



The Queensland Baptist Forum

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Plaque Project—3rd Dedication

The third plaque in the BHQ 'Heritage Plaques' project will be dedicated 10am on Sunday August 13th at Windsor Road Baptist Church. It commemorates the current church building which was erected in 1888 and the Memorial Hall opened in 1931 in honour of the long pastorate of Rev Thomas Leitch from 1878-1929 (a record for Queensland!). Windsor Road church was initiated by the former Jireh Baptist Church with open-air services and cottage prayer meetings. The first building was erected in 1874 about 100 metres down the street from the present location. The church was formed in 1877. Ever since it sent out the second Baptist missionary from Queensland in 1890, it has maintained a strong missions and church planting interest.

All are welcome to attend the dedication service. Earlier plaques have been installed at Toowong and City Tabernacle Baptist churches. Other churches interested in the 'Heritage Plaque' project are invited to contact BHQ.

A First for BHQ—Heritage Bus Tour

Baptist Heritage Queensland is partnering with the City Tabernacle Over-Fifties group to sponsor a bus tour taking in many of the historic German Baptist sites in the Lockyer Valley and Scenic Rim. The tour, organised by Bryan Laurens, will take place on Wed 6 September and will cover about 250 kms. The cost is \$35.

Dr David Parker will provide a commentary on the significance of the sites visited, which include some of the earliest Baptist churches in the area and also one that was the second largest in Queensland at its peak. Some of the churches have ceased to exist, but there are still thriving works at Minden, Laidley, Kalbar and Boonah. Many of the descendants of the original pioneer families moved to other areas of the state, including the South Burnett.

Over the last 150 years, members of these German families have made a distinctive contribution to Queensland Baptist life and may be found in many churches.

For bookings, contact Bryan Laurens at laurens@bigpond.net.au, phone 3846 7212.

BHQ—Meetings 2017: 28 October (AGM) 2pm @The Baptist Archives

<p>Baptist Heritage Queensland (est. 1984)</p> <p>Membership (2017) Individual \$10 pa Family \$15 pa Corporate \$20 pa <i>Qld Baptist Forum 3 issues pa</i> Free to Members Others \$2 each posted</p> <p>President: Mr Eric W. Kopittke 98 Yallabee Rd., Jindalee 4074 Ph 3376 4339 kopittke@tpg.com.au</p> <p>Secretary: Bill Hughes, 7 Dalziel St., Nundah 4012 Ph 3256 8897 Mob 0409 915 685 roslynbill@bigpond.com</p> <p>Website: http://dparker.net.au/bhsq.htm Archives contact: archives@qb.org.au Ph 3354 5642</p>	<p>CONTENTS</p> <p>Qld Baptist Forum No 97 August 2017</p> <p>Plaque Number 3 Dedication p 1</p> <p>First for BHQ—Heritage Bus Tour p 1</p> <p>Resources for Compiling a Baptist Church History by David Parker p 2</p> <p>All the Way! Dr SW Solomon (2) p 6</p> <p>Qld Baptists, the Census and NCLS p 8</p>
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Resources for Compiling a Baptist Church History

By David Parker

This is an adapted version of the latest in the series of Baptist Heritage Qld Guide Sheets produced to assist with the management and use of church records. They can all be found at this web site: <http://www.dparker.net.au/barc-sheets.htm> Note that information from the sources described in the document may be subject to privacy, confidentiality and access restrictions.

Introduction

Requests are often received by the Baptist Church Archives and Baptist Heritage Qld for assistance in compiling a local church history. This paper deals with one particular aspect of a church history project – the resources that are available for discovering the story of the church, where are they, and how can they be accessed!

To begin answering this, let us look at how Baptist churches have usually started.

Records of the sponsoring body

First of all, there was probably some body which laid the groundwork for the church – perhaps the Baptist Union through one of its departments, typically the Home Mission and then later Mission to Queensland. Or, it may be another church which expanded, or engaged in a deliberate church planting ministry, or one that just split due to some problem. It may be simpler – a group of people in a given area decided to come together and form a church, at first carrying out the leadership and ministry themselves and with the help of people they have invited in (such as other Baptist churches and pastors or the Baptist Union) to assist.

Where there have been other bodies involved in the commencement of the church, the first place to look for information about the origins of your church will be in the records of those bodies (see more below for the Baptist Union). Look for printed histories, newspaper and church magazine reports, photograph collections (church and family) and most of all, their official documents like Minutes and Annual Reports.

Early church records – informal and official

Now turning to the new church. The main source for the earliest stages of its history may be hard to find because the original activities might have been rather informal and tentative – perhaps a Sunday School operated informally or there might have been occasional week night fellowship gatherings in someone's home or services at a local school or hall. But at some point, it became clearer that the new work was going to be permanent and someone would have started keeping records. Look for informal records (perhaps a newspaper report or advertising the commencement of a Sunday School) and family photographs.

So the first step in compiling a history is to find out what documents are available from its earliest days. They can be collected together in categories and put in order. (If there are gaps in the records,

make efforts to locate missing items.) Make sure that these documents are carefully preserved and stored.

Supplement the official documents with informal ones – such as family photographs, letters, newspaper and church magazine reports. If there are still people who were part of the original founders, interview them for information using Oral History techniques to capture the information they retain (see more below on Oral History).

Local records of the on-going church

General Records

From this point on, there would be regular meetings of the members and leaders properly recorded in Minute Books, supported by financial records, as well as brochures, bulletins and newspaper cuttings announcing various events. The members' roll should be available (sometimes a separate book and other times part of the Minute book), and Annual Reports. Church bulletins give a feel for the week by week life of the church and provide detailed information about dates of events and the names of personnel involved.

Similarly, there would be a gradually increasing number of ancillary organisations such as Sunday School, ladies groups (Baptist Women's Fellowship/ Union, and Senior Girls' Missionary Union) and men's groups, youth work (Christian Endeavour, a youth fellowship, and Boys' and Girls' Brigades) and sporting clubs. Records of these organisations such as Minute books, membership rolls, financial documents and reports should be available.

Any major ancillary ministries such as a pre-school, kindy or op-shop should have their own sets of records.

Registers are another form of documentation of church life. These include marriage registers and in the few churches which had cemeteries, burial registers (see below under German churches). Some churches have also kept records of baptisms and infant dedications, usually in the form of certificates published in book form with butts to retain the basic information (like a cheque book). The church should have a membership roll, often in a separate book but sometimes as part of a Minute books. There may also be books listing attendance at members' meetings. Various groups such as the Sunday School, Ladies Groups, Christian Endeavour and Brigades may keep track of their members by roll and attendance books. Visitors' book may also exist and provide interesting insights into church attendance. Note that privacy laws apply when using information of a personal nature from such sources.

There will also be official papers relating to the place of meeting (eg, a lease on a public hall, land

purchases, documents relating to building projects etc) which will yield more useful information. Correlate these documents where possible with material from the local council and any advertising to do with the projects (tenders, openings etc).

Look also for advertising/publicity brochures and photographs and videos of people and events.

Your church may organisations which have links to other bodies. These include the Girls' and Boys' Brigade, KYB (Know your Bible) study groups, Christian Endeavour, and sporting clubs. The parent bodies of these groups may have helpful information in their records, especially about dates of commencement and affiliation and the names and details of officers and leaders. They may also have information about district-wide events in which your church group participated.

Financial Records

Financial records provide a particular challenge both for their management and their use in compiling a church history. There may be very large volumes of financial records including not only account books of various types but also bank statements, cheque butts, invoices and receipts, utilities invoices, pay slips, taxation records, collection records, and all kinds of reports.

They are likely to be incomplete, and very difficult to interpret after any length of time. So it is best of rely initially on annual financial statements and any explanatory notes and reports in Minutes and other publications to provide keys to understanding the financial trends of your church.

However, sometimes detailed figures may be useful for church history – eg, it may be possible to trace the giving of the church through collection records, funding for special efforts such as a building program, support for missions or how well the church paid its minister! Overall reports may provide interesting clues on the prosperity of the church and district.

Records of ancillary organisations, especially the women's groups, will give a clear indication of how the church was supported financially. Special projects, such as a building project, a missionary support scheme or local outreach ministries will probably have their own sets of their own records.

Managing your documentary and digital records

To keep track of this array of documents, use our *Church Archive and Record Form* which will assist you to list, categorise and date all documents, and also give you a framework for the historical development of the church, including the names of its leaders, buildings and locations. A good idea is to compile large charts or spreadsheets with the required information. This will not only help you to see clearly the development and growth of the church but also spot any gaps in the records (it is important to try to fill these gaps as soon as possible).

In the early stages, these records will be all paper based (and some tape recordings, transparencies and

movie films), but since about 2000, they will transition to digital records (some of which may have been printed in hard copy as well). The essential principles of managing and using digital records are the same as paper records but they are much harder to manage.

See our Guide Sheets: *Managing Church Records A Guide; Baptist Archives How to organise & manage your Church or Denominational Archives; Guide to Digital Archiving*

Oral history

The memories of people connected with your church can also form a valuable source of information, although care and patience are needed to make effective use of this source. Depending on the age of your church, there may even be people still alive who were involved in its foundation. Other key people will include former pastors and officers (track down those who have moved from the area).

Use the best principles of 'oral history' to capture information from these people. Approach people with respect and be ready for alternative arrangements should circumstances change. Be responsive to the situation of your interviewee. Plan your questions well, taking into account information already known from other sources. Prepare your note taking devices (recorders, video etc), be comfortable with their use, explain what you are doing to your interviewee. Secure permission to take notes and record the conversation.

Use some 'starters' like documents and photographs to get the conversation under way. Cross check all information gained, bearing in mind that memories are not fool-proof, especially over many years! Be content with partial information if full details are not possible and try to fill the gaps in other ways. Ask for any further documents and photographs that the interviewee may possess and be sure to handle them carefully, have permission to copy them and make sure they are returned promptly or as arranged.

If the interview is not face-to-face (eg by phone, email etc), adapt the above principles accordingly.

A productive variant of individual interviewees is the use of focus groups involving up to about 6 people at a time. The inter-personal dynamics within the group often opens up otherwise forgotten threads and memories, as well as providing a valuable means of cross-checking for accuracy. Use documents and especially photographs as effective conversation starters. Sessions can be at the church property, or for more informality, in a private home. Use the same principles as above adapted to the group situation.

Denominational documents

There may be some material available in the Baptist Archives and other denominational repositories.

First of all, if the church was established by the Home Mission or Mission to Queensland, there will be references to this in the records of those two bodies, hopefully including dedicated files for the church. In most cases there will be documents relat-

ing to its constitution and recognition as a member church of the Baptist Union, including application papers, votes authorising recognition and details of any official services to perform the constitution.

Most churches in Queensland have the Baptist Union as their trustee for property matters, so further documentation will relate to this area – eg, property purchases, building schemes and financial loans associated therewith. (Note that some churches, while members of the Baptist Union of Queensland, are independently incorporated.)

Similarly, most churches call upon the Baptist Union to assist with advice and help when calling a pastor. There will usually be copies of letters and other communications related to pastoral settlement. In the case of churches under the Home Mission, there will be records in the Home Mission Minutes of appointments made. If there has been any reason for the church and the Baptist Union to be in consultation (eg pastoral or property issues), there will be records documenting this activity. (Note privacy issues may apply.)

More generally, look for reports and photographs in the denominational newspaper, *The Queensland Freeman/Baptist* and later *QB magazine* which have been submitted by the church, or articles written about it. In earlier days, many churches reported regularly, often monthly, and these reports often contain detailed information. Many of the reports found their way also to the national paper, *The Australian Baptist* (1913-1991). Both newspapers may be searched digitally in the Baptist Church Archives.

Finally, the Baptist Union published its annual reports and a year book from 1907 (and before that the same kind of information appeared in the QB). Some of these reports (eg, by the General Secretary, Home Mission) were quite detailed and often contained at least basic information about particular churches (such as dates of constitution, property developments, pastoral changes). This information can also be searched digitally at the Baptist Church Archives.

Some churches have sent copies of their printed histories (printed and now digital) to the Archives, which constitute another source of information, if not already available locally. These histories are typically small booklets of 30 to 50 pages, commemorating a significant anniversary (jubilee or centenary) often with many illustrations and lists of pastors and officers.

In addition, some older churches have transferred a large proportion of their records to the Baptist Church Archives for safe keeping. The records of churches that have closed or otherwise ceased to exist as a separate entity are required to be transferred to the Baptist Archives.

Published historical information

Now we can turn to historical documents which record the story of the churches and denominations. There are several different publishers and sources.

First, those published by the Baptist Union. The first is the *Queensland Baptist Jubilee*, issued in

1905, which features a short history of all the churches which had been established up to the time of publication. The second is the Baptist Union centenary history, *A Fellowship of Service* (1977) which as well as the general history of the Baptist Union contains supplements listing of names of the churches together with membership figures and the names of pastors who have served. The latest history is *Pressing on with the Gospel: the story of Baptists in Queensland 1855-2005*, published at the time of the sequi-centenary of Baptist work in Queensland. (The latter volumes do not contain the history of individual churches.)

Baptist Heritage Queensland (BHQ) has published a number of books on individual churches as well as some regional ones, including *Something more than Gold - Baptists in Central Queensland 1862-2012*. A number of churches are covered in *Mission to Queensland, 1981-1996: a Baptist experiment in church planting*. BHQ has also produced several biographies. Many articles of the same types have appeared in its journal, *QB Forum* (published 3 times a year since 1984). For the full list of BHQ books, visit <http://dparker.net.au/bhq-order-3-13.pdf>

The Baptist Church Archives also contains a number of histories produced by local churches, and some academic theses on historical or biographical topics. There are also some auto/biographies of pastors and other Baptist people. The Malyon College library also contains some histories, biographies and academic theses, as well as general studies on Baptist life.

Another useful source of information are family histories produced by people with Baptist connections, some of which contain biographical and church information relevant to local churches.

Local district historical societies and local governments also produce historical books which may contain useful information, especially about the area, and sometimes about churches (although often the material on Baptist churches is limited in extent and value). These are usually obtainable at local and state libraries.

Records relating to particular groups of churches

German Baptist Churches

The German Baptist churches are a particular feature of Queensland Baptist life. These are a group of churches located in the Fassifern area north and west of Ipswich, which were established from the early 1870s and existed as a separate identifiable group until the 1920s, for much of that period in their own 'German Baptist Conference'. These churches were founded by German migrants (some of whom were Baptists before their arrival and others were converts here in Queensland), and they used the German language for services and their records up until about the First World War.

The records of these churches survive in varying degrees of completeness, some with the local churches and some, especially the churches which no longer exist, are in the Baptist Church Archives. Each of the

churches have produced their own history, mostly at the time of their centenary.

Many of these churches had their own cemeteries, also a unique feature of Queensland Baptist life. Personal information about those buried may be obtained from the headstones (where existing), but there are many unmarked graves and illegible headstones; see our *Coleyville, Engelsburg (Kalbar), Boonah & Highfields Baptist Cemeteries (Qld) Monumental Inscriptions*, by Rosemary and Eric Kopittke for details. Burial registers and other documentary records are sparse.

The Baptist Church Archives has some specialised material relating to the German Baptist churches. This includes the published histories, the records of some of the churches (in German, and some with some basic translations), some property related documents and some material relating from focused research on the movement.

Of particular interest is a collection of newspaper clippings from Baptist newspapers in Germany which contain reports from the German Baptist churches in Queensland (in German and in translation).

Of particular interest in the Baptist Archives collection is a number of books by Rev Hermann Windolf, who was recognized as an author and poet.

Mission to Queensland Churches

The Mission to Queensland (MTQ) was established in 1981 as the church planting ministry of the Baptist Union of Queensland in remote and mining areas of the state; it replaced, in a partial way, the Queensland Baptist Home Mission which had been the comprehensive church planting and support ministry of the Baptist Union from the late 19th century until the 1960s.

In the initial period of the ministry of MTQ, a number of churches were established under its auspices, and staffed by specialised church planting pastors. Its story up to 1996 is told in our book, *Mission to Queensland 1981-1996: a Baptist experiment in church planting* by Rev Mel Williams.

The records of these churches (not all of which have survived) are with the churches themselves and also in the files of MTQ, some of which are housed in the Baptist Archives, including some records of some of the defunct churches. There were also extensive reports of the activities of the pastors and the churches published in *The Queensland Baptist*.

The early life of these churches were typically associated very closely with the church planter who established them; these church planters usually issued detailed newsletters to their supporters and friends, which are a good source of information about the church.

Ethnic churches

As well as the German church, there have been many different ethnic churches within the Baptist denomination in Queensland, especially in recent years, although many had a short life. In the early days there were some Danish and Welsh-speaking

fellowships and churches but very little is known of their records.

The oldest of the existing churches is the Brisbane Slavic Evangelical Baptist Church which was officially established in 1938. With the surge of immigration after World War 2, there appeared a number of different works amongst the various European groups such as the Italians, Romanian, Yugoslav, Spanish (and also Latin American) and Dutch; later still, work appeared amongst Asian cultures such as Vietnamese, Cambodian, Korean, Chinese and Burmese, while more recently, African communities have been included as well Pacific Islanders. Over many years, there have been some sporadic ministries amongst Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders.

These groups are responsible for their own records, with few if any making their way to the Baptist Archives. Some information of a more general nature may be obtained from the reports and newsletters of the New Settlers Association and occasional reports in the *Queensland Baptist*.

Basic public records

There are many public records which can be useful for church history projects.

As mentioned above, local historical societies and museums often have information about churches. Family and genealogical societies usually have libraries with extensive collections of data. Some of this includes overseas information (British, European and American in particular) which is invaluable when tracing the stories of people.

One of the best public sources for information are newspapers, which in earlier times, reported on church life in some detail. For the period up to the mid-1950s this information is available on-line through the National Library of Australia's Trove website, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/>.

Dates and statistics of Queensland churches and ministers

The Queensland Baptist Yearbooks (also known as Report Book, Handbook, Directory) published from 1907 to the present include the names and details of member churches, and also the list of officially recognized pastors (including their periods of ministry at different appointments and their place of training and qualifications, as well as their official status. Of particular interest in this publication was the section where for many years the vital statistics of churches was reported.

How to access material in Baptist Church Archives Qld

The contents and services of the Baptist Church Archives, located at the QB Centre, 53 Prospect Road, Gaythorne is available to local church historians. For full details, see our Guide Sheet describing the archives, *The Baptist Church Archives, Qld. - a Guide* at <http://www.dparker.net.au/d-BaptArc-guide06.pdf>.

All the Way!



BHQ has recently established a new occasional series featuring the life stories of Queensland Baptists. We invite people to tell their personal, family and ministry lives, highlighting aspects of the spiritual growth, development and service for the interest of our readers and to be stored in our Archives as a permanent record. In this issue we present the second part of Rev Dr Stan Solomon's autobiography for which he has kindly given publication permission (it has been only slightly adapted). The first part was published in our April 2017 issue. We invite contributions to this series. Contact BHQ for details.

The Baptist Union

The time came for me to move on from Townsville. The Baptist College in Brisbane had advertised for a dean of ministry. I came to believe that God was



calling me out and it seemed that my gifting, training and experience all lent themselves toward that end. My application was accepted and the transition set for second semester, 1990.

Towards the end of April that year I was in Brisbane for an SSRRC meeting and flew back to Townsville that afternoon. I had hardly walked into the house around 7pm when the phone rang to let me know that Fred Stallard, the General Superintendent whom I had just left 3 hours earlier, was dead. The shock was palpable, and the sadness at the loss of a great leader and brother in Christ affected me deeply. It was another attack of satan on the kingdom work of the denomination. What transpired was sobering to say the least. In May I was approached by a Union group set up to find at least a temporary replacement for Fred. They asked that, seeing I was in transition and already on the way to a leadership role within the Union, would I consider a six-month role as interim General Superintendent. With the concurrence of the college, I agreed and was appointed. This was certainly an interesting development, as some years before, a brother minister had suggested that in the future I could well be chosen for that role. Was this God's choosing, or was it a happy conjunction of circumstances? All I could do was give it my best shot in a caretaker role. We moved to Brisbane to occupy house number 24 of the 31 homes in which I have lived to date.

Soon after I was appointed, Lloyd Woodrow was appointed as secretary of the Union, later to be known as the Director of Administration. This was the start of an almost eight-year collaboration in the leadership of the Union. Lloyd was an executive officer of the highest quality, integrity and ability. The Union owes him a great debt.

At this stage of the Union's life, the various departments were still run by committees who met, usually monthly at the central offices in the valley. It was really on the fringe of the red light district, almost inaccessible for parking and therefore an area where women in particular did not want to venture at night. The sooner the Union could move its headquarters, the

better. We began therefore a "lookout" for a more auspicious venue. This was not achieved till 1992.

Meantime, the question of a permanent General Superintendent was on the table. Applications were called and a representative interviewing committee established. My question was, "Should I apply"? "Was this of God, or simply my own wish"? Naturally I was in prayer over this. My leading came from several sources. The first was the earlier seemingly prophetic statement regarding the possibility that might be a future role for me. The second came from scripture. I had always taken as my own the servant passages in Isaiah 49 such as "Before I was born the Lord called me..." (verse 1) and "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob....I will also make you a light for the gentiles..." (verse 6). The third was also a scriptural pointer. A Sunday or two before the applications were due, my pastor, John Sweetman, preached on Jeremiah 30. It was for me. God says to His people, "I will restore you to health and heal your wounds (17)...I will add to their numbers and they will not be decreased (19)...Their leader will be one of their own; their ruler will arise from among them. I will bring him near and he will come close to me (21)...". I applied and was trusted with the job.

What really is the job of the General Superintendent?

He is designated as the spiritual leader of the denomination. What a responsibility! He is to inspire people and churches as he visits, preaches and encourages. He is pastor to the pastors, responsible for their selection, training and care as they minister. He is the protector of the flock in doctrine, matters of faith and practice, and the maintenance of Baptist principles. He is available to consult with churches and their leaders as invited. He is to maintain the services to churches and to do for the churches jointly those things they cannot do for themselves.

How does one lead a group of independent, individualised churches as Baptists are? One has no power to order, only to advise and encourage. One has to earn the right to be listened to. Where does one start? The denominational machinery was all in place. There was no need for structural change, at least till one found "the lay of the land". Best to pick up where Fred left off. The Baptist history document "Pressing On" says of me in part:

"Coming into the position at a time when there were many other staff changes, he had a clear idea about the task, and his 'great sense of responsibility to lead Baptists of Queensland in a forward thrust of re-

newal and evangelism'.....In practical terms, he wanted to take up urgently the Forward Thrust initiated by his predecessor, and make that the centre piece of the growth and outreach of the denomination".

I believed, along with Peter Wagner of the Church Growth movement, that "the most effective form of evangelism is to plant new churches".

To this end an appeal was raised for funds to do that. Mission to Queensland was already heavily involved and funded outside of the Union budget, but this was an add-on. It was not greatly successful, but at least two donations of \$50,000 each and one of \$100,000 helped. Again "Pressing On" reads, "However, many churches were planted and the Forward Thrust goal raised from 35 to 50", and "There were 25 churches planted between 1990 and 1994". Some of these were ethnic congregations.

I should say that this time saw the beginnings of a shift of emphasis for Mission to Queensland – not just to plant new churches itself, but to encourage churches, particularly larger churches to plant daughter churches in outlying areas where new developments were occurring.

The years 1991 to 1993 saw the replacement of staff who were moving on. There was Lloyd Woodrow, already mentioned, Trevor Owens the previous Director of Blue Nursing for Queensland as our Director of Baptist Community Services, Rev. Lester Kelly as State evangelist, Rev. Dr. Geoff Cramb as Associate General Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Jim Gibson and Rev. Dr. John Sweetman as part-time college lecturers.

When I first took over, Rev. Dr. John Tanner was my associate. He was and still is a great blessing to me personally. Later when Geoff became associate, that blessing continued. Geoff brought expertise in pastoral care, dealing with difficult situations. He instituted much improved systems in the accreditation of pastors and particularly in restoration procedures which became necessary due to an unprecedented increase in moral failures in pastors. He also masterminded the pastor's retreat group ministry.

Both Geoff and Queensland Baptist Care instituted training and consultancy for churches and encouraged local churches in their wider ministries of care to their communities. Geoff later created InterCare, a pastoral care ministry, independent of the Union.

These early years ('91 – '93) saw the beginnings of the radical changes of the nineties. The official Baptist history book "Pressing On" records:

"Through a wide range of conferences, seminars and courses, the Baptist ministry in Queensland was rapidly being transformed into a much more professional body....it became common to work within a framework of position descriptions, personal development, performance reviews, mentoring and the like".

There were more large churches. This was partly the result of input from overseas church leaders and partly due to the regionalisation of the eighties. It soon became evident, however, that not only was there a place for large regional churches when appropriate leaders were available, but there was certainly a need for smaller more intimate neighbourhood churches

surrounding the regionals. The development of larger churches also made for many more team ministries, which in turn necessitated an increased training and consultation. I do reflect that the rise of team ministry had its downside for numbers of churches. Too many smaller churches began to employ second pastors for specialty ministries such as pastoral care or youth, which "gobbled up" their resources and led to reduced giving to outside ministries such as missions. This became a recipe for more inward rather than outward looking churches. My memory recalls one church of 15 members in which the pastor wished to employ a part-time youth pastor.

Another change was the establishment of the role of Area Superintendents to offer increased support to pastors and churches at the local level. Arising from the SSRRC review were the beginnings of streamlining the structure of the Union, doing away with the Council and making the Directors of the departments directly accountable to the General Superintendent. All this change was symbolised in moving the annual assemblies away from the City Tabernacle to Ashgrove and later to Gateway churches.

On the administrative side, the major change of these years was the sale of the valley property and the move to 518 Brunswick Street – a move that was fully funded from internal Union resources, and which through appropriate rentals, provided much needed income.

1994 became significant in my time as GS. It was the year in which triennial reviews of Baptist Union operation leading to even further changes, began. The Department of Theological Studies, for example, introduced upgraded in-church field education supervision. The Department of Community Service embarked on rapid expansion which occupied the next years – aged care homes at Toowoomba, Wishart, Ipswich and Laidley, moves to purchase land for future development at Kuluin, Townsville and Mudgeeraba, and the establishment of the Glendyne Youth Training Centre at Hervey Bay (1997).

The most significant event of 1994 was the establishment of Baplink, a banking system in which people could invest for the benefit of the churches. It was the brain-child of Lloyd Woodrow who set it up with his customary enthusiasm and precision. By the end of my term as General Superintendent Baplink's base was over seventy million dollars.

All of this time, of course, there was the endless round of committee meetings, consultation with churches and preaching in one or other of the churches almost every Sunday. There was only a very small handful of our churches in which I did not preach during those years. Almost all of my visits to churches were joyous occasions.

Occasionally I was called to preside over difficult situations that occurred in local churches – these, though few and far between, were not happy times.

One of the many functions the General Superintendent is called on to perform, is to advise churches on pastors available for call. The churches make their own decisions, which is as it should be, but they do

seriously consider what the GS says. However, some don't. One very traditional church asked about a certain pastor already very successful in his current church. I indicated to the deacons that I didn't think he would be suitable for them. He was certainly leading his church in contemporary worship, even mildly charismatic. They called him but within a year it was all over and they parted company.

Another church elder whom I knew very well, rang me and asked my opinion regarding the possible call of a certain pastor. My exact words were (I am very rarely so rude), "I wouldn't touch him with a forty-foot pole". By this I was not denigrating him as a person, but trying to indicate that he would not be suitable to that church as it was. They called him. Within eighteen months the membership had fallen from near 200 to somewhere in the sixties.

Fortunately, or rather should I say, because of God's good hand upon His church, such situations are rare. I am sure however, that the arch enemy, satan, will attack every church as often as he is given a foothold. He will attack through illness, discontent, false testimony or any avenues, most of which we can't even imagine.

The Baptist history "Pressing On" entitles its chapter 9 "Fire and Passion in the Nineties" and concludes, "All these changes at the denominational level reflected the situation across the churches. There was plenty of evidence that the kind of renewal and modernisation advocated by leaders like S W Solomon was taking place".

In February 1998, I officially retired. I believed the leadership of the Union should be in the hands of younger men with energy and drive.

Baptists in Queensland: Census and NCLS Figures

An initial picture of the 2016 Australian Census figures released recently shows Queensland to be the most Christian state with 56% of the population indicating this was their religious choice (NSW was a close second at 55%). Queensland was also the most Baptist state with 1.86% of the people (NT was next with 1.83%), the total number being about the same as last census. WA grew more, and also has a slightly higher ratio of men to women, 91%, with Queensland, 90%. Queensland has a quarter of all Australian census Baptists.

The density of Christian adherence varies quite considerably in different regions. For example, 3.0% of the population in Dalby is Baptist, 2.5% in Hervey Bay and 2.2% in Bundaberg, but only 1.2% in Townsville and 1.1% in Cairns, and 1.08% in Mackay. Other interesting figures are: Toowoomba 1.76%, Rockhampton 2.1%, Mount Isa 2.02%, Maryborough 1.53%, Gold Coast 1.2% and the Sunshine Coast, 2.06%.

Baptists are the fifth largest Christian group in Queensland (or sixth if 'undefined Christian' are counted), ahead of Pentecostal and Lutheran. There are 345,142 Baptists in Australia, down a little from last Census, making 1.47% of the population. But overall, the number of Australians professing Christianity has declined sharply in the last 5 years from 61% to 56%.

Note that the Census figures do not refer only to people who are actively associated with Baptist Union of Queensland churches—others included would be purely nominal in-active Baptists and others would associated with non-BUQ Baptist churches.

Internal Queensland Baptist statistics show that there are 16,708 members, a broader community of 50,777 people, with an average Sunday attendance of around 29,000. All of these figures are up over a 5 year period, but the church community and Sunday attendance have not grown much, if at all, over the previous year.

The Census figures can be read in relation to the National Church Life Survey taken about the same time; which focuses on the internal life of participating churches. According to the QB General Superintendent, Dr David Loder, the initial report indicates, for example, that Queensland Baptists value sermons, preaching or Bible teaching quite highly at 52%; other features such as small groups for prayer, discussion or Bible study drop down to 27%, along with ministry to children or youth at the same level, or praying for one another, 25%. Contemporary style worship or music and practical care for one another in times of need both rate at 24%, and wider community care or social justice emphasis garners 21%. Sharing in Holy Communion receives only 16%!

Other features of interest from the NCLS about Queensland Baptist attendees indicated that the female/male ratio is 57/43, 38% have a university degree, and 35% have primary or secondary education, the average age is 59 years, 71% were born in Australia, 29% born overseas and 15% speak a language other than English at home.

People who started attending the church in the last 5 years amounted to 42% of the total, and nearly all (97%) attend at least monthly. Long term attendees amount to 57% of the total, 8% are new comers, 15% have transferred in from another Baptist church and 18% have switched from another denomination.

The list of priorities attendees would like to see addressed in the next year are topped by spiritual growth (44%), building a sense of community (32%), encouraging people to discover and use their gifts (30%), and worship services that are nurturing (27%). Growing into a larger congregation rated only 8% and starting a new church or other venture, 3%.

Note that these NCLS figures only relate to the 108 churches (about 50% of the total) which participated. There is plenty of material for further reflection in both the Australian Census and NCLS.