



*The Church from the
Paddock*

A HISTORY OF CHURCHES OF
CHRIST IN QUEENSLAND 1883-2013

SECOND
EDITION
2016

Geoff Risson &
Craig Brown

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The second edition of ‘The Church From the Paddock’ contains new highlights from the early 1900s that have been foundational to the successes today in bringing the light of Christ to communities. Stories of Stephen Cheek, David Ewers, Frederick and Johanna Stubbin, EC Hinrichsen, Vi Callanan, Harold and Mary Finger, have been refreshed with more insights. We would like to acknowledge the vast number of people and their life works that have shaped Churches of Christ in Queensland. Although there are limitations to a publication of this kind, we have endeavoured to cover as many varied stories as possible.

We give credit to Geoff Risson, who passed away in March 2015. Geoff was a generous, loving and down-to-earth disciple of Jesus who made the first edition of this book possible, with Craig Brown as co-author. Craig authored the new chapters and changes in this second edition, with support from Desley Millwood as editor and publisher. The second edition is part of Geoff’s legacy, and his voice still resonates in the chapters he penned.

We are also grateful to Jonathan Smith, the Queensland archive officer, whose dedication, efficiency and enthusiasm has made the archives accessible and this second edition much easier to produce.

We need to remember where we have come from and our DNA. We must learn from our past in order to go forward in the future. This new edition will play its part in the collective memory of the Queensland churches.

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*Bringing the
light of Christ
into communities*



Foreword

Some years ago I was reading a newspaper story about Remembrance Day. One paragraph in the reporter’s article particularly stuck in my mind. Amongst his description of how the city stopped on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, he mentioned that he heard birds singing. The reporter remarked that he had never heard birds singing in the city before.

History often only records the big events, whilst the “birds that sing” every day are not heard or remembered.

Authors Craig Brown and Geoff Risson, ably assisted by Desley Millwood as Editor, have been the ideal team to write the story of Churches of Christ in Queensland, describing how God’s spirit has been at work amongst his people throughout these 130 years. Craig has been a journalist, minister and most recently the Federal Coordinator of Churches of Christ in Australia. Geoff Risson has been a minister, State head of church resources, and interim Executive President of Churches of Christ in Queensland prior to his retirement. Desley Millwood is Churches of Christ in Queensland’s Director of Communications. Between them, our authors have been able to record not only the big events but also some of the individual stories of those who have been quiet achievers day in and day out throughout the years.

Having said this, the writing of this book was never about compiling a list of people, buildings and dates. Rather it is a story of commitment – a commitment to a belief in God and a way of life founded upon Jesus Christ; a commitment that has been discovered, owned and acted upon by generation after generation. Revelation 3:20: “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.”

As our name conveys, we are Churches of Christ. The original “DNA” strands of this 130-year-old story of Churches of Christ in Queensland can easily be read in the Bible. Later strands that are clearly seen in our story are those from the Reformation and subsequent Restoration movements around the 1800s on the American frontier, led by Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian and other Christian leaders committed to shedding religious traditions and following God’s word as their sole guide and authority. There was a coalescing of heart and thought that transcended denominational fences; a shared commitment to restoring the church to its original, uncluttered essentials and unity. These folk simply called themselves “Christians” and their congregations a “Church of Christ” or “Christian Church”. Their baptism was by immersion and the Lord’s Supper was observed on the first day of every week.

Barton W Stone and Alexander and Thomas Campbell were prominent leaders of two of these groups who came together and became known as the Stone-Campbell movement. The movement grew rapidly and evolved to be the fastest growing religious organisation in America.

In addition to the above restoration goals, were two other core principles – the whole church should work in unison as one body as Christ intended, and love is ultimately more important than doctrine:

“The Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally and constitutionally one,” Thomas Campbell (1809).

“Heresy is not believing wrong doctrines but rather a lack of love and rending of the body of Christ,” Barton Stone (1808).

Our story of Churches of Christ in Queensland was similarly started by folk committed to these ideals. Our journey of 130 years since then has been an amazing story of faith, courage and entrepreneurship, and our current day identity and culture still holds much of what was considered important by this Stone-Campbell movement.

I am proud to be part of Churches of Christ. I think the essentials taught by Jesus Christ are still the way to life, and foundational for healthy communities:

Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV): “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Matthew 28:19-20 (The Message): Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I’ll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age.”



Throughout our story, uncluttered commitment to these essentials has been at the heart of who we are and what we stand for as Churches of Christ in Queensland. What a great story of so many lives uplifted, changed and saved by this commitment, empowered by God’s Holy Spirit. What a great story of achievements, history changing events and faithful folk who “sang everyday” even when they were not heard or appreciated. Let us pray for continued discernment, wisdom and courage to continue this story and to exponentially forward the light of Christ in every community in the decades ahead.

Dean Phelan
Chief Executive Officer
Churches of Christ in Queensland

November 2013

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PREFACE: *The Church from the Paddock*

*As I sit in a church hall an hour’s drive south-west from Ipswich,
I reflect on the history of this region and how it has shaped Churches of Christ
in Queensland and my own life.*

On the drive here, I deviated from the Cunningham Highway to Warwick to stand on a small knoll to take in a panoramic view of the undulating valleys. These valleys are part of the Scenic Rim region in south-east Queensland. South-west of this small knoll lies Cunninghams Gap through which climbs the highway to western Queensland and northern New South Wales. Today, the Great Dividing Range glimmers with the typical blue haze that characterises this part of Australia. On this small knoll, Allan Cunningham stood in 1828. Having first discovered the Darling Downs from the western side, this botanist and explorer discovered in 1828 the way from Moreton Bay through to the rich-soiled plains behind the Great Dividing Range. Generations of farmers have since lived, toiled and sweated in this region, doing well in the good seasons, and sometimes giving up hope in the seasons of prolonged drought. But, they were battlers; hard, honest workers who kept on working until the rains came again. And with the rains, hope.

It is something that we who have connections to churches can understand. Throughout our history there have been seasons of drought followed by seasons of hope.

In the mid-1800s, farming life began in this region. Fields were ploughed, homes were built, and communities and small towns came to life. A pleasurable drive through this country will take the driver past simple church buildings, early symbols of the faith of these early settlers. Some are still used for worship; some now stand unused and evoke only memories of worship, weddings and funerals. These country churches are always wooden structures: a simple entry foyer, wooden pews, with a low stage on which stands the necessary furniture for worship. Six of these church buildings were, and still are, active churches that form part of the movement known as Churches of Christ. These churches wear the proud badge of being part of the birth story of Churches of Christ in Queensland. Any history telling of Churches of Christ in Queensland must include their history.

The drive out here evokes memories for me of my early years with my parents and siblings spent north of here in another valley. My mind plays with memories of sitting at wooden desks on hot, steamy summer afternoons and cold winter mornings in small, simple country school buildings that, like these country churches, also dotted the country side among the farmlands.

So, today, as I sit in one of these church halls, the walls speak of past Sunday school and youth activities. But, instead, my mind mulls over two important historical memories. One is a very personal and pivotal memory that steered my life in a new direction. The other memory is of an historical figure, Ernest Christian (EC) Hinrichsen, who became a national evangelist and church planter for Churches of Christ in Australia.

EC Hinrichsen came from this very church in Rosevale where I sit. Like many early settlers in these valleys, Hinrichsen’s grandparents were immigrants from Europe (his family were Danish). Hinrichsen left his home in Rosevale to take the long journey south to study in Melbourne. After studying for ministry at the then Churches of Christ College of the Bible, EC Hinrichsen, in 1920, aged 20, became the State Evangelist for the Victorian Conference of Churches of Christ. In his ministry career, over 35 years, he also became State Evangelist for Queensland and then New South Wales. As an evangelist, he was also often a church planter. Following his preaching missions, and the resultant converts and baptisms, he would often leave behind a new church, with the ability to financially support a full-time Christian worker. Hinrichsen has been described as “the most spectacular and consistently successful evangelist in Australian Churches of Christ over a longer period than anyone else. In the course of a 35-year ministry, which took him around Australia and to the United States, Britain and New Zealand, 30,000 people made commitments to Christ under his preaching” (G Chapman).¹ This occurred before we developed the capacity to promote such preaching missions via television, flyers in letterboxes, and social media! This great influencer for the gospel of Jesus Christ and the mission of Churches of Christ was birthed here. It is a powerful thought as I sit in this church hall. Much advancement and growth came because of one person who was nurtured in his faith in this simple Church of Christ.

The second memory that comes to my mind as I sit here is a very personal, historical memory.

In this hall one Saturday night 40-plus years ago, I attended a rally that featured students from the then one-year-old Kenmore Christian College in Brisbane. This country church, Rosevale, was a strong financial supporter and agitator for the college.

Several months before that night, I attended a weekend camp for late teens and young adults at Camp Cal, Caloundra. It was the ministry and experiences of this camp that solidified my conviction that Jesus Christ was really worth following – totally, without reservation. However, I did not know what this really meant for me and contemplated this for several months. I went to the rally still travelling on this personal journey.

At the rally, several students shared their thoughts of Kenmore Christian College. My brother-in-law spoke and another student shared why he felt ‘called’ to study for Christian ministry. As this student shared a few simple words, my mind and spirit responded with, “Yes, that’s for me also.” That night, I left this very hall ready to sign up as a student at Kenmore Christian College the following year.

When I think of the first-year students that were then part of Kenmore Christian College, I think of three in particular. One of the three went on to become the Executive Director of what was then called Churches of Christ in Queensland Social Service Department, now called Churches of Christ Care. Through his leadership over two decades, this service grew remarkably. The second, through his preaching and leadership on the Gold Coast, began the growth of a small church at Southport, which at the time mainly consisted of retirees and a few locals, and has grown into a church today that has a \$20 million campus. This church was the first of the movement of large churches in Queensland that began to occur during the 1980s.



EC Hinrichsen Mission, Gympie

The third student became the National Australian Director of Promise Keepers, a movement that called men to find their manhood in Christian faith.

So, as I sit here, I look back on this church and its hall and reflect on the pivotal role it played in two movements separated by some 40 years in the history of Churches of Christ in Queensland. The first movement enabled thousands to be added to the church of Jesus Christ through the preaching of one person – EC Hinrichsen. The second movement influenced me and others who attended Kenmore Christian College and brought new growth and a number of new vital ministry opportunities for Churches of Christ in Queensland, and also Australia.

‘The Church from the Paddock’ seeks to tell the story of Churches of Christ in Queensland.

What are the stories of our churches?

What are the stories of our influential leaders?

What are the stories of our people in these churches?

What are the stories of the combined Conference?

What are the stories of the Agencies?

What have been the highs and lows for Churches of Christ?

Importantly, what must we learn from the past as we face the reality that the church of Jesus Christ now sits on the margins of society, no longer the invited guest to the centre of conversation? How can we be true to the gospel story of Jesus Christ and the message of Churches of Christ where the church finds itself in a pluralistic society rather than the church in the simple village or the church in the country paddock?

Geoff Risson

We invite you to read the following pages and reflect on what we can learn from the past, what we must redo, and what we must start afresh to build on the foundations of the forebears of Churches of Christ in Queensland.

Our prayer is that there may be another mighty movement for God in our nation that includes Churches of Christ in Queensland.

Geoff Risson & Craig Brown

CHAPTER ONE: *The Beginnings*

*It has been written and spoken of before.
How did what is now known as Churches of Christ begin in Queensland?*

In 1871, a small gathering of Christians met in the home of Mr and Mrs McAlister in the suburb of Albion, Brisbane. A Baptist minister, FW Troy, became enamoured with the teaching and practices of Churches of Christ, and travelled south to Melbourne in 1882 to plead to JJ Haley (then President of the Victorian Conference of Churches of Christ) for a preacher/evangelist to come to Queensland. Troy expressed to Haley the desire to be a “Paul” to a young “Timothy” – that is, he wanted to mentor a younger man for ministry. He was sent by Haley to meet Stephen Cheek in Northern Tasmania. Cheek, a former school teacher, was ministering and establishing churches in Tasmania. Troy and Cheek joined together in ministry. Together they decided to take up the challenge of ministry in the frontier state of Queensland and set sail from Melbourne in July 1882. Following their arrival in Brisbane, they held their first service at Zillman’s Waterholes (now the Brisbane suburb of Zillmere) on 1 August 1882. Some 16 people were baptised in Waterholes, and, on 23 August 1882, the first Church of Christ was established in the then colony of Queensland. Stephen Cheek then left Brisbane and planted churches at Rosewood, Toowoomba and, finally, Warwick.

But, maybe, just maybe... this is not a complete story of the beginnings of Churches of Christ in Queensland. Maybe the story of the church’s beginning needs to be revisited.

A search of the archives of Churches of Christ, now beautifully stored at the Churches of Christ Campus at

Mitchelton, Brisbane, may well cause a rethink of exactly when Churches of Christ in Queensland began. It is true that a small gathering of Christians met for a short while in Albion in Brisbane in 1871. However, there is also documentary evidence of a church that met for a number of years in Gympie, beginning in 1877. In the archives is a small weathered book recording minutes of a church that met for a number of years in Gympie. So, when did Churches of Christ actually begin in Queensland? What year? Which place? All we can state is there were a number of ‘beginning’ points as Christians gathered in homes or halls to celebrate the Lord’s Supper together. However, 1883 was the year the first Conference of Churches of Christ was held. “What resolved... was a meeting called by D.A. Ewers in the house of F.W. Troy, at Toowoomba on 9 August 1883... reports at that meeting showed the gratifying result of the year’s effort to be seven churches with 150 members, and two evangelists in the field.”²

Who was this Stephen Cheek, who at the age of 29 travelled from Tasmania to Queensland not only to preach the simple story of Jesus Christ, but also to establish churches that would seek to follow the simple patterns of church life as evidenced in the New Testament?

Before we answer this question, it is worth considering the historical context of the people then occupying this “Great Southern Land” in the 1870s and 1880s.



Brisbane in 1876 – intersection of Queen and Edward Streets

Travel

The main means of long interstate travel was by coastal shipping. Ships plied their ways along the coasts of Australia transporting goods and people. For example, ships used to sail up the Brisbane River, then the Bremer River, to unload or load goods at wharves in Ipswich (I remember as a small child the remnants of these wharves). Cheek and Troy would have travelled some 1,900 kilometres by sea from Melbourne to Brisbane. Another means for travel was in the coaches of Cobb and Co. They had many coaches that travelled day and night along primitive roads between towns and villages. The cost in Cheek’s time to travel inside a Cobb and Co. coach was the equivalent of a business class airfare on a plane today! Other means of travel were horseback, in a horse drawn dray, or, for many, to simply walk the long journey.

Communication

The newspaper and other periodicals reigned supreme in spreading the latest news. Early papers, for example, were ‘The Argus’ in Melbourne and ‘The Courier’ in Brisbane. Stephen Cheek, using this means of popular communication of the day, published for a short time a monthly paper, ‘The Christian Pioneer’, which reached a circulation of 2,000. The well-known ‘The Bulletin’ magazine began its life in 1880 (the last edition was in 2008). ‘The Bulletin’ was very influential in culture and politics of the nation from 1890 until the First World War. For example, ‘The Bulletin’ popularised the writings of Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson. The famous “the city versus the bush” debate between Lawson and Paterson is to be found in ‘The Bulletin’ of 1892 in the poems they wrote (e.g. ‘Up the Country’ by Lawson and ‘In Defence of The Bush’ by Paterson). Electronic communication was limited to Morse code and telegrams.



1882 Australian team, Captain WL (Billy) Murdoch

Culture

The tensions of ‘the city versus the bush’ influenced the formative culture of this young nation. Essentially a rural economy, there was developing on the continent of Australia a ‘lens’ of what it meant to be a citizen here. Patrick White in his book ‘Inventing Australia’ wrote about the then current view of “the coming Australian” in Cheek’s time: “... there was substantial agreement on a particular group of characteristics: independence, manliness, a fondness for sport, egalitarianism, a dislike of mental effort, self-confidence, certain disrespect for authority. These qualities were considered to be distinctively Australian.”³ Cheek’s generation were just one generation removed from the convicts sent to Australia from Great Britain. This period of history was a cruel, bestial time in the early period of settlement in Australia.

What is fascinating is to put the first recognised cricket test between England and Australia in the context of this history when Cheek was church planting. The first test between Australia and England was played in Melbourne on 15-19 March 1877 in front of a crowd of 4,500 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Australia won the match by 45 runs. What, then, is intriguing about this first test match? First, the Australian test team had to overcome tensions between the Colonial Cricket Associations of New South Wales and Victoria (what else is new?). Second, the English team consisted only of professional cricketers – no amateurs were invited on this early tour, and the colonials would have been well aware of the class distinction practiced by this English team! The Australian team won by bowling out the English team. It has been noted that their defeat on 19 March followed a copious lunch with much beer provided for the English team! Shades of this formative Aussie spirit – larrikinism, egalitarianism (“we will bring them down a peg or two!”), self-confidence, and a fondness to win at sport – were apparent in the early years of our nation.



1903 Ann Street Board of Officers

Nationalism

It was in the 1880s that the idea of one united nation, rather than a collection of separate colonies was gathering support. In January 1881, at an inter-colonial conference held in Sydney, Henry Parkes, then Premier of New South Wales, planted the seed of the idea of a federation of colonies that would gather irresistible momentum, ultimately leading to the formation of the nation of Australia on 1 January 1901.

It was, therefore, a changing world when Stephen Cheek came into Christian ministry. His family had left behind the ‘old world’ of England to become part of the strange new world of the colonies founded on the continent of Australia. Means of communication were changing and evolving, the convict prison that had been Australia was being left behind by the flood of free settlers to the shores of this new country, and Aboriginal people, by and large, were sadly considered primitive and had failed (in the white man’s view) to develop the resources of this continent (tragically, the ‘White Australia’ concept was also developing). A new, distinctive Australian character was emerging, and the seeds of a new nation were germinating. This was the fertile ground in which Churches of Christ was to be planted.

Stephen Cheek – The man who lit the spark (1852⁴-1883)

Stephen Cheek was born in Essex, England to Thomas Cheek and his wife, Martha. Thomas Cheek was a distant cousin to the renowned British evangelist, Charles Haddon Spurgeon. There is debate about the actual year of Cheek’s birth, but there is increasing evidence for 20 December 1852 as the correct date. Thomas and Martha left England with their four young children and landed in Launceston, Tasmania, on 2 April 1855. The family settled in the Evandale district for the first five years, before moving to Launceston in 1860.⁵ Stephen attended the Public School there for the next four years, until in 1864 Thomas purchased some scrubby land from the Government, four miles from the nearest bush track in the vicinity of Rosevale, west of Launceston. Stephen continued his studies at night, and in 1871, Allen Baxter from the Hagley State School drew Stephen away from the relative isolation of the family farm to give him the opportunity to qualify as a teacher with the Tasmanian Board of Education – an opportunity Stephen took with both hands by passing the examination.⁶ He was also teaching in the Rosevale Sunday School and, it seemed, was becoming more and more active in the ministry of the Congregational Church.

Through their Christian Congregational beliefs and practices, there was a deeply rooted sense of biblical church independence in Cheek’s family. Cheek went on to become the Superintendent of the local Congregational Sunday School. Cheek’s attention was drawn to Churches of Christ through a series of debates over infant baptism in the Congregational paper, the ‘Day Star’. The proponent of believer’s baptism in these literary debates was George Moysey, the minister at the Church of Christ in Hobart. However, following Cheek’s baptism on 5 December 1875, Cheek then associated with the Brethren Churches in his area, becoming an evangelist. He planted churches in Tasmania, which he later brought into the Churches of Christ movement.

What drew Cheek to make the move from his Congregational Church upbringing and Brethren practice and become involved with Churches of Christ? As just stated, he had read early material about the message of the Churches of Christ. Something of the message of being simply Christian, of being free of denominational ties, of basing one’s personal and church life upon Christ and the Bible alone as his guide, entirely captured him. When these truths dawned on him, Cheek became an ardent evangelist for the person of Christ and the message of Churches of Christ. As Clow reminds us, this was not an easy move to make, bringing with it an end to his career and to many relationships: “He gave up all he had striven for in life and surrendered his position in the Department of Education – for what? Nothing definite that man could offer him.”⁷

After this decision, Cheek went to southern Tasmania, preaching in the New Ground area, baptising some 40 people in 1879. It was here that Cheek also launched his magazine, ‘Truth in Love’, which would continue on through his ministry in Queensland.⁸ Cheek also pioneered churches in parts of rural Victoria during this period (in the Elphinstone, Taradale and Drummond region), where he met with good success. However, to be an evangelist in the 1870s and 1880s was no easy task. Upon returning to Tasmania, Cheek went to Bream Creek on the Tasman Peninsula and – amid great opposition – planted a church there in February 1879 with an initial membership of 50 people.⁹ Cheek left Bream Creek in April 1879, only to return in September of that year, where the hostility he had endured previously manifested itself in a savage assault. Court records show that Cheek was flogged, beaten and pelted with eggs, as well as being threatened that if he did not leave Bream Creek by the next day, he would be “tied to a tree and his flesh separated from his bones.”¹⁰ The offenders were later tried, and found guilty, but Cheek’s attorney made it clear that his client was not seeking severe damages. Cheek’s manner during and after the trial must have struck a chord – the persecution stopped and, in 1881, Cheek baptised one of his assailants, Albert Mundy.¹¹



FW Troy & BC Black

On to Queensland

In Queensland, James H Johnson had moved to Toowoomba in 1876¹² from the Church of Christ at Cardigan (Victoria). There, he had managed to sway a Baptist minister who also became his brother-in-law, Frederick W Troy, over to Churches of Christ principles. Troy headed south to Victoria in 1882, where he asked the Conference for an evangelist to be sent to Queensland. This request was refused, primarily due to their being no funds for such a venture. Yet Cheek, who was in Melbourne during this time, felt the stirrings of a call to go north to Queensland. Troy was introduced to Stephen Cheek and, after a visit to the Tasman Peninsula to see the fruits of Cheek’s labour at Bream Creek, Clow suggests that “they returned and the heart of Cheek was now aglow for an effort in Queensland”.¹³ The two then headed north, spending some time in Newtown, Sydney, before boarding the *Derwent* and landing in Brisbane on 27 July 1882¹⁴. Cheek arrived without ready funds, without definite plans to even have funds sent to him from Victoria or Tasmania, no overcoat, and “but one suit of clothes that was well on the wear”.¹⁵

Cheek and Troy left Brisbane on their own (schoolteacher Thomas Geraghty was to meet them, but the evangelists had left the wharf before he got there), intending to return for a series of evangelistic meetings, and arrived at Zillman’s Waterholes, where in Cheek’s own words, they “devoted a week to the proclamation of the gospel of Christ, the result of which was that twelve became obedient to the faith.”¹⁶ Cheek was also able to convert some members of a small Baptist church in the region to the Church of Christ cause and so, on 6 August 1882, “we beheld the first Church of Christ in Queensland... so far as we know.”¹⁷ Cheek’s manner came under criticism from some of the Baptist members, notably JW Lee, a deacon, who wrote to the ‘Queensland Freeman’ “to warn other small churches in Queensland against being caught and over-thrown in the same manner.”¹⁸ Cheek refuted this accusation in ‘the Brisbane Telegraph’, and embarked on a spirited debate regarding the primacy of believer’s baptism. The formation of the first Church of Christ in Queensland was not without controversy. After a few weeks, Cheek left Troy at Zillman’s Waterholes, and continued on to preach – including at Lanefield, where he stayed with the Colvins. Two of the sons from Mrs Colvin’s first marriage – Thomas and Frederick – would respectively go on to be well known in church work and international mission in the next generation of Churches of Christ in Queensland.

Cheek returned to Brisbane, which he commented was “noted for its apathy”.¹⁹ The success that he had experienced at Zillman’s Waterholes eluded him in the capital: “Our Brisbane meetings bore no apparent fruit”.²⁰ This lack of initial success, added to the expensive nature of running meetings in the city, meant that the decision was made by Troy and Cheek to leave Brisbane and meetings were next held in Rosewood, which ultimately led to a church beginning there on 14 January 1883. Cheek recognised the task that lay ahead of them: “We have before us a large field.

A darkness broods over the colony, which only the Glorious gospel – proclaimed in its original simplicity, purity, and fullness, can dispel.” He was, however, not daunted. “Yet, confident in the inherent power of the message we are privileged to bear, and cheered by the knowledge that we are upborne by the prayers of hundreds of loving hearts, we anticipate rich harvests of precious souls, for our Redeemer’s kingdom and glory.”²¹

JH Johnson’s home patch at Toowoomba was then visited, and a small church was established there on 22 October 1882 in the local Temperance Hall, after 17 baptisms were held in the preceding weeks. Cheek wrote: “others previously immersed, have rallied to the New Testament principles, and a Church of Christ has been formed.”²² Work was also begun nearby in Drayton and Middle Ridge. While on the surface all seemed smooth, Cheek and Troy both reported opposition in the area.

The last church that Cheek planted would be at Warwick. The ‘Warwick Argus’ announced that his first meeting was held on 15 November 1882 at the Protestant Hall.²³ The fruit of subsequent evangelistic meetings resulted in the Warwick church commencing on 14 January 1883 “despite some opposition”²⁴, which included Cheek having to respond to “jeering, and scoffing and insolent remarks”²⁵ while baptising in the Condamine River on 10 December 1882. Warwick, it appeared, was most likely to be Cheek’s new base – he had settled accounts with his Victorian printer and had organised for subsequent publications to be printed in Warwick. From Warwick, Cheek then began to focus on Killarney, holding evangelistic meetings there. It was one such trip to Killarney that would prove his demise – after conducting a series of meetings at Killarney on the 12 and 13 February 1883 at the home of Mrs Hall²⁶, he began his return journey of 40 kilometres (by foot) to Warwick on St Valentine’s Day.

While it may be tempting to look back on someone like Cheek as ‘inexhaustible’, that was far from the truth. Cheek’s method of transportation was primarily his own two legs; he was often ill clothed and underfed, relying on the goodwill of strangers for shelter and food as he ministered from town to town. When he did receive funds, he used only what he needed and gave the rest away. He endured almost constant opposition, and ran local meetings with little external support. On 14 February 1883, Cheek was caught in a tropical storm while walking back to Warwick. In the darkness of the storm, he lost his way and spent the night in a deserted hut, soaked to the skin and unable to make a fire. The next day he made it to Warwick, where he retired to bed, fatigued and unwell.

JJ Haley in Melbourne received a telegram from FW Troy the next day, informing him that Cheek was “dangerously sick” with “typhoid fever”.²⁷ It is unlikely that Cheek had typhoid fever – typhoid manifests over a period of days, and does not (usually) claim its victim so quickly. It is also unlikely that with end stage typhoid that Cheek could have walked from Killarney to Warwick. What is more likely is that Cheek had manifested symptoms of fever that to Troy’s untrained eyes could have suggested typhoid. Cheek was no doubt over worked, under nourished, and as Hayley suggests, he was not a man of a strong constitution or robust health: “a man of... Cheek’s constitution and laborious habits would not be able to withstand a severe attack of typhoid fever.”²⁸ The week previously, Cheek had written a letter to Frederick Troy complaining of headaches, a loss of appetite and a general feeling of being unwell – and of being so exhausted that “to cut a slice of bread is quite an exertion.”²⁹ This letter indicates a man who is deeply, deeply tired. Haley’s fears regarding the inability of Cheek to fight off a serious illness proved true and, at 11am on 17 February 1883, the short but influential life of Stephen Cheek came to an end. His last recorded words were: “Let me go to my Master!”³⁰

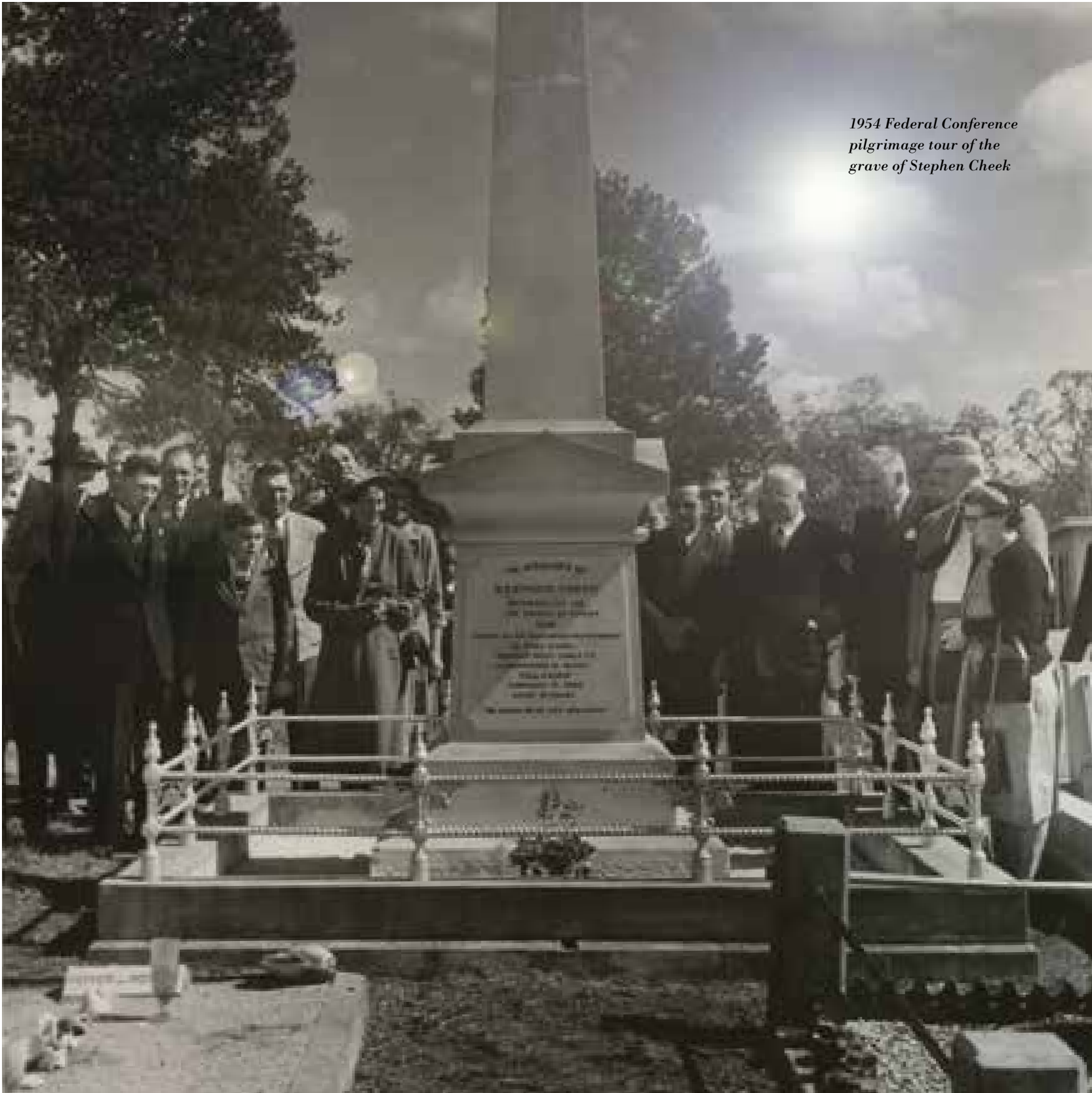
The character and legacy of Stephen Cheek

What kind of person was Stephen Cheek? From reading the written eulogy by JJ Haley on the death of Cheek, we can garner some contemporary understanding of Cheek as a person.

Haley, in his eulogy, speaks of Cheek’s leadership abilities as a teacher, evangelist and church planter. He had the capacity to inspire confidence and draw people into mission with him. As a pastor/teacher, he had a capacity to bring a fresh approach in his teaching of the Bible. Cheek was an innovative user of visual aids to help him better communicate Bible teaching – in one Baptist church he was not allowed to use his visual aids as this, apparently, was not the proper thing to do! Haley writes:

*“His memory being remarkably retentive, and his devotion to the Bible supreme, his knowledge of that book was but little short of phenomenal. His familiarity with the Book of books was simply wonderful. It is not too much to say that he was a living encyclopaedia of biblical knowledge and a walking concordance combined in one... He was emphatically a man of the one book. He had read other books, and was a good observer of men and things, but the Bible was his chief study, and in this laid the secret of much of his power.”*³¹





*1954 Federal Conference
pilgrimage tour of the
grave of Stephen Cheek*

What does Haley say about the character of Cheek? He writes:

*“He literally forsook all for Christ, and laying himself on the altar of consecration to his Divine Master... in labours prodigious and unremitting his time and strength were consumed, for which he neither desired nor expected fee or reward beyond food and raiment and a few shillings to take him to his next preaching appointment. If he received money beyond enough for the bare necessities of life, he devoted it to his work. If churches treated him handsomely in these matters he never boasted; if they treated him shabbily, as they often did, he never complained... He had not in his composition the slightest trace of self-conceit”.*³²

This, then, was the world and the person of Stephen Cheek. A world that is changing is often fertile soil for a movement – any political, social or religious movement. Churches of Christ flourished as a movement in its early years in Australia in part because of such soil. What faith would work for people in this emerging nation? Stephen Cheek became a leader for his time not just because of natural teaching abilities, but more so because of two eternal truths. One: who he was reflected the person of Christ. Two: he was passionate about the gospel of Christ and passionate for simple New Testament Christianity.

In our changing world of the twenty-first century, what is needed today are such people who reflect the life of Jesus and are passionate about the gospel. We need leaders whose character reflects the Christ they speak of, leaders who are sure of who they are in Christ, who are passionate about the gospel of Christ and desire to reach the generation and the culture they live amongst.

In the Warwick Cemetery there is a monument on Stephen Cheek’s grave. The following are the inscriptions on his monument:

In the Warwick Cemetery there is a monument on Stephen Cheek’s grave, with the following inscriptions:

ON THE EAST SIDE:

In Memory of Stephen Cheek, Evangelist of the Church of Christ, who, having as an honoured instrument in God’s hands brought many souls to a knowledge of Jesus, fell asleep 17 Feb, 1883. “He being dead, yet speaketh.”

ON THE WEST SIDE:

Erected in loving remembrance, by Christian Brethren in Australia and Tasmania.

ON THE NORTH SIDE:

“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.”

ON THE SOUTH SIDE:

Away from his home and the friends of his youth,
He hasted: the herald of mercy and truth,
For the love of the Lord, and to seek the lost;
And he fell like a soldier: he died at his post.



David Amos Ewers

David Amos Ewers (1853-1915)

Much of the early establishment of Churches of Christ in Queensland can be attributed to DA Ewers³³
(George Haigh)

Stephen Cheek – and rightly so – is a well-known name when talking of the early history of the Churches of Christ in Queensland. Despite his untimely death, it was not the end of the fledgling Movement. In Cheek’s wake were men and women who continued his work, solidified it, and ensured the Movement was viable in Queensland despite the setback of Cheek’s death. Foremost among those names is David Amos Ewers.

Like Cheek, Ewers could trace his lineage back to Essex, England, and also arrived from the southern colonies to contribute to the beginnings of the Churches of Christ in Queensland. With the death of Cheek in February 1883, James Johnson again turned to his connections in Victoria, sending his now well-known telegram to Frederick Troy which simply read, “Send for Sparks”. “Sparks” was the name by which the Queensland readers of ‘The Christian Pioneer’ knew David Ewers³⁴, based on his series, “Sparks from the Forge.” Ewers, his wife Emily and their young family arrived in Queensland on 26 April 1883, and stayed on until September 1887. During that time, Ewers, Frederick Troy and Ed Bagley (among others) built on the foundation that Cheek had laid.

Dr AG Elliot summarises the impact of Ewers, writing that “David labored consistently in building up small causes and in addition to the well-established fellowships meeting at Zillmere and Toowoomba, 11 other churches were set up.”³⁵ This included work done in establishing and nurturing churches such as Ann Street (Brisbane), Killarney, Allora (south of Toowoomba), Gympie and as far north as the gold mining centre, Charters Towers.

Ewers was not only a church planter, but he was often the person called upon in the early years to strengthen a new church. One example of this was Charters Towers. The Smyths (from Taradale, one of Cheek’s Victorian ventures) had started the small church meeting there in 1884. Ewers visited them in 1887; he stayed five weeks, and 13 people were added to the church by baptism. Both his preaching and his personality had a profound impact: “the secret of his success in leadership was his ability to mix with everyone and his readiness to do whatever had to be done.”³⁶ His impact on another goldfields town, Gympie, was similar. The church at Gympie had benefitted from Ewers’ writings in ‘The Christian Pioneer’, and so invited him to spend time with them, which he did at the start of 1887. In his five weeks there, Ewers baptised eleven people who were then received into church membership.³⁷

Ewers, during this time, had not been idle with his writing and publications. Almost immediately upon his arrival in Queensland, pressure was placed on him to restart ‘The Christian Pioneer’ and, as we can see from the above paragraph, ‘The Christian Pioneer’ had a wide influence. From its ‘revival’ in August 1883, ‘The Christian Pioneer’ had a circulation of roughly 2,000 copies.³⁸

Ewers, a capable organiser, helped establish the Queensland Churches of Christ Conference at a meeting held in Frederick Troy’s home in Toowoomba, on 9 August 1883. He continued to evangelise and build up churches and, in Elliott’s words, was “the driving force among the Queensland churches.”³⁹ A significant vote of confidence in the fledgling Queensland Conference, Ewers, and the other early evangelists came in Easter, 1884. At their annual meeting, the Churches of Christ in Victoria decided “all contributions for the Queensland work should be retained by the

Queensland Committee and that all future control of evangelists be left with the Queensland brethren... And... all direct liability for Bro. D. A. Ewers support in Queensland should cease.”⁴⁰ In short, this meant that Ewers’ work was now funded directly from Queensland, and that the Queensland Conference was seen to be viable.

He, Emily and their family returned to Victoria in September 1887 and, over the next three decades, he had influential ministries in Victoria, Western Australia, NSW and, lastly, in his birthplace of South Australia. Alongside of his church ministry and evangelism, he had always been a prominent writer. In 1888 Ewers began the ‘Pioneer’, the first weekly paper for the Australian Churches of Christ. In 1898, the ‘Pioneer’ merged with the ‘Australian Christian Standard’ and became the ‘Australian Christian’, in which Ewers continued to contribute editorials.⁴¹ AB Maston, writing in the ‘Jubilee History’, comments that the writings of Ewers (and others) made significant gains for the cause of Churches of Christ in Queensland: “the brethren here, as elsewhere, owe a debt of deepest gratitude.”⁴²

A life long sufferer of asthma, Ewers died suddenly on 22 September 1915. It is important to note his legacy in Queensland, as he worked to establish and consolidate the infant churches, helping them grow after Cheek’s sudden death, as well as being a leading figure in the cooperative work and vision that occurred with the formation of the Queensland Conference. It would be fair to say that Cheek may have lit the flame for Churches of Christ in Queensland, but it was Ewers (and the other evangelists of the day) that kept the fire burning.

Of the 29 local Churches of Christ recorded in 1903, 13 still meet for worship today in 2013 as Churches of Christ. This chapter is a brief history of the beginnings of these 13 churches.

CHAPTER TWO:

After the Beginnings

What followed the coming of Stephen Cheek to Queensland in 1882?

By the year 1903 there were 29 local churches. The furthest north of these churches was Charters Towers, the furthest west was Roma, and there were only two local churches – Ann Street and Zillmere – in what we now know as Brisbane. The Jubilee History of the Churches of Christ (1903) stated that these 29 churches had a total membership of 850. On 30 June 1904, the population of Queensland was 519,948, and the total church membership had grown to 900, representing a 0.002% of the state’s population. At the time of writing of this chapter, the population of Queensland, as recorded by the ‘live’ counter on the Queensland Government web page, was 4,612,962, and the Churches of Christ in Queensland Annual Report 2012 recorded a total attendance of 6,811 in our churches, not including those associated with our care services. This indicates that those who regularly attend a local Church of Christ still collectively make up only 0.002% of the state’s population. This is a sobering statistic as we begin a chapter on the first steps for Churches of Christ in Queensland, post the flurry of planting that occurred around the time of Stephen Cheek.

Of the 29 local Churches of Christ recorded in 1903, 13 still meet for worship today in 2013 as Churches of Christ. This chapter is a brief history of the beginnings of these 13 churches.

As you read the following brief history summaries, you will find among these churches: a passion for the simple church of New Testament Christianity; a strong commitment to evangelism; a ready willingness to plant churches where people lived; volunteer led churches supported by visiting (or employed) evangelist leaders; the use of homes for early church meetings; sacrificial giving and living to support the establishing of churches; and where sin and division comes into a local church, that local church loses it way.



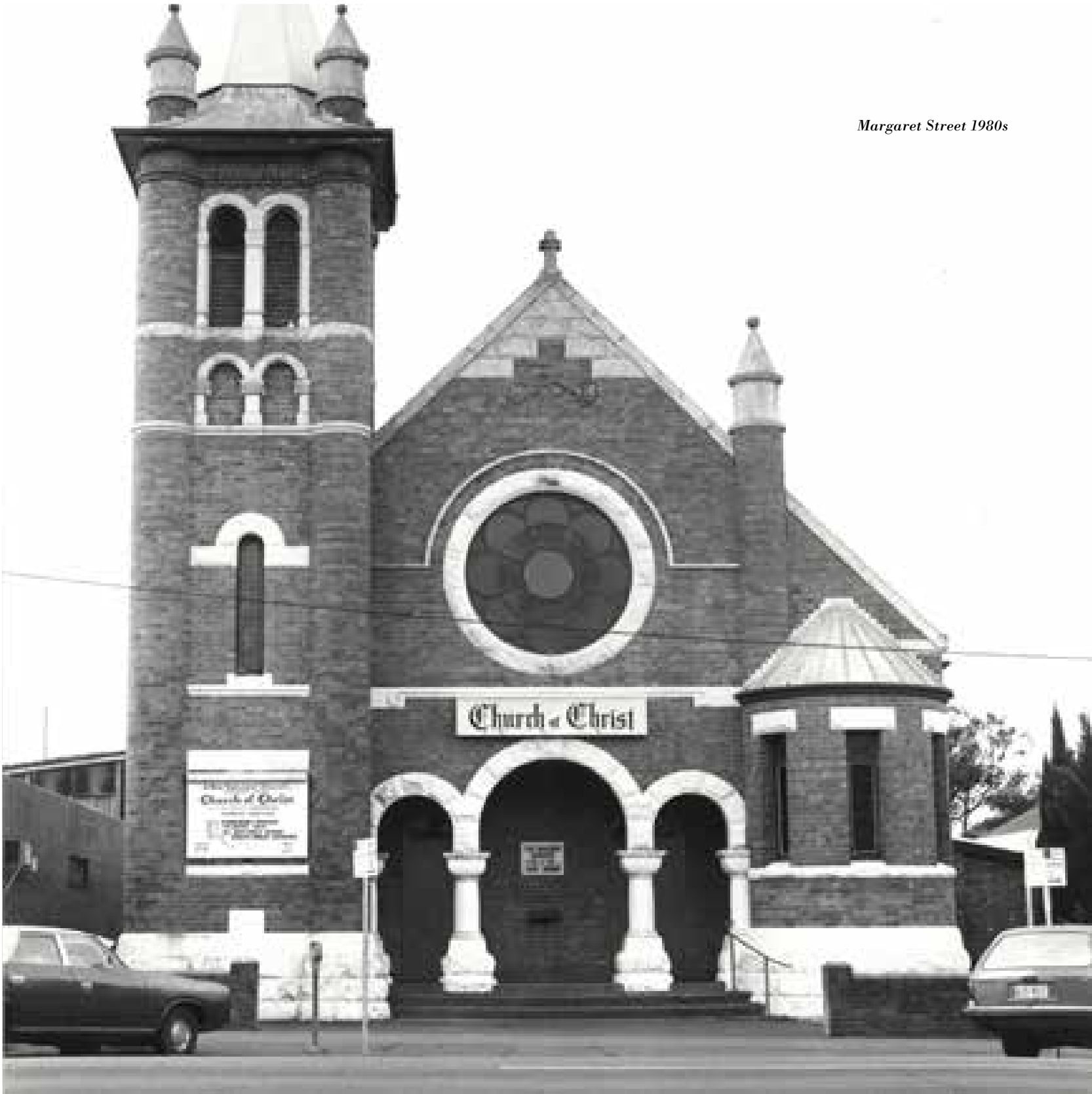
Zillmere, 1882

The Zillmere church held its first meeting on 23 August 1882. In the three weeks between 1 August (when Stephen Cheek arrived in Brisbane) and 23 August, some 16 people were baptised at Zillmere Waterholes. In those three weeks, Cheek, with the assistance of FW Troy, conducted a mission there. What this mission consisted of – night meetings, visitation or something else? – we are not told. But what we are told (Jubilee History, 1903) is that this young church resolved to aid the spread of the gospel from its giving. On 6 June 1883, “It was decided to give the two largest out of every five collections to help the work elsewhere, and this was the practice for many years.”⁴³ Special meetings for the proclamation of the gospel and the associated plea for simple New Testament Christianity were held by occasional visiting evangelists. In 1903, of the 84 who had held membership in this church, 63 were people who had been baptised in this church. Most of these were young people. In 1894, the first building for the church was planned, and this building was opened on 24 May of that year.

But for this history of Zillmere to be complete, it is fascinating for us today to visit a Baptist historian’s view of the story of Zillmere, which is provided in the footnote.⁴⁴ In response, we should say that Stephen Cheek went to the church by invitation. If a majority of people decided to leave the Baptist church, that was simply their choice. The local people made a decision. To use a modern phrase ‘church hopping’ is not just a modern phenomenon. Baptist, Churches of Christ, and Assemblies of God (to name just three today) have all experienced this movement of people from a local church to another of a different brand. Indeed, in recent history, there has been a loss (of what had been a healthy partnership between Churches of Christ and the Baptists in a combined Churches of Christ and Baptist local congregation) when one local church voted to become a Baptist Church only, which resulted in Churches of Christ losing a local church. One of the writers of this book still has a healthy relationship with the Pastor of that church, and both writers have always enjoyed a personal healthy relationship with the Baptist Union.



Zillmere Social Service Picnic 1910



Margaret Street 1980s

Toowoomba beginnings (1882): The faithfulness of God

Churches are vulnerable in their early years. One example is of a church that began with 18 members and four years later had grown to over 50 members. Yet a mere decade later, there were no longer enough members to meet due to people having to move from the local area. For two years, the church suspended meetings. You would think that the end of that church had come.

One man – a PJ Pond – convinced a handful of others to meet, and a few years later the church boasted over 40 members, and was on its way to becoming a hub of evangelism, church planting and compassionate ministry in the area. From seemingly barren ground, fruit was borne that has continued to impact the Churches of Christ in Queensland through to this day.

That brief early church history describes the first 20 years of the Toowoomba Church of Christ, which held its first service on 22 October 1882. This service was almost a ‘who’s who’ of the pioneer evangelists in Queensland. FW Troy presided at communion, JH Johnson (who had won Troy over to the Churches of Christ cause in 1876) read the Scriptures along with SH Draney, and the preacher was no less than the famed evangelist, Stephen Cheek, fresh from baptising four of the new congregation the previous day.⁴⁵ Draney would speak of this day almost 50 years later at the opening of the Margaret Street building, saying “little did I think then that the church would be one day meeting in such a place as this, or that I would one day be standing before an audience such as we have tonight.”⁴⁶

The legacy of the first meeting in the Temperance Hall in 1882 is now obvious, with thriving churches at HumeRidge and Toowoomba North, and numerous other church plants emanating out of Toowoomba. Mylo House is another lasting legacy of the ministry of the churches, as are the numerous missionaries that emerged from the Toowoomba area.

In 1898, when the evangelist PJ Pond convinced a small group to once again meet as the Toowoomba Church of Christ, one wonders what was said. His words helped the church ‘restart’ and grow once again. The faithfulness and foresight of those early pioneers is to be noted – as is the faithfulness of God. Draney, in whose house the Toowoomba church would begin meeting again, said in 1932: “Much has been said about remaining faithful for 50 years – but it is not really remarkable. It is just that God has kept His promise – ‘I will uphold thee’.”⁴⁷ It is sometimes easy to see the fruit, but miss the deep roots that have produced it, and the different seasons they have weathered.

Through bright beginnings, worrying lows, and renewed energy – the early history of the Churches of Christ in Toowoomba is a testament to the faithfulness of God. If SH Draney and PJ Pond were to walk along the streets of Toowoomba and see the impact that the ministries of the Churches of Christ in Queensland have now, one wonders again at what they might say.

Ann Street, Brisbane, 1883

Stephen Cheek, a few weeks after his arrival in Queensland in 1882, gave six lectures on the plan of salvation in the Temperance Hall in Edward St, Brisbane, but had no visible results. But on 23 September 1883, people living in the town of Brisbane formed a church and first met in the Synod Hall, then later moving to the Temperance Hall. Among those who began the church was one Mr Crawford, who had been associated with the Churches of Christ in England. By August 1884, the Brisbane Church of Christ had 21 members. One of these members, Theodore Wright, was elected as the Conference President for the Queensland churches. Early preachers/evangelists who ministered at the Brisbane church were H Goodacre (1885) and DA Ewers (1887). Their ministry was followed by WS Houchins as the next evangelist, who spent two years at the church. During his ministry we read, “The church became packed... the cause prospered... a larger place was sought (the Centennial Hall, Adelaide St.)... there were splendid open air meetings on Sunday evenings and week nights... a move was made to the Chapel in Wharf St, since demolished.”⁴⁸ In 1898, the church managed to outrace by a few hours the Brethren Assembly, which was seeking to move to other premises, to purchase the United Methodist Free Church. “Hearing that the building was on the market for £1100, Mr Clapham hurriedly obtained the necessary deposit of £100 through the influence of Mr Booty, the manager of the then London Bank. Mr Booty was at one time a member of the church.”⁴⁹ Today, this building still houses the Ann Street Church of Christ. Beginning with Houchins, the Ann Street church used to regularly hold open air meetings. In 1903, the preacher was the then well known AR Main (later Principal of Glen Iris Bible College). The church had at this stage a membership of over 200, and a Sunday morning attendance of 120. The Sunday school had 110 pupils, with 13 teachers. Move on in the history of this church some 40 years later and it is interesting to read of the church’s ministry during the war years 1939-45. The church was packed morning and

night and it was often difficult to accommodate the crowds. Many of these attendees were Australian and American servicemen. Often the pulpit was occupied by an Australian or American Chaplain. Many a member of the church took servicemen home for lunch on Sunday. Ron Stocks, now an elder at Caboolture Church of Christ, recalls as a small boy the church during the war years providing every Sunday night comfort meals for soldiers in the city.

Warwick, 1883

The church at Warwick has had two beginnings. The first was on 14 January 1883, and the second in September 1950. This second beginning was the initiative of a Reg Holmes, a Queensland Railway employee who was transferred in his employment from Roma to Warwick. Interestingly, his son Trevor was later among the early graduates of Kenmore Christian College. The second planting of the church in Warwick was aided and encouraged by the then Churches of the South East Queensland Conference.

Back to the first beginning, Stephen Cheek was in Warwick in January and February 1883. As a result of his ministry, people were baptised and the church held its first service on 14 January 1883. Preachers/evangelists who gave early assistance included FW Troy and DA Ewers. At its best membership of the church reached 100, but sadly by 1890 the church had ceased. This was mostly due to the early members living and working in outlying areas around Warwick, with the dispersion leading to churches being started at Tannymorel, Allora, and Killarney. Church buildings were erected at Tannymorel and Killarney, but there appears to be no trace of these buildings today. The Jubilee History records regarding the church at Killarney state: “The church fell on evil days”.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, we do not know the meaning behind this short and sad comment – what was the cause of these evil days? Loss of vision? Internal divisions? We do not know.



Mt Walker, 1884

This church began chiefly because of one person, JJF Hinrichsen. He had been brought up in the Lutheran church in Germany. Uncertain about his own spiritual condition, he began to earnestly read the Bible. The result was that he was baptised by a Baptist minister near Berlin on 4 October 1860. Hinrichsen then migrated to Queensland in 1865 to settle at Mt Walker. After spending one day with the Church of Christ in Ipswich (Bundamba), he invited DA Ewers (then ministering at Warwick) to visit Mt Walker. A crowded meeting took place in the home of a Mr Jenner. The result of this meeting was seven of the German Baptists decided to form a Church of Christ. On 4 May 1884, the church held its first service. Early baptisms were held in the Bremer River, which meanders its way through this district, or in dams on local farms. In 1903, the membership of the church was 30.



Marburg, 1885

The Marburg church began because of a marriage! Ed Bagley had been invited to the Marburg district to celebrate a marriage among some German Baptist friends. While he was with them, he began to explain to them the teachings of the New Testament concerning the life and ministry of the church. The result of these conversations was that on Sunday 17 May 1885, a Church of Christ began with 20 members, all from the German Baptists (the writer recalls a conversation of some years ago, with a then dear older lady, now with her Lord, who grew up in the Marburg district. Her family were from the German Baptists. One day, when I was visiting her, I asked her why the family left the German Baptists. She answered, “Oh, my mother wanted us to grow up knowing English as our main language.” The services at the German Baptist church were conducted in the German language. So, a more pragmatic reason, rather than theology, caused her family to join the Marburg Church of Christ!).

A farmer’s barn, owned by a Mr J Kickbusch, was fitted out to become a place suitable for worship. On 10 June 1886, their own church building was officially opened. It was designed to seat 150 people, but on the opening night, 250 eager people were present in spite of heavy rain. Not only had they to endure the patter of the heavy rain on the roof, but also the ‘patter’ of the preacher, one AB Maston, who spoke for three hours! Membership of the church grew to approximately 50. However, in 1903, owing to transfers out from the district of Marburg, and troubles within the church, records show only eight members.



Group of members taken above the site of the original building 1890

Ma Ma Creek, 1885

In May 1885, a five-day crusade was held at Ma Ma Creek by Troy and Bagley. House-to-house visitation occurred during the day, and meetings for preaching were held in the evenings. The church began on 10 May 1885, with 13 members, 12 being received by faith and baptism. Among these baptisms were members of the Risson family, the Woolf family, and Mrs J Metcalf. Charles Risson was one of the first Superintendents of the Sunday school. In 1890, the church built the first chapel in the main street of Ma Ma Creek, which still stands alongside of the brick chapel built in 1956. In 1894, the Mt Whitestone church was planted from the Ma Ma Creek church, with 15 members from the Ma Ma Creek church. A chapel was erected on 20 August 1899 for the Whitestone church, free of debt.

Gympie, 1886

The first Church of Christ planted in Gympie occurred in 1877. Remarkably, as mentioned earlier, the handwritten minutes of meetings of this first Church of Christ are to be found in the archives at Mitchelton. However, research finds only silence for several years after this church began. But, on 8 August 1886, three people met in the home of a Mrs Cane to break bread together. They had been influenced by the paper ‘Christian Pioneer’. DA Ewers, the editor of this paper, and now an evangelist/minister in Brisbane, visited this small group and spent five weeks in Gympie in the early months of 1887. A series of meetings were held in the Oldfellows Hall, which resulted in an additional 10 people joining this small group. The first baptismal service for this group was held in at a waterhole in Horseshoe Bend (road), where the present church building complex is now located. With the support of the Toowoomba church, H Goodacre visited this group and numbers expanded by an additional 12 people. An American evangelist, one Austin Mordaunt, then came and, through his ministry, the church quickly grew. Local Gympie history records indicate that at one baptism – a baptism by immersion – some 1,500 people came to watch. At a second such baptism, some 2,000 people attended! The church was able to erect a chapel in Crescent Road, Gympie. This ‘Tabernacle’ had a seating capacity of 250. Interestingly, interest-free loans of £25 each were made by the members towards this building.⁵¹ This building was opened on 6 August 1887 and was soon clear of debt. Membership of the church was 60 in 1903. The church was also involved in assisting the establishment of a small church at Eel Creek.

Date unknown





Roma, 1888

The Roma church held its first meeting on 16 October 1888. This was only 42 years after the Roma district had been settled by white people. How did this church begin? Roma is a long way west of Brisbane. The railway line to Roma had been built in 1880, eight years before the church began. The church began because of the visit of Austin Mordaunt, who had been influential in the growth of the Gympie church. A Mr R Whipham, a sceptical resident of Roma, had heard Mordaunt preach in the Brisbane Temperance Hall. Being convinced by his preaching and teaching, he urged Mr Mordaunt to come to Roma. He offered to pay his fare, hire a hall, and give him accommodation if he would come and preach in Roma in the same way as he did in Brisbane! Mordaunt agreed to come. Nine people were baptised at the first immersion service. The first minute of this church reads, “Mr Austin Mordaunt, evangelist of the Church of Jesus Christ, having immersed some believers into Jesus Christ, they agreed to constitute themselves as a Church of Christ. The whole Bible and nothing else than the Bible is held to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice”.⁵² The Arthur Street Chapel was purchased from the Congregational Church in 1896. This chapel was Roma’s first church building.



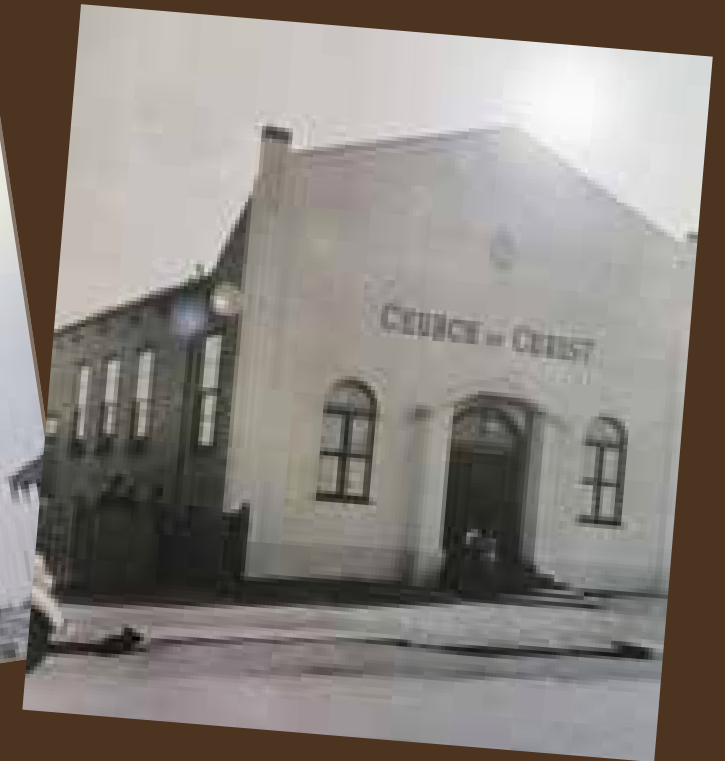
Bundamba, 1889

Ipswich was an important town in the colony of Queensland in 1860. At one stage, just before Queensland separated from New South Wales, it was one of the three early places under consideration to become the capital of the colony. Ewers and Troy visited Ipswich in 1883. In 1884, five people were baptised, and soon a church was formed. But, as a result of opposition from within and without, the church withered and ceased. In 1889, 20 persistent members of this church re-formed to begin a church in Bundamba. The membership soon grew to 49. On 12 October 1889, a chapel was opened. However, as reported in the Jubilee History, by 1903, the church consisted of only eight members. “Difficulties without and many troubles within have greatly retarded the work.”⁵³



Rosevale, 1891

In 1891, JJ Hinrichsen journeyed from Mt Walker to Rosevale to start meetings in the home of a Mr C Christensen. The result of these meetings was the first baptism for this group – Mrs Christensen was baptised in the Bremer River, which flows through this district towards Ipswich. The evangelist J Park, who was then ministering in the West Moreton area, began to spend time in the Rosevale area. A number of local people joined this small group. Until 1896, this small church met house-to-house in the homes of its people. During PJ Pond’s ministry, a church building was erected on land donated by C Christensen. A Sunday school was birthed in 1893, and it is recorded in the Jubilee History that the attendance of this Sunday school never exceeded 25.



Maryborough, 1892

The Church of Christ began in Maryborough when a Mr and Mrs Stephen O’Brien, with two children, arrived in Maryborough on 13 January 1892. Lead by Mr O’Brien, the family started worship services in the dining room of the Post Office residence in Bazaar St, Maryborough. There were over a dozen people, including children, in attendance. Bible studies and prayer meetings began to build this small community of Christians. Due to a growing number of attendees and members, this small church moved from the dining room of the Post Office to the Protestant Hall in Alice Street. The first sermon in this hall was preached by a Mr GT Mason of Gympie. As church life gathered pace, a range of social and workshop activities were introduced. Soon there was a choir, a Sunday Bible school (70 pupils and 10 teachers) and, on Friday nights, a Christian Endeavour for approximately 25 young people who met in the various homes of members. A monthly social was also on the Friday nights. By the year 1903 there were 50 members active in this church.



Boonah, 1894

In ‘Venturing in Faith’ it is recorded: “As far back as 1885, small groups of Christians met together in cottage meetings in the Fassifern district at Harrisville, Milora, White Swamp, Carney’s Creek, Millbong, Cannon Creek (Sugar Loaf Mountain) and Boonah.”⁵⁴ In 1892, TF Stubbin bought a farm in the Boonah district and, together with the Green family, started home meetings. Notably, TF Stubbin had been baptised at Rosewood by Stephen Cheek at the age of 11. When Mr Stubbin sold his farm and moved to live in Boonah, regular meetings began to be held there, as this was central to the above-mentioned outlying areas. There in Boonah the church began to grow. Morning meetings were held in the homes of members, and evening services were regularly held in the School of Arts. In 1898, land was purchased in Mary Street, but was then sold for the land in Park Street, where the church building in Boonah was located for many years. In 1901, the church building was built on this land. At the official opening of the building, AR Main from Ann Street, was the guest speaker. At that time, there were 48 members on the roll. It was from Boonah church that Churches of Christ in Australia sent one of its first missionaries; Frederick Stubbin went on mission from the Boonah church to India in 1898.



Eel Creek

The end of the beginning

This is the story of Churches of Christ in Queensland until the year 1904. It is a record of the first movements of Churches of Christ into Queensland. In some places, this movement experienced great visible impact upon a town (e.g. Gympie). In other places, this movement lost its momentum because of internal strife among its first followers. Regardless, this story beats strong with two themes:

- an enthusiasm for New Testament Christianity.
- a passion for people to be persuaded to come to Christ, to be baptised, and to grow in faith and service of their Saviour, Christ.

The question is, do these two drivers still throb in our lives and churches today?

CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN QUEENSLAND.		
Name of Church.		Members.
Boonah	—	43
Brisbane, Ann-street	—	200
Bundamba	—	8
Cairns	—	10
Carney's Creek	—	—
Charton Towers	—	20
Childers, Kanaka Mission	—	—
Eel Creek	—	10
Flagstone Creek	—	—
Gympie	—	60
Killarney	—	12
Ma Ma Creek	—	44
Millbong	—	—
Mount Walker	—	30
Mount Whitestone	—	20
Maryborough	—	30
Marburg	—	8
Rosewood	—	35
Roma	—	60
Rosevale	—	20
Spring Creek	—	—
Greenmount	—	30
West Haddon	—	—
Tannymorel	—	8
Thornton	—	7
Toowoomba	—	43
Vernoe	—	35
Wallumbilla	—	18
Yingerby	—	11
Zillmere	—	64
Total Membership in Queensland, 850.		

CHAPTER THREE: *The Churches Respond to the Great Crises of the Twentieth Century*

No century since the fourteenth century, with its plagues and seemingly endless wars, has disrupted the life of the average person as the twentieth century did. Australians were not immune to the ravages of this cruel period. A nation that achieved independence in 1901 without taking up arms against the ‘mother land’, soon found its maturity formed and challenged in the maelstrom of war and the Great Depression, where the robust nature of its inhabitants was sorely tested.

The churches in Queensland were also impacted during the twentieth century – from the senseless loss of life of young men on the cusp of maturity, through to the ravages of an economy seemingly in free fall. The spiritual environment began to change, moving from a confidence in a good and benevolent God whose sovereignty was unchallenged, to what seemed to be the unchecked rise of evil and suffering. The seeds of doubt sown in the first half of the century were reaped in the second half, as society began to abandon their faith in a God capable of intervening in world affairs.

The challenges were immense and at times too great for some of the local expressions of the church in Queensland. Yet, it was also a time of bravery and faithfulness, where the Queensland churches and the Conference rose to the occasion and shone their light (Matthew 5:14-16) in the darkness that surrounded them and, at times, threatened to overwhelm them.

This writer, born long after these events that shook the foundation of both church and state, can only admire those who had the fortitude to persist, let alone progress, in such tumultuous times.



World War I

Australian society as a whole greeted the news of the Empire’s entry into the war in August 1914 with a sense of enthusiasm. There was no trouble in recruiting men into the armed forces and both sides of politics pledged unwavering support for the Empire. Andrew Fisher, who would become Prime Minister after the beginning of the war, famously proclaimed that Australia would “stand beside the mother country to help and defend her to the last man and the last shilling”.⁵⁵ There was little mainstream belief that Australia had just entered into the worst conflict in human history.

The initial response of the Queensland churches

It is important to remember when reading – and writing – history to not impose the responses of the current era on to those who lived in 1914. The Queensland churches were not bombarded with a 24-hour news cycle regarding the outbreak of what would become known as the ‘Great War’. The response of the Churches of Christ in Australia to the outbreak of war was largely one of regret that events had come to such a point, and also an assumption that the war would be limited in scope and concluded quickly.

The Australian Christian

Consolidating amongst Churches of Christ in the Australian Commonwealth and New Zealand.

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HYPOL

The Famous
Emulsion for

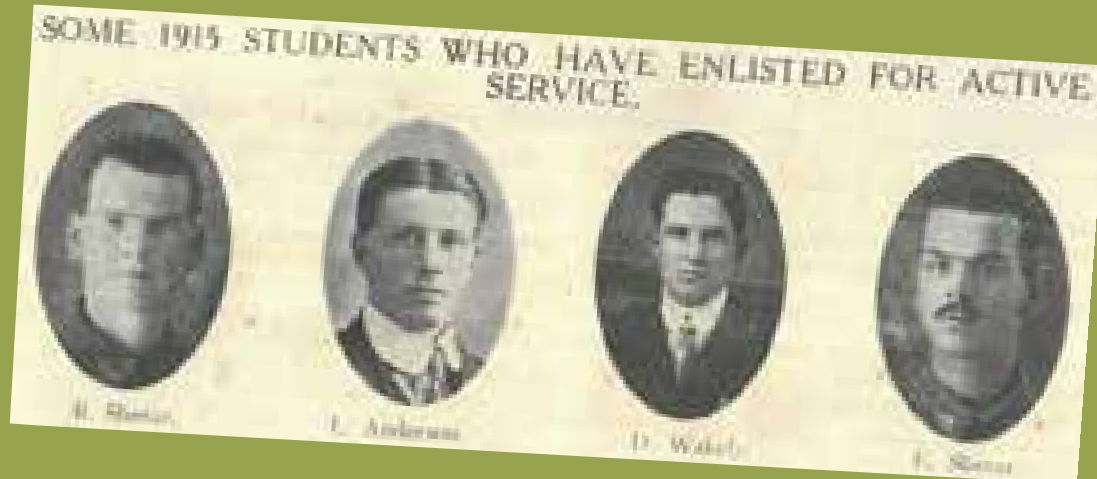
Coughs, Colds, Debility, and
all Chest Complaints, and
Wasting Disorders.



PLEASANT TO THE TASTE.

Children especially are very fond of Hypol and take it rapidly upon it.

To be Obtained Everywhere.



Other responses called for compassion and maintenance of Christian values. Editor of ‘The Australian Christian’, FG Dunn, in an editorial published on 13 August 1914, cautioned his readers from viewing those of German heritage as enemies, commenting that there were “several thousands of Germans by birth or descent... especially in South Australia and Queensland”, and calling on his readers to “live in the heartiest fellowship with all our fellow colonists”.⁵⁶

The churches in Queensland continued to meet, with the Great War initially making little impact upon them. The ‘bullish’ nature of the Queensland Conference meeting, as reported in the 30 April edition of ‘The Australian Christian’, is typical of the sense of optimism and progress that the modernist setting encouraged. The churches⁵⁷ that were represented at the Ann Street church (then the biggest of the Queensland church⁵⁸) were reported as experiencing “a splendid feeling of ‘up and doing’” and looked optimistically forward to “the ensuing year, under the guidance of our heavenly Father,” which “will be one of progress throughout the State”.⁵⁹ At this Conference, held unknowingly in the shadows of the greatest conflict then known to humanity, the Annerley church was granted membership. Membership in the Queensland churches was reported to be 1200 and a year of advancement was forecast with regards to mission and evangelism: “Wherever the door opens, missions are to be held, new churches planted, weak causes helped, and extra evangelists placed”.⁶⁰

As indicated, the life of the churches went on in this vein despite the breakout of war in late July 1914 and the entry of the United Kingdom and its former colonies in August 1914. Recruitment for the Australian Expeditionary Force began immediately. Meanwhile, the Queensland churches exhibited a sense of health and vitality, assuming that the war would be relatively short in duration. The church at Sunnybank bought land for a chapel;⁶¹ the Albion church had a stump capping service on the site of its new chapel;⁶² the church at Ma Ma Creek welcomed its new preacher from New South Wales on the 15 August,⁶³ reporting good attendances at its services; Gympie held a month-long mission led by JW Way;⁶⁴ the Toowoomba church enjoyed a message from Brother Davis entitled ‘Climbing Heavenward’ so much that it was repeated a few weeks later;⁶⁵ the Ann Street, Zillmere and Albion churches were hosted by Annerley for the ‘Brisbane City and Suburban Conference’;⁶⁶ and the Roma church recorded good attendances at its Sunday school,⁶⁷ as did Hawthorne for its Bible school.⁶⁸ Hawthorne also became one of the numerous churches of the era to build its chapel in just one day on 14 November 1914. The chapel was subsequently “packed” at the evening service the next night.⁶⁹

It seemed, despite the war, the hope of the Queensland Conference in April 1914 of a year of “progress” would be realised in the vibrant life of the local churches.

Post-ANZAC Cove, April 1915: *“Now all is changed...”*

In the pre-dawn dullness of 25 April 1915, the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZACs) launched an attack on the heavily protected Turkish positions at what is now known as ANZAC Cove on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Australian losses were heavy that day, and in the chaos and the death, the new Australian nation was tested and tried on foreign soil. Back home, the churches of Queensland were carrying on as they had in 1914 – building worship centres, converting people and looking optimistically forward, despite the war. At Ma Ma Creek, the services held on 25 April were described as “a day of blessing”,⁷⁰ and at Ipswich, where the work was progressing slowly, the visiting speaker, PJ Pond, gave a “very impressive exhortation”.⁷¹ Such carefree mornings were soon to be changed as the war hit home.

AR Main’s editorial in ‘The Australian Christian’ on 6 May displays a sense that the war was coming closer to Queenslanders, and the rest of Australia: “The last few days have changed the situation for us. Our own men are now in the firing line. Australia’s sons have joined with their brothers... At their baptism of fire, our soldiers have borne themselves as we believed and hoped they would do”.⁷² No longer was the distance from the war any comfort to those back in Australia. Those at home nervously awaited newspaper reports and the mail – with the postman described as “a messenger of sorrow to many”, while “the absence of news” was “harder to bear than any message could be”.⁷³ The next week Main wrote: “Now all is changed, and hundreds of homes are suddenly darkened by the loss of sons, husbands and fathers”.⁷⁴

While the focus was increasingly on what was happening to the boys on the front, there was still a focus by the Queensland Conference on the needs at home. Conference President Wendorf wrote in ‘The Australian Christian’: “Let us not neglect the enemy at our door... the enemy at our door consists of so many social evils that surely there is a tremendous call for enlistment of our young men to equip themselves to fight the sin in our land.”⁷⁵ His message in ‘The Australian Christian’ shows a Conference committed to battling the social issues of the day, a commitment that would gain greater traction in the decades to come.

The end of the Great War

The clues to the pain being felt by the churches are not numerous. Conference reports focused on the growth of the churches and their mission. In 1918, however, the Home Mission Committee’s Report poignantly sums up the mood of the day in the Queensland churches: “The great war has continued its dreadful course, and into the homes of many of the household of faith has come the sorrow caused by the loss of loved ones at the Front”.⁷⁶ Its measured language aside, a century later we can still feel the numbing shock of it all.

Despite the pain felt in many Queensland households and churches, the Queensland Churches of Christ grew during this turbulent era. At the 36th Annual Conference, the statistics reported that both Ann Street and Toowoomba had passed the 300 member mark, due largely to the Chandler-Clay evangelistic missions which saw impressive numbers of ‘decisions’ in Brisbane (212), Toowoomba (330), Maryborough (108) and Gympie (52).⁷⁷ There was justifiable optimism that, with the war behind them, the Queensland churches would experience growth. This optimism carried to the mission field as well, with the Foreign Missionary Committee report seeing openings for the gospel in a post-war world: “As in the civilised nations, the war has left great problems to be solved, so in the great heathen nations there will be problems also, and we pray that their eyes will be opened to see that it is righteousness alone that exalteth a nation...”⁷⁸

Those problems would be keenly felt throughout the next decade.

Mission and evangelism through public proclamation

The previous chapters in this book mention the early evangelism work of Stephen Cheek, David Ewers and Frederick Troy, men who were clearly gifted in speaking to people about Jesus in such a way that those people changed their lives in order to become disciples of Christ. From both their personal example and the biblical witness, other men and women in Queensland made it a priority to speak their faith out and draw others to Christ. A generation later, others emerged on the scene who were gifted at speaking to large crowds of people and saw the fruits of their labour through conversions and rededications of people in large numbers. We can now look at their stories – set in tumultuous times – in more depth.

The Chandler-Clay Missions

In 1918, Gilbert E Chandler and WH Clay⁷⁹ arrived in Queensland at the invitation of the Home Mission Committee to conduct evangelistic meetings: “We are now in communication with the Federal Executive to secure that splendid team of Evangelists, Brethren Chandler and Clay... We trust that the whole Queensland Brotherhood will support to their utmost this forward movement.”⁸⁰ Chandler and Clay were no strangers to Queensland, having conducted missions in Toowoomba in August – September 1917⁸¹, during a time where the Toowoomba church was without a minister. Topics preached on in that mission were diverse, ranging from “What is a Christian?” to “Rebellion, Witchcraft and Stubbornness”, which were covered in the third week of the Toowoomba mission held in “the Big Tent” on Margaret Street.⁸²

Chandler was the evangelist, and Clay was the song leader, in the tradition of Dwight L Moody and Ira Sankey. This was a model that was still active decades later, most notably in the long partnership between Billy Graham and George Beverly Shea. This model would also be replicated in in Churches of Christ ‘tent’ missions right up to the early 1980s, albeit with diminishing results.

Chandler and Clay arrived in Queensland in June 1918, staying for a prolonged time with significant results⁸³ in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Maryborough and Gympie. Their impact was profound. As Ethelbert Davis reported in ‘The Australian Christian’, “the Chandler-Clay missions concluded with a total of 703 decisions. Though all these have not taken membership, a splendid addition to our numerical strength will result.”⁸⁴ It was not only the Queensland Conference’s “numerical strength” that grew – some Queensland Churches of Christ that are still in existence today were bolstered with the gifts, the finances, the skills and the momentum that new converts brought with them. Although not all those converted at the Chandler-Clay missions ended up in the local Churches of Christ, the churches in the areas that Chandler and Clay conducted their missions all grew, giving them a solid foundation for the difficult days that would lie ahead.

Ernest Christian Hinrichsen (1899-1956)

At the time of Ernest Hinrichsen’s death on 23 April 1956 at the relatively young age of 55, Les Brooker credited him with “over 30,000 decisions for Christ, and the establishment of the church in fifty places!”⁸⁵ Hinrichsen began his first tent mission in 1920, at Ringwood, Victoria, and held his final tent mission at Gawler (SA). Coincidentally, Brooker was the song leader for both the first and the last tent missions that Hinrichsen conducted.

Born on a cold and wet night in Rosevale on 23 May 1899, Hinrichsen was the product of a devout family. “He was born of parents who knew something of the urgency of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. His father, a saintly man, could forget all material interests in the quest for whom the Christ came and died. This quality was even more pronounced in his son, Ernest.”⁸⁶ Ernest was a studious child, with an appetite for both food and books – his brother recalling that: “each of us ate our meals quickly, but he ate his doubly so, spending the time thus gained reading a book.”⁸⁷ He went on to study at the College of the Bible in Glen Iris (Vic), where he showed potential for the work and ministry that would follow. At the age of only 20, he was appointed Federal Evangelist⁸⁹, and thus began a ministry that touched every Australian state and saw him travel extensively overseas conducting missions. Hinrichsen himself had doubts about his own capability to live up to the task before him, writing in 1923: “with much fear and trembling did I come to conduct Missions in Queensland. Not because I doubted the gospel’s power, but because I doubted the wisdom of choosing a Queenslander to work in this State. Some of the fields were new, and all were regarded as difficult.”⁸⁹ His doubts were ill founded. The 1923 Mission was immensely successful at Bundaberg, Ipswich, Boonah, Rosewood and Annerley, with over 300 converts added and over £1000 raised.



Ernest Christian Hinrichsen

What was Hinrichsen like as a speaker? Contemporaries described him as having a “powerful, far-reaching voice”, and that he didn’t “indulge in flights of oratory, but pours forth the truth in forceful and convincing eloquence”. Another wrote: “he spares neither saint nor sinner. He speaks from full conviction that God is true, and that His plan of salvation is right, and that there is no other way of being saved except by faith and obedience to the gospel.”⁹⁰ TF Stubbin, Conference President at the time, simply wrote, “He is true to the Book.”⁹¹

In 1925, he returned to Bundaberg, and another 50 converts were added to the church, as well as 70 at Maryborough and over 100 at Wynnum.⁹² In 1926, this gifted evangelist went on to Western Australia, and in that campaign saw over 800 converts confess Jesus as Lord. His success ranged from beachside Cottesloe (over 80 converts) to the hardened goldfields of Kalgoorlie (almost 300 converts). It is staggering to contemplate that Hinrichsen did all of this by his mid-20s. He married Ruby Wendorf in 1925, and Ruby went on to assist his ministry as a pianist. In 1931, he spent the best part of that year in New Zealand (the mission yielding over 1500 converts⁹³) and in a subsequent tour of Great Britain, the ‘colonial’ Hinrichsen preached for 74 weeks and reaped a harvest of over 1300 souls for the kingdom.⁹⁴

It is not hard to see why, by the time of the Queensland Jubilee Conference (1933), that Hinrichsen was advertised as “The Prince of Preachers” – this title in itself showing both the esteem he was held in and the success his ministry had seen. By 1933, his missions had grown the church at Bundaberg (the 1923 mission saw over 100 converts join the church⁹⁵) and established the church at Rockhampton. He was also in pastoral ministry at Toowoomba (1929; 1932 – 34) where he continued to actively conduct tent missions. He was a firm believer in the supremacy of Christ to save and the Bible as the preeminent record of Christ’s work: “We know that message. We don’t have to add to it or take from it... We believe in God, in the deity of Christ, in the Holy Spirit; we believe that nobody can be saved without believing on Christ and his shed blood... This is the Message of the Book; it is a message that should take the world.”⁹⁶

His ministry in New South Wales was also significant during World War II and the post war years, notably in Granville, Bankstown, Mayfield, Enmore and Wollongong, where his mission resulted in land being purchased, a building commenced, a minister called and over 130 converts added to the church. Of course, Hinrichsen was also the NSW Director of Evangelism, and a key player in the establishment of the Woolwich Bible College (NSW), where he was a lecturer, financial supporter and chair of the College Board.⁹⁷

Hinrichsen conducted tent missions (or, marquee missions) for over three decades with over 30,000 conversions recorded and fifty churches planted. He was active throughout Australia (from Bundaberg to Perth), and – as mentioned – internationally. His desire was always that the gospel be preached, and he was an advocate of evangelists using the tent mission model, which he felt had natural advantages over missions based in church buildings – namely, that tent missions often allowed “rank outsiders” to attend, and that the music, the singing, and the message itself “goes out a great distance”.⁹⁸ He once wrote: “That is why this writer never did speak only for those inside. Incidentally, that is why he speaks too loudly in a building.” Jabez Wiltshire wrote: “Mr Hinrichsen, from the outset, felt that the masses could not be reached from within church walls, but that the purpose would better be served by the marquee, and for more than 30 years he continued to preach the gospel in this way.”⁹⁹

However, despite his preference for tent missions, Hinrichsen’s view of the value of evangelism was much broader: “May God raise up more evangelists both for the marquee and our church buildings. It’s a great work.” If there is but one lesson we can take away from Hinrichsen’s ministry, it is to emulate him to never “speak only for those inside.” It is a simple statement, but one that can help orientate individuals, churches and Conference activities towards those for whom stepping inside a church building is not yet a desirable thought.



The final word in this book on Ernest Hinrichsen’s ministry goes to Les Brooker, who wrote this moving assessment of the legacy of Hinrichsen’s zeal: “I believe that, until the Lord returns, the work and name of EC Hinrichsen will be remembered; for in fifty different places he was the servant of God to be used in establishing and confirming the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. His name will be linked with the great days of tent missions, of the clear and convicting message and of the witnessing of those willing to accept and respond to the invitation so ably presented by the missionary. Let us continue in prayer that God will raise another servant like unto our brother, courageous enough to present no creed but Christ, and no book but the Bible.”¹⁰⁰

The Great Depression

The Great Depression has been commonly linked to the stock market crash on Wall Street on 29 October 1929. However, other economic factors were at work in Australia. Regardless of causes, with the United States quickly falling into a mire of dwindling consumer confidence, deflationary pressures on wages and mass unemployment midway through 1930, it wasn’t long before the economic malaise spread globally. Australia was not spared and suffered under the same economic conditions. The most obvious – and the most debilitating from a social point of view – was the unemployment rate. Already high at approximately 10% in 1929, it increased to 21% in 1930, and by mid-1932 the unemployment rate peaked at a staggering, and tragic, 31%.¹⁰¹

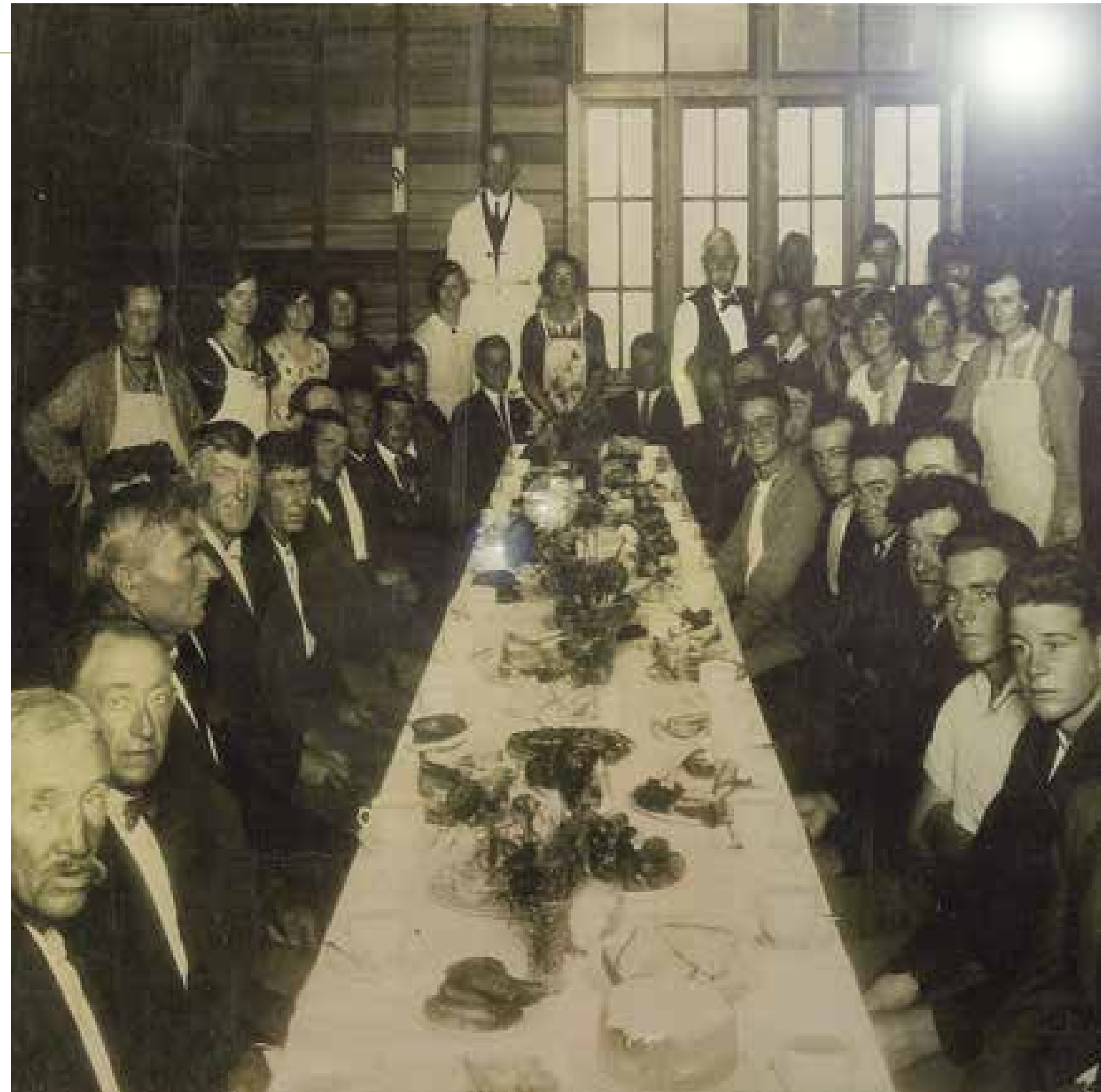
Queensland had been in a period of economic decline prior to the Great Depression, due mainly to the drought of the mid-1920s. Slipping, rather than crashing, into the Great Depression, Queensland’s unemployment rate peaked at approximately 20% in 1932, and it was the only Australian state that had some form of a dole system.¹⁰² Despite this, it would be unwise to suggest that Queensland escaped lightly from the impact of the Great Depression. Those who suddenly found themselves without employment or with reduced wages certainly felt the impact of these unprecedented economic conditions.

RIGHT: “Unemployed Teas”, Annerley Church – 100 or more men sat down to a Sunday evening meal (standing in back of photo is “Uncle Charlie”)

It was in the midst of the Great Depression that the Queensland churches, through its Conference, responded to the overwhelming needs around them. The Annual Conference determined in 1930 to restructure the Social Questions Committee (formerly the Temperance Committee [1918] and the Prohibition and Social Questions Committee [1925]) into a Social Service Department that operated throughout the Great Depression and the slow recovery afterwards. This new committee, which would subsequently have a significant impact on the Queensland Churches of Christ and their witness, was brought into being with this simple resolution: “That Conference inaugurates a State Social Service Department along lines of Victorian Social Service”.¹⁰³

Initially, the newly formed and named Churches of Christ in Queensland Social Service Department was dependent on donations from the local churches. During the early 1930s, clothes and food were donated to and stored at the Conference hub at Ann Street Church of Christ, and were passed on to hundreds of families who had fallen on hard times. As the Churches of Christ Care 75th Anniversary publication states, “The Social Service Department had found its mission”¹⁰⁴ with the onset of the Depression. However, it was not smooth sailing for the new committee.

In 1931, it became apparent that the committee was struggling with the weight of its responsibility. In its own report, the Social Service Department lamented: “It is to be regretted that the Committee appointed to carry out the expressed desire of Conference has not functioned in a manner worthy of the great cause”,¹⁰⁵ and also bemoaned the inability of the Committee to even meet, stating, “At least three efforts were made to get the Committee together, but each effort was a failure”.¹⁰⁶ Despite this frank assessment Charles Young, the Secretary of the Committee, also reported the remarkable work of the Social Services Department, which included the delivery of food parcels and clothing, and the finding of employment for those out of work. Young also thanked the Queensland churches for their generous support.



An example of light in dark times: Charles Young (1889-1970)

Charles Young was one of 14 children born to the Young family in the farming community at Killarney – an area rich in Churches of Christ history through the pioneering work of Stephen Cheek and others. Baptised by JW Parslow at Toowoomba in 1908, he entered the Federal College of Churches of Christ at Glen Iris in 1912 to train for the ministry. Upon graduating, Charles went on to ministries at Burnley, Maryborough and Preston in Victoria. Charles returned to Queensland to minister at the Annerley Church of Christ in 1924, in the wake of Ernest Hinrichsen’s mission there, which added 60 members to the 10-year-old church.¹⁰⁷ Young’s ministry at Annerley built upon his interest in helping those less fortunate than himself, which had characterised his ministry at Burnley.

This Killarney boy never lost his ‘common touch’, and his ministries included serving as a chaplain during World War II, as well as being a hospital chaplain with the Victorian Department of Social Service. Will Atkin, who knew Young for over 23 years said, “I found him to be a man of integrity, great devotion and dedication. He always had a concern for the needs of others, particularly for those in hospital.”¹⁰⁸ Young was commonly referred to as ‘Uncle Charlie’, a sign of his warmth and generosity to others.



Charles Young will probably be best remembered for his tenure at Annerley Church of Christ (1924-34), which saw him leading the young church during the Great Depression. Each week during the Depression, the Annerley Church exercised a practical ministry that reflected their care for those made vulnerable by the great tide of unemployment and hardship sweeping the land. There was a large camp of unemployed men at the nearby Yeronga Park, and on Sunday nights the Annerley Church offered them a free meal – and up to 100 men took the opportunity each week to sit down at the Annerley table. It is estimated that this one church provided over 4,000 meals during the darkest days of the Depression.¹⁰⁹ The ‘Sydney Morning Herald’, reporting on Young’s move to ministry at Hamilton in NSW, suggests that this figure is closer to 16,000 meals over the four years (1930-34).¹¹⁰

On top of providing the meals, Young’s reputation was also of a minister who was prepared to make personal sacrifices. As the Depression bit deeper, the Annerley church members were not spared its impact. In response, Charles Young voluntarily reduced his salary in order to help the church meet its financial requirements. He once came home to his wife, Katie, and their children, barefoot. When asked why, he related that he had passed a barefoot man on his way home, and could not go by without giving him his own boots. His reputation as a godly, sacrificial man went beyond his own congregation – George Haigh records the story of two Catholic nuns who Young drove past on his sulk. One acknowledged who he was by remarking to the other, “There goes a man of God.”¹¹¹

His work ethic at Annerley was voracious. In Allan Male’s article, ‘Remembering Charlie Young’, Male states that: “It is recorded in the Annerley Church history notes that Charles Young was the inaugural minister of the church and set a cracking pace with his pastoral duties. Records show in one year he did 1,000 visits, gave 200 addresses, attended 250 meetings as well as hospital visitations, even visiting Sunnybank members as well.”¹¹²

Young’s ministry in Queensland also included Ipswich (1923) and, beyond that, he served in various State and federal roles, including being President of the Queensland Conference of Churches of Christ (1929), vice-president of the Federal Conference, as well as leading both the social services committee and the youth department committee.¹¹³

During the dark days of the Depression, Charles Young ensured that the Annerley Church of Christ offered hope, and was truly a light to the community around it.

The Social Service Department’s early days

During 1932, the Social Service Department truly showed its potential to meet community needs. Given space at Ann Street, meetings of the Committee took place regularly.¹¹⁴ Over 400 parcels were delivered to the needy, and the churches were supportive of the work and, importantly, partnered in it. Testimonies were recorded of lives touched by the work of the Department, including this from a mother of seven: “I do not know how to thank you for your kindness to us. The good things came when we most needed them and when we thought our position was extreme.”¹¹⁵ Despite these successes, there was no report from the Committee in 1933 and, from a reading of the 1934 report, the Committee temporarily disbanded and then reformed in August 1933.¹¹⁶ Its return was low-key, with only three churches financially supporting its work and its attempts at placing unemployed city youth to work under “our country brethren” failing.¹¹⁷ Significantly, the name ‘Clive Burdeu’ first appeared in connection with the Committee, in the roles of Secretary and Treasurer. Under Burdeu’s guidance, the ministry of the Committee grew (especially post World War II) despite the easing of the economic conditions that gave birth to the Social Service Committee. It is a significant point to remember that in these early days of Social Service – the forerunner of what is now Churches of Christ Care – that the Social Service Committee did not see itself as a separate entity, but one that worked in partnership with the local churches and depended on them for support and the distribution of help and aid.

Chaplain-General Allen Brooke (1899-1968)

As the impending war approached, there was a sense that this was the beginning of a transformative time: “To millions who lived happy and carefree lives before 1914 the world was never the same again. A world war today would doubtless be much more terrible than the former.”¹¹⁸ One of the ways that the Queensland churches participated in World War II was by giving some of their best men and women to the cause. Some served with distinction but also anonymity. One who served, and whose name is known, is Allen Brooke, who at the onset of the war was the minister at the Ann Street Church of Christ.

Brooke was born in Wallaroo, South Australia, on 12 February 1899, and enlisted in the AIF when he was just short of his seventeenth birthday in January 1916.¹¹⁹ He became a signaler in the AIF and served in France. He married Dorothy in December 1920. Brooke was a graduate of the College of the Bible in Melbourne, and ministered in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia before commencing at Ann Street, where he was inducted into ministry on 12 February 1939 – his fortieth birthday.



1939-45 Allen Brooke
Ann Street Church Minister and Army Chaplain

‘The Australian Christian’ consistently reported that Brooke’s ministry at Ann Street was a fruitful one: “Highest attendance for some years was reached on May 14, 225 breaking bread. Interest is growing.”¹²⁰ One of the first baptisms that Brooke presided over was that of his son, Ian, in May 1939. His star was on the rise. Radio station 4QR broadcasted sermons from Ann Street¹²¹ and he was made Vice President of the Queensland Conference in August 1939¹²². In his first six months of ministry at Ann Street, over 60 people had joined the church, many through baptism¹²³. By April 1940, Allen Brooke was named President of Conference. Barely a year after he was inducted at Ann Street, he was in arguably the most influential position in the Queensland Churches of Christ Conference.

During this time, as well as serving at Ann Street and at Conference level, Brooke was appointed a chaplain on the United Board in January 1940. He would find himself serving once again with the AIF, and by 4 August 1940, 400 people had gathered at Ann Street to send him off to the Middle East with the troops¹²⁴. Brooke was well accepted by the troops, which he attributed to his previous military experience, his broad knowledge of Australian towns and cities and “the companionship of Christ made vital through devotions and the prayer backing of the folks at home.”¹²⁵

However, ill health intervened. Brooke was evacuated to an AIF Officers Hostel with what was termed “desert debility”¹²⁶, and by mid-1941 he was back home, undergoing treatment in a convalescent home¹²⁷ before returning briefly to his ministry at Ann Street. He was appointed Chaplain-General in August 1942, and left Queensland to take up that position in Melbourne.¹²⁸

Brooke’s stay in Queensland was brief but significant. His story is not tragic, but does epitomise the effect the war had on people. There was no doubt that the Queensland Conference and the Ann Street Church of Christ valued his ministry, and he was an effective evangelist. Who knows what impact he may have had at local church ministry – and throughout Queensland – had he stayed on, without the interruption of the war and its impact on his health. Many other Queensland men, women and children had careers, families and lives taken from them by the wars that raged between 1914 and 1945. The course of life was changed for many.

As mentioned, Brooke’s story is not tragic in comparison. He would have a long career as Chaplain-General, retiring from service in 1964¹²⁹, and helping to found the Ainslie Baptist Church (Canberra) in 1961¹³⁰, where he served as its first minister until illness forced him to retire in 1967. He died in September 1968.

Brooke’s story is significant that as a microcosm, it shows how the war impacted people and ministry trajectories. His attitude toward the war was forged from his own experiences in 1916-18, but also his solid and foundational faith in Jesus, and his belief that his faith needed to be lived out. Writing about the war in ‘The Christian Echo’ in July 1944, Brooke summarised his approach to living in those days: “None can escape the times, even though some may try to hide, ostrich-like, by burying their heads in the fast moving sands of war time pleasures. God did not mean us to be escapees. He meant us to face the times, and as victors.”¹³¹

Allen Brooke, like so many other Christians in wartime, faced the times confident in his Lord.

World War II

On 3 September 1939, Australia entered the war alongside Britain and her allies after the German invasion of Poland. The onset of World War II descended upon a generation who still remembered the ‘Great War’, and who were just recovering from the harsh economic conditions of the Depression. Since Nazi Germany’s annexation of Austria (1938) and Czechoslovakia (1938-39), the world had been heading towards an inevitable conflict that would engulf Europe, North Africa, Asia and parts of the Pacific. Spared a ‘Gallipoli’ experience, Australia instead felt the very real threat of invasion by Japanese forces in 1942, and had to come to grips with the concept that the interests of Britain (still the ‘mother land’ to many Australians) did not always align with the best interests of Australia. Raymond Evans, reflecting on the front line status of Queensland from 1942 onwards, contends that “Queensland lived through the latter war years in a condition of hyper-reality – an exaggerated social atmosphere of heroism and foreboding.”¹³² When compared to the Great War, Queensland’s incarceration of ‘aliens’ was the highest in the country, representing almost half of the Commonwealth’s internments.¹³³ That statistic alone suggests that Queenslanders felt far more threatened by this war being so close to their homes.

Unlike the Great War, the onset of World War II was greeted with sober reflection. It is a sign of both a more mature nation and a more mature Churches of Christ. The Federal Conference released a pamphlet entitled ‘The Church and War: An Appeal by the Federal Social Questions and Services Board’ on 6 September 1939, just days after Australia entered the conflict. In the pamphlet, WT Atkin (President) and William H Clay (Secretary) reflect on the experience of the Churches of Christ in the Great War and the challenges that lay before them. The Committee had been in thought prior to the outbreak of war, and it is important to note their response.

Reflecting on the Great War, Atkin and Clay wrote: “At the time we were not able to foresee the dreadful possibilities, and consequently could make little provision against them... we all, to a greater or lesser extent, were left to our own devices. Many of us followed the popular cry, and said and did the popular thing.”¹³⁴ They acknowledged that different positions would be held by different members of the Churches of Christ when it came to enlistment, and reflected on the lessons learned from the divisive and acrimonious conscription debates of 1917 and 1918. They also reminded their readers “that as Christians, it will be necessary for us to refrain from all harsh speaking, and to have a sympathy and understanding outside our own particular attitude”, and that “loyalty to our Lord Jesus Christ and our unity in Him is deeper and more abiding than any divergence in our attitude to military service”.¹³⁵ They were wise words reflecting a tense situation amongst the churches during the Great War – a tension missing from the Queensland Annual Conference reports and the like from 1914-18.

What were the churches doing?

As war began, the churches in Queensland were ‘being the Body of Christ’ in their local settings.

In Ann Street, Conference President Clive Burdeu addressed the church on the morning of 3 September (the day war was declared), and close to 200 people shared in a communion that soon took on a poignant tone as the news of war began to spread.¹³⁹ In the Bundaberg church, a young man responded to the address by the principal of the College of the Bible, TH Scrambler, and was baptised a few days later.¹⁴⁰ In Boonah, on 10 September, the sermon by Brother Vanham was entitled ‘Peace, the Gift of Christ’, and, on the same day, the Toowoomba church distributed the first issue of its monthly paper ‘Christian Tidings’, and, in Albion, many of the women gathered to hear a lecture on air raid precautions.¹⁴¹

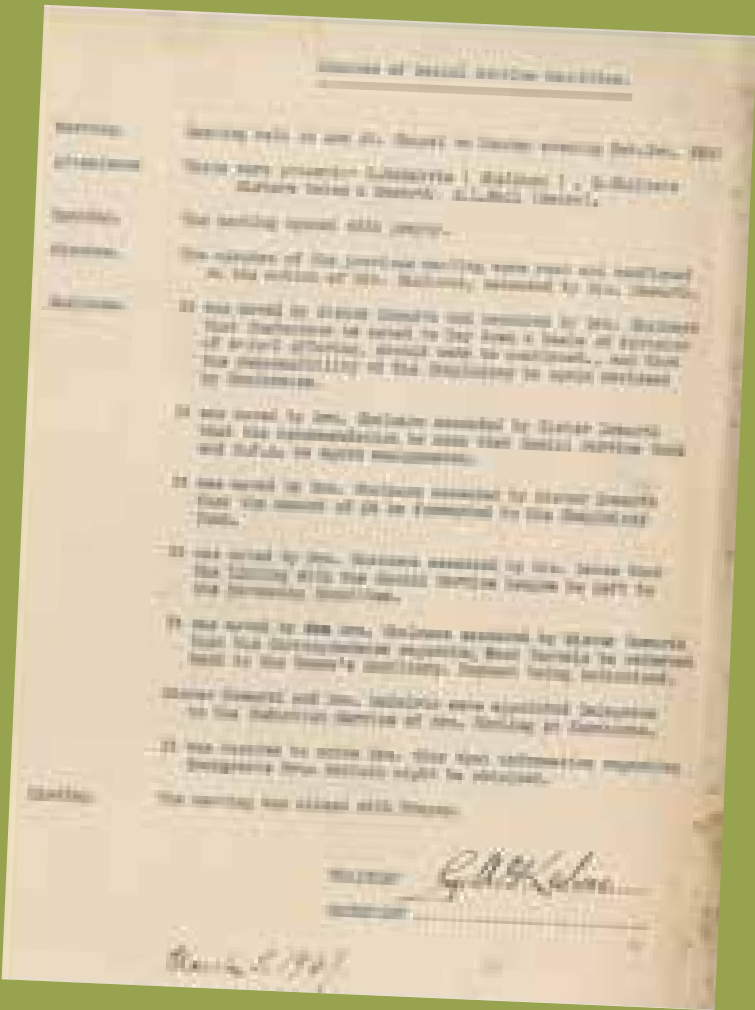
In Mackay, preparations were being made for a Bible Convention in October, and Rockhampton saw improved numbers at its services through September and also received a visit from CR Burdeu on 16-17 September.¹⁴² Charters Towers saw a decision for Christ, Roma reported good attendances, as did the church at Gympie, and Maryborough added a senior Bible class on 17 September despite reports of sickness interfering in meetings.¹⁴³ As in 1914, the churches were carrying on – almost in business as usual mode. However, filtering through the reports in ‘The Australian Christian’ was a sense that the Queensland churches were very aware that life could never, really, be the same during wartime.

Another way that the churches expressed themselves in this dark period was through the maturing influence of the Social Service Committee.

Social Service Committee (1939-49)

During the war years, the Social Service Committee remained dedicated to a group of causes, in particular throwing its weight behind temperance campaigns and highlighting the problems associated with gambling. It is significant that during this time the Committee also highlighted the need for “improvement in the management of aborigines in Queensland”.¹⁴⁴ In 1943, the Hospital Chaplaincy Committee was formed and worked alongside the Baptist and Congregational Churches.¹⁴⁵ This chaplaincy work was sponsored and funded by the Social Services Committee.

A long-held aim of the Committee was achieved in 1939,¹⁴⁶ with the formation of a Christian Fellowship Association (CFA), which Clive Burdeu (its President) described as “the Church’s response to Acts 2:45 ‘They shared all they had with one another’”.¹⁴⁷ The purpose of the CFA was “to provide a fund which will meet some serious emergency in life”.¹⁴⁸ Throughout the 1940s, the CFA grew, at first as a separate sub-committee from the Social Service Committee. In 1947, however, it amalgamated with the Committee, as the separation of the two committees had led to difficulties in maintaining the Social Service Committee in the previous year.¹⁴⁹ With the two groups amalgamated once more, the Chairman of the Social Service Committee, Stanley Chalmers, referred to that decision as “wise, as both are inter-related and able to assist each other”.¹⁵⁰



Social Service minutes 3.3.1947, CFA

By now, the name Clive R Burdeu has occurred enough in Committee and Conference reports to cause us to pause and consider the legacy that Burdeu has left for the Queensland Churches of Christ.

Burdeu was born in Ballarat, Victoria, on 14 April 1889. He made a confession of faith in 1901 at Ascot Vale Church of Christ.¹⁵¹ Despite this, he was almost ‘lost’ to Churches of Christ when he married Pearl Philpott who attended the Essendon Baptist Church, where Clive also became a regular attendee and contributed to the ministry of the church. With the outbreak of the Great War, Clive sought to enlist with his brother, Cyril. Cyril was accepted, but Clive did not sail with him to Gallipoli owing to the fact that his work in the public service was deemed “essential”. Cyril was killed at Gallipoli, and it was not until 1916 that Clive was accepted for service, after trying another time to enlist and being rejected for having “insufficient teeth”.¹⁵² He became a signaller and served in France, where he was gassed (and temporarily blinded) in October 1918, evacuated, and hospitalised while peace was declared.¹⁵³



On his return, Burdeu moved around the country with his work in the public service. Settling back into Melbourne post-war, he and his family attended the Bambra Road Church of Christ (Caulfield). In 1929, work took him to Sydney where he and his family stayed until 1933, before finally completing the northward drift and moving to Brisbane (where they attended the Albion Church of Christ), until they then moved to Western Australia in 1942 and then back to Melbourne in 1944.¹⁵⁴ For a man so identified with Queensland Churches of Christ, Burdeu also left his mark in the other states, namely in Victoria where he helped form the Social Service Committee¹⁵⁵ in 1923 that would be the forerunner of the Queensland model, and in Western Australia, where his interest in “the welfare of the aboriginal people”¹⁵⁶ saw him become president of the Churches of Christ Federal Aborigines Board. He returned to Brisbane in 1946, after Pearl’s death and in ill health himself.

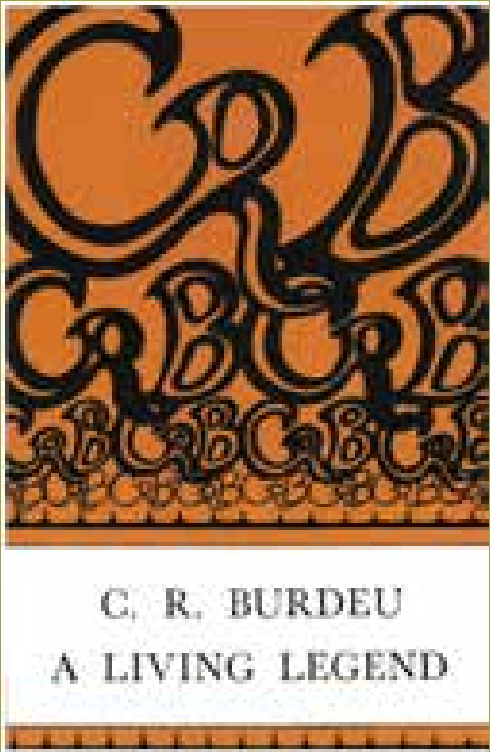
In Queensland, the Social Service Committee noted his return in 1948 with the words: “the committee was strengthened by the return to Brisbane of Bro. C.R. Burdeu, who willingly accepted our invitation to meetings, where his helpful advice has been most acceptable”.¹⁵⁷ Burdeu was remarried in 1949 to Olive Enchelmaier, a member at Albion, and in the same year was co-opted back onto the Social Services Committee.¹⁵⁸ At the age of 60, Burdeu’s influence in Queensland Churches of Christ was to be even more keenly felt.

In 1950, Burdeu was made State President, and that year saw the beginnings of Churches of Christ Care as we now know it. The Social Services Committee was granted “the authority to establish a Christian Guest Home”, which Burdeu in his submission called to “be made the best in the land”.¹⁵⁹ In 1953, it was aptly named ‘Burdeu House’.



Clive & Olive Burdeu

The next stages of Burdeu’s influence belong to the boom years of the 1950s and early 1960s. Suffice to say, his influence – from the highlighting of the needs of Indigenous people, the contributions to a thriving social service arm and his concern for the wellbeing of ministers and preachers post retirement – is hard to underestimate. Yet, the influence of one man should not overshadow those who worked with him and alongside him, and it must be strongly noted that Burdeu’s successes would not have been possible without an environment of care, compassion and social awareness exhibited by the churches of the 1930s through to the immediate post World War II years. The trauma of two ‘great’ wars and the Depression in the space of 30 years left their mark. However, these years also saw the emergence of Churches of Christ in Queensland as a group of churches that genuinely cared for the society around them.



CR Burdeu ‘A Living Legend’ is written and published by Ken Wiltshire and depicts the life of CR Burdeu, the humble beginnings of this incredible man and his important work for the ‘church’.

These days are given to us by God. They are ours, for this generation. We are servants of the Master and we must be about His business. Other times are for other generations. The challenge becomes theirs, the cloak falls from our shoulders to theirs.

Clive Burdeu, April 1950

CHAPTER FOUR: *The Post-war Era* *1945-80*

*The context of the times:
When one reflects on the years 1914 to 1945, it is hard to comprehend
what it must have been like to live through that time.*

In 1945, a typical Queenslander born in 1910 would have experienced the two most horrific armed conflicts in history fought in the space of a generation, and survived the sharpest and most devastating downturn in the Australian – and world – economy in modern times. They were also confronted by the darker forces of human nature as news of the Holocaust emerged from Europe, prisoners of war returned with stories of starvation and barbarism at the hands of their Japanese captors, and the devastation from the systematic bombing of civilian targets in Europe and Japan became apparent. The very fact that World War II was brought to an end with the tragic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki shows to what lengths – after a generation of chaos and death – the world would go to achieve peace.

Australian collective memory often refers back to the post-war era as ‘the good old days’: employment was high, it was a time of ‘peace’ and prosperity, crime was low, housing was affordable, and there was a predictable stability in Australian society. The Coalition – for the large part under Sir Robert Menzies – governed Australia from 1949 until 1972, and Queensland was under conservative and/or

coalition rule from 1957 until 1989, with almost two decades of rule by Johannes Bjelke-Petersen (1968-87).

Yet this collective memory of the ‘good old days’ often glosses over the significant cultural shifts of the era. There were the Korean and Vietnam wars (with the latter leading to a vigorous protest movement), the Cold War with its threat of all out nuclear warfare, and the rise and response to communism in Australia and the region. There was also the emergence of a youth culture, the sexual revolution of the 1960s, the spike in overseas immigration, as well as the slow emergence of an acknowledgement that many previous policies toward the Indigenous people of this nation were unhelpful and even racist. Beneath the surface of the ‘good old days’, there were significant and destabilising cultural shifts occurring: “World War II and its aftermath were a time of virtually full employment, providing unprecedented access to mass culture and the immediate gratification of desire through higher wages and an expanding leisure market. This was countered by widening adult concern that church-based ‘character building’ and long-serving bourgeois values... were under threat.”¹⁶⁰

In Queensland, as the Bjelke-Petersen era progressed, tensions emerged in the form of protests and street marches, with the government response being to quell them through harsher legislation attempting to ban such demonstrations. For much of his rule, however, Bjelke-Petersen had the support of police, the media, a gerrymandered electorate, the political processes and, by and large, the church. It would not be until his last few years in power that hard questions about corruption would be asked and gain traction.

Under the threat of the erosion of “church-based values”, and the significant tensions simmering under the surface of propriety, the Queensland Conference emerged during this period as a stable and growing organisation.

The hope of peace

PCD Alcorn, writing in ‘Victory Week’ for ‘The Australian Christian’ in September 1945, examined the state of the churches in Queensland and their social service work. While one would expect a gushing sense of enthusiasm upon the conclusion of World War II, Alcorn’s prose was measured and realistic. He lamented the work of social services in Queensland in its current form, and stated, “The conscience of the brotherhood must be kept alive on social problems”. His survey on the Queensland churches was almost prophetic, as he highlighted the health of the work in the regional areas but suggested, “We should like to see some of our suburban churches grow stronger”. He concluded his short article with: “The war is over, and we face the future with concern but not without confidence”.¹⁶¹ Alcorn was not alone in tempering his enthusiasm. The Queensland Conference President, VG Boettcher, wrote a few weeks later that the “immediate post-war years will present great demands upon the Christian church”.¹⁶²

What did this era see? Queensland churches full of confidence engaging in their communities, or Queensland churches concerned about their own well being as the demands

of post-Christendom forces began to impact on belief, attendances, offerings and human resources? One of the particular joys of historical research is to be surprised and encouraged. What we found in this era was a consistent level of confidence and commitment to evangelism and service to their communities by the Queensland Conference: its churches and departments.

A mid-era report card ‘This could be our finest hour’

In a unique move, the 25 February 1964 edition of ‘The Australian Christian’ was a Queensland edition, which gives us the opportunity to assess how the life and witness of the churches was progressing almost 20 years after the war ended. Articles were written by Frank Nicklin (the then Premier of Queensland), Haydn Sargent, Clive Burdeu, George V Haigh (Federal President) and Ken Wiltshire, Clive Burdeu’s grandson. There were 47 churches in total, the largest being Toowoomba with 309 active members, followed by Ann Street (239), Ipswich-Leichardt (227), Albion (162) and Annerley (151). Overall, there were 2,926 active members and 900 members on rolls such as the isolated and supplementary rolls.¹⁶³ New church buildings were being opened in the coming months at Kingaroy and Maryborough, along with the demolition of the old buildings at Annerley to make way for a chapel and a Christian education facility. Ma Ma Creek had also commissioned new buildings in 1964. Haydn Sargent threw off the cautious optimism of Alcorn and Boettcher back in 1945, when he stated, “There is in our Queensland churches a real spirit of optimism and hope. This could be our finest hour.”¹⁶⁴

Certainly, from a Queensland perspective, there were reasons for optimism. Australia’s first commercial oilfield at Moonie, 330 kilometres west of Brisbane, was giving credence to the belief that Queensland would be the centre

“We should like to see some of our suburban churches grow stronger. The war is over, and we face the future with concern but not without confidence.”

PCD Alcorn

of a resource boom and economic prosperity. From a Churches of Christ perspective, there was other good news: plans for the Kenmore Christian College were progressing and Dr James Jauncey had just been appointed its first Principal;¹⁶⁵ the Social Service Committee was embarking on an expansion of its aged care facilities, with particular focus on new and existing facilities in Toowoomba and the construction of a new home at Maryborough (1965);¹⁶⁶ and two new circuits were also added to the Queensland churches, with Hawthorne and Murrarie forming one, and Sunnybank and Acacia Ridge the other¹⁶⁷. In July 1964, the Conference announced in ‘The Australian Christian’ the appointment of Allan Male as a full-time Youth Director, to begin in December 1965. The words used in this article again emphasised a sense of optimism (as does the appointment itself): “As our Queensland churches face a period of unprecedented progress...”¹⁶⁸

This optimism was further demonstrated by incoming President Roy Acland’s program of evangelism for Queensland called ‘Win One More in ‘64’, an ambitious program that called on churches to have two months of prayer, two months of “Bible Study and systematic Bible reading”,¹⁶⁹ and then two months of “personal evangelism and personal witnessing”,¹⁷⁰ with regional rallies held at the end of the year. This sort of program again suggests a State Conference that saw evangelism as a key to its health and planned to meet the challenges of a new era with confidence through the active ministry of its churches.

Beneath the optimistic advances and the promotional language of the Queensland edition of ‘The Australian Christian’, there lay some concerns for the future. Burdeu concludes his article by wondering about the size of the challenge before them and whether “we will ever be big enough and determined enough to accept it?”¹⁷¹ John Sheriff, Queensland State President, highlighted the “isolated

districts in which Church of Christ families are residing, where there is no organised witness or fellowship”.¹⁷² He saw the formation of Kenmore Christian College as a way to train and equip more leaders to reach those isolated areas. The sheer physical size of Queensland had long been a challenge to the Churches of Christ desire for unity and a stretch on ministry resources. Clearly, in 1964, there was still a vibrant sense of optimism with an underlying sense of the challenges that lay before the churches.

The post-war years saw an increase in a desire for the Queensland churches, social services and Conference to grow in order to keep pace with a state rapidly expanding in population. This saw the Queensland Conference respond to a period of stagnation in church planting by planting churches in the population growth corridors. Between 1916 and 1948, a total of 14 churches were established in Queensland, a marked slowdown from the initial beginnings of the movement in the 1880s through to the early stages of the twentieth century. However, from the period 1945-65, 18 further churches commenced in Queensland,¹⁷³ and the Home Missions Committee was busy identifying new areas of residential increase and expansion to establish works in, such as Mt Isa, Kenmore and Gladstone. Another 15 churches would be added in the period 1965-80, matching in particular the growth of Brisbane and its outlying suburbs, with Kenmore (1965), Arana Hills (1966), Springwood (1974) and Pine Rivers (1975) being prime examples of this. Evangelism was obviously a primary value and task. On the back of the ‘Win One More in ‘64’ campaign, a further 154 people were added to the active roll in Queensland churches in the next year,¹⁷⁴ and over 1,000 copies of the Home Mission handbook on evangelism had been distributed. Stronger churches were encouraged to develop weaker ones through sharing resources in what was being called “Operation Sponsor”.¹⁷⁵

Missions – called crusades at the time – were also a feature of the post war years. The most famous crusade (from an Australian point of view) was the Billy Graham Crusade of 1959. The Crusade came to Brisbane in May, with Leighton Ford preaching all but the final three meetings. Although some 10,000 people were listed as inquirers over the two weeks,¹⁷⁶ anecdotal evidence suggests that the impact on Churches of Christ in Queensland was less than in Victoria and New South Wales. In 1967, Reggie Thomas started the first of a series of American crusades in Queensland when he led a team to Annerley and Toowoomba. In 1969, Don De Welt (Ozark College, Missouri) led a mission that “added some 50 souls”.¹⁷⁷ Then, in 1970, in conjunction with the World Convention being held in Adelaide, 51 American teams fanned out through Queensland to 17 centres, and recorded over 100 responses to the gospel. In 1978, the white suited Cecil Todd’s ‘Reach out for life crusade’ saw 61 responses over six nights in Brisbane.¹⁷⁸

Other missions occurred during this period, a mix of them being led by other American evangelists from 1967 but, prior to that, Australian evangelists still conducted missions among the Queensland churches. SW Vanham was appointed pastor-evangelist in 1951, and for six years concentrated his ministry in the north of Queensland. Popular evangelist JK Bond led a tent mission at Zillmere and Gatton in 1962 with John Timms, and returned to Queensland to conduct tent missions at Hawthorne and Camp Hill in 1963. The Camp Hill mission saw 17 people make first-time decisions for Christ.¹⁷⁹ John Timms went on to be appointed State Evangelist in 1980.¹⁸⁰



There is evidence of the fruit this evangelistic emphasis provided. The churches in Queensland grew in the 1960s: “From the mid-1960s Victoria and South Australian membership fell noticeably, with Western Australia less so. New South Wales, on a level since 1964, showed slight increase in 1971. Tasmanian membership steadily declined, while the Queensland churches over the period made steady progress.”¹⁸¹ As the Director of Home Missions, Alex Surtees pointed out in 1970, “This doesn’t just ‘happen’. It results from dedicated service and consistent emphasis on outreach. Our Home Missions task is to stimulate this with every resource of God’s Spirit. It is a demanding, stimulating, thrilling task.”¹⁸² The passion from Surtees is certainly one that was shared by many in the Queensland Conference throughout the remarkable period of establishing churches and maintaining an emphasis on evangelism through the decades of the 50s, 60s and 70s.

The 1968 Commission on Evangelism

Another helpful guide to the state of the Queensland churches is the Commission on Evangelism (1968), which was submitted to the Annual Conference in May 1968. This sweeping report took into account historical trends and methods of evangelism in Queensland and did not shy away from frank assessments of the state of evangelism at various stages in the churches’ history. The Commission’s current assessment in 1968 was: “The trend is clear. We are in decline again after increasing our net gain since the World War.”¹⁸³

The self-assessment by the Commission is somewhat harsh when one examines the figures for the preceding years. While it is true that the establishment of new churches was slowing before there was a burst again in the mid-1970s, the Queensland churches had been growing at a healthy rate for some years after a period of numerical decline in the 1940s. From 1950 until 1960, approximately 1,000 people were added to the church rolls; from 1960 until 1970, another 700 were added, and from 1970 until 1980 just under 1,200 more people were included – a total that was on par with growth in the 1920s. While this was not spectacular growth, it was solid and continued on into the 1990s. It is a testimony to the emphasis on evangelism and church planting in growth areas that the Commission was able to see a drop in the late 1960s as cause of concern, and sound the warning.



*Brisbane RNA Showgrounds
1959 Billy Graham Crusade*

The Commission report also contained insights that hold true today. While one could argue that it still championed ‘older style’ evangelistic methods, it rightly upheld a biblical view of the church in its context: “As in past centuries revolutionary ideas and ways faced the church, we today are caught up in the most rapid and far reaching change civilisation has experienced. The Church, finding itself in this situation must be alive to its true purpose. That purpose I believe to be ‘heralds of the kingdom of God.’”¹⁸⁴

The same could be said of our churches today. It can be argued that the response of the post-war Queensland Conference – in both proclamation of the word backed by deed – was indeed to be heralds of the kingdom.

The growth of the church and the Social Service Department

Not only was there a renewal in planting and establishing churches, but the Queensland Conference began to branch out into other areas of active service to the community. One of the most significant signs of this was the partnership between the local churches and the Social Service Department. In 1960, the Conference made the Social Service Department responsible “financially for the purchase price and extensions”¹⁸⁵ of all homes. The Department had had recent success when it offered the Toowoomba church the opportunity to establish a home for aged care in 1958, which was opened in April of that year as Mylo House. Mylo House was a pertinent example of partnership between church and the Committee in developing such a ministry in the post-war era. The people of the Toowoomba church pitched in, and the women of the church raised funds and “assembled beds, hung curtains, put down new linoleum in the hall, did the washing and ironing and made jam”.¹⁸⁶ Church and Department worked in unison to provide a much-needed ministry.

Throughout the 1960s, and 1970s, with the aforementioned support of the Conference, the Department was able to initiate aged care facilities in Annerley (1963), Maryborough (1966), Southport (1966), New Farm (1972), Bribie Island (Bongaree in 1973) and Boonah (1973). The point to make with these initiatives, as Haigh does regarding the Fassifern Retirement Village at Boonah, is that they were “supported by the church and the community”.¹⁸⁷ The 1970s also saw Yeronga (1975), Alexandra Hills (1975), Southport (Benowa) (1978), Gatton (1978) and Michelton (1979) established as care services from the Conference to the local communities, as well as the further development of Fairhaven Home at Maryborough (1979). Given the stuttering beginnings and difficulties experienced in the 1930s and 1940s by the



The 1980s would see another significant leap forward in Churches of Christ Care ministry and establishments.

Social Services Committee, it is remarkable to chart the growth of the Department to this point. It is no coincidence that as the renewed vigour of the Queensland churches blossomed there came the initial start and development of this ministry to seniors via aged care facilities. It was also in this period that churches began ministries to ‘at risk’ children, with homes established in Maryborough (1970), Mackay (1976) and Bundaberg (1980).

It is in these post-war years that we see the emergence of the foundation of the current Churches of Christ Care ministry in Queensland. The 1980s would see another significant leap forward in Churches of Christ Care ministry and establishments.

Haigh’s description of this service is both pertinent and a cautionary tale for the whole Conference: “Social Service is not the exclusive prerogative of the Department which is pleased to continue to play a leadership role in that which is the reasonable and compelling service of every Christian”.¹⁸⁸ While it was crucial to have strong leadership in this area, by the turn of the millennia, it became increasingly obvious that there were large gaps between Churches of Christ Care, the Conference and the churches that had once partnered so faithfully together in the deliverance of social services to the Queensland communities.

Growth from partnership

One only has to take a cursory look at this period to see that the Conference, the churches and the various departments saw themselves in partnership. This has been in the DNA of the Churches of Christ in Queensland right from the beginning. It can be argued that the arrival of Stephen Cheek at Zillman’s Waterholes on 1 August 1882 was a direct result of partnership between JH Johnson, FW Troy and the Victorian Conference of 1882 which saw the potential of establishing the Churches of Christ in Queensland: “It is easy to forget that Stephen Cheek, D. A. Ewers and others came to Queensland through the support of the Conference in Victoria.”¹⁸⁹

Other churches in Queensland through the post-war period came about because of partnership. Camp Hill church, for example, was started in 1958. The initial meeting to discuss this possibility was chaired by the then Conference President, Gordon McKelvie and attended by members of the Hawthorne, Ann Street and Annerley churches who lived locally. When the church began the next year, 22 of its foundation members were from the Annerley church, and in the initial years funding was received from the Home Mission Committee and the Rosevale church.¹⁹⁰ Camp Hill’s beginning was as a church community born out of partnership, and the willingness of other local Churches of Christ to release members to plant new churches.

Kenmore church (1965) was also the result of partnership, with Kenmore being established with the bulk of its members from Ann Street, and its initial ministers including the Principals of Kenmore Christian College, Dr James Jauncey and FL Ewers.¹⁹¹ In turn, Kenmore members helped form the nucleus of the Centenary church (1977), as the rapid growth of the area demanded more Christian witness. Pine Rivers (1975) had its initial beginnings in partnership when Allan Male noted that there were approximately 20

Church of Christ families in the area. The Home Missions Committee supported the beginning of a church in the Pine Rivers area and by 1978 the church was able to call a full-time minister, Malcolm Chandler.¹⁹² Springwood (1974) is another example of partnership in action. Gerald Parriott, Home Missions field officer, led a mid-week Bible study with members from various Churches of Christ in Brisbane’s south. From this, a minister was engaged (Roger Foletta), with financial support provided by the Home Missions Committee. Growth in the Springwood church was so strong that a mere 19 months later this subsidy ceased. In 1977, this fledgling church also released members to help form the Kingswood Park church.



Malcolm Chandler

From this brief selection, the partnership of Conference and local church can be seen clearly. It again reminds us that together in unity we can do so much more than when we toil in isolation from one another.

Despite the aforementioned growth, great challenges still lay ahead for Queensland churches. The technological advances around the turn of the millennia dwarfed the rapid changes to technology and lifestyle that were apparent in the late 1960s. Churches still felt the ‘tyranny of distance’ in the far-flung reaches of rural and provincial Queensland, as they did in 1978, when Cairns, Mareeba, Charter Towers, Gladstone and Mt Isa were all experiencing a lack of a minister.¹⁹³ However, as is often the case, it was not external threats to the Conference that were the most challenging, but the ones that emerged from within.

Responding to the 1974 Flood

The Spring of 1973 dumped significant rain on Queensland, causing many river systems to swell. The new year of 1974 saw heavy rain dominate the weather and, with the arrival of the weak Tropical Cyclone, Wanda, it was expected that this pattern of wet weather would simply continue. Wanda was one of the least likely carriers of disaster: “Wanda wasn’t really a cyclone at all. It produced winds of 100kmh which is a fair bit of wind, but it never made a central eye,” recalls Arch Shields, a former Queensland Bureau of Meteorology Director¹⁹⁴. Wanda – cyclone or not – triggered a deluge. Over the next 36 hours, 642mm of rain fell on Brisbane.¹⁹⁵

The floods arrived on 27 January when “the normally placid Brisbane River” rose and submerged houses in a “raging torrent that measured two miles wide in some areas.”¹⁹⁶ The flood was catastrophic – 14 people were killed, another 300 were injured and some 8000 homes were destroyed. The main impact was felt in Brisbane, its surrounds and Ipswich, although damage occurred as far away as Maryborough, Bundaberg and the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Given the widespread nature of the disaster, response bases to the flood occurred wherever churches and Social Service Committee members could find dry land. One such place was Social Services Director Eric Hart’s home, which became a “reception centre for evacuees and distribution point for clothing and food.”¹⁹⁷ Likewise, Conference President Len Brooks’ “home was one of the first set up on the north side to become a receiving centre which fed into the City Hall, Red Cross and Civil Defence centres”.¹⁹⁸ Others responded as they could, where they could, with homes being set up as food preparation centres, where meals were cooked to be reheated later, clothes were washed and made for those who had lost all they possessed.¹⁹⁹ Church buildings were given over to the distribution of food, clothing and comfort, both of a spiritual and physical nature.



Australian Christian 1974

As Len Brooks wrote at the time, “in spite of adversity, hardship and heartbreak, it has been no doubt an enriching time in service for the Lord... The Church was seen to be in action expressing real love and concern in what one could certainly describe as “practical Christianity””.²⁰⁰ The adversity was real – in terms of deaths, injuries, damage and impact, the floods of 1974 will be remembered as one of the most devastating natural disasters to impact Queensland. They will also be remembered as a time when the churches and their people offered up “practical Christianity” to those around them.

CHAPTER FIVE: *Queensland and Training for Ministry*

Vision and beginnings

The first Churches of Christ training college in Australia was established in Victoria. The College of the Bible (as it was first called) began with 16 students on 19 February 1907.

For a brief time, lectures were held in the Lygon Street Church of Christ at Carlton, Melbourne. Early in 1910, the College moved to a four-acre property at Glen Iris. One pragmatic reason for the formation of this college was to stem the flow of Australian Churches of Christ students heading to the United States to study for ministry, with some students choosing not to return to Australia.

A similar story can be told for Churches of Christ in Queensland. For several decades in the twentieth century there was a desire for a ministry training college for students from Queensland to minister among our churches in Queensland.

In 1924, the State Conference formed a committee, the Christian Workers Committee, with the goal of training people for service among our churches. In 1941, the Conference appointed a sub-committee to investigate the possibility of a Bible college for Queensland. In 1962, the Annual Conference gave approval to a Queensland Bible College Establishment Committee. About this committee, the then pastor of Albion Church of Christ, Maurie Pieper commented, “It was April 12, 1962. The Queensland State Conference just ended had appointed a College Establishment Committee. On this day, which was destined to become a memorable one in the history of the Queensland churches, the committee consisting primarily of Clive R Burdeu, Prof. Alan F. Wilson, Maurie Pieper and David Mansell met for the first time. It is true to say that there has never been an event in the life of our Brotherhood to match Kenmore Christian College for rapidity of growth at the beginning and magnitude of possibility for the future.”

The vision bears fruit

It is interesting to note the attitudes of the other states to the plans to start a Queensland college for ministerial training. In the 8 May 1962 edition of ‘The Australian Christian’, the decision by the Queensland Conference to “establish a Bible College in Brisbane” while seeking “the advice of the Federal College Board” was announced.²⁰¹ The article features the reasoning of the Queensland Conference for the decision, with the most prominent being the potential “great increase in population expected in the next few years”.²⁰² No editorial comment was passed by ‘The Australian Christian’, and the article goes on to note that the establishment of the College “will eventually be a source of increased strength for the Australian brotherhood as a whole”.²⁰³

Any sense that this proposal may weaken the movement, as opposed to increasing the strength of Churches of Christ in Australia, was largely absent until the Federal Conference that was held in Hobart, in October 1962. In the list of resolutions, one was devoted to the prospect of there being a Queensland College. It stated, “In the interests of the Australian brotherhood solidarity and stewardship, this Conference requests the Queensland Conference to think again of the advisability of setting up a third Bible College at this stage of brotherhood development”.²⁰⁴ Given the traditionally measured language of Conferences, especially when dealing with one another, there is a strong hint here that the Federal Conference saw a third college as a potential fracturing of unity.

Among the members of the Queensland College Establishment Committee were David Mansell, the State Evangelist/Youth Worker; Stan Chalmers, the then Director of Churches of Christ Social Service; Lloyd Read, minister of Ann Street Church of Christ; Professor Alan Wilson, Professor of Geology, University of Queensland; and the educationalist Helen Trudgian.²⁰⁵ The visionary Clive Burdeu was appointed Chairman to form what was indeed a formidable committee. The first thoughts were to use the then Churches of Christ Boys Hostel at Annerley, but when this closed thoughts quickly turned to purchase an available five acres in the growing suburb of Kenmore. Churches were informed about this, and when the majority agreed, the land was purchased at Kenmore in 1964 for the price of £6,000. In August 1963, an appeal was launched for the land and the first buildings (accommodation for students, lecture rooms and the Principal’s house). The goal of this appeal was to raise £15,000. £14,000 was raised in gifts and loans.

A tangible and positive mood was stirring among our churches in Queensland. A vision had been cast. A sense of “that something special was around the corner” was evident.

The question remained: who was to be the founding principal of the college? Around this time, Haydn Sargent,²⁰⁶ the pastor of Annerley Church of Christ, had returned from an information-gathering trip among our churches in the United States. He had come across Dr James Jauncey, a native-born Australian, then minister of the El Paso Christian Church in Texas. Dr Jauncey had an impressive CV. He was a scientist who had worked at Cape Canaveral, yet had degrees and training in theology and marriage counselling. Haydn passed his name onto the Establishment Committee, and Dr Jauncey became the first principal of the Queensland College.



LEFT: CR Burdeu breaking ground April 1964

Kenmore Christian College

The year the dream of the college became a reality was 1964.

In April 1964, a ground-breaking ceremony for the first buildings of the College was held. Then, in July 1964, a tree-planting ceremony was held on-site, and the driveway named Hinrichsen Drive. EC Hinrichsen was the well-known evangelist from Queensland who became known worldwide for his evangelistic crusades. In September 1964, Dr Jauncey arrived in Brisbane. Wearing his Texas hat, he walked off the plane at Brisbane Airport to be met by TV cameras from the commercial networks. In September 1964, the Conference President Roy Acland unveiled the foundation plaque before an audience of some 400 people, including representatives from Woolwich Bible College (New South Wales) and the College of the Bible (Victoria). Also present was Dr L Kilpatrick, the General Secretary of the World Convention of Churches of Christ and Christian Churches.

The year 1965 saw the first intake of students, 17 in total. The dream first voiced in 1941 had finally become a reality; a training college for Christian ministry in Queensland had been established. One of the students from that first year recalls his excitement and the comradeship felt among the first intake of students to Kenmore. The second year of the college saw a further intake of 13 students, and also the employment of the second full-time lecturer, Rex Ellis. In 1968, the third full-time lecturer, Frank Ewers, was employed. Ewers ultimately went on to become the Principal of the College from 1970 until 1983.

Kenmore Christian College had arrived, and was making an impact in its home state of Queensland. Part of this impact was that in its early years, it assisted with the birth of two churches in the greater Brisbane area – Arana Hills and Kenmore.

Maturing years

Following the excitement and fervour associated with its establishment, what was the continuing story of the College? Following are two brief samples from the 1970s and the 1980s. It must be noted that the peak enrolment for Kenmore was not in the 1960s but in the 1970s, with 1979 claiming the record for enrolment of 52 full-time students.

In 1977, the total student body numbered 43. Found among these students are Malcolm Chandler, who later became Deputy Executive Director of Churches of Christ Care; Norm Flett, who had valued and successful ministries at Mackay and East Ipswich; Lyall Muller who spent time as a missionary in Vanuatu and in ministry at Gladstone; Russell Mutzelburg, a long-serving Army Chaplain who went on to become the Principal Chaplain General for the Armed Forces of Australia; and Geoff Charles, a long-serving Minister at Springwood Church, where he lead the church through various stages of healthy growth.

In 1984, the intake for the year numbered 14 new students. The total enrolment sat in the mid-30s. A sad event in 1984 was the death of Frank Ewers, who had retired from being Principal of Kenmore in 1983. Randy Edwards had been appointed Principal in 1983. Staff lecturers during this time included Randy Edwards (mostly biblical subjects), Graham Warne (mainly Greek and biblical subjects), Jan Christensen (Christian education and missions), and Dennis Helsabeck (church history). The renowned Bob Fife from the Christian Church USA also spent two semesters at the college. Helen Trudgian, a retired educationalist from the training of teachers, was the Registrar for the College.

For the first time, in 1987, a recognised degree program was offered and also accommodation for married students and families was built on site.

A student of this period, Bruce Warwick (later employed as Pastor to Pastors by Churches of Christ in Queensland) commented on this time period and the characters of the college's staff lecturers saying, "Randy was great for stretching our understanding, Graham always had a wonderful enthusiasm and energy, and had an incredible passion for biblical languages, Dennis's passion for church history was beyond belief, and Jan was admired for love for overseas mission... I appreciated my grounding in biblical areas and Restoration Movement principles during my time there".

The college exhibited healthy indicators that it was functioning well as a training college for ministry.



STAFF
Graham Warne
Randy Edwards
Jan Christensen
Dennis Helsabeck
Helen Trudgian

STUDENT
Lyall Muller
Norm Flett
Geoff Charles

KENMORE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE – 1977
FRONT ROW: (left to right) Cheryl Holmes, Faye Turnbull, Marilyn McLellan, Mr. McCosker, Dr. Hamner, Mrs. Charles, Sue Charles, Bob Warren, Linda Hyde.
SECOND ROW: Fred Quen, Judith Harper, Alan Bickell, Robert Clancy, Wayne Kelly, Peter Matthews, Doug Higgins, Lyall Muller, Alan Miller, Ross Phommam, Sharon Fanning, Peter Bridgman.
THIRD ROW: Jan Bennett, Don Quinn, Chris O'Donnell, David Hamner, Barry Tieding, Noel Williams, Geoff Charles, Brian Jay, Bruce Bell, Roger Bell, Norm Gilbert, David McKay, Don Goring.
FOURTH ROW: David McLaughlin, John Teller, Malcolm Chandler, Ray Charles, Steve Pratt, John Halls, John Brown, Russell Mutzelburg, Lindsay Stafford.
ABSENT: Mark Swan, Helen Whiston.

However, sometime near the end of the 1980s and into the early 1990s, concerns were felt about the future of the college, and its suitability for training ministry in a changing and increasingly secular world. An earlier paper²⁰⁷ had optimistically set goals of 50 full-time students by 1990, and 70 full-time students with five full-time lecturers, and an expansion of the then present buildings by the year 2000. These goals were not met, and the college, as in its maturing years, found it hard to find a suitable principal and began to face declining student enrolments. In fairness to the then hard-working college staff, the declining student market can be attributed to a variety of factors: growth of Churches of Christ in Queensland churches was starting to decline after a peak in the early 1980s; the inability of Churches of Christ to consider and cope with cultural changes,²⁰⁸ and changes in theological and worship emphasises;²⁰⁹ local churches depending upon transfer growth rather than growth through local evangelism; competition for students from not only Churches of Christ in Australia training institutions, but also other interdenominational colleges; the rise of the larger church model in Queensland, with their senior pastors sending prospective candidates to their old alma mater and not Kenmore; the slow loosening of the once tight relationships found among Churches of Christ in the State via State Conference, with resultant lessening of the interest in Kenmore Christian College, Churches of Christ Care etc; and the vague suspicion among some churches that the college was “academic” and “out of touch”.²¹⁰



Kenmore Christian College 1994 staff and students

By 1994, there were only 18 full-time students at Kenmore Christian College and serious considerations for the future direction of the College became a matter of urgency for the College Board. In the mid-1990s, three members of the Board (Principal Rod Tippet, Professor Alan Wilson [Chairman of Board] and Randy Edwards) were asked to present papers that dealt with the future direction of the college, and related matters. Edwards in his paper presented seven options.²¹¹

New directions

One of these options was to engage in joint training with the New South Wales college of training for ministry, Carlingford College. In December 1996, the papers were presented to the College Board. The Board accepted the recommendation to explore a possible merger with Carlingford. This led to Rod Tippet’s immediate resignation. Randy Edwards was asked to resume the role of Principal.

In 1997, Kenmore College met with Carlingford College and agreed to “partner” together in training. A major result of this decision was the sale of the property at Kenmore to Churches of Christ Care, with the resultant Queensland funds invested for continuing income for the new college. There now emerged “intensive” style teaching (four days per week in local churches); and the relocation of college offices to the Springwood Church of Christ complex. This shift in focus carried the intent to equip people who were already serving in ministry, rather than just those who were anticipating ministry service. Another innovation was the introduction of a Certificate IV for non-English speaking students who could study both English and biblical subjects at the same time. Under the leadership of Moses Kim, the number of students in this program grew to approximately 40, but sadly government regulations eventually forced the closing of this effective program, which saw a number of students from Asia become Christian.

Near the end of 1999, the partnership with Carlingford was formalised and the new combined college was given the name of Australian College of Ministries (ACOM). Dr Keith Farmer was appointed the first Principal for ACOM. Significant decisions at the start of ACOM were:

- i. That the Board was to be formed by selection rather than election, and attempts made to work with Churches of Christ Training College (CCTC – Melbourne) with a shared board member.
- ii. Crucially, that ACOM teaching and training be around “head, heart and hands with a Missional emphasis.”

ACOM began a major re-writing of its curriculum, through the ‘missional’ lens. This was innovative and frontier thinking for theological and ministry training, and caught attention from varying nations around the globe. ACOM partnered with various groups to offer contemporary courses in Youth Work (Youth Vision), emerging church (Forge), and Community Development (TEAR). In particular, Churches of Christ in Great Britain linked with ACOM for a few years to offer ACOM’s courses to their emerging missional leaders. Within a few years, enrolments grew to approximately 250 Australia-wide in degree studies and close to 1,000 in vocational education studies.



ACOM students: Steve Peach, Geoff Snook, Brendan Edwards and Ben Eames

In Queensland, the reasons for the decline of Kenmore College were still there and whilst student numbers climbed to around 40 within the first five years, this rebirth of training for ministry in an increasingly secular society received little attention from Queensland churches. There were a number of contributory factors, including: churches were still looking for the model of pastoral ministry; the lack of a physical college property for the churches to connect to; little publicity on the early successes of ACOM; little awareness of ACOM amongst our churches; and rapid changes of models of teaching in the early formative years of ACOM. However, it has to be recorded that more and more students came to ACOM from other denominations, attracted by the ACOM model.

On 22 October 1999, ACOM Queensland had a public celebration of 10 years of ministry as ACOM in Queensland. The special guest speaker for the day was the first Principal of ACOM, Dr Keith Farmer.

It has to be stated that throughout ACOM's history there were tensions between New South Wales and Queensland Conferences over the operation of ACOM. There were disagreements over funding, allocation of resources and national collaboration. However, these remained at board level and services to students enrolled with ACOM continued unaffected. Because of this and other varying factors, at the Annual General Meeting of Churches of Christ in Queensland 2012, Queensland's Churches of Christ Conference ended the formal arrangement with the New South Wales Conference as a co-owner of ACOM, by endorsing a motion passed by a combined meeting of the Conference Council and Board. "That Council will, subject to ratification at the 2012 Churches of Christ in Queensland Annual General Meeting, resign Churches of Christ in Queensland's membership of the Australian College of Ministries, Inc (ACOM). It is further noted that this decision was made at a combined Churches of Christ in Queensland Council and Board meeting, and was supported unanimously by all present. Council will therefore recommend to the 2012 Churches of Christ in Queensland Annual General Meeting that the decisions made Churches of Christ in Queensland and Board prior to the 2012 Annual General Meeting regarding ACOM membership be endorsed."²¹² The memorandum also included this comment: "It should be noted however that we would continue to actively support and encourage ACOM – but not as a part owner."



Tim McMenamin

There are still visible results in leadership from the Queensland association and partnership with ACOM.

Ministers who trained at ACOM and (at the time of writing) were giving capable leadership in local churches included: Walter Harnisch, Redcliffe Church, who lives, breathes, and dreams mission; Steve Peach, the Senior Minister at the large Southport church; Tim McMenamin, the Senior Pastor of Sanctuary Park Church Nambour, passionate about community engagement; Dan Foster, the capable Youth Pastor at Springwood church; and Geoff Snook, Generations Pastor at Centenary Lakes, Cairns. It is also intriguing to note that the Mission Division (formed in 2011) has many ACOM graduates, including the visionary Steve Drinkall, Luke Finlay, Kevin Hamer, Mark Wall and Ben Zambra.

Has the relationship and investment into ACOM by our Queensland churches added value to our churches and the kingdom activity of the church of Jesus Christ? The previous paragraph clearly declares "yes"!

Geoff Snook was asked to reflect on his association with ACOM. Geoff is married to Laura and they have four children. Both have completed a Bachelor of Theology with ACOM and trained for ministry at Southport Church of Christ, where they served for eight years. Geoff is the Generations Pastor at Centenary Lakes Christian Community in Cairns and has completed a Master of Arts in Christian Leadership through ACOM. Geoff reflects that, "ACOM has been instrumental in my formation and training as a pastor. I appreciated the way that I could stay fully invested in my local church while still studying with ACOM. Their setup meant that I learned 'on the job' like an apprenticeship rather than going away to college and being less grounded in the realities of ministry. I also appreciated their focus on personal and spiritual formation. At times it felt unusual as part of an academic degree, however, on reflection I know that who I became through my study was even more important than what I knew. I am very thankful for the study and formation that ACOM provided me in my training for ministry."

Into the present future

In this chapter of ‘The Church from the Paddock’, via the histories of Kenmore Christian College, and the Australian College of Ministries (ACOM), we have reflected on two significant moves of God in training and equipping followers of Christ for leadership and service. Because of the decision of the Queensland Conference at its Annual General Meeting 2012, Churches of Christ in Queensland for the first time since 1964 has no direct ownership of a training institution for Christian ministry and service. Leadership, and associated training for leadership for the local church and the wider church, is always a key factor in the longevity and success of any movement. The question is now to be asked, “Are we open, ready, and looking for a new move that further builds and expands on the significant ministries of the College of the Bible (now Stirling College) in the earlier years, and Kenmore Christian College and ACOM in the later years?”

Appointment of a full-time leadership development pastor, investment in youth ministry internship programs, renewed healthy dialogue with both Stirling College and ACOM about ministry training and Christian leadership development in Queensland augurs well for the future.



CHAPTER SIX: *Ministry to Children and Youth*

Young people and Christian camps and youth conventions have often, for Churches of Christ in Queensland, been the vehicles of shaping lives to be effective followers of Jesus Christ.

The first detailed record found in the archives for a camp for young people is a yellowed book titled ‘Camp Chronicle Xmas Camp 1943’.²¹³ Several fascinating lines convey the simple camping conditions for this camp held at Scarness (Hervey Bay). “The camp site was well chosen. When one stepped out of bed he sank in sand to his ankle... The rain and wind dislodged the tent poles and reduced the tent to a dripping mess... Director Greenwood protected by his mac, was forced to brave the wet and cold in order to rescue the furniture... At times it was evident that cooks and orderlies were green... The orderlies particularly had difficulty in making the fires burn with wet greenwood.”

These conditions are far different to today’s Christian Camps and Convention Centres!

Then, one line from this Camp Chronicle soberly reminds us of the world events of 1943: “The RAAF boys who were of our number became very willing beasts of burdens, hewers of wood and drawers of camp stretchers.” When you

read this line you wonder what they may have faced next, these “RAAF boys”? What air battle of World War II may they have been sent to after Christmas 1943? What defence of Australian coast line may they have undertaken? And, importantly, how did this Christian camp experience prepare them for what events they faced next in life?

Moving on from the 1943 Christmas Camp to 2013, we see a change in the facilities used, but not the purpose of youth camps. In October 2013, the fourth National Youth Ministry Convention (NYMC) was held at the Twin Towns Complex, Tweed Heads, New South Wales. NYMC began as a Youth Leadership Ministry of Churches of Christ in Queensland. In 2013, there were approximately 500 youth pastors, youth leaders and other young adults in attendance from across Australia. They gathered in air-conditioned auditoriums and listened to national and international speakers experienced in youth ministry. The attendees made their own choice from the multitude of hotels, motels and apartments in Tweed Heads.

There is a great economic and cultural difference between the 1943 Scarness Camp and the 2013 NYMC. But, there is an important and powerful common denominator. At each event there are young people and young adults whose lives are being influenced by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

What has been the history of children's and youth ministry within Churches of Christ in Queensland?

What has been accomplished?

Early days

The Annual Reports from the Young People's Department, found in editions of 'The Christian Echo', provide interesting insights into the previous year's collective activities for the youth of churches in Queensland.

The Annual Report in 'The Christian Echo' for 1934 states that there was a "deplorable lack of interest shown by some in churches" concerning the financial support for the Young People's Department. Yet, the report continues, "The committee sets aside 5% of its regular income for extension work".²¹⁴ Apparently, there was a clear commitment to grow and extend Christian ministry among young people across Queensland. One of the headings of this report has three lines about a "travelling library". Were these resource books and study materials to assist and grow ministry among children and young people in our churches? The reader is not told.

Scripture exams are a recurring theme of these pre-1950 Annual Reports for the Young People's Department. The 1934 report records: "For the Annual Scripture Examination in July 1934, 356 entered; 279 sat, and 247 passed, representing 26 (Sunday) schools." The 1946 report records "217 scholars and teachers sat, and 174 passed." This is followed by the line: "Many more should be encouraged to sit for the examination".²¹⁵

One wonders what would be the level of responses today for a state-wide scripture examination among our children and youth in our churches! The concept of personal study of the Bible to sit for an annual exam seems to have faded from state youth work over the years. For example, this cultural shift can be seen in the 1960 Annual Report where a paragraph of the Young People's Department report focuses on an "Efficiency Campaign and Scholar Drive". "75 new scholars were gained during the campaign, the winning school being Boondall obtaining 11".²¹⁶

The 1946 Annual Report on the Christmas Youth Camp states: "76 shared in the worship, studies, and fellowship. Eight had accepted Christ as their Saviour, and 16 had reconsecrated their lives." This report also included a whole paragraph outlining the rationale behind the purchase of land at Dicky Beach, Caloundra, stating: "... all sections of youth may have a centre for worship, study and fellowship... eventually the camp will be in service for an overall period of 3 to 4 months per year... the camp project (will be) the soundest investment that has ever been taken".²¹⁷

Camp Cal, as it later became known, proved for many years to be a sound financial investment. Even more so, Camp Cal was for many, many years a place where the lives of youth and young adults were influenced by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. There are leaders present in our churches today who can trace their commitment to Christ and to serving Christ from a significant moment experienced at Camp Cal, Caloundra.





Bruce Armstrong with Sergeant Leon

City-wide youth rallies

The 1960 Annual Report mentions for the first time the formation of a monthly Saturday evening fellowship for young people, stating: “A variety of successful monthly functions were held which attracted larger numbers...”²¹⁸ Those later stage ‘Builders’ (1940+) and ‘Baby Boomers’ (1946+) still present among our churches with long memories will carry positive memories of these rallies. They will warmly remember the packed King George Square Methodist (Uniting) Church hall (now demolished and replaced by a high-rise office

building). Who can forget at one of these rallies in this hall the verbal duel between the puppets of Bruce Armstrong and Ted Watson? Puppet Sergeant Leon, like his owner Bruce Armstrong, is now well retired. Bruce Armstrong, in a personal conversation with this author, stated that this was one of the hardest conversations he ever engaged in in public! “To have a conversation on stage between four people (Bruce and Ted, and the two puppets) was extremely difficult. You have to hold two streams of words in your mind, not sure who would answer – Ted or his puppet!”

Maturing years

By 1960, the Young People's Department (YPD) had a part-time Director. David Mansell held the joint roles of Youth Director and Director for the Home Missions Department. It is interesting to read his reports on the YPD. He constantly refers to the number of decisions made at the camps. David, as an evangelist, was passionate about seeing people coming to follow Christ. David Mansell sometimes married his two roles together, with the 1960 Annual Report mentioning: "As the Director was conducting a mission at Gatton, the Annual Youth Workers' Conference was held at that place".²¹⁹ What a positive learning experience for leadership – mission and ministry combined in one place. One can sense a positive mood towards the future of the work among young people from this Annual Report. Place this mood with the gathering momentum towards the establishment of a Bible College for Queensland, and this became a peak period in the combined history of Churches of Christ in Queensland.

The AC Male era

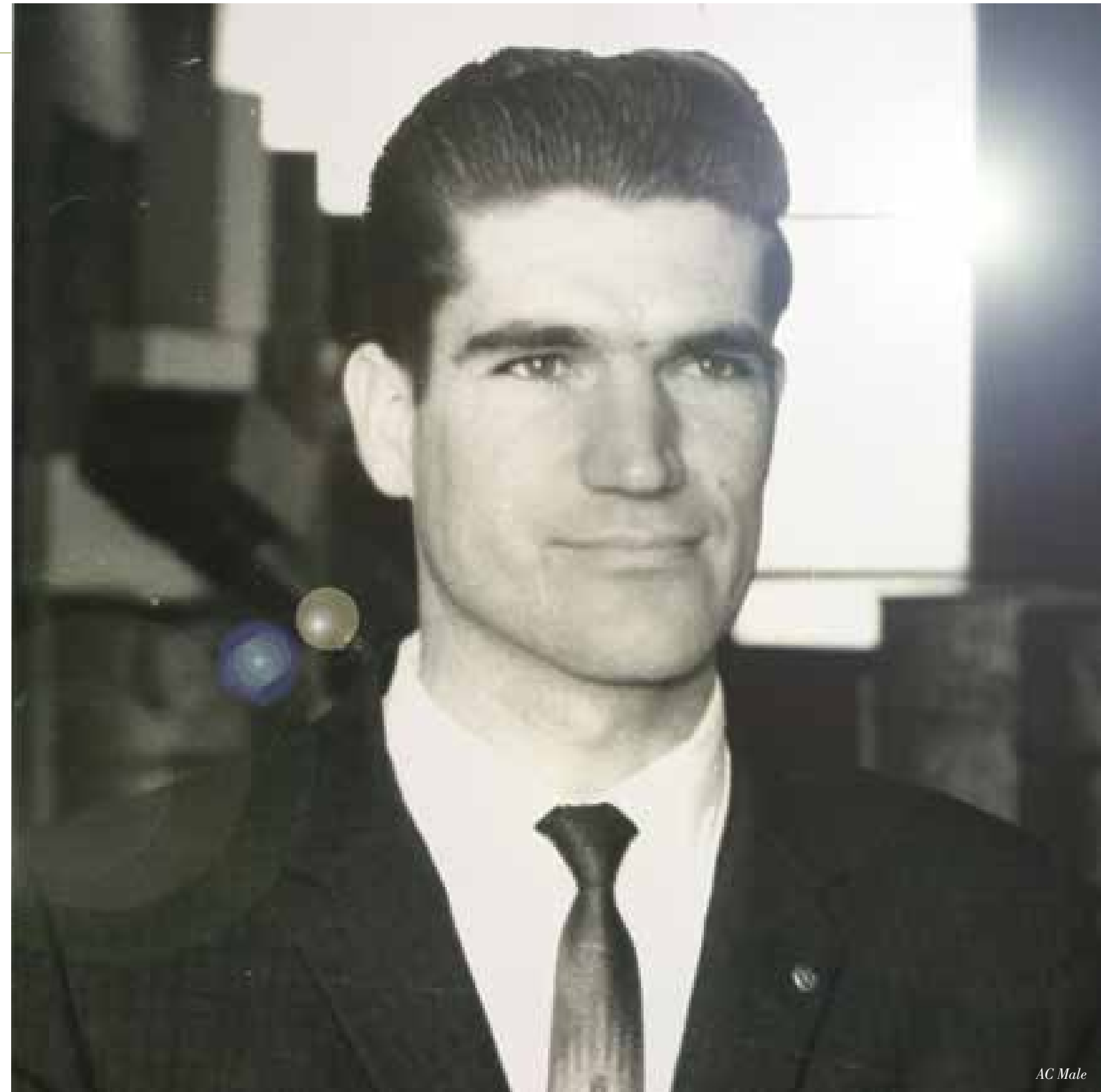
Ministry among children and youth for Churches of Christ in Queensland reached a new level when the then Youth Department employed their first full-time Director, Allan Male. Male (affectionately called "AC") stayed 20 years in his role as State Youth Director, from 1965 to 1985.

Allan saw that there was much to do for youth in Queensland. He initially introduced systemised aged programs for the young people in camping. His rationale behind the camping program was "you have to be age specific... Good youth ministry will seek to address these needs".²²⁰ The first age-specific camps were the Tweenager camps (for 13 to 15-year-olds) and Midget camps (for children under 12) in 1966. The first Midget camp at Camp Cal attracted 29 campers. This quickly grew the next year to more than 100 campers. These camps not only attracted campers from across the state, but also drew kids from the streets close by to Camp Cal. Other camp programs were for teenagers 15 years or older and young adults.

In Allan's words, effective camping consisted of "good programs, good beds, good food and had to be age specific."

Camping activities were not confined to Camp Cal. The Youth Department also held camps at the sites on Magnetic Island (North Queensland) and Emu Park (Central Queensland). Allan also initiated the purchase of the former Government-owned accommodation buildings²²¹ at Marburg (west of Ipswich), which became 'Teen Ranch'. Later on, the Care Department built rental accommodation for aged people on this site. These units are now affordable rental accommodation managed by Churches of Christ Care Housing.

Allan Male's second major aim was to build Camp Cal into an effective suite of buildings for all levels of camping life. During the 'AC Male era', other staff members for the Youth Department included Lorna Holt, Claire Cobine, Lyn Miller, Lyall Muller and Rod Feldham.



AC Male

Toowoomba Easter Camps

It would be neglectful in this record of Christian camping for young people not to briefly write of the Easter Camps held on the Darling Downs. Our Church of Christ at Warwick under its minister, Colin McCosker, had first held youth camps at Leslie Dam. However, Toowoomba was considered to be more accessible for a wider field on young people. So, beginning in 1980, for a decade, Easter Camps were held on Shannon Memorial Park under canvas with adequate ablution blocks. The camp was organised by Randy Edwards (Kenmore College Principal) and Bruce Armstrong (Senior Minister Margaret Street Church of Christ). The camps grew dramatically. Hundreds came from Brisbane, and country regions as far north as Mackay and Mareeba. Camps grew to over 400, which one year included a bus-load of Indigenous young people from Mareeba. The camp that year transferred to a larger site at Mt Tuckekoi.

A typical Easter Camp program included guided quiet time material, a guest speaker for the main sessions, practical electives, sporting activities and a Q&A forum on Sunday night with Randy and Bruce. If there were missionaries home on furlough, they too were invited to share. Many young people made decisions for Christ, some deciding on ministry and missionary training, with most returning to their churches inspired to contribute in practical and effective ways.



Youth ministry after AC Male

The camping ministry at Camp Cal, Emu Park and Magnetic Island continued under the leadership of Jim Deutschmann, who was then employed by the Youth and Christian Education Department in 1985. A series of primary school camp directors (e.g. Di Mudford, Alanah Fisher and Cheryl Hoffman) were employed by the Department to provide leadership for Christian discipleship in the camping program. Also at this time, from increased income that came through the marketing of the camp site and holiday units at Camp Cal, Alan Herman was employed as a Christian Education Officer. Other leadership for camping came from students attending Kenmore Christian College and other mature leaders.

North Queensland was not forgotten by the Youth Department. Annual trips were made from Brisbane to Magnetic Island to support the churches from our northern region in their camping program.

The end of children's and youth holiday camps

When Jim Deutschmann moved on from the then Church Development and Education Department, a decision was made to invite Scripture Union to oversee the camping ministry.

Children, youth and Churches of Christ Care

It would be remiss, as we record the history of Churches of Christ in Queensland ministry among children and teenagers, not to also briefly trace what Churches of Christ Care has done for the young people of Queensland.

In 2013, Churches of Christ in Queensland ran 22 licensed service for children aged from birth to 16. These services were run, funded and staffed through Churches of Christ Care. Among these services are found centre-based care, family day care services, out of school hour's care and a remarkable rural mobile service, run out of St George in Western Queensland. Some 250 staff were employed in operating these services. A number of these services are run in close proximity to a local Church of Christ. What is known as Pathways is a series of programs providing foster care, respite care, and residential and semi-independent care to some 2,800 children and young people under child protection orders each year.²²² In 2013, Care was Queensland's largest non-government provider of foster care.

Where and when did this special and important ministry among young people in Queensland begin for Churches of Christ Care? There are several beginning points.

One beginning point is found as an initiative of the Maryborough Church of Christ. One Sunday church members noticed a young family, regular attendees of the Sunday School, were absent. Worried, someone went to visit the family, and found that the mother had left town and the eight children were living on their own. Without parents to care for them, the children were placed in foster care and the once close knit family was split up and scattered throughout the state. Knowing the State Government had funding available to set up group homes, the church people set out to establish a family group home and bring the family back together. Leading this initiative was Jim Ferguson, a leader in the Maryborough church.²²³ When Malcolm Chandler²²⁴ was first employed at Care, he was given oversight over the existing family group homes in the role of Children's Home Administrator. This ministry continued to grow, and family group homes were found in Maryborough, Bundaberg, Mackay and the Gold Coast.

The Family Group Homes were an alternative to the larger residential institutions present at that time in Queensland. The concept was to have a small number of children live with a normal family. It is fascinating to note that several of these homes parents were concurrently pastors in their local churches, or had been pastors of local churches. Maryborough's Frank Gilson House was led by Jim and Ann Deutschmann; the Mackay Family Home was led by Alan and Gwen Weedon, as well as David and Coleen Birrel; and Southport's Irwin Blowers House was led by Noel and Trish Newton. Malcolm Chandler, as he reflected on his role comments, "the concept with all these child/youth services was to integrate them with the local church."

The second beginning point for this ministry of the care services was the co-purchase of land with the Pine Rivers church. Together with the then Social Service Department eight acres of land was brought in Ann St Kallangur – two acres for the church and six acres for the Social Service Department. Dianne Chandler comments, “At that time I was working at the Lutheran child care centre in Petrie. I felt that the local church could serve the community by establishing a child care centre in Ann Street. Malcolm followed up on the possibility with the then government only to find that funding was available under a joint funding arrangement from both the Commonwealth and State Government and that Kallangur was indeed a high need area. A management committee was formed from the local church. This was our first child care centre.”

Dianne recalls fund raising activities for this inaugural Child Care Centre for Churches of Christ. They included chocolate drives, fashion parades, movie nights, shopping expeditions and sewing! Why did Dianne become involved with what is known as Care? She recalls as a young person the then Director of Care, Eric Hart, visiting her home church, Camp Hill, and challenging young people in his message to consider careers where they could work for the Social Services Department. It was at that point in her life she decided to begin her nursing training.

From small things big things can indeed grow. What is encouraging is that what is now a large component in the ministry of Churches of Christ Care, had two small beginning points closely associated with two local Churches of Christ.



Emerging new directions for youth ministry

For a period of time in the 1990s, the emphasis on camping as the primary vehicle for children and youth ministry for Churches of Christ in Queensland appeared to have diminished. However, during this time, several visionary new models for ministry among youth and young adults began to emerge and take shape. In the period of a decade, they were to become powerful forces for shaping young lives not only to follow Jesus Christ, but also to become leaders for the kingdom of Christ. There were three significant initiatives to arise out of that era that still have current influence: State Youth Games (SYG), Youth Pastors Internships, and the National Youth Ministry Convention (NYMC).²²⁵

STATE YOUTH GAMES

SYG is a sporting event held in most Australian states as a ministry of Youth Vision, the national network of Churches of Christ youth ministries. SYG involves teams of young people from local Churches gathering for a weekend of organised sporting competition. It began in Western Australia in 1987. In Queensland, an early version of it was run called the Sonshine Games. This was led by Mark Willis, then pastor of Sunnybank Church of Christ, and ran for several years.

After several years of absence, the rebirth of SYG in Queensland came from David van Leen, who had been part of the SYG experience for many years in Western Australia. When David moved to Queensland to study with the Australian College of Ministries, he soon caught a vision for beginning a similar event in Queensland. With the assistance of a small team, David nearly single-handedly ran the first Queensland SYG in 1998 at Tallebudgera on the Gold Coast. Exactly 100 young people participated, with one third of them being from Springwood Church of Christ.

David returned to Western Australia in 1999 to complete his ACOM studies in a new pastoral ministry in Perth. Stephen Parker (who had been part of the initial leadership group) agreed to lead the event in its second year. Key players with Stephen in the early years were Jason and Renae Appleby, Ruth Parker, Tim Vincent, Clayton Riddle, Shaun Kelly and Cate White.



After two years at Tallebudgera, SYG moved in 2000 to Currimundi on the Sunshine Coast. Again, the event outgrew its facilities and moved in 2004 to Gatton. Until 2004, SYG had been a two-day event, but now it was able to be held over a three-day, long weekend. Where previously all campers were put in dorms and ate all meals together, now each church sets up its own campsite and does their own catering. This was, and still is, the overall genius of SYG. Its strategy was never just about sport, but also to create a high-quality event that would be attractive to people who liked sport and where Christian youth would feel able to invite their non-churched friends. The intention was that through experiencing Christian community over three days of camping and sport, young people would be challenged to consider the claims of Jesus. SYG has always been able to reach these goals.

The event continued to grow steadily, until there were 419 participants by the event’s 10th year in 2007. After ten years of service, Stephen Parker and Jason Appleby both stepped down from their leadership roles. Ben Zambra, who had joined the SYG Committee in 2006, took over the leadership of the event. Under his supervision, SYG has increased to approximately 800 participants, with a fourth new venue at Dakabin.

YOUTH PASTORS INTERNSHIPS

From 2003 to 2011, Youth Vision (under the Resource Missional Team, a resourcing body of Churches of Christ in Queensland) offered a series of internships to up and coming youth leaders. All churches were invited to consider who would be interested in committing to an internship. For successful candidates, up to half of the wages for a part-time staffer were paid by Conference. This was not ‘free money’, as the church had to provide ministry opportunities, supervision and coaching. The interns had to commit to 20 hours of ministry per week, some form of ministry training (normally with ACOM), and be coached by an experienced youth pastor. There was the understanding that this person may be called to another church. The key was that the intern had to be supervised by someone with good experience. The internships were often successful, not just for the people who were approved as the official interns, but for those who were not accepted as well. Many of them also went on to do ministry training and have careers in ministry. Given the ambition of the scheme was to stimulate churches into recruitment, and young people into ministry, that counts as a win! Following the formation of the new Mission division for Churches of Christ in Queensland these internships were replaced by the Next Generation Leadership Scheme.

NATIONAL YOUTH MINISTRY CONVENTION (NYMC)

NYMC is a conference aimed at people engaged in youth ministry, and began as a ministry of the Resource Missional Team. In 2012, it expanded to become a national event under the auspices of the Council of Churches of Christ in Australia, and was led by Brenton Killeen.

Stephen Parker (Director of Churches of Christ Youth Ministries in Queensland from 2000 - 2011) and Andrew Boutros of Southport began laying the foundations for NYMC in 2004. The two of them had travelled with Clayton Riddle to the National Youth Worker’s Convention in San Diego in 1999, and had experienced the value of youth workers coming together for training and encouragement. The first stage was hosting a one-day training event in 2005 with Doug Fields, Youth Pastor at Saddleback Community Church. This was a one-day event that gathered more than 400 people together on short notice. Encouraged that there was a hunger for excellent youth ministry training, plans began for a biennial NYMC on the Gold Coast, starting in 2007.

With the support of a professional event organiser and a team of volunteers, the first NYMC was a great success. It was held on the Gold Coast, and 461 youth workers came from all around Australia to hear national and international speakers.

From the beginning, NYMC had three aims. One, training was to be the most valued aspect of the convention, featuring well renowned international and national speakers and youth leaders. Two, networking was also important, as the average youth worker often had few peers nearby, and could really do with some more support from other like-minded workers. Three, given the pressure of the role, attendees were encouraged to see the four days of NYMC as a time to relax, and be encouraged for another season of ministry.





Stephen Parker commented on this first NYMC: “The feedback from participants was astounding, and virtually demanded that the organisers continue the event. Person after person spoke about the encouragement they had received, the people they had met, the ideas they had been exposed to and the blessings they had received. God seemed to be doing something in the lives of many who attended”.

NYMC ran again in 2009 and 2011. Although it was openly a Churches of Christ-run event, it was marketed as a cross-denominational event and attracted a broad variety of people across denominational and geographic lines. In 2011, the NYMC Director, Stephen Parker, stepped down from the role in favour of Brenton Killeen from Victoria, as NYMC itself was restructured as a national expression of youth ministry in Churches of Christ.

Present and future directions

From January 2010, the organisation of Churches of Christ in Queensland became one functionally. Previously, over many, many years, there had been an evolving and morphing of various departments that oversaw various combined support activities for Churches of Christ in Queensland. In 2010, these were all brought together under the Mission Division so that there were two full-time workers employed to support the local churches in their children’s ministry (Kid’s Vision Team) and youth ministry. The first two people in these roles were Bonnie Seip (Children) and Martin Thomson (Youth).



Bonnie made this comment as to the reason for the Kids’ Vision Team, “The Kids’ Vision Team was formed and exists to see children disciplined, and families strengthened through envisioned churches and resourced leadership within the Churches of Christ communities across the state... and beyond. Our motivation is to reverse the exodus of young people from our churches. The Kids’ Vision Team is committed to working to see a reversal of this trend so as to fulfil Jesus’ final command to ‘Go and make disciples’ – true disciples that do not fall away”.

Martin Thomson spoke for his vision for youth not only in Churches of Christ churches, but throughout Queensland. “Since being appointed Senior Youth Pastor in October 2011, I have been working with the Youth SALT (Strategic Action Leadership Team) to design and implement a strategy plan. The first phase of this plan is ‘building strong foundations’ and is focused on ensuring the health of our Youth Pastors, the intentionality of church-based youth programs, and the development of youth leadership. New initiatives in this phase have included the establishment of the ‘Youth Leadership Teams Weekend’ and the ‘Next Generation Leadership Network’. The second phase will involve the empowering of ‘new missional ventures’ to young people in our state”.

Today

This chapter is the story of Churches of Christ in Queensland ministry among, and for, young people. Heavenly history, yet unseen by us today, will celebrate not only movements of God among young people in this state, but victory stories from this ministry. The challenges for our churches today in ministry among children and youth are many, but there is a strong sense that God is sowing the seeds of some great work amongst young people in our movement.

CHAPTER SEVEN: *Care – bringing the light of Christ into communities*

The beginnings of the Care ministry have been outlined in the chapter, ‘The Churches Respond to the Great Crises of the Twentieth Century’.

The work of Clive Burdeu and Charles Young (and others) in the Great Depression gave rise to the Queensland churches actively being involved in what could be termed ‘social justice’ ministry. However, the rise of Churches of Christ Care (Care)²²⁶ (which went through various name changes, beginning with the long Churches of Christ in Queensland Social Service Department moniker in the early 1930s) soon branched out from church based welfare-orientated ministry (such as feeding the urban unemployed in the Great Depression) to aged care ministries, through to its current manifestations, which now include: community housing; children, youth and families services, community care, retirement living and residential aged care.

This growth since 1930, with a fledgling committee that ebbed and flowed in effectiveness in its first decade (“the Department has not functioned in a manner worthy of a great cause”²²⁷) is unprecedented in the history of Churches of Christ in Australia, and shows signs of growing stronger. Issues highlighted at the turn of the twenty-first century regarding the sense of disconnection between care services and the local churches, have been addressed and resolved. As of 2015, there were 153 care and support services, 876 foster and kinship carers, 306 family day care and in-home carers, 1,229 housing places, 797 independent living units, 1,719 aged care beds, and 1,195 registered volunteers²²⁸ across Queensland and Victoria. This means that over 27,000 people are recipients of support through the widespread and diverse ministry of Care. This is no side ministry to the gospel; this is the gospel at work bringing light into many, many communities across Queensland (and beyond).

This recognition that churches and church movements have a responsibility to care for the body, as well as the soul, has been apparent throughout Care’s ministry: “The work carried out... is closely linked to our call to ministry: James 1:27 ‘Pure religion is this, to visit widows and orphans in their distress and to keep yourself from being polluted by the world.’ In caring for children and young people at risk, families in crisis, and people in need, Care truly lives this vision.”²²⁹ Over the years, this recognition has also diversified to reflect the complexities of the human condition – for example, during the 28th Churches of Christ Conference (1911), only one ‘social justice’ issue was brought to the meeting: temperance. Fifty years later, the Social Service Department brought 16 resolutions to the Conference.²³⁰ As can be read from the previous listings of Care ministries, resolutions have led to compassionate ministries being established across many fields and disciplines. It is always sobering to note that the ministries that flourish so well now, emanated from beginnings that had to be fought for, with little infrastructure in those early days to support the cause. Yet these turned out to be significant foundations upon which the successes of today have grown.

We have already traced the beginnings of Care earlier in this volume, so there now comes the point to delve a little deeper into some of the foundational highlights of its growth since the 1930s.



Frank Gilson House (Maryborough)

One of the best ways that care services have operated in the past (and currently) has been through listening to the needs of local communities as identified by local churches, and working with various stakeholders to ensure that resources were released and that services were created that benefited vulnerable people. The Frank Gilson House, in Maryborough, is a prime example of this method of operating. The Maryborough Church started in 1894 when the Postmaster, Stephen O’Brien, gathered a small group of people to share in communion. From there, the church grew through tent missions led by the likes of Chandler and Clay, as well as EC Hinrichsen.²³¹ It was through the care of this attentive and pastorally minded church that the first family group home was established.

It was a normal church service on a Sunday, in the late 1960s when it was noticed that a family of eight children were missing from Sunday School. Concerned, a church member paid a visit to the family to find that the mother – possibly finding the stress of raising eight children on her own too much – had left Maryborough and the children were fending for themselves. As was the process in the day, the children were sent to different foster carers throughout Queensland. The splitting up of a vulnerable family did not sit well with the Maryborough congregation, and they took action in conjunction with the care services.

It was in August 1970 that ‘The Australian Christian’ announced that, “the seventh day of the seventh month, 1970, will be remembered as the day we officially moved into the realm of caring for vulnerable children and families”²³². On that day, permission was granted by the Queensland Government to proceed with the first family group home, to be built in Maryborough in response to the need highlighted by the Maryborough church. This came about through a collaborative effort between the church (which donated the land), the Lions Clubs of Maryborough (who raised funds), the Queensland Government (who also provided funding and furniture), as well as Care who provided guidance and expertise. When the Frank Gilson House was opened in November 1970, it set in motion a good news story, with the bulk of the children being reunited when they moved into Frank Gilson House on 13 December 1970²³³. It was also opened debt free, and Jim and Ann Deutschmann served as the first house parents.

As was reported by JH Curtis in the “Social Service Committee Homes and Hostel Report” in 1970, the importance of the project was that it was a “pilot project”. Had it failed, enthusiasm for this kind of ministry could have stalled: “We need further Homes of this nature associated with our Churches throughout the country and right here in the city... Only one thing holds us back – the necessary enthusiasm in a given area and, of course, the finance to get it going.”²³⁴ The success of Frank Gilson House opened the doors for more ministry and care of vulnerable children – a quality that is still reflected in the ministry of care services today “throughout the country and right here in the city”.



Early Mylo House Units

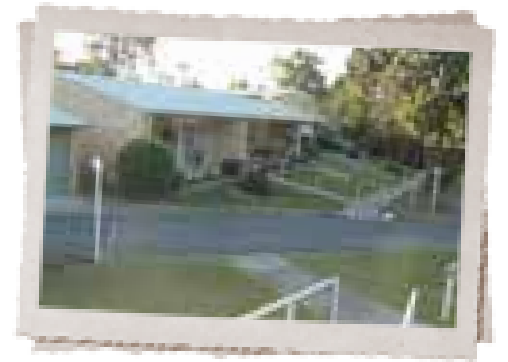
While the way children are cared for by Care is now vastly different, Frank Gilson House was a forerunner of a vital and much needed core ministry that is still in operation today. Care can now lay claim to being “one of the largest child protection services outside of government”²³⁵ in Australia.

Frank Gilson House was closed in 2001, but reopened in October 2009 as the Maryborough Family Day Care.

Mylo House (Toowoomba)

Aged care is a significant part of the work of Care, and both Mylo House (Toowoomba) and the Golden Age Retirement Village (Southport) shed light on the foundations of this extensive work that is thriving in Queensland (and Victoria).

As already noted, Burdeu House was the first aged care facility that Care was responsible for, but the first facility to be set up outside of Brisbane was Mylo House in Toowoomba. The Toowoomba Church of Christ was not only fully supportive of this move, but deeply involved in it. Mylo’s name was “steeped in romanticism”, as it was originally built to be a home for the first owner’s wife – Louisa, hence he called it, “My Lou”.²³⁶ It would go on to be a comfortable home for the aged, and be a shining light to the community around it.



Golden Age Retirement Village (Southport)

Stan Chalmers, writing on behalf of Care as its Executive Director, summed up the increasing need for aged care facilities in 1966: “The care of aged people is a major problem facing our community... These people are lonely, often neglected, and need help most. It is natural that those who profess love and concern for the aged should seek to meet their need by providing care and comfort.”²⁴⁰ He was summarising an increasing mood in Queensland churches, and throughout the ministries of Conference. The Golden Age Retirement Village is a prime example of both that mood, and the actions taken to meet a growing need in the community.

The Golden Age Retirement Village continues the theme of local churches working alongside services to develop varied ways of shining the light of Christ into the local community. The Southport Church of Christ was formed in 1957, when the Home Missions Committee commenced a service at Southport, and first met in the local Memorial Hall.²⁴¹ One of the foundation members was Eric Franks, a businessman who owned the Sunbeam Real Estate business, who later became an elder at Southport. In 1966, eight acres of land was purchased from him by the Southport Church at “well below market price”²⁴² and, in typical fashion, events moved very quickly from that point on.

The first units were officially opened on 2 December 1967, and a range of facilities (including the Southport manse) were developed on site, including “self-contained units, a nursing home... and a home for those requiring constant care and supervision”²⁴³. What is striking about the development of the Golden Age Retirement Village was the vision that saw this happen stemmed from a new church who, at the time of the sale of the property to Care, were only about 70 strong in membership, and were also exploring (and later, engaging in) their own church building program. The Southport Church of Christ, in partnership with and resourced by Care, was able to see a view of ministry that extended beyond the four walls of the church building. This continued with the building of the Village, and Southport ministers and members conducted ministry on site, including communion services and visitation. In a significant move, the ‘old’ Southport chapel was even transplanted to the Village site, where it was adapted to a new lease on life. One of the first residents at Golden Age was Vi Callanan, who was a counselor at the Southport church and who was the first ever woman to be in paid pastoral ministry in Queensland.

In 1970, and in keeping with Care’s long-term commitment to including the vulnerable and those who were not readily in a position to face the financial challenges of retirement, the decision was made to build the Cecil Carey Memorial Court on the Village site. This development was to be made available for “occupancy by people in the low income bracket”²⁴⁴, and was partly funded by the Gold Coast City Council. Eventually 10 units were made available to people who would not normally have been able to afford a home in such a setting.

One of the hallmarks of this facility – as an example of the partnership with local churches – is the dual emphasis on *good deeds* (the building of the facility to benefit the local community) and *word* (the proclamation of the gospel). In the 1974 Social Service Committee report, this is again highlighted: “May God continue to be our Partner to speak for us through our personal witness, and that we as a Caring Community, embracing the Life of Christ and living for the fulfillment of God’s purpose, may He assist us to buy up and not miss any opportunity to help those under our guidance, to find Christ.”²⁴⁵ There are echoes in this statement today, as Churches of Christ in Queensland vow to “bring the light of Christ” into their communities, through both word and deed.

The Village continued to grow, including the development of the Eric Franks Nursing Home in 1980 (Franks had passed away the year before). This new nursing home was opened by the then Queensland Governor, Sir James Ramsay. In a fitting move, it was built on the land sold by Eric Franks. By this time, the Lady Small Haven Retirement Village (Benowa) had also opened, as the need for increased levels of accommodation became apparent in the Gold Coast region. It may be too much to say that “Care may well be directly responsible for the Gold Coast’s reputation as the retirement capital of Australia”, but the level of investment by Care, local churches and members of those churches, certainly opened the door to a “‘golden age’ of accommodation and care services for the elderly on Queensland’s famous stretch of surf.”²⁴⁶

The Golden Age Retirement Village is now accredited under the International Retirement Community Accreditation Scheme.

Warrawee Aged Care Service (St George)

There is a famous story about the then Executive Director of Care, Dr Don Stewart, drawing more people to a public meeting about the need for an aged care facility at St George than those attending a Slim Dusty concert some weeks previously in 1984. This is a notable part of the Care story as there was no local Church of Christ backing this potential facility, unlike the other examples cited in this chapter. One of the key voices urging such a move was Beverly Grenfell, Chair of Care’s Board at the time, and a long time member of Toowoomba’s Margaret Street Church of Christ (now HumeRidge).

At the meeting in St George, and after a survey was conducted of patients by St George doctors, it was clearly established that there was a need in the local community for hostel accommodation. The need, however, required funding and a location in order to manifest itself. The story has been told in ‘Celebrating 75 Years of Caring’ but it is worth retelling here, as again it shows how the expansion of Care operated in partnership with others, ranging from individuals to churches to government agencies. In St George, after the need was identified, locals Paul and Nancy Young took a bold step towards meeting that need. They offered their house, situated on a 10-acre property dotted with fruit and nut trees, to Care for the price of \$100,000, which – remarkably – they then donated back to Care. Those funds were then used to renovate the property into an appropriate aged care facility. This wasn’t the end of Paul and Nancy Young’s involvement at what would later become the Warrawee Hostel. They also donated funds to pay for a tractor for the site, and took on the role as caretakers while still operating their own business from the property. So, now with the goodwill of the local community, backing from the medical profession, land and available funds, Care seemed to be faced with a series of green lights.

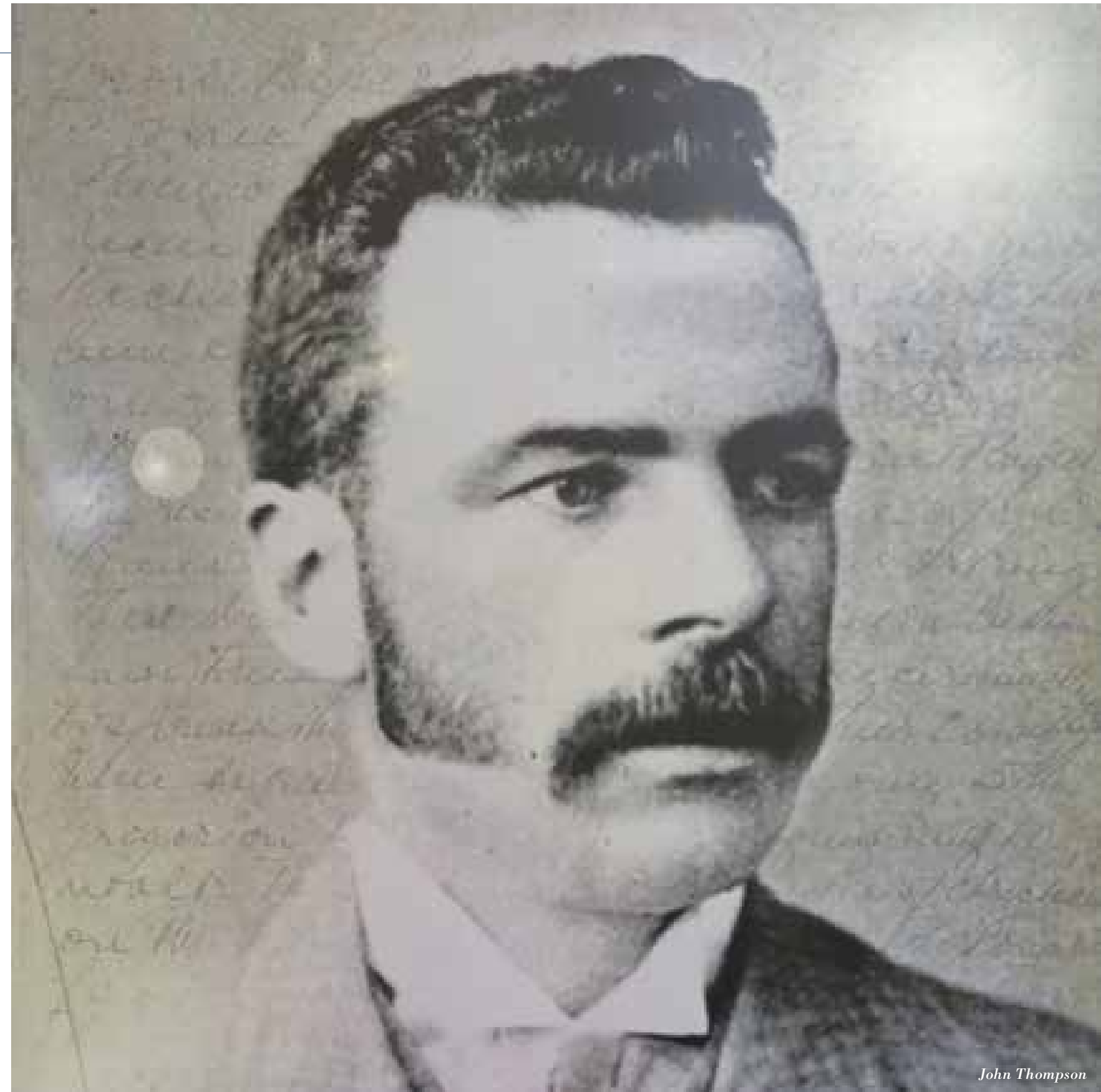
Then the only community nurse in St George quit, “leaving the town without services or resources for the aged, ill or disabled. Care needed to start a nursing service – and quickly.”²⁴⁷ The remarkable Youngs again came to the rescue of the yet to be built facility by selling their “near-new” car²⁴⁸, and donating the sale price back to Care so that a nursing service could be funded. Such extraordinary devotion to the idea of providing care for the elderly is something that needs to be noted in histories such as these. Care is now a large organisation, and it can be often forgotten that the facilities it now runs were often initiated and supported by dedicated individuals or small groups and communities of passionate people.

By 1987, the Warrawee Home Nursing Service had commenced in St George, and in 1989 the Warrawee Retirement Village had opened. It has not all been smooth sailing since then, with the residents of Warrawee needing to be evacuated due to rising floodwaters three times in 2010-12. Warrawee has a 38-bed capacity, and includes a mix of residential options for residents, and includes extensive gardens and a chapel. This Care facility has also sparked other initiatives in St George, including the “first mobile child care service”²⁴⁹ which caters for the needs of the rural community and the long distances that often need to be traveled by parents. Today, Warrawee stands as an example of the partnership between the community of St George, Care, and a couple of deeply motivated people in Paul and Nancy Young.

There are, of course, many more stories that could be told about the beginnings of Care facilities and ministries all over Queensland, and of lives changed and shown the love of Christ – just as there are many more stories of how local churches have shown the love of Christ through word and deed. It is hoped that the above stories have shown a glimpse of what Care has been able to achieve in partnership with local churches, invested people, government and local councils.

CHAPTER EIGHT: *Missionary Endeavour in Churches of Christ in Queensland*

The Churches of Christ in Queensland were still in their infancy when they began to have an active participation in mission work. This work had both an international feel and a domestic one. In its earliest formation, these churches had a ministry both at home to people from overseas, as well as in sending people overseas. The Foreign Missionary Committee (formed in 1891, and now operating as Global Mission Partners) established one such outreach on home soil to the ‘Kanakas’ in the Isis district of Queensland (just south-west of Bundaberg) on 1 January 1893.²⁵⁰ The start of a new year saw the ‘official’ beginning of a new mission field in partnership with a remarkable missionary pioneer, John Thompson.



John Thompson



Kanakas working in Bundaberg, Photo: Fairymead House

Who were the ‘Kanakas’?

The term ‘Kanakas’ is not in common usage today. So, who were they, and what were they doing in Queensland? First, the term ‘Kanakas’ was a derogatory one in the Australian context, applied to people who were shipped from the South Pacific to act as labourers in the cotton industry and on the sugar cane fields of Queensland from 1863 until 1904.²⁵¹ Specifically – and importantly from a current perspective – the bulk of the people who came to Australia originated from the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), with the rest coming from the Solomon Islands.²⁵² Their numbers in Australia had swelled to almost 60,000 by the 1890s,²⁵³ and most of these individuals had been shipped to Australia to work in terrible conditions as indentured labourers (the term of their servitude lasting between one and three years). Many of these workers had been stolen from their families or tricked into coming to Australia, where they were put to work in harsh conditions. In 1872, critics of the trade claimed that the vast majority of ‘Kanakas’ “had been taken by force, deception or cultural miscommunication”²⁵⁴ and death rates for the ‘Kanakas’ were 15 times that of white males of the same age.²⁵⁵ In the later years of this trade, some of the Kanakas volunteered their labour.

On the whole, the treatment of the ‘Kanakas’ is a terrible and sobering mark on Queensland and Australian history, given that by the time the importation of the ‘Kanakas’ began in 1863, most of the civilised world was in the process of turning its back on slavery as an insidious evil. Historian Raymond Evans writes: “Queensland was the only place in the Empire where ‘coloured labourers’ were being recruited by unsupervised private importers”.²⁵⁶ The Islanders (a far better term which will be used from now on instead of ‘Kanakas’) represented a particularly marginalised group who had no voice in mainstream Australian society. It is therefore both appropriate and challenging to the Queensland churches today to hear that one of the first missionary efforts of the Churches of Christ in Queensland (in conjunction with the Foreign Mission Committee) was directed towards these marginalised and exploited Islander peoples.

John Thompson (1858-1945) and Tabymancon

The pioneer of this mission activity was John Thompson. Thompson was a former Roman Catholic who joined the Church of Christ that met in Elizabeth Street, Sydney. After the death of his father in August 1872, Thompson moved to Queensland, eventually settling in the sugar cane regions around the Burnett River.²⁵⁷

Thompson's initial hopes had been focused on being a 'medical missionary'. DG Hammer reports in 1981 that Thompson was not a doctor, but by 1890 was performing a voluntary role that could be described as a cross between a chaplain and a nurse in the Bundaberg Hospital: "He spent a lot of time visiting patients... obtaining medicine for sick people in the area round about, giving injections, attending to injuries and illnesses, sitting up all night with those who were dangerously ill, and preparing those who died for burial."²⁵⁸ One can almost picture Thompson, sitting by the side of one of his ailing 'patients', ministering to both soul and body – a portrait of a man capable of sacrificial and persistent compassion begins to emerge.

RIGHT: Mission House, Buddy Hill Childers, John Thompson, Jane Gow Thompson with children John, Violet and Austin with Willie Tabymancon and his wife (presumably)

With this streak of compassion, Thompson soon found himself ministering to the Islanders after work hours in the sawmill that employed him at the time. His methods followed in the footsteps of Florence Young, who had founded the non-denominational Queensland Kanaka Mission near Bundaberg in 1881. It is difficult to tell whether Thompson was actively involved in this work, but he was in contact with some its workers and influenced by its model. Thompson's Kanaka Mission, which he linked to Churches of Christ, used the same methods as Young, emphasising literacy and Bible teaching with the twin aims of education and spiritual growth. Graeme Chapman estimates that in Thompson's first year of working with the Kanakas, 40 of them became Christians and between 1886 and 1895, the figure approached 1,000.²⁵⁹ In 1893, Thompson, supported by the newly formed Foreign Mission Committee who provided him a wage, was working full time as a missionary to the Islanders, and was based in Childers.²⁶⁰

On 29 January 1893, a church was established at Childers, and 17 Islanders shared the Lord's Supper at its first service. On 1 March of the same year, 18 baptisms were performed at the Childers church – 17 of these were Islanders.²⁶¹ At the peak of the work, it spread out from Childers to Doolbi and the Gregory.²⁶² By the end of 1893, approximately 90 Islanders had been baptised and 60 were attending the mission (the others had returned home).²⁶³



Towards the end of 1897, work began on the building of a chapel that would be opened in February 1898, with seating for approximately 30 and a baptistery. For Thompson, this was a significant moment as it gave the Islanders a safe place to meet, preventing them from being ‘decoyed’ into the gambling houses run by the Japanese and Chinese where, according to Thompson’s reports, the Islanders were being fleeced out of their hard-earned and meagre wages.²⁶⁴

The Islanders were not idle, despite the obvious constraints of their situation. They built chapels and other buildings used for mission on their plantations, evangelised their own people and, when they returned to their homeland, continued the task of evangelism and education there. One of the ni-Vanuatu workers, Tabymancon, received permission from the Queensland Government to be employed by Thompson as his assistant in the mission in Childers. If Thompson was absent through deputation or illness, Tabymancon and Mrs Thompson ran the Kanaka Mission, such as when Thompson went south on deputation in 1901.

We know very little of a biographical nature about Tabymancon, except that he came to Australia at a young age, and according to Thompson, by his own choice. We also know that he was one of those baptised in March 1893. Tabymancom returned in 1902 to his homeland of Pentecost Island (Vanuatu), a nation of special significance to Churches of Christ in Queensland, and still a place of active partnership between the Churches of Christ in Queensland and the churches of Vanuatu.²⁶⁵ Tabymancon’s work there was significant amongst both the returned Christians and the local people, particularly around Ranwadi, where he had an active and fruitful ministry of evangelism and teaching. In 1903, after a direct appeal by Tabymancon for a ‘missionary’ to lead the work, John Thompson visited Vanuatu and again teamed with Tabymancon. When he arrived in Ranwadi, Thompson discovered that Tabymancon and others were running church services daily and multiple services on Sundays.²⁶⁶ Thompson himself records that “I found that they had established schools and had been instrumental in winning many souls to the Master through their teaching.”²⁶⁷ Thompson had written over a decade earlier that he wished that “those who embrace Christianity would return to their islands as messengers of peace.”²⁶⁸ His desire for indigenous mission was being well and truly fulfilled.



However, this was not to be a long partnership on the mission field. Thompson’s stay in Vanuatu was curtailed by severe and recurring bouts of malaria. While able, Thompson baptised more than 50 people and built the school enrolment to 500. However, the ni-Vanuatu workers, such as Tabymancon, who had learned their ministry skills in Queensland, had laid the groundwork for the initial success of Thompson’s mission. As Keith Bowes wrote: “The arrival of an expatriate does not constitute the beginning of a church”.²⁶⁹ It was the work of the former Kanakas, oppressed and over-burdened, converted, trained and disciplined by Thompson, who formed the foundation of the Churches of Christ in Vanuatu. GT Walden, the Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, wrote of Tabymancon: “The zeal for God’s word had eaten him up.”²⁷⁰

What they had learned in Queensland they faithfully and uncritically reproduced when they arrived back home: “When interest was shown, they started classes to teach reading, no doubt using the same procedures by which they had learnt. When they began services, they taught from the Bible and the Sankey’s hymn books they had brought from Queensland.”²⁷¹ The Islanders would carry on this mission on their own until the arrival of Frank Filmer in 1908.

Tabymancon returned in 1902 to his homeland of Pentecost Island (Vanuatu), a nation of special significance to Churches of Christ in Queensland...

Thompson had written over a decade earlier that he wished that “*those who embrace Christianity would return to their islands as messengers of peace*”...

It was the work of the former Kanakas, oppressed and over-burdened, converted, trained and discipled by Thompson, who formed the foundation of the Churches of Christ in Vanuatu.

The end of the Kanaka Mission

In 1907, the Kanaka Mission was wound up, due to the fact that the Islanders were being sent home under the White Australia Policy. For many who had been forced against their will to leave their homes, this was a relief, but for those born in Australia, they found themselves being ‘exiled’ from the place of their birth. Through this hardship is the legacy of the church in Vanuatu, pioneered by John Thompson, who saw the Islanders not as slave labour to be exploited, but as men and women made in the image of God, who needed to be restored to their relationship with their Creator. This mission to the vulnerable and marginalised in the Queensland context later manifested itself through the local churches in partnership with the then Social Service Department of Churches of Christ in Queensland.

Not only was this mission to the Islanders prophetic and timely, but it also bore much fruit – fruit that would last. One example is the story of Abel Bani, whose father had been ‘black-birded’ by a sea captain, and compelled to work in the cane fields near Maryborough. In 1970, Bani, who was an elder in his Vanuatu church, was traveling to the World Convention in Adelaide with the missionaries Harold and Mary Finger. Abel remembered his father’s stories, and was able to visit some sites in Queensland that were meaningful to both him and the history of the Islander missions. Speaking at the Missionary Convention, “Abel held up his Bible and told how his father and six others returned to the New Hebrides with a copy of the Bible, and started the first native church.”²⁷² Out of the hardships of the forced labour of the Islanders – and this is not to belittle those experiences in any way – there was a significant gospel impact that reverberated beyond the cane fields, back to Vanuatu and from there to Papua New Guinea as the Vanuatu Christians embarked on their own foreign mission programs.

Harold (1916-91) and Mary Finger (1913-86) – Missionaries to Vanuatu

To say that the extent of the impact of Harold and Mary Finger (nee Clipstone) was limited to Vanuatu is to undervalue their significance. Their most crucial contribution to the work of the kingdom was, however, in Vanuatu, where their presence during the Second World War ensured that the Churches of Christ work there continued, and thrived. Between the years 1941-57, their presence prompted the sending of more workers, more finances and gave the missionary work in Vanuatu significant publicity back in Australia. It is, perhaps, not too extreme to say that without them, the current shape of mission and ministry through Churches of Christ in Vanuatu could look very different.

Harold was born in Mackay on 25 January 1916, in the middle of the Great War. His family moved to Brisbane in 1918, and in 1926 Harold was baptised by Charles Young at the Annerley Church of Christ. In 1939, he moved to Melbourne to attend the College of the Bible in Glen Iris, where he had ministries at Burnley, Frankston, Boort and South Melbourne.

Mary Clipstone was born in on 19 January 1913 in Fremantle, WA, and was raised in Kaniva in Victoria. In the same year (1926) that Harold was baptised at Annerley, Mary accepted Christ at Kaniva.²⁷³ She left Kaniva in 1934, to train as a nurse in Melbourne. During this time, Mary responded to a call to go to Vanuatu (the New Hebrides), and departed from Melbourne on 10 February 1941²⁷⁴, which AW Stephenson described as “an outstanding event... since she was the first qualified nurse ever sent to our station”²⁷⁵. Another nurse, Violet Wakely (NSW), later joined Mary and they formed an effective missionary team with David and Doris Hammer on Ambae (Aoba). With the advent of the

Pacific War in December 1941, the Japanese advance threatened the safety of the Australian missionaries. In 1942, Mary and Violet (the Hammers having already left for furlough) were pulled back to the relative safety of Australia. Like so many other ventures during those difficult days, no one was quite sure of the future of the Churches of Christ mission in Vanuatu.

The departure of the nurses meant that Vanuatu was without missionary representation until David Hammer returned (with Harold Finger) in December 1942. Upon arrival, they were not met with a warm welcome, but rather by a customs official asking them, “What do you want here?”²⁷⁶ They also found a resilient church serving Christ, which in Harold’s words was one that knew “nothing else than service for Christ. Is it any wonder that they carried on during the absence of any missionaries, and I have no doubt would carry on again, very faithfully, if the need arose.”²⁷⁷ While there was a faithful church, material resources were scarce at the beginning of Harold’s first term, amounting to: “one European house [incomplete], one launch, in a very weak condition, one dinghy, one shed for medical work, and some leaf and bamboo huts.”²⁷⁸ Harold would write, “I was surprised to learn that the children were using pieces of bamboo and leaves to write their lessons on... Even kerosene was in short supply... The mission launch we owned was dangerous because of its poor construction. On one trip to Pentecost, one of the planks on the side of the boat came adrift and the water poured in... we managed to save the boats and ourselves.” Through the generosity of “American Christian men in the army”²⁷⁹, money was donated and a new and safer boat – the ‘Sunbeam’ – was acquired.



Harold J Finger

The early work focused on education and church ministry. It was not yet considered safe for the nurses to return and, in early 1943, Hammer returned to his family in Australia because of malaria. By that stage, he and Finger had built up four classes of 70 students from Ambae, but the need was greater than what a lone Churches of Christ missionary could provide.²⁸⁰ Ron Saunders interrupted his own theological studies and arrived to assist Harold later in 1943, and this began the reestablishment of a missionary presence that would last decades. Harold and Mary’s engagement was announced in 1944, and they were married on Ambae on 2 September 1944 when Mary returned to resume her work as a medical missionary.

The medical needs on Ambae (and the rest of Vanuatu) were significant, and needed to deal with a variety of conditions, including yaws (a chronic skin infection causing deep skin lesions), malnutrition, measles, whooping cough, as well as keeping pregnant women and their babies healthy. Mary was active in administering the much-needed drugs for yaws, as well as making a significant contribution in the areas of maternal health. She would write soon after returning that “the Lord has greatly blessed our efforts, and each mother has gone home happy and well with a bonny, healthy babe.”²⁸¹ In 1948, the first hospital building was erected, and the next decade saw the work develop and expand. The Londua School was established, workers continued to arrive from Australia, more local women were trained in modern and safer birthing practices, better medical facilities were built, and the churches continued to be strengthened. Evidence of the maturing nature of the churches in Vanuatu was highlighted in 1947, when the churches on Ambae gave £1000 for international mission.²⁸² The first conference of the Vanuatu churches on Ambae, Maewo and Pentecost occurred in August 1951.

With the work becoming well established in Ambae, Harold and Mary moved to Maewo in 1954, re-establishing residential mission work there for the first time since 1916.²⁸³

Looking back, over 60 years later, it is easy to forget the level of day-to-day sacrifice that missionaries in Vanuatu (and elsewhere) had to contend with. The Fingers and their children, particularly the eldest, John and Stephen, made one of the biggest sacrifices a family could make. Given the lack of schooling available in Vanuatu, once the boys were of school age, they stayed behind in Australia – John in 1952, and Stephen in 1954, while their parents continued to minister in Maewo with their daughter, Lois. In 1957 it was announced in ‘The Australian Christian’ that the Fingers were returning home to Queensland (the boys were being looked after and schooled in Toowoomba): “Mr and Mrs Finger, for the good of the work, but at great sacrifice to themselves, have allowed their boys to remain in Australia... Mr and Mrs Finger have intimated that they should now remain home with their family when they return later in the year. Their services to the Island work have been monumental and the brotherhood should remember these things. The age of sacrificial service is by no means past.”²⁸⁴

Prior to leaving, there was a flurry of infrastructure and advances in Vanuatu. Two chapels were built on Maewo in 1956, and a medical clinic and midwifery ward opened in February 1957. Given that when Mary, and then Harold, had first landed in Ambae in 1941-42, there had been little infrastructure present, the growth of medical buildings, chapels and educational facilities was a testament to the faithful and hard work of both the Australian missionaries and the ni-Vanuatu church. It can be argued that it was the faithful and effective work of both Harold and Mary that was a human conduit for this to happen. Their letters to ‘The Australian Christian’ are clear calls to join the work in Vanuatu or to support it financially – and their authority in asking for such things increased the longer they stayed and got to know the needs and strengths of the ni-Vanuatu community.

Returning home did not mean an end to “sacrificial service” for the Fingers. Plans were afoot for more pioneering work, this time in Papua New Guinea. In June 1957, Albert Anderson (Foreign Missions Secretary), Lin Fitzgerald and Robert Hilford (army chaplain stationed in PNG during the war, and a member of the Ipswich church) surveyed the lower Ramu River area in PNG and, upon their return, it was decided that the Bogia sub district would become the next mission location for Churches of Christ in Australia. Frank Beale and Harold Finger were chosen to establish the work there. Harold’s tenure was always only going to be short term in nature – he arrived with Beale in May 1958, and left again in February 1959. Harold was just as passionate in rallying support in PNG as he was for Vanuatu: “All must stand behind the decision by giving and by praying. We don’t want merely to ‘have a finger in the pie’; we want to have a vital, full-orbed work here which will be worthy of our name.”²⁸⁵ By the time Harold returned to Queensland, a mission base had been established at the village of Tung, along with some infrastructure and six missionaries on the ground.

The Finger family – now reunited – settled into life at Toowoomba by serving in the local churches there, with Harold beginning ministry at Margaret Street in April 1959, and staying on until 1966²⁸⁶. He was also the first minister at the Harlaxton church, once it separated from Margaret Street in 1965²⁸⁷. From there, Harold and Mary returned to Vanuatu for another significant period of time, from 1967-74. What followed were further terms of church ministry, including ministries at Kingaroy and Warwick, before they moved to Bribie Island. Theirs was a life lived in service and, as was the case when they announced their first departure from Vanuatu, we “should remember these things.”



FE Stubbin AC June 1898

The first Queensland missionaries: Frederick Stubbin (1876-1934) and Johanna Stubbin (1875-1956)

Queensland's first missionary to a foreign field was Frederick Stubbin, who was born on 7 March 1876²⁸⁸ in the West Moreton area of Queensland. In November of that year, Frederick's father, Robert, was killed on his farm by a falling tree limb while clearing scrub²⁸⁹. It would be left to Louisa, his mother, to raise her four boys on her own until she remarried in 1882.

Stubbin was from the Rosewood Church of Christ and toward the end of 1897 and the beginning of 1898, he was accepted by the Foreign Missions Committee to become the first male Church of Christ member and the first Queenslander to be sent overseas on behalf of the Churches of Christ (Mary Thompson, who went to India in 1891, was the first Church of Christ missionary full stop). Frederick worked with the American mission field during his time in India. In early 1898, he participated in mission meetings to raise awareness and funds in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney, before returning to Brisbane and departing for Harda, Madhya Pradesh, in central India. He was just 21-years-old and, as 'The Australian Christian' described him, "young, inexperienced" and "just away from his dear ones."²⁹⁰ Despite his inexperience, he was a competent builder and maintenance worker, and it was felt that he would best serve the field as a practically minded missionary who would be of use constructing the buildings needed for the developing fields in Harda and Hatta. He would certainly be that, and more. AW Stephenson would summarise his work decades later: "Harda and Hatta were the chief places of location, but being appointed as an industrial missionary, his services were extremely valuable in the initial stages of the mission. He was so versatile that the natives were amazed at what he could do. He not only built houses and necessary buildings, but prepared all the materials required for same. The practical and spiritual help of these workers made a valuable contribution in the pioneering stages of the American work."²⁹¹

The context of life in Harda

The British, with their *laissez-faire* approach to economics, ruled colonial India. The British rulers believed that the market, despite sometimes tragic external circumstances, should be left to correct itself without Government intervention. This was an attitude that had a devastating impact when Stubbin arrived to work with the Foreign Christian Missionary Society (FCMS), the mission arm of the American Churches of Christ.

When Stubbin first arrived in Harda, the area had just barely recovered from the devastating famine of 1896-97. He participated in language studies, and could report by December 1898 that he could read and write "almost as well as my English" and "talk a little bit to the natives."²⁹²

The summer monsoons failed again in 1899, and the subsequent drought ushered in another devastating famine (1899-1901), made worse by the hoarding of grain by suppliers in order to drive prices up. Grain riots occurred, and some sources estimate the loss of life from starvation and malnutrition over this period as ranging from 1 million to 4.5 million people. Central India, where Stubbin was working, was one of the worst affected areas. In 1901, Stubbin went to Calcutta where he physically broke down from the impacts of the famine. He wrote: "... I was so weak and low that when I had to go to that dirtiest of all cities, I took fever and had to stay just 28 days. It was not the famine work that broke me down. It was the famine sights. No man with a conscience could lay his head to rest without feeling that he had really done his duty for the day, and was that tired that he could hardly raise his head to do any more. It needed strength from above every day, yea, every hour and every moment of the day."²⁹³

Some of that "duty" included an increase to Stubbin's building projects, particularly to cater for the rising number of children orphaned during the famine.²⁹⁴ During the height of the famine, the building of a schoolhouse in Harda employed up to 700 local workers²⁹⁵; Stubbin was also a regular visitor to the Government camps, where – as he writes: "we... distributed blankets and food, and in some cases money, but very seldom the money."²⁹⁶ The 'we' in this statement is significant, because it indicates the arrival of Queensland's first female missionary to a foreign field, Frederick's fiancée, Miss Johanna Pfrunder, who on 1 May 1901, married Frederick. Johanna came to the Indian field alongside Mary Thompson, who had been on furlough back to Australia.

Johanna flits like a shadow through the pages of history – rarely referred to by her first name in Church of Christ histories (mostly as Mrs FE Stubbin as per the cultural norms), we can only glean the details of her life from Frederick's letters and those of other correspondents to 'The Australian Christian'. What we do know is that she and Frederick were engaged some time before 1898, that Johanna arrived in India in October 1900, married Frederick the next year, raised a family²⁹⁷ in India through difficulties and illness, and returned to Australia in 1907, the year before Frederick. Johanna died in 1956 in Brisbane, outliving Frederick by over two decades. It is somewhat speculative to say so, but both of them must have had remarkable courage to go to India and stay the best part of a decade in difficult conditions.

From official Church of Christ histories, we could get the impression that Frederick’s main focus in India was building infrastructure. While he was an effective builder and overseer, contributing to the work on the field through building and extending school buildings, orphanages, dispensaries and the like, his time from mid-1902 is characterised by a growing ministry in evangelism, discipleship and sacrificial mercy (which was also dependent on Johnanna’s participation). He was able to do this because he trained his workers to be leaders, and trusted them: “my workmen know me now, and I can set them to work in the morning and I need not look at them again all day”.²⁹⁸

In April 1902, he writes that he and Johanna “have taken seven little orphan boys to care for”²⁹⁹ as he thanks a supporter for their financial gift. On Easter Sunday, he conducted the baptisms of 31 girls from the orphanage and, in June 1903, his ministry is described as “preaching in bazaars and by the wayside... supervises the buildings, draws plans and oversees erection of structures for hospitals and dispensaries. He has an orphanage under his care.”³⁰⁰ As his preaching ministry increased, he was given a horse to better access remoter areas. In mid-1904, the family moved to Hatta, which was described at the time as “a hard district for mission work”³⁰¹ by ‘The Australian Christian’. At Hatta they were helping establish a new mission field among a population of 9,000 people. The orphanage that he and Johanna looked after in Baidyanath, as well as the boys they cared for, came with them to Hatta.

In August 1904, Frederick was struck down with a severe illness (“very ill with fever”³⁰²), which required constant nursing from Johanna and the employment of a nurse from Damoh. Illness (such as the bout that knocked him low in Calcutta) was a recurring theme in the letters from the Stubbins. When AC Rankine³⁰³ visited them in late August/early September 1904, he too commented on Frederick’s illness (“a severe bout of the fever again”) and that the “little

boy and girl have sore eyes”. Johanna, in Rankine’s report to the Foreign Missions Committee, had “developed into a fine Christian woman”³⁰⁴ – evidently, as she was able to face the stresses of a sick family, a burgeoning work and four years without a real break in difficult conditions. What fever did Frederick suffer from? We aren’t sure – various fevers may have been common in the area, including malaria and typhoid. It may have also been a non-specific fever brought on by local conditions and exhaustion. Regardless of the specific illness, it would be ill health that would eventually send the Stubbin family home.

Without speculating, it seems that it is likely that a combination of exhaustion and illness were the most likely factors in terminating the Stubbins’ time in India. In early 1905, Frederick reports that he visited 36 villages in the space of 24 days.³⁰⁵ He gives a snapshot of what those visits could entail; in one village, he began to preach: “I preached to them for 2½ hours on the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus... When I had finished, the head man of the village thanked me for my lecture and invited me to stay in his village for a week and preach to them every day.”³⁰⁶ Frederick stayed on for the week, and the leader of the village, after listening to a four-hour sermon, declared “that he wanted to become a Christian”, but like many others, balked at “the final step for fear of their caste-fellows.”³⁰⁷ It was arduous work, and sometimes without obvious results. Frederick continued on, saying “we have preached to many hundreds who have never heard the gospel before, and in a native State where missionaries have never gone before.”³⁰⁸ There was opposition too, but by and large letters back home reported that the audiences listened well and often invited Frederick and his team to stay on and preach for a longer period of time – sometimes offering land for the mission to be based on in their enthusiasm to hear more.³⁰⁹ By Christmas 1904, Frederick could report that the “we are all enjoying the best of health.”³¹⁰

Missionaries can often be made into flawless saints as we read back, or seen as colonial vandals, depending on one’s view. Frederick and Johanna were, just as we are, products of their time. In their reports back home, they report on a mix of success and of difficulties – the numerous illnesses of Frederick, for example, are not hidden. One report that came through in March 1904 highlights the surprising transparency of the time. It seems that Frederick was out and about one day when he heard an Indian woman scream. “He rushed in and found her husband with one knee on her chest and one hand on her throat.” The husband then enquired what Frederick wanted, whereby Frederick “politely caught him by the back of the neck and threw him outside, and sent for the magistrate.”³¹¹ The incident serves to highlight two things: the openness of the communication back home, and Frederick’s sense of justice. Perhaps, also, an impulsive streak.

Later years

The reports in ‘The Australian Christian’ of the work being done by the Stubbins in India drop off after 1904-05. It is hard to say why, but perhaps the illnesses that would cause their departure were beginning to impact their work and the time they had for communicating as often as they did up until 1904.

Johanna and their two children arrived in Adelaide in March 1907 from Mumbai, and then proceeded directly back to Queensland. Adelaide’s ‘The Register’ recorded in its religious notices that Frederick “was unable to leave his post for the present.”³¹² Johanna took on a role of publicising the missionary work, speaking at Boonah in July 1907 on “Indian mission work.”³¹³

It is likely that the family attended Ann Street Church of Christ – a Mr F Stubbin is advertised as leading the communion at the 11am service on Easter Sunday, 1931.³¹⁴

Frederick died on 13 February 1934, aged 57, and was buried the next day at Toowong Cemetery³¹⁵. Johanna died on 9 September 1956³¹⁶.

Legacy

Although relatively unknown, even through Church of Christ circles, Frederick and Johanna Stubbin leave behind a significant legacy. To begin with, they were the first missionaries to be sent overseas and supported by the Queensland Churches of Christ; second, the scope of their ministry in India included infrastructure to benefit the local community (orphanages, schools and wells to name a few); third, they spoke out the gospel; fourth, they had a significant impact on the local community during times of crises, most notably the 1899-1901 famine, and finally, their ministry was sacrificial and holistic – the best example being the taking in of seven orphaned boys into their own care, while raising their own two children.

Their ministry combined infrastructure projects, evangelism and discipleship, emergency relief and care of the vulnerable. It is that model of ministry that the Queensland Churches of Christ Conference – through local churches, Kingdom access points and Care – are replicating today.



Pioneering Papua New Guinea

There was a strong Queensland connection to the opening of a new mission field in Papua New Guinea, which was authorised by the Federal Conference in 1956. Frank Beale, along with Harold Finger, was asked to form the advance team to scout out a location in the lower Ramu River in northern Papua New Guinea to base the mission. It was a region that was without schools, medical facilities or other ‘major’ Protestant missions.³¹⁷

Beale and Finger arrived in May 1958, and soon found that there were numerous challenges, including the terrain, the climate, and the numerous languages spread across different people groups. Beale reported that when they built the mission station at Bunapas, the villagers from the five closest villages spoke five different languages. Beale was also joined by his wife, Win, who had a significant medical ministry as well, and their two young daughters. Beale reminisces that he built “a house from local bush timber with palm bush floors and no doors or fly screens over any opening [resulting in] plenty of mosquitoes!”³¹⁸ Over the next decade, Beale and his fellow workers pioneered new mission stations on the Ramu and Keram Rivers and their tributaries.

Beale’s practical theology of mission that he recorded in the 1950s still strikes one as being relevant today. He advocated a view of mission that certainly has an affinity with the modern day workings of Churches of Christ Global Mission Partners and the missionary outlook of many churches. As the work in Papua New Guinea began to consolidate, Beale believed that mission stations or missionary outposts should only be established at the invitation of the local people; he believed that missionaries needed to “develop a sense of belonging” to a community before they evangelised, and that they also needed to learn the beliefs and practices of the groups they were reaching, “without condoning them – allow the Holy Spirit to change people from within.” He also advocated the gospel being presented as “God’s love revealed in Jesus” and not as law based system of “do’s and don’ts”. One of Beale’s strongest beliefs and practices was that the missionaries came as friends – often to the extent that if the missionaries walked into a village, but there was no villager prepared to introduce them, or there was hostility toward their presence, they would simply move on.³¹⁹ All the while, these pioneers had a vision of a Papua New Guinean church that would be in existence some 50 years later, self-supporting and reaching out.

The work progressed relatively quickly from the pioneering stages. In 1961, a site was chosen for a hospital complex at Bunapas, and by 1964 work had been established in six villages, four of which had schools, and there were three locations that had medical work. Importantly, the fledgling churches in the regions were growing. Beale and the others sought to replace themselves in order to establish a truly indigenous form of church and conference system in Papua New Guinea. Sometimes this was not easy, as Beale himself reflected: “At times missionaries experienced heartaches as they watched the indigenous church make decisions”.³²⁰ Yet they knew that, just as they had been led by the Holy Spirit and allowed to make and learn from their own mistakes, so too could the indigenous Papua New Guinean church. Frank Beale’s summation of his and Win’s time in Papua New Guinea pays testament to that belief: “I spent 15 years being scared and out of my depth. Then when the growth took place it was like body surfing. Working with the Holy Spirit means that you are being carried along with your head only just above water and if you don’t ride with it you get dumped and left behind. It was the greatest 15 years of my life.”³²¹



PNG children with Bible translations

Frank and Win Beale left Papua New Guinea in 1972, having shared the wave of the work of the Spirit with their co-workers and the growing indigenous church. Frank and Win continued to contribute to the Churches of Christ in Queensland, including church work at Townsville, with Frank also working in chaplaincy at Churches of Christ Care’s Fair Haven aged care facility in Maryborough and spending time as the Director of Christian Education for the Queensland Conference. Win died in 1989, and Frank remarried in 1990 to Ros, whom he continued to serve with in both Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. Remarkably, some 50 years after riding the wave of the Spirit in Papua New Guinea, Frank was still actively preaching and teaching. Frank Beale passed away in 2016, leaving a legacy of a PNG with an emphasis on evangelism.

Two significant contributors: *Aileen Draney and Fay Christensen*

In focusing (briefly) on the ministry of Aileen Draney and Fay Christensen, we touch on almost 50 years of combined ministry in Papua New Guinea, further consolidating the special connection between the Churches of Christ in Queensland and the island nation to its north.

Aileen Draney, a teacher, left in September 1959 for Papua New Guinea, from the significant sending church of Toowoomba. When she arrived, the Churches of Christ work in the Ramu region was barely a year old. She stayed on in a teaching capacity for 30 years, with her greatest legacy being the establishment of the Yamen Bible School for women, a school that “offers young women a chance to continue practical and spiritual studies in order to better contribute to their own communities and churches”.³²² Draney’s other contributions to the work in Papua New Guinea include the development and teaching of Bible Correspondence courses, training Sunday school teachers and running courses for women. The Yamen Bible School is now incorporated into the Gandep College.

One of Aileen’s letters to her supporters in April 1982 gives a realistic snapshot of the conditions that she faced in the village of Yamen. Evidently, some of her supporters back home were nervous about this single woman staying in fairly basic conditions. Her frank letter gives an account of what her early days in Yamen were like and may not have allayed too many concerns. She wrote of the persistence of the local mosquitos “that knew how to bite in the most awkward places at the most awkward times”, of petrol that was stolen by some men from down river who were “very much under the weather from drink at the time” and of her new house in Yamen, with only “insulation paper for the ceiling of my house which makes a very noisy race track for the rats”. However, these seem

incidental to Aileen’s acceptance in the village and the start of her significant ministry in establishing the Bible College.

Aileen also wrote of the establishment of a Bible college committee, the likely students who would attend, the progress of the building of the college and the fact that she felt safe and welcomed by the villagers. In her letter, she tells an anecdote of a night at the college building where she and some villagers were laughing and calling out in fun “and before we knew it we were surrounded with young men wanting to find out what was the trouble. Apparently some of the young men... have committed themselves to come running if they hear any loud calling out. We should be safe.” Aileen had also been shown much hospitality, writing that “over seven pigs have been killed since I arrived and a cassowary as well and I have shared in some of all of this”. She also spoke warmly of the daily devotions in the village, which were signalled by a drum roll.

This letter home, albeit a small sliver of her time in Papua New Guinea, tells of a down to earth woman whose character and ministry were widely accepted and appreciated.

Aileen passed away in October 2005 after contracting an infection from a recent visit to Papua New Guinea.

Fay Christensen is also from Toowoomba, and was sent out by the church at Toowoomba North. Both she and her twin sister, Jan, have made an impact for the kingdom through missionary work. Fay and Jan’s father, Horace Christensen, also headed up the Queensland Missionary Board and made a significant contribution in that capacity for many years.



*A Draney and
H Christensen*

Fay went to Papua New Guinea after feeling that God had called her there at the age of eight. She arrived in 1974, having been accepted by the Overseas Mission Board (OMB). Fay was to start as the Head teacher of the school at Chungribu, situated on the Ramu River.³²³ However, Fay’s contribution will be best remembered by the stellar work she did in getting the New Testament translated into the Rao language. Fay’s interest in this language came as she discovered that Pidgin (the trade language) was not the heart language of the people. Therefore, for example, it was not the language used to make decisions. In her early days, as she listened to Diana Catts, another OMB missionary, practice the language at night, her desire to learn and use the Rao language grew.³²⁴

After a year in Papua New Guinea, Fay went to Sydney to do the intensive Summer Institute of Linguistics course to prepare her for translation work, a process that would take up the bulk of the next quarter of a century, amongst the other jobs that rose to the surface of the missionary life. In 1982, a selection of stories from the gospels were printed in Rao in between church visitations, pastors’ workshops, education meetings, church planting and administrative tasks, including a year in Madang doing administrative work.³²⁵ It is clear that although translation was a passion of Fay’s, the busy and growing mission work in Papua New Guinea demanded much of each of the workers. She was able to gain some locals to help her and to work independently on various chapters, men including Tom, Mark, Jacky, Jamson and Silas, so the work progressed well until Fay was elected to head the mission work, and her workload subsequently increased.³²⁶

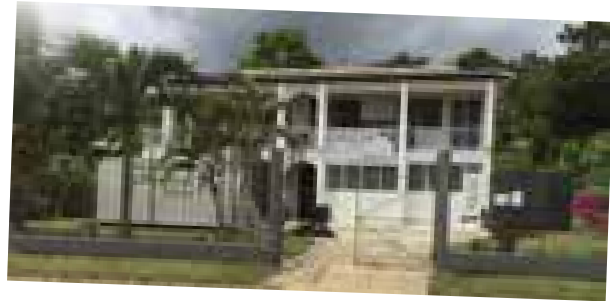
There were difficulties that Fay experienced, but as she records in her book, *Ramu Woman*, God always intervened with funding, helpers, typists or encouragement to keep going on a project that required so much time, effort and diligence. One has to keep in mind that, for many years, the technology was slow – nothing like it is now – and the translation of the

New Testament into the heart language of the Rao people was an achievement worthy of commendation. By 1998, Fay and her team had a definite goal in mind for the Rao New Testament: “the New Testament for the Rao people in the year 2000!”³²⁷

In keeping with the nature of the project, the final stretch of checking and re-checking the work was not easy. In mid-1999, Fay organised for herself and four helpers to spend four weeks in Madang to ensure that the translation was correct. Despite almost constant noise from jackhammers, steel being cut, and a neighbour’s new stereo being tested out, the prolonged illness of Jimjari, one of the helpers, and just the effort required to run a house of five people, the moment came that Fay knew that the work was done. One of her helpers, Reuben, told her: “It’s good. As we’ve been reading this, I’ve been crying for joy inside me, just to hear God’s Word in my language.”³²⁸ A quarter of a million words later, a quarter of a century later, the Rao people had their New Testament.

In 2000, 12 boxes of Rao New Testaments were unloaded on the airstrip at Chungribu. The village had swelled in size as people gathered from all over to witness what one man described as “the biggest day the Rao people have ever had”.³²⁹ At one point in the ceremony, Fay noticed that grown men were crying and hugging her. One man was asked why he was crying, and his response as recorded by Fay is a gospel truth: “I suddenly realised that God speaks my language”.³³⁰ To the thousands of Rao speakers, Fay Christensen, a small, slight woman from Toowoomba, will be forever remembered as helping them see that wonderful insight via a ministry of devotion and persistence.

Shortly after that historic occasion, Fay decided it was time to leave Papua New Guinea and she returned home to Queensland in 2001.



Ongoing mission to Vanuatu

Space simply does not allow the time to go into all the details of all the missionaries that the Churches of Christ in Queensland sent out through the Churches of Christ mission agency, let alone those who went to mission fields through other agencies. It does seem fitting, however, to return to Vanuatu, the ‘first fruit’ of the Queensland push into foreign mission via Thompson and Tabymancum at the turn of the twentieth century to see how the passing years have borne even more fruit.

Vanuatu has been well served by Queensland workers through Overseas Mission Board/Global Mission Partners over the decades. Notable work has been carried out by people such as the Beales, Jan Christensen, and Lyall and Jill Muller. Gerry Weatherall (who would later become Director of Mission for Churches of Christ in Queensland) and his wife Joy, was principal of the Churches of Christ school at Londua from 1992 to 1995.

Most, if not all, of the church work is now carried out by the Church of Christ in Vanuatu, which is a legacy to the work of the missionaries who helped build, and then support, the church in Vanuatu. That story, of course, has not ended, nor has the partnership that has borne so much fruit.



What the Churches of Christ in Queensland contribute today is badly needed resources, the most recent being the opening of the medical centre in Luganville in May 2013. Medical Santo is the latest partnership between the Churches of Christ in Queensland and the Churches of Christ in Vanuatu, and it is hoped that this facility will be able to meet the needs of approximately 140,000 people in northern Vanuatu. Significantly, one of key instigators in the formation of this important facility is a Queenslander, Allen Cox. Allen and his wife Lyn, members of Lakeshore Church of Christ on the Sunshine Coast, have contributed significantly to the work in Vanuatu for many years.

Allen explains that: “Poor health and death at an early age is an accepted part of life in Vanuatu that I believe as Christians we cannot close our eyes to.”³³¹ It is a comment that reminds us that for over a century the churches in Queensland have kept their eyes open to the needs of the people of Vanuatu.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, with John Thompson’s pioneering work in the cane fields of the Isis region with the Islanders, a significant story has formed and continues to impact both the churches in Queensland and Vanuatu. It is a significant story, one that speaks of a man who ministered to those at the margins, and helped them to hear and see the gospel in action. From there, lives were changed, churches were built, and a lasting, growing partnership between the churches in Queensland and Vanuatu was born.

Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, many members of the Churches of Christ in Queensland have gone out sharing the light of Christ in word and deed to many regions of the world. To focus on each one would, indeed, be a book in itself. By focusing briefly on the ministry to the Islanders, and in Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea, we have seen a snapshot of what the Queensland churches have contributed over a long period of time. May the examples of both those named and unnamed inspire others to emulate their sacrifice and continue to advance the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER NINE: *Ministry to and with Indigenous People in Queensland*

There can be no doubt that the arrival in 1788 of 11 ships from Britain at Botany Bay had a disastrous impact on the lives of the Indigenous people of Australia.

Throughout the following decades, the Indigenous population was subjected to forced expulsion from their lands, degradation, abuse, imported diseases, and social ills, as well as massacres. On top of that, there were numerous pieces of legislation that discriminated against the Indigenous people, treating them as sub-human, which emerged from crass stereotypes based on misguided beliefs and, frankly, racist dispositions.

Rather than dwell on the details of such actions, there is no more pertinent summary of the responsibility of the Churches of Christ in Queensland than what was released by the Social Service Department in their 1988 report: “In our reflection we can also see that there have been some social disasters which have resulted from the process of settlement and of special note among these is the position and place of Aboriginal people in Australian society. We have a need to commit ourselves to the important tasks of seeking, in the name of Christ, to help our Aboriginal and Islander brothers and sisters to stand with us in the equality that Christ bestows upon all who are his disciples.”³³²

What follows is the story of the Churches of Christ in Queensland’s attempt to do that – complete with its successes and its difficulties.

The beginnings of Indigenous ministry

It would not be until 1941 that there came a concerted and united effort from the Churches of Christ in Australia to minister to the Indigenous people of this nation. The Federal Aborigines Board (FAB)³³³ was formed and based in Perth, Western Australia, with the work initially based in Western Australia. In 1949, the Queensland Conference appointed a State Aborigines Committee to support the national initiative.³³⁴

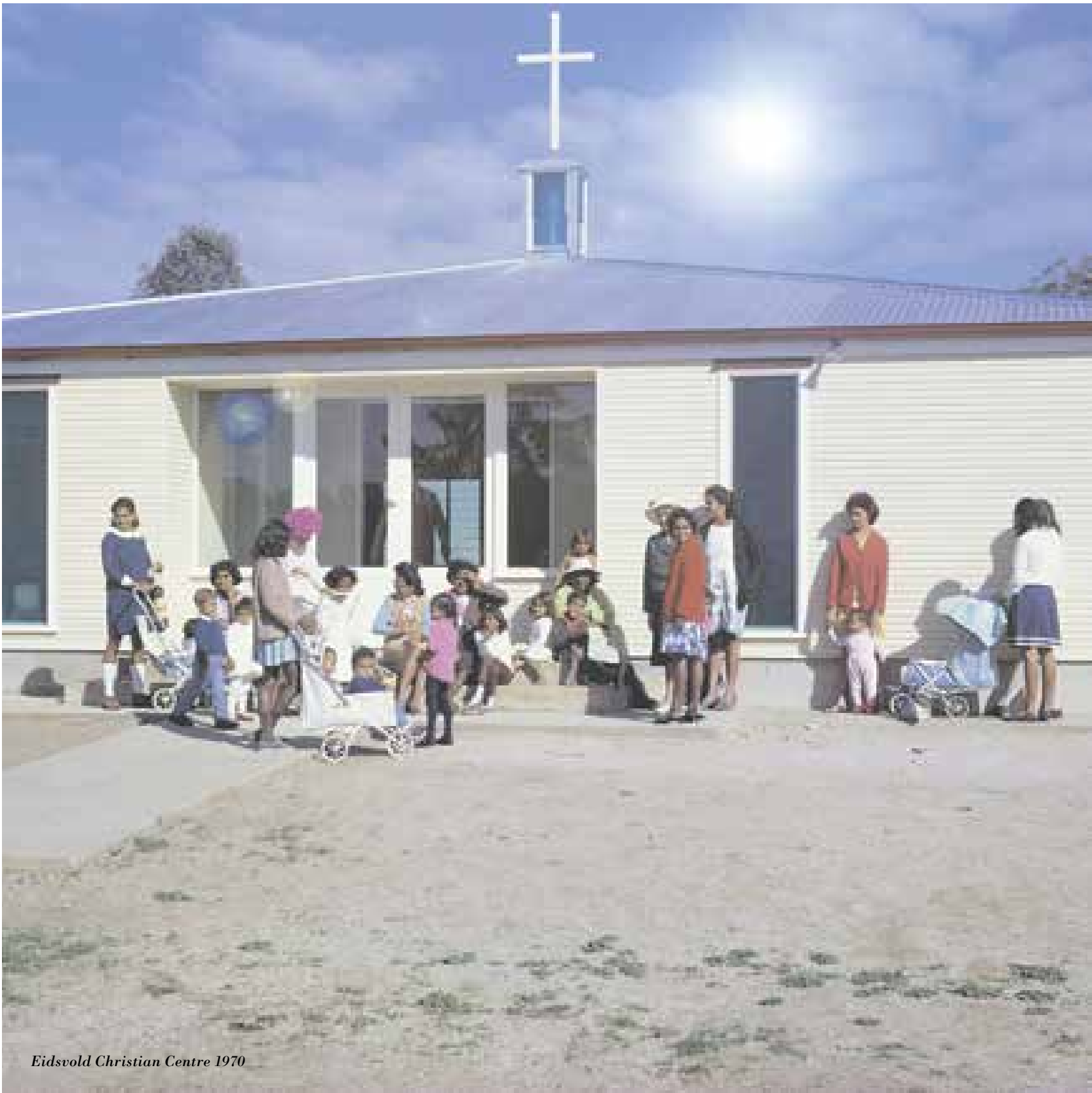
To coincide with the annual offering for Indigenous mission in February 1962, the Committee hosted Sonny Graham, an Indigenous minister³³⁵ from Western Australia, who spoke at various Queensland churches, including Acacia Ridge, Albion, Kingaroy, Murgon, Warwick, Sunnybank and Gladstone, with some of the congregations included both

Indigenous and non-Indigenous people among them.³³⁶ Sonny’s tour of Queensland, according to CR Burdeu, had him “visiting nearly every church”.³³⁷ From this brief report, we can see that Indigenous issues were slowly being raised in the Queensland churches. It is interesting to note that the report of Sonny’s visit to Queensland shared the front page of ‘The Australian Christian’ with the report of a record offering at the opening of the Southport chapel, on the Gold Coast. This visit was deemed to be of some national importance to the churches.

In 1962, the Queensland Committee was also asked to take over the work of the church at Eidsvold, approximately 400 kilometres north of Brisbane, which had begun in the 1950s, as there was a significant Indigenous population in the district. George Haigh reports that in 1963 there were 15 adult Indigenous people in the Eidsvold church, more than 50 Indigenous children, and three non-Indigenous families. In 1964, the church at Eidsvold was affiliated with the Queensland State Conference.³³⁸ Maston Bell, the Chairman of the FAB, visited Eidsvold and decided that while the work did not warrant a full-time minister, he encouraged Mr and Mrs Walter Kusay and Mr and Mrs Barry Farmer to make Eidsvold “their mission field.”³³⁹ This they did, and later that year their efforts were recognised by the Federal Conference (Brisbane), which expressed “it’s appreciation of the work of Mr and Mrs Kusay and Mr and Mrs Farmer among the Aborigine children and adults in Eidsvold, Queensland, which has resulted in the establishment of an indigenous church and Sunday school in the settlement.”³⁴⁰

The ministry of the church increased with the calling of the newly wed Lyle and Hazel Morris, who began ministering at Eidsvold in February 1968. This young couple from Gilgandra (NSW) would have a profound impact on the shape of Queensland’s Indigenous ministry to, and with, Indigenous people. The small Gilgandra Church of Christ (which has since closed) punched well above its weight when it came to forming mission minded disciples. A succession of leaders there helped shape future ministers and missionaries, and there was also a strong FAB connection at Gilgandra. Hazel boarded with the parents of Dorothy Butler, who worked in Carnarvon with the FAB. “I am just so blessed,” recalled Hazel when thinking about her formation at Gilgandra. “That little church has made an impact for God.”

The Eidsvold church called the Morrisises with the promise of a small salary (\$10 per week) as well as a caravan that would serve as their manse. This was not a lucrative position, but as Lyle told Hazel at the time, “If they have the faith to ask, we have the faith to move.” Fortunately, by the time the Morrisises arrived, a home had been found for the newly married couple. It was a small house with an outdoor toilet and a corrugated iron roof. In the hot months Lyle attempted to cool the house down by putting the sprinkler on the roof. However, this modest accommodation was luxurious compared to what many of the Indigenous people had to endure in the area. “The Indigenous people lived on the outskirts,” recalled Lyle. They were “fringe dwellers”, and Hazel remembers that the “people lived in dreadful conditions in Eidsvold and Normanton. They had tough times.” There were significant issues around housing conditions, education, health and employment. Even when the Indigenous people were employed, “they weren’t paid equal conditions,” said Hazel. The ministry of the Morrisises in Eidsvold certainly included an advocacy component and, as was the case in many communities across Australia at the time, this advocacy ministry sometimes ran headlong into racist and ignorant attitudes.



Eidsvold Christian Centre 1970

(The Christian Centre at Eidsvold) presented the church and the mission workers with the opportunity to provide for the needs of the whole Aboriginal community, through spiritual ministry, teaching and outreach, social welfare assistance and child care through foster care and the establishment of family care homes.

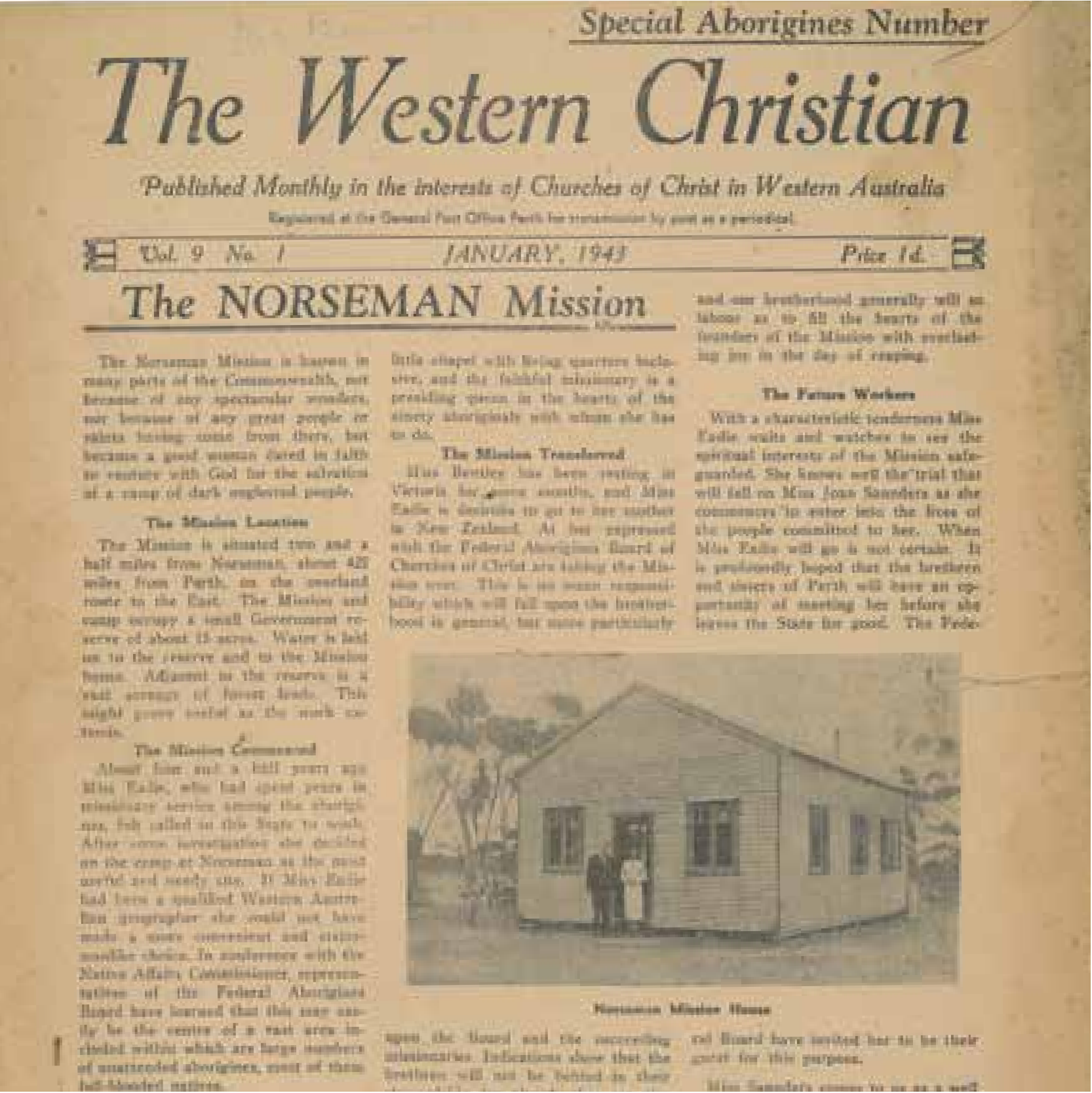
George V Haigh

Another letter from Western Australia, this time from David Hammer (Federal Secretary of the FAB), suggested that the work in Eidsvold would not prove to be viable, and so the FAB would not be officially involved.³⁴¹ Regardless, the Morrisises still went ahead and started a ministry among – and with – Indigenous people that has since lasted over 40 years in various incarnations. It was, in fact, the local Indigenous people who had invited the Morrisises to begin ministry among them, and who ultimately decided that the ministry there was both viable and necessary.

Work on a new Christian Centre was begun at Eidsvold, with the team of builders led by Horace Christiansen and Harold Scholl. Significantly, it was David Hammer who led the service at the opening of the Centre in June 1969³⁴². Haigh says that the Christian Centre “presented the church and the mission workers with the opportunity to provide for the needs of the whole Aboriginal community, through spiritual ministry, teaching and outreach, social welfare assistance and child care through foster care and the establishment of family care homes”.³⁴³ In the early 1970s, there were positive changes occurring in Eidsvold. For instance, government funds were becoming available to lift the housing conditions for Indigenous people, and efforts to improve the health of Indigenous people were also increased – the Morrisises remember that, “all the children of the town were immunised” around their trampoline in the mid-1970s. The church also grew, featuring some dramatic life changes and conversion stories. Even when some of the younger Indigenous people were employed out of town, they were reluctant to leave because it meant missing church services. The Morrisises would often do 160km round trips to get the young people from church back to their stations on Sunday nights. This pioneering ministry at Eidsvold set a pattern for Indigenous ministry in Queensland, with an emphasis on word and deed in presenting the gospel to Indigenous communities.

The Morrisises served at Eidsvold until 1978, by which time the work had come under the FAB’s mantle (1973). By the early 1980s, there was a church with a Sunday school and other ministries, including religious education, social outreach work and two “operational Group Homes”.³⁴⁴ Fruit was borne with local Indigenous men and women active in ministry, including preaching and outreach. Robert and Jocelyn Clancy were examples of this, and the Clancys went on to serve in other AICF fields over the years, including Brisbane (while studying at Kenmore) and Mareeba, where Robert became the first Indigenous pastor of the church, as well as serving on both the FAB and AICF boards. According to the Morrisises, “Robert had a burden to reach the Islanders and Aboriginal people,” and was “passionate to establish an Aboriginal church in Brisbane.” Although this urban Indigenous church did not form under Robert Clancy’s leadership, that passion and focus on reaching urban Indigenous people eventually found an outlet at the Logan City Church.

Other significant ministries were undertaken by Jan Christiansen and Muriel Holt, to name but a few. When the Morrisises left in May 1978, the ministry had grown significantly, with over 100 children attending the Sunday school. Ern and Pam Paddick stepped into their shoes until 1981, and in that time two family group homes (approved prior to the departure of the Morrisises) were opened in June 1979.



The Morrisses moved on to the Gulf Country, basing themselves in Normanton (still supported by the FAB) in January 1979, where the Aboriginal Inland Mission (AIM) had established a church in 1929. The Normanton church subsequently became a part of the Churches of Christ.³⁴⁵ An outreach ministry was quickly established, and practical assistance was also offered to people in the town, including short-term accommodation and business advice.³⁴⁶ Life in ministry was not always straightforward. Lyle tells the story of the transmission going in his car, and that the only way the car would work was when it was in reverse. He then proceeded to drive the last 150kms in reverse into Normanton. In many ways, this story exemplifies the need to be both innovative and stubborn when it comes to overcoming obstacles in ministry.

Mareeba, roughly an hour’s drive east of Cairns, was to become another setting for Indigenous ministry. Originally the work at Mareeba had been conducted by the AIM, and was handed over to Pastor Phil Brewster. In 1981, Ern and Pam Paddick took up a ministry at Mareeba when Brewster moved to WA. The Paddicks were also assisted by local Indigenous leaders, including lay preacher George Meldrum. By 1983, the membership of the church had grown from 15 to approximately 60 people.³⁴⁷ Don Stewart, then the head of Churches of Christ Care, described Mareeba as having an “active Church, and an outreach program to surrounding districts”, largely operated by a volunteer staff in 1984.³⁴⁸ The Normanton church, too, was recorded in 1985 as having a “flourishing work with an important input to the community as a Church, Youth and Sunday School work [and] Community Social outreach.”³⁴⁹ A pioneering ministry in Brisbane began in January 1980, with Robert and Jocelyn



*Olive Burdeu
with parcels for
Aboriginal
Mission*

Clancy appointed to full-time ministry there. Kenmore College students assisted them in the initial stages, and promising signs of growth in the ministry were evident by the mid-1980s.³⁵⁰ In July 1987, the Kingswood Park chapel was handed over to the Indigenous work, with a name change signifying the start of the ministry of Logan City. To this date, it remains one of the few entries that Churches of Christ have initiated into urban mission and ministry with Indigenous people.

The positive summary of the Queensland work by Don Stewart in the early to mid-1980s did not – in his mind – reflect the current status in 1988. In Stewart’s words, the state of the Queensland Indigenous ministry was a “sorry picture from what it was”.³⁵¹ Stewart’s comments reflect that there was a growing frustration in Queensland that its Indigenous ministry was in danger of faltering, and there appeared to be no Federal strategy or support to stop that. The FAB did move workers across from its WA fields to fill some of the vacancies as they opened, yet a sense of frustration persisted at a State level that the Queensland fields were being ‘neglected’ federally and that funds raised in Queensland were not being used for ministry in Queensland. Combined with the ‘tyranny of distance’ between Perth and Brisbane, these factors led to the next chapter in Indigenous ministry, as the Queensland work sought to separate itself from the federal body.

Queensland goes it alone in Indigenous ministry

There is still understandable sensitivity over this particular aspect of Indigenous history and ministry in Queensland. It is relatively ‘recent history’, and the people involved have invested significant portions of their lives in ministry to and with Indigenous people. The practice over the past two decades has been that these matters should not be discussed publicly, but to continue that practice denies the churches in Queensland the answers to two basic questions: First, why is Queensland’s Indigenous ministry separated from the rest of Australia’s? The second question is at the heart of this book’s philosophy: What can we learn from the past? It must also be noted before we examine the details of this era, that despite the sharp rhetoric that was sometime expressed at State and committee levels, the workers on the fields continued to carry on as best they could, and often saw significant fruit from their ministries.

By 1989, the FAB was emerging from difficulties with regards to its perceived financial viability. Federal Conference Executive Minutes through 1987-88 reference the financial difficulties that the FAB was experiencing, but also note that the “foundations for a much leaner FAB” had been laid.”³⁵² These financial difficulties were mostly due to a change in West Australian State Government policy with regards to Child Care Support, which meant a \$500,000 drop in income per year for the FAB.³⁵³ Importantly, the minutes also reference tensions between the FAB and the Queensland Aborigines and Islander Board (QAIB). A decision was then made to have a meeting between the two parties to clarify “the future relationship between the FAB and the Queensland A.I.B”,³⁵⁴ suggesting that the difficulties were significant.

Concerns about the relationship had also been raised by the QAIB and communicated to their federal counterparts in October 1987.³⁵⁵ The main areas of concern from Queensland’s perspective were the management of the children’s homes in Eidsvold, and whether the FAB was using Queensland Government money specifically allocated for the Eidsvold homes to fund other FAB work outside of Queensland. There were also suggestions that the Queensland Family Services Department “had difficulties with out-of-State administration”³⁵⁶ of the Queensland homes. When the QAIB raised these concerns with the FAB, the Queensland delegates felt that they were not heard, and that their concerns appeared to not be taken seriously enough. Other issues included a perceived failure to “grasp the seriousness of the problems between the Department of Family Services and the F.A.B”.³⁵⁷ Critically, the QAIB also considered that “it has lost any real function in decision making, policy formulation, or direct involvement in any of the Queensland fields.”³⁵⁸

From an FAB perspective, there were concerns regarding a perceived lack of process regarding fundraising in Queensland, and that the QAIB were acting provocatively in regard to the language used in some of their correspondence. Strong letters had been written; emotionally charged language was used and then rescinded, but although the words were taken back, the damage often could not be. Miscommunication occurred, and, at one point, the QAIB believed that they had been given verbal permission from the Executive Director of FAB to raise funds for Queensland work from Queensland churches, without sending the proceeds back to Perth.³⁵⁹



The FAB felt that it was doing all it could to support the work of the Queensland fields during a time of significant funding changes in an increasingly complex national context where funding for the FAB centres from the churches was often short of what was needed. Regardless of who was in the ‘right’ or the ‘wrong’, by 1989 there were serious cracks in the unity of the Indigenous work at a governance level. Perception was becoming the new reality.

The QAIB Board members went to the Queensland Conference where they were encouraged to continue to present their concerns to the FAB. Don Stewart, President of Federal Conference (the first Kenmore graduate to be appointed to that role) and the then Executive Director of the Queensland Social Services Department, was also worried about the breakdown in the relationship between the QAIB and FAB.

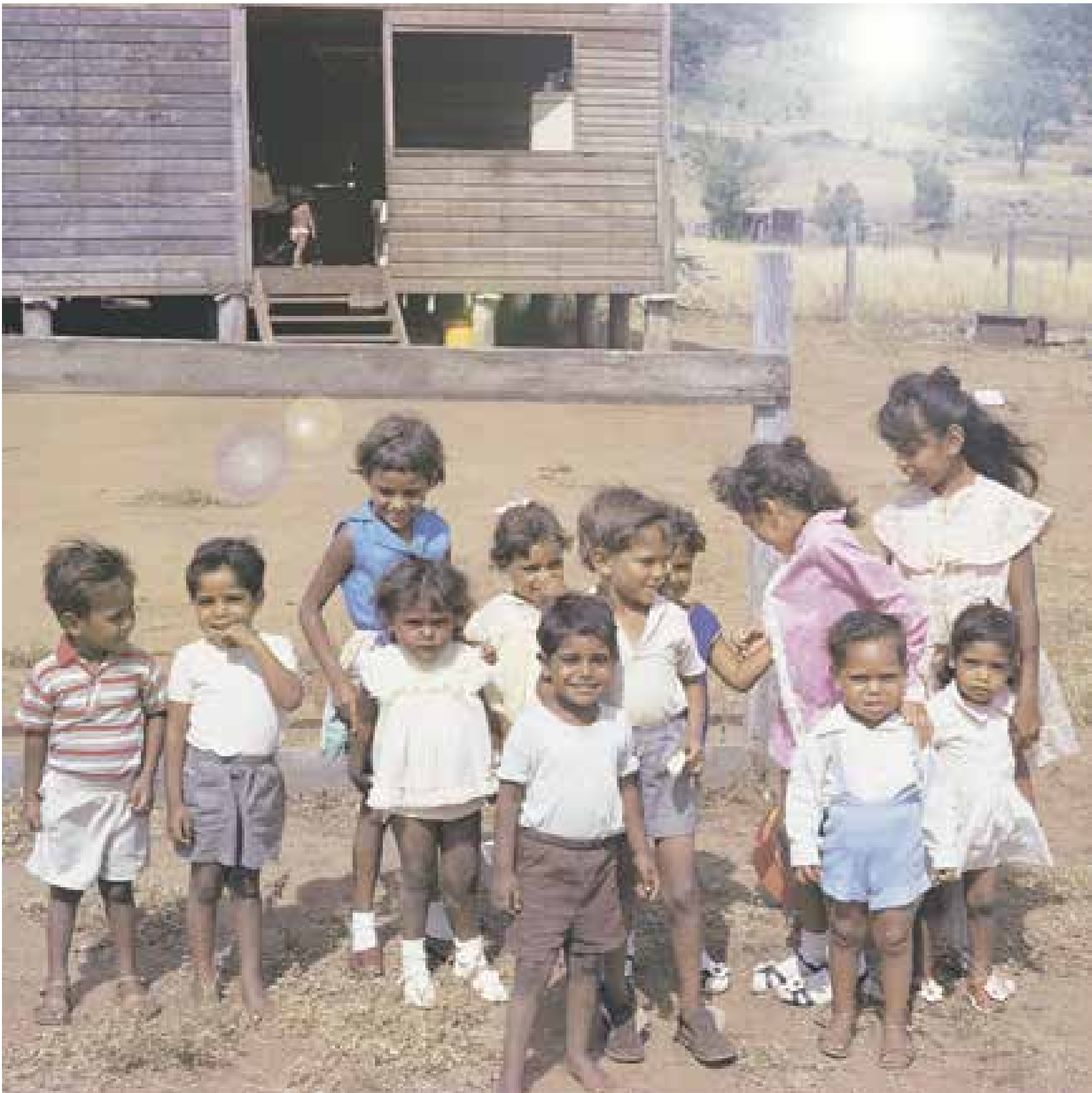
Stewart had also been appointed by the Queensland Conference to attempt to sort out the growing breach between the FAB and the QAIB, but found that the breach had gone too far by the time he tried to step in.³⁶⁰ However, if the average church attendee simply relied on reports in ‘The Australian Christian’ regarding the growing tensions between the federally endorsed FAB and sections of the QAIB, then the next FAB edition of ‘The Australian Christian’ would be a confusing read. There, one would find the FAB advertising its work in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, and advocating for “future plans” in Victoria, Western Australia, SA and the ACT.³⁶¹ What was missing? Mention of the ministries at Eidsvold, Mareeba, or Normanton. ‘The Australian Christian’ is silent on this omission. What lies behind the silence is crucial in understanding the formation of the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Christian Fellowship (AICF), which, incidentally, is first mentioned in ‘The Australian Christian’ in October 1990, with the invitation of Ben and Cathy Bird to ministry at Logan. There is no acknowledgement of how

the AICF had come into being.³⁶² ‘The Christian Echo’ was not silent. In September 1989, Ken Tedford’s (Secretary of QAIB) report to the State Conference is frank. His report begins with: “this year has been a very difficult year for the Queensland Aborigines and Islanders Board (QAIB) due to the problems related to the Federal Aborigines Board” and that the “relationships between Queensland Conference and the FAB have continued to deteriorate.”³⁶³ There was concern on the QAIB’s behalf that the Queensland works were in “decline” and that Eidsvold and Mareeba, in particular, were under-funded.³⁶⁴

The picture painted by Tedford is one of a state branch – struggling under federal supervision – that wanted autonomy in order to grow. This bleak report needs to be considered in its particular context, as it would be at the State Conference in October 1989 that the QAIB asked for Conference permission to operate outside of the supervision of the FAB.³⁶⁵ It is not surprising, given the breakdown in relationships between the two parties, and the pessimism expressed by the QAIB regarding the future of its work, that the Queensland Conference voted to transfer the responsibility for ministry to Indigenous people from FAB to the Queensland Conference. This transfer was completed on 1 February 1990.³⁶⁶ This was a dramatic decision in a movement that values unity.

The AICF era

The “new era”³⁶⁷ of ministry to Indigenous people did not come without difficulties – a prominent one being finding financial support for the Queensland centres and pastors from the Queensland churches. Finding personnel was also an issue; for instance, Mareeba was without full time ministry from 1988-94, until the arrival of the Thomsons in March 1994. Lyle Morris juggled being the State Coordinator of the AICF with filling in as both minister and administrator at Normanton in the early 1990s.



While there was a sense of “anticipation and great expectations of what God has in store”³⁶⁸ the early 1990s were years where the reality of laying the “foundations for the establishment of our ministry to the Aboriginal and Islander people”³⁶⁹ needed to be faced by the newly formed AICF. The bulk of this work fell on to the AICF State Coordinator, Lyle Morris, and his wife, Hazel. Gradually, and after much sacrifice, the churches slowly established themselves through the hard work of those on the ground, church visits, work parties, and financial support from the Queensland churches and also from Churches of Christ Care’s community support funds. What the past 20 years have seen is the growth of the AICF as it sought to connect with the Queensland churches in both financial and prayer partnerships, encourage work teams to visit centres that needed maintenance and repair, and establish mature and growing Indigenous churches in remote and, at times, difficult settings.

Stories of growth and ministry

There could be many, many stories told of the impact that the Churches of Christ in Queensland have had with Indigenous people in ministry. One such story is that of Vincent Mathieson. One of the encouraging aspects of this brief testimony is that it covers both the federal and state Indigenous ministry eras. Vincent’s story is one of a lost man who, carrying the burden of alcoholism and also having been removed from his mother as a young boy, came to Pastor Phil Brewster at the Mareeba community church looking for help to get to the Aboriginal Reserve. He received that help – and a whole lot more than he bargained for as well.

“At the end of 1979 the Lord showed Himself to me: He called out to me ‘Come’. I was shaking. For days I kept hearing that voice calling me ‘Come’. I was afraid. I told my wife ‘Jesus is calling me’. My Christian wife, Pam, told her brother. Tom said, ‘Tell him if he means it, to come with you to our Bible Study.’ There Pastor Phil talked with me and I prayed for forgiveness. Then Pastor prayed for me. I felt as if a heavy load was lifted from me. I felt light. I now had God in my life. I did a real turn around. God could, and did, change my life! What a change! Since then I’ve stuck to my God and He to me! The journey hasn’t always been easy. A couple of years ago when my wife was sick it was tough. I became her carer until the Lord called her home. But through it all God has helped and kept me. I’ve been one of the Aboriginal elders at Mareeba Community Church for years and on the Board of the Aboriginal and Islander Christian Fellowship since it began. I am also a Director of the Aboriginal and Islander Christian Community Centres Ltd. Over the years I’ve been involved in Sunday school, Youth Programs, open-air meetings, Prison Chaplaincy, Gospel Outreach trips, bus driver, guitarist, singer, and shared in leadership in the church program. But in these last months God has been stirring me, and calling me to walk a new – to be more involved in ministry.

In February 2008 I began a Certificate III of Theology at Wontulp-Bi-Bunya College for Aboriginal Christians at Cairns. In December 2012 I married Veronica and we are now pastoring the Mareeba Community Church. I am also continuing my Studies at Wontulp in Cairns. From Mareeba we do outreach to many places. As a Church we have a real interest in Townsville where I lived on the streets for many years.”³⁷⁰

The church is still growing at Mareeba, where 10 people were baptised in 2015.

Vincent’s story is one of hope, one in which Jesus Christ takes a life that looks lost and not only recovers that life, but sets the person on to a path of giving others life. His story is one that reminds us that life is full of ups and downs, where sometimes events occur that we would rather avoid but eventually find strength and growth from. The same is also true of ministries. While there have been points along the journey of Indigenous ministry in Queensland that we would perhaps rather hadn’t happened, we need to learn from those times, and embrace the stories and the principles that show Jesus at work in, through and alongside Indigenous people and their ministries. Vincent is now in full-time pastoral ministry at Mareeba.

The Normanton Christian Centre continues to impact the community around it, and one example of this influence is the annual Northern Aboriginal Christian Convention. The Convention was first hosted by the Normanton Christian Centre on the Delta Downs Cattle Station in 1984, and in 2011 attracted up to 500 people. The station is owned and managed by the Kurtjar people, who are the traditional owners of the land.³⁷¹

By mid-2013, the ministry of the AICF churches had spread beyond the four centres of Normanton, Eidsvold, Mareeba and Logan City. Indigenous ministry and mission is now spread throughout Queensland in a variety of ministry settings, including initiatives at Mt Isa and Townsville.

Lyle and Hazel Morris are still heavily involved in the ministry of the AICF, and coordinate the ministry on a voluntary basis. The administration of the AICF is located in Brisbane, where the Morris’ work tirelessly to ensure that the administrative load does not fall on the local AICF churches. Lyle still travels extensively to the fields, supporting the pastors and conducting funerals as needed. His and Hazel’s ministry to Indigenous people has lasted over 40 years.

Mt Isa is used as a base for Hazel Lauridsen’s Mobile Christian Bookshop, which takes Hazel beyond Queensland into the Northern Territory, a part of Australia where Churches of Christ have had little presence in Indigenous mission and ministry. Currently, Hazel’s work there (and the work in Normanton) is one of the few instances of Churches of Christ mission in the Northern Territory.

There are also ministry centres (“Cross Flow”) in northern New South Wales based at Fingal Head and also one in Dubbo, NSW.

Conclusion

Change has impacted both the AICF and the Australian Churches of Christ Indigenous Ministries (ACCIM) in recent years. ACCIM ceased as an organisation in June 2013, and handed its operations and centres over to Global Mission Partners (GMP). In 2005, the AICF ceased to be an agency under the Queensland Conference and was recognised as a local church with affiliated church status within the Conference of Churches of Christ in Queensland. The AICF continues to operate under this new relationship to raise funds and support for Indigenous leaders and to provide training for Indigenous leaders operating in AICF churches.

To conclude this chapter, it is important to highlight two significant points. First, is the motion handed down by the Queensland Conference Council that affirmed the work of ACCIM and its then Executive Director, Avon Moyle: “Council expresses its support, confidence and encouragement to Avon and Deslee Moyle and the ACCIM for the work of the Lord that they are undertaking in Queensland and Australia.”

This reversed a previous motion of no confidence in ACCIM by the Conference Council. Such moves are significant, not merely from an organisational point of view, but also from a spiritual one. Healing and wholeness can only occur in lives, ministries and in organisations when the pain of the past – where it can – is recognised and addressed.

The second point is the ACCIM Board’s decision in November 2012 to “unanimously approve that ACCIM divest itself of any further interest or claim over any of the disputed properties in Queensland”.³⁷² The Queensland properties had at times been a point of actual and potential tension between ACCIM and the AICF. Generous acts such as that can do much to disarm mistrust and apprehension.

Whether the AICF again joins with the national expression of Indigenous ministry is a speculative point. Preliminary talks with GMP have already yielded agreements for the national and Queensland expression of Indigenous ministry to work more closely together. As John Gilmore, Executive Director of GMP, stated in 2013: “We will work together and what funds are raised from Queensland churches will go to ministry in Queensland... the future looks much more positive.”³⁷³

There is also a reserved place for an AICF representative on the Indigenous Ministries Australia (IMA) Reference Board.

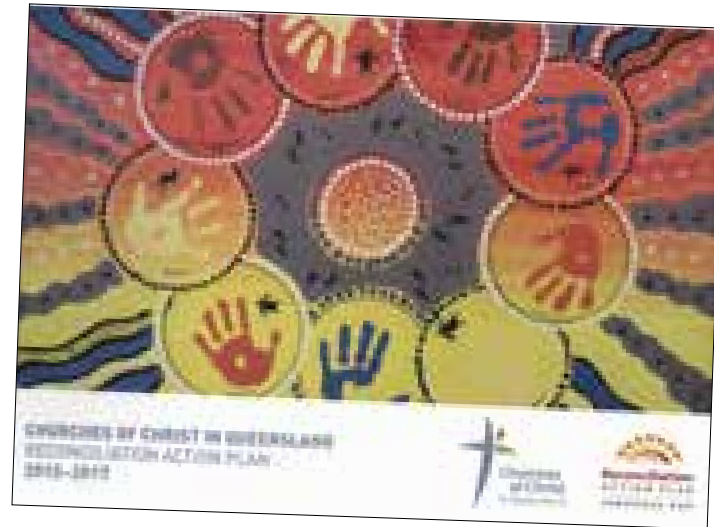
The statement of the Churches of Christ in Queensland in 1988 desiring “to help our Aboriginal and Islander brothers and sisters to stand with us in the equality that Christ bestows upon all who are his disciples” has yet to be realised.

There is hope that, as the Indigenous ministries continue to grow and mature, this ideal will be achieved.

Reconciliation Action Plan

“Reconciliation describes the journey we must take to realising a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians stand together as equals. We do not start this journey with a clean slate, as our shared history has often been painful, with its effects reflected in many areas including inequalities in health, education and employment. This inequality, and what we stand for as Churches of Christ, compels us to change: to walk a path that acknowledges our shared history with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and seeks to build lasting relationships, transforming our future together. Our journey requires us to walk side by side, and to listen and learn.”³⁷⁴

With these words, Dean Phelan (Chief Executive Officer) introduced the first ever Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) embarked upon by the Queensland Churches of Christ. The RAP was launched on 26 August 2015, and is the first by any Churches of Christ Conference in Australia. The language used by Phelan is transparent, recognising the need for an acknowledgement of a difficult “shared history”, and highlighting many of the social issues that the FAB/ACCIM and, later, the AICF encountered as they worked alongside Indigenous people and churches. It also recognises that in 2015, only 3% of the staff in Churches of Christ Care identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and no volunteers did.³⁷⁵ One of the goals of the RAP is to make the Queensland Churches of Christ into a viable option for employment for Indigenous people, including pilot programs around traineeship, examining the need for scholarships and developing and piloting “an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment and retention strategy in the North Queensland area”.³⁷⁶ Once this program has been trialled, it will be rolled out to the rest of Queensland.



The Reconciliation Action Plan was launched in August 2015. The plan was developed with a working group that included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members and representatives from Churches of Christ in Queensland’s mission, care and support services.

Throughout the document there is aspirational language, aiming to redress the wrongs of the past and how they have manifested in the present. Alongside that aspirational language, are practical measures that – if implemented successfully – can go some way to bringing equality and empowerment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is hoped that this can be another marker on the journey toward equality in status, ministry and opportunity that the many have worked to achieve for all Indigenous people in Queensland.



CHAPTER TEN: *Stories from Our Churches (Part 1)*

There are a myriad of ways people come to faith and the following of Jesus Christ. When they become a Christian, they become part of the community of faith, the church of Jesus Christ.

These next two chapters of ‘The Church from the Paddock’ contain collective stories of past and current local Churches of Christ who carry the message of Jesus Christ to their local community. What can be observed from their stories? Were they part of a movement of God in their past history? If so, is it possible they can still be part of a movement of God in their present history? Is it possible that, as with the stories of EC Hinrichsen and Kenmore Christian College,³⁷⁷ something good and special is occurring in our local churches today?

A variety of beginnings

Let’s visit the beginning of three local Churches of Christ in Queensland – Rockhampton, Outback and Arana Hills.

ROCKHAMPTON

In 1928, following a suggestion at a meeting of the then Women’s Executive in Brisbane, the women of the Conference raised £300 to sponsor an evangelistic mission in Rockhampton.

EC Hinrichsen was to be the evangelist. With him were his wife as the pianist, and a Mr D Stewart as the song leader. The mission was also assisted by a Mr Manning from South Australia. A ‘Big Tent’ (capacity of 600 people) was erected on the corner of Alma and William Streets, Rockhampton, and the mission began on 23 September 1928. The first night saw 200 inside the tent, with almost the same number listening from outside. Some nights the seats were filled, with overflow in the aisles and also outside the tent. On most nights people went forward to confess faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and many were immediately baptised. Remarkably, at the end of the eight-week mission, 293 decisions to follow Christ had been made.

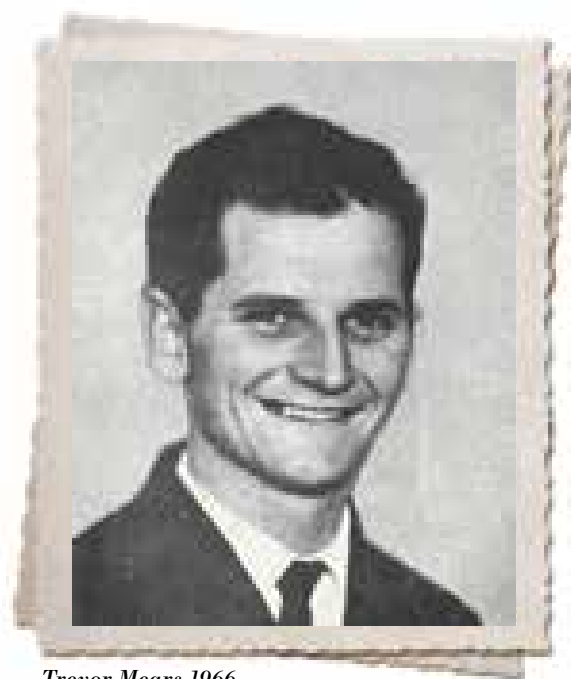


Outback Church of Christ Camp

What was also extraordinary was not only the founding of the Rockhampton church during this mission, but also the erection of its first chapel! After approximately one week of this mission, Manning was approached by a man in the street. He had been to hear EC Hinrichsen speak. He inquired from B Manning whether they had plans to build a chapel. When he answered “yes”, this man, a Mr Winter, offered financial help towards the building costs. With this financial encouragement, the team took it upon themselves to raise the rest of the funds, some £1,200, which is equivalent to approximately \$84,000 today. This amount enabled land to be purchased and the chapel to be built. To put this in perspective, it is important to note how small the average wage in Australia was in 1928 – in today’s currency only approximately \$6,000 per annum! The mission finished after eight weeks on 18 November 1928. The chapel for this new church plant was completed by the last week of the mission.

OUTBACK CHURCH

Trevor Meares, upon graduation from Kenmore Christian College, was called to the Broken Hill Church of Christ to be their pastor. Trevor, with Jenny his wife and family, spent 11 years in this town developing a unique ministry. While he was at Broken Hill, he began to develop a pastoral interest in the people of the outback. Trevor made several ‘flying visits’, flying from one outback station to another with an Anglican Padre. He began to find Christians in the outback who, due to their isolation, had little fellowship. A vision began to form in his mind of ways to bring outback Christians together.



Trevor Mears 1966

When Trevor and his family moved to Queensland to be the pastor of the Dalby Church of Christ in 1981, he wanted to provide ministry to people in the outback. His vision was coming to fruition, and the move to Dalby was a strategic one enabling him to start a work among distant outback people. The Dalby church's leadership agreed with Trevor's vision, and gave him permission to start an outback ministry. They also gave him permission to experiment. The last 12 months of his ministry he worked half-time with the church and half-time with outback Christians. The first year with the Outback church, the Dalby church paid Trevor's full wage as the pastor of this experimental church. Trevor and Jenny continued to live in Dalby from 1987 to 1993. In this time, while developing the ministry of the Outback church, he held various jobs (including a funeral director). One job was for six months as a field officer for the National Party. As Trevor states, "This gave me freedom to move around Queensland at the National Party expense!"

Trevor started by working with Christians in outback towns, particularly Church of Christ folk who were transferred to the western districts. His aim was to help them work out evangelistic strategies for where they lived, in spite of their physical isolation. By this time, he held a flying licence and was flying into various outback places. How could these people come together for fellowship and support? At this stage, he heard about a Telstra Conference Call system. This was very expensive – a \$20 connection fee, plus STD charges. Using the Conference call link up, Trevor began to hold regular church services linking people in worship over vast distances. Subsequently, the Meares' phone bill began to run to \$1,500-2,000 per month! However, the 'bush telegraph' was working and the ministry began to grow. One of his 'members' was a governess who used to go from property to property. Through her, and others, people began to talk about the 'phone church. Soon the 'congregation' grew to 35 families linking up on Sunday by telephone for fellowship and worship. At one stage, the Outback church was conducting up to five services a weekend. By the year 2000, when flying costs became too prohibitive, Trevor took to pastoral ministry by Light-Ace van. On every Sunday you will find people scattered across the western parts of Queensland, who see this unique church as their Christian community.



1968 Members at Narrellen Street

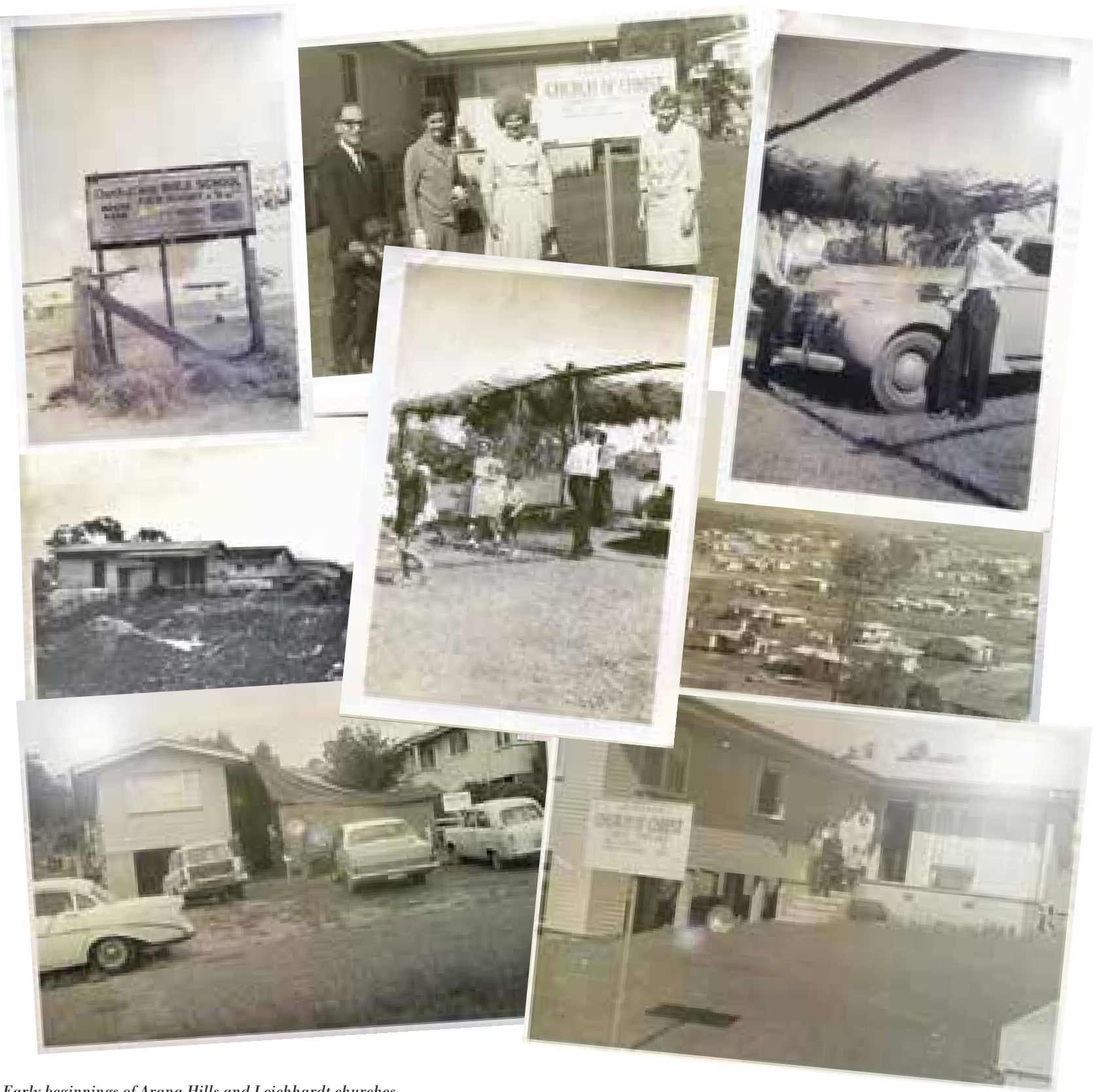
ARANA HILLS

In 1966, the newly married Ray and June Wilson purchased their first home in the new suburb of Arana Hills in what has become known as the Hills district comprising a number of suburbs on the north west edge of Brisbane. On 8 May 1966, they began a Sunday school in their home. A fortnight later, they held their first worship and communion service in their home with a membership of four. This area was the dormitory for many young families, and soon more than 100 children were crowded into their home! With the supportive vision of Kenmore Christian College, Col McCosker (a first year student at Kenmore), became the student minister of the fledgling church.

These are three remarkable stories from past and recent history, representative of the beginnings of some Queensland Churches of Christ. I have deliberately chosen these three stories for the following reasons.

First, they represent this state. They include a large regional city in Central Queensland; a church planted amongst the people of the outback; and, finally, a church in one of the many dormitory suburbs sprawling in and around Brisbane. Second, these churches are still with us today. Third, the common factor of a vision to reach people in specific communities with the good news story of Jesus Christ drove the early beginnings of these three churches. Such vision began in the mind of an individual, or a group of people, who had a passion to reach people in a specific area. Finally, the evangelistic method was different for each planting. From the mix of these ingredients, churches were born.

When past history is read (to which there are often relational and emotional attachments) there are usually two reactions. A desire for the 'good old days' mixed with some memories of the stories of the individuals who created that past history. The second response is to reflect on history and to ask, 'what are the lessons we can learn from this history? What were the drivers in these early stories that led to the planting of a new church?



*Lens from the past –
reflections to the present*

This chapter is written with a desire to learn from history. It is also written with an overarching view of the history of local churches, and not the retelling of each church’s story. What were some of the values that led people to invest in God’s kingdom?

VISION

Vision was seen in the Women’s Conference when they raised funds for a tent mission in Rockhampton. One can imagine several women – whose passion went beyond the daily stuff of life for Queensland women in the 1920s – meeting somewhere in Brisbane dreaming of winning people to Christ. For them, evangelism meant holding a tent mission with the preacher and evangelist, EC Hinrichsen. As written earlier, £300 was raised as a response to their vision. Sadly, there are no minutes of that meeting.

Vision began to ferment in Trevor Meares’ life as he ministered at Broken Hill. What could be done to encourage a church plant among the people of outback Australia?

This word ‘vision’ also pulsed in the first days of the Springwood Church of Christ. In August 1973, the then Field Officer for Home Missions (a department of Conference), Gerald Parriott, and members from Sunnybank Church of Christ who were living in the area of Springwood, commenced a midweek Bible study home group. The church officially formed in 1974 under a house on the corner of Springwood Road and Dennis Road. In the first 12 months, the congregation doubled and, after 19 months, the Home Missions subsidy was no longer needed. Springwood church had a clear evangelistic heart and engaged in evangelistic crusades. Among these crusades were ‘Deeper Life’ in

October 1975, and ‘Reach Out For Life’ in 1978. A vision for surrounding suburbs was also evident in the early days of the church. In 1977, some members transferred to commence the Kingswood Park Church of Christ.

This word ‘vision’ has been behind three of our newer churches of Christ. These three churches are the Vietnamese Church of Faith (2004), The Good Shepherd Church of Christ (2011) and the Bethel Christian Fellowship (2011). Behind the formation of each of these churches was the vision to reach specific ethnic groups in the greater Brisbane region. These groups represent people from Vietnam, Korea and Ethiopia respectively. Hieu Nahn, the pastor of the Vietnamese church (a refugee from the then South Vietnam), and baptised by Don Smith³⁷⁸ who said: “Our aim is not only to introduce Churches of Christ among the Vietnamese people, but also to preach Jesus Christ to Vietnamese and Australians. Our vision is not just here for Australia, but also for Vietnam. We are presently supporting missionaries and the building of new house churches in Vietnam.”

What is a visionary? A dreamer, one person, or several people, who out of a love for Christ and passion for people, ask “Why not?” rather than “Why should we bother?”

Such visionaries are frontier people. They often are found at the first break of a movement for God. In past history their visions have blessed Churches of Christ in Queensland.

Evangelism

The word ‘evangelism’ comes to us from the Greek word meaning ‘gospel’ or ‘good news’. The verbal forms of this word means ‘to bring’ or ‘to announce good news’.³⁷⁹ Evangelism linked with mission, and Christian unity, are the first two descriptors on the national web page for Churches of Christ in Australia defining what it means to be Churches of Christ.³⁸⁰ So, what have been the ways our churches since 1883 until now, have sought to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the people of Queensland?

Let’s take a journey through how Churches of Christ have announced the good news of Jesus in Queensland.

MISSION EVANGELISM

Churches of Christ began in Queensland through mission evangelism. In using these two words – mission and evangelism – together in this chapter, we are referring to an evangelist who comes to speak to a specific community of the need of personal response to Jesus Christ. In our history, this typically occurred to a gathering of people in a tent or a public hall. “Sunday 1 August 1882 is the day on which the first addresses were delivered by an Evangelist of the Churches of Christ in Queensland.”³⁸¹ The evangelist was Stephen Cheek; the place was a German Baptist building at Zillman’s Waterholes. Upon the death of Cheek at Warwick, DA Ewers the evangelist/preacher came to Queensland, and stayed in Queensland from 26 April 1883 to September 1887. It is interesting to note two phrases as to why he came to this state.³⁸² AJH Johnson, whose home Cheek had visited and spoke in, telegraphed our Melbourne churches: ‘Send for Sparks’, referring to the evangelist Ewers, asking him to come to Queensland. Then the second statement is made. “At the request of the Victorian Conference, he did.” In the early formative stages of Churches of Christ in Australia, movers

for positive action for the growth of the church were both an individual, and the collective Conference of Churches. This is often still the DNA by which Churches of Christ tend to forge ahead into new ventures for the announcing the good news of Jesus to communities.

Remarkably, this evangelist DA Ewers assisted in the birth of eleven churches in the four years he was in Queensland.³⁸³

‘Mission evangelism’ continued to be the major focus of reaching people for Christ for a number of decades among the churches in Queensland. The 1919 report for the Annual Conference states, “During the year the most successful series of Gospel Missions ever held in this State, was conducted by the Chandler-Clay Evangelistic team. The missions were held at Brisbane with 212 decisions; at Toowoomba with 330; at Maryborough with 108; and Gympie with 52. As a result of these missions many have been added to the church.”³⁸⁴ The 1924 report to the Annual Conference includes this statement, “BUNDABERG – perhaps the most successful work of the year was the establishment of a strong self-supporting Church at Bundaberg during the Hinrichsen-Brooker mission. Over 100 souls were added to the church there, and land purchased and building erected.”³⁸⁵ The Home Missions Committee meeting dated 9 June 1933 has this as its first minute: “Budget outline by Bro. Hinrichsen to include £3 weekly for tent, £4 for advertising, £2 for light and installation, 10/- for caretaker, £7 for evangelist, and £5 for song leader...”. This was for a tent mission to assist the church at Stones Corner in Brisbane – a church long since gone. There is no record of the results of this mission, which was to last six weeks.

Shifting moods towards evangelism

Post World War II, it appears there are early signs of a shifting attitude towards evangelism among our churches. These shifting attitudes may not have been verbalised at the time, but the reading of our past history indicates the early winds of shifting attitudes towards mission evangelism. This can be seen in two illustrative examples from the 1950s and the 1960s. First, the 1957 Annual Home Missions report calls the employed person of then Home Missions Committee, Stan Vanham, the “Pastor-Evangelist.” While it is reported he conducted three missions (no details or results of these missions are given, unlike the pre-war period where strong emphasis is given to the number of decisions for Christ), emphasis is also equally given to “five interim ministries, and visiting twenty churches.”³⁸⁶ Second, the 1967 Annual Home Missions report outlines the activities of the Director and the committee for the year “... covered a wide range of activities, including: conducting missions, teaching and stewardship campaigns, subsidising churches, counselling preachers attending church business meetings, assisting with preaching brethren, evangelistic literature, drawing up church by-laws...”³⁸⁷ Mission evangelism, while honoured, apparently no longer had the major attention.

However, the appointment of David Mansell in 1959 as joint Youth Director and Home Missions Director, with his leadership and preaching abilities, led to a re-emphasis on evangelistic missions for a short number of years. This is indicated by the reporting of results from the missions he conducted. For example: “At Gatton there were 57 decisions, at Chinchilla 18 and at Short St 14.”³⁸⁸

Historians and social commentators both agree that there was a major shift in Australian culture that began in the 1960s and accelerated in the 1970s. For example, when Labor won federal Government in 1972, Attorney-General Lionel Murphy introduced Civil Marriage Celebrants. Up to then, couples only could be married by a religious celebrant (usually in a church building) or in the typically dour registry offices of “Birth, Death and Marriages.” There were several reasons for this change and establishment of Civil Marriage Celebrants. Associated with the increasing social changes in society, more people were registering ‘no religion’ in the National Census. This introduction of Civil Marriage Celebrants was a public symbol that the church was on the way to being a voice among many competing voices guiding the social mores for Australian society.

So, how does the Home Missions Committee, 1970, report on the past year? Its annual report reflects on its “victories over five years covering a wide variety of activities. Some of these are: meetings in Mt Isa and Cairns, distribution of a book on Personal Evangelism, conducting nine missions...” It also reports on crusades with Reggie Thomas and Don DeWelt’s teams from USA (held in seven centres with 50 responses), but, possibly sensing a changing culture, also reports of “introducing new evangelistic techniques in ‘friendship contact’” and considering a paper by Rex Ellis on planting new causes featuring the establishment of “house churches.”³⁸⁹ Mission evangelism was not achieving the same success as in past times.

What stemmed from this discussion of Rex Ellis’ paper? Was this a possibility of a fresh move for God among Churches of Christ? In our local churches, it sadly appears it was business as usual. However, it seems that the Home Missions Committee was aware of the need for different approaches to evangelism rather than the ‘mission evangelism’ approach. In the 1973 Annual Report to Conference, it is reported that the Field Officer for Home Missions, Gerald Parriott, “has encouraged evangelism through home visitation and the use of the all-age Sunday School”.³⁹⁰

By the 1990s and towards 2000, the Home Missions department name changed. First, it was amalgamated with the Youth Department and called the Department of Church Development and Education. Then, it became known as the Department of Church Development (DCD). As indicated by these two titles, the emphasis was on healthy churches. The Annual Report for the DCD in 2000 lists five goals. The first four are:

1. the strategic planting and nurture of new churches.
2. effective consultancy services to churches.
3. the development of effective local leadership.
4. the development of effective regional churches.³⁹¹

So, what happened to evangelism? Collectively, as a Conference and individually as churches, had we lost the passion for evangelism? The answer, in part, is that collectively the Conference and its leadership believed that healthy churches should have the capacity to win people to Christ in a variety of ways through its people and activities, and continue to reproduce people who were growing as Christians.

Evangelism: the 1970s to the present

As part of the research for this chapter, a survey was conducted of a number of churches asking the question: ‘What is your church doing evangelistically these days? How is it different to what your church did 10 to 15 years ago? How would you rate the passion for evangelism among your leadership?’ The use of the word ‘evangelism’ was deliberate, as the movement called Churches of Christ has for our collective history carried a strong emphasis on evangelism. Today, the word ‘missional’ has become the vogue word for churches when they engage in activities focused on non-churched people.³⁹²

Some 10 church pastor interviews were conducted. Listening to the responses to these above questions, it became clear that some of the responders were on the journey of working through how to reach their communities. However, some of the responders had clearly thought through how to engage people in conversations about Jesus Christ and the Christian faith. Following are summaries of a selection of conversations held with these pastors.

Phil Bignall, who was the Senior Pastor of the Cairns church, clearly enunciated his responses to the three questions. There was no change, he stated, in how they engaged in evangelism today to that of 15 years ago. Phil spoke of “sowing seeds of love” in the community. Phil illustrated his point by referring to regular barbeques held by people in his church on the esplanade in Cairns for visiting backpackers. He also told of holding barbeques in a new housing estate twice a month. At these events they found opportunities to go further than simple conversation and to pray with people. Six playgroups a week are held on the church premises, reaching over 100 families. Phil spoke of one-on-one evangelism and an increasing passion for evangelism among his leadership. The active membership of the church has grown by 56% from 2005-13.

The story of the Southport church is a fascinating one. Throughout the 1980s, the church was well known for its emphasis on evangelism. Noel Newton, in his time as Senior Pastor, baptised some 1,000 people. Noel’s time was followed by a teaching ministry, and then Ross Pelling became the lead Pastor following a brief time of instability in the church. Changes were forced upon the church – it could be said ‘from the outside’! The large church complex, with its site located opposite the Gold Coast University, was requisitioned by the Government for the building of the new Southport hospital. The loss of this established complex also meant the possible closure of the Child Care Centre (operated by Southport and the local church). Ross commented, “the way the tangible ministry/mission to children via our Child Care Centre who weren’t able to go to a normal Day Care centre actually lead to non-Christian parents ‘taking on the government’ over the forced closure of the church and the possible closure of the Child Care Centre. This resulted in our eventually getting a better deal and land than we had before. However, in the time between the church’s land being requisitioned and the establishment of new facilities, the church spent several years in a rented auditorium at the nearby university. Baptisms increased per year from 10 to 40 when ‘in the wilderness’, with no church property/baptistery, so we went to the beach for our baptisms”.



Ross Pelling, Southport Church of Christ

Ross and his pastoral associate, Bruce Murray, began to think through how to engage with non-churched people in today’s world. The commencement of a café-style church (which began in Bruce’s garage) to reach out to new residents in the northern corridor was one of the first ventures to build missional communities. Bruce commented that the church is involved in mission with a total of six such communities. While there was a 31% decrease in membership between 2005-13, actual attendance grew by 32% from 2009-13.



Geoff Charles 2014

Geoff Charles, the Senior Pastor of Springwood, when asked the three questions outlined at the beginning of this section, spoke of ‘backyard blitzes’ by church folk. Through one such blitz, a young person came to church and ultimately became a Christian. The church also has a close working association with Springwood High School, which is adjacent to the church complex. Darryl Seip Senior, Pastor of Whitehill church in Ipswich, agreed that there has been a change in approach to evangelism over a long period, and finds that people now want to “belong before they believe”. The church, as part of its evangelistic thinking, presently has Baptism Sundays four times a year, thus regularly bringing the need of personal response to Christ before those who may be associated with the church in its varying ministries.

Steve Nixon, the Senior Pastor at Kingaroy, when asked the questions of evangelism practices and the church, spoke of the unique combined church’s youth group run by Kingaroy’s Youth Pastor of the church for all the churches in the town. Fifty-plus young people regularly attend, with many coming from non-church families. The church also runs a holiday Kids’ Club, which reaches non-churched families. Younger leaders in the church indicated that they wanted to reach those with little or no association with church, and were considering a ‘messy church’ model. The HumeRidge church in Toowoomba is involved with and reaches out to international students at the local university and migrants who have settled in Toowoomba.

How people listen to music is vastly different today from how people listened to music 100 years ago. Phonograph, graphophone, gramophone, Sony Walkman, tape deck, cassettes, and today, downloadable music from the internet all have been means to bring music to people since 1877. However, people listened, and still listen, to music. People today still need to hear the ‘music’ of the story of Jesus Christ despite the fact that means and methods of sharing this story will vary in the future. But, the message must still be clearly heard today. So, what is the message? Paul’s summary in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 answers this question: “Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...”

CHAPTER ELEVEN:

Stories from Our Churches (Part 2)

It is our firm belief that any success, any hope of a positive future for Churches of Christ in Queensland is intrinsically linked to the local church.

The local church is understood to be comprised of people who, in coming to faith in Christ, come together to not only worship Him, but to witness to Him, and serve in their local community and beyond.

This second part of ‘Stories from Our Churches’ tells what has happened in the recent past, and what is happening in our local churches. There are many inspiring stories of how individual Christians and local churches are living out the story of Jesus Christ in Queensland. Unfortunately, all of these cannot be used,³⁹³ as there are just too many good stories!

I have two sons who are keen surfers. In their younger years, they drove all the way along the east coast of Australia searching for perfect surfing waves, and reached the ‘holy grail’ for surfers: Bell’s Beach, Victoria. They are now grown men approaching the middle years of their lives, but their passion for surfing still burns, like a hot summer sun, into their souls. Recently, my wife and I enjoyed a great camping holiday with two of our children and their families. Several times, from the comfort of the rocks of a breakwater, I watched my second son surfing. He paddled out on his board to just beyond where the waves were breaking, and watched and waited for a good wave to ride into the beach. When the right wave came along, he

swiftly paddled, jumped, placed both feet onto his board, and enjoyed the surfer’s mystic thrill of riding a wave.

It can be seen in the previous chapter of this book that Churches of Christ rode some special waves of mission evangelism. In this section we recount where some of these waves have taken us and reflect on the journeys within the Churches of Christ movement. What can be observed from the overarching collective story of our local churches, and also the organisational side of Churches of Christ in Queensland? In what direction is our movement heading? Reverently, we write, “What is the Spirit saying to the churches?”

I have had the benefit of observing our churches in Queensland via two avenues. First, for 10 years I worked as a resource person for local churches, acting as a consultant to church boards in a variety of ways, including speaking at special church events, and advising many of our pastors. Second, I encouraged our churches to participate in the National Church Life Survey (NCLS), which is conducted every five years.

Faith and vision

The local church, no matter its public expression, consists of people who have come to faith in Christ and now seek to serve Christ in their local church and community. Scattered throughout the pages of this book are some of the stories of individuals from our churches. Such people are the heartbeat of the kingdom. Another book could be easily written recording not only the stories in this book, but the faith journeys of many, many people not only from the present, but also from the near and far past.

But, what are the collective faith stories of our churches? The following two stories demonstrate that where there is a collective faith in a church, a vision “that something must be done here” percolates alongside of that faith.

Springwood is a suburb that sits on the border of Brisbane and Logan City. The Springwood Church of Christ recently moved into a new auditorium placed below their older church building. The church’s Senior Pastor, Geoff Charles, reflected on that aspect of the church’s story as he compared it to the beginning story of the church. “A similar sense of vision (as evidenced at the church’s beginning) was evident on Foundation Sunday, 26 October 2008. Families gathered on the ground God had given us to worship and lay a faith foundation. Multi Purpose 5 (MP5) is committed to engaging our local community with a Christian approach to human needs. MP5 is much more than a building. It is about meeting people with the whole gospel that transforms their social, physical, psychological, vocational and spiritual lives. We are called to engage our world with the whole GOSPEL for the WHOLE person”³⁹⁵.

Highfields is an outlying community north of Toowoomba. The Highfields church was planted by the HumeRidge church of Toowoomba. Christine Sharp, a member of this church, tells her story. “My first memory of Highfields Church of Christ is going to an evening youth service at the invitation of our eldest son who had started attending the church... my husband and I were so engaged by the excitement and enthusiasm of the young people and their involvement in the service that we became regular attendees of the church from that time onwards. This service, and many other services over subsequent years, was held in a tent! The tent was actually a large, permanently erected marquee at Shannon Park just north of the rapidly developing suburb of Highfields. In more recent times the congregation of Highfields church has had to say goodbye to Shannon Park and the marquee. The church then welcomed the opportunity to be able to hold services in the Geham State School hall. The recent purchase of a property in Highfields will become a new home for the church in the very near future, but irrespective of where the church has been or will be physically located, the same passion and enthusiasm for the vision of the church which impressed us at the first service we attended is still strongly in evidence today.”



After years of prayer, visioning, planning, fundraising and working bees led by Senior Pastor Geoff Charles, Ministry Coordinator Cal Muggleton, and the leaders of Springwood Church of Christ, a new 600-seat church and community facility was officially opened on Sunday 21 April 2013.

These are two examples from recent history of local churches where faith and vision propelled a local church into creating new history. Vision comes from an experience and understanding of what God has done, and is still able to do. This statement can be illustrated and reinforced with much biblical data, but that is not the purpose of this book. However, it must be said that, in the past, a vision for simple New Testament Christianity linked with a passion for evangelism, resulted in the planting and the growth of churches. Faith and vision must still be the primary drivers for Churches of Christ into the future.

Service

Our churches in Queensland, individually and collectively, have often responded to needs in their local communities.

The largest collective expression of responding to needs in the community is Churches of Christ Care, which is a division of Churches of Christ in Queensland and is active in the areas of early childhood services, child protection, community housing, retirement living, community aged care and residential aged care. Churches of Christ Care has approximately 3,000 employees and more than 600 volunteers.³⁹⁶

However, at the same time, individual churches have responded to needs that they find in their local communities.

Sometimes their response is in partnership with Churches of Christ Care, but other times it flows from a simple heart response to an individual crisis or a community need.

One of the nine NCLS descriptors of a healthy local church is service. At the date of publication, the most recent NCLS was conducted in 2011. The collated results were sent to churches and the State Office in 2012. A study of these results reveals where our local churches are most ‘alive’ and where their strengths lie. Collectively, the core quality of ‘service’ had the largest percentage increase for all our churches out of the nine core qualities recorded in the 2011 NCLS. The key indicator question for this core quality was, “I have helped others informally in at least three of named ways”.³⁹⁷ Stories from our churches that illustrate this present strength of service are briefly recounted below.



Residents of the Warrawee Aged Care facility were evacuated from St George as the floodwaters rose.

In 2011, Queensland experienced devastating floods not only in south-east Queensland, but also in parts of western Queensland and in coastal regions of the state. These floods caused billions of dollars worth of damage to homes, state infrastructure, and the tragic loss of life. Swift responses to the victims of these demoralising floods came together from the church’s State Office providing resources and personnel, and from individual churches in areas sorely affected by these floods. One swift response to the floods was the launching of a financial appeal by the Executive Director of Churches of Christ, Dean Phelan, which raised over \$400,000. As indicated in the table, these funds were distributed to 19 local churches responding to victims of the floods in their areas. Kerry Schulz, one of the staff members of Westside church (Jamboree Heights) commented, “Our area had significant flooding in 2011 and we were able to assist local families with money (from the Churches of Christ Flood Appeal), cleaning up in the aftermath, counselling and also by donating household items”. A number of our rural churches assisted farmers whose farms were flood damaged. For example, the Kingaroy church organised work groups to go and help farmers in their district.

<i>Flood appeal funds distribution list</i>	<i>Grant Amount</i>
Annerley Church of Christ	€ 24,800
Avenell Heights Bundaberg Church of Christ	€ 10,000
Caboolture Church of Christ	€ 3,000
Camp Hill Church of Christ	€ 10,000
Fernvale Church of Christ	€ 21,000
Gatton Church of Christ	€ 20,000
Gladstone Church of Christ	€ 2,000
HumeRidge Church of Christ	€ 32,660
Kingaroy Church of Christ	€ 54,400
Leichhardt Church of Christ	€ 10,000
Ma Ma Creek Church of Christ	€ 1,000
Oasis Church of Christ	€ 40,000
Pathways Collective	€ 10,000
Springwood Church of Christ	€ 10,000
Westside Church of Christ	€ 75,600
Whitehill Church of Christ	€ 70,178
Redlands Church of Christ	€ 2,957
Rockhampton Church of Christ	€ 2,500
Withecott Church of Christ	€ 3,000
Total funds distributed to churches	€ 403,095



In recent years, Roma has experienced three major floods. The church commented on the events saying, “In the aftermath of the major floods – 2010, 2011 and 2012 – the church has been very much involved with ministry to flood victims and getting alongside them with assistance in cleaning up, as well as ministering to their emotional needs”.

The Mackay church was a shining example of Christian care and compassion in their response to the floods that devastated Mackay in 2008. The then Pastor of the church, Michael Thurlow, offered the church complex as a Flood Crisis Response Centre for the city. For over a week, the building was used as a place for people to come to for emotional and financial assistance from varying specialist disaster response groups. In a remarkable moment on the Sunday following their worship service, the National Disaster Coordinator from Canberra declared to Michael, “I would give my life for this church!”

In the January 2013 floods in Bundaberg, people from our two local churches were heavily engaged in responding to the crisis. Churches of Christ Care Chaplains and Mission Action workers also came from south-east Queensland to work alongside the churches in the community.

These are just a few of the stories of local churches exhibiting this NCLS core quality of service in response to floods in the recent history of Queensland.

Besides these responses to flood crises, our local churches also serve in other ways.

Our small church at Browns Plains has for years distributed food parcels in Logan City.

Our Sunnybank church began in 2010 English as a Second Language (ESL) program to assist the Asian community in their area. There is now up to 60 people attending.

Our Ann Street church in the heart of Brisbane has had a ministry to the poor and Indigenous people of the city.

Our Westside church runs a free counselling service to youth through its Westside Youth Support Service.

Our then Leichhardt church, as well as our Fernvale and Oasis churches, have been involved in ‘Gleaners’ a low-cost food service to those in need in their communities, with our Annerley church starting a similar ministry from its premises in recent years.

Our Gatton church has grown through reaching out and caring for students at the nearby university agricultural campus, as well as to seasonal workers and ethnic groups in their community.

Our Roma church, in response to the rapid growth of the town and accommodation shortage, opened ‘Heartlife’ units to provide affordable and comfortable accommodation for patients and their families travelling to Roma for medical reasons.

Our Dalby church received government funding for a car trailer for mission to children during the flood crises of their recent history.

Our Gladstone church runs a counselling service for this central Queensland industrial city.

A number of our churches are involved weekly in teaching Religious Education (RE) classes. These churches understand RE classes as the ‘Sunday school’ of today. For example, Steve Christian of our Toowoomba North church commented on the special ministry of mentoring in a local school saying, “We have a ministry into the local State School that involves our folk going into the school as mentors every week to many of the needy children. The school comes into our building for an Easter and a Christmas service each year, and we get the mentors and mentee’s families together quarterly to build relationships and trust.”

Can a smaller church have a big impact on its community?

The Murgon church story provides an answer. Murgon is a small country town some three hours north-west of Brisbane. The Church of Christ began its life and witness in this town in 1960. In spite of its smaller size, it seeks to actively minister in the community. A sad characteristic of smaller churches is that they tend to live on past memories. But, when the Sunday school closed in approximately 2005, this church sought to still reach children. “We have joined with other denominations to run a very effective Religious Education program in the local primary schools to hundreds of children, which we consider today is our ‘Sunday school’.”

What propels this in a small church? There are a number of reasons, but a healthy sense of ‘belonging’³⁹⁸ in a local church tends to spill over into various acts of Christian service. So, it is not surprising to read that the Murgon church enjoys a strong sense of belonging. “One wonderful aspect of our church is the remarkable unity within the fellowship—we are just like a big family. God willing, Murgon will still be serving and praising God for many years to come.”

It also comes as no surprise that this church has been involved in a Men’s Shed ministry for a number of years (before Men’s Sheds were fashionable!), with up to 100 men attending.

Conclusion

The NCLS has defined that there are nine core qualities that determine the health of a church.³⁹⁹ In 2011, the NCLS results indicated that the core quality of ‘service’ was the greatest strength of our churches. Sadly, the core quality that declined most of all among our churches, in comparison with the 2001 NCLS, was the highly important core quality of ‘leadership’, which was measured by the key indicator, “Our leaders encourage us to a great extent to use our gifts here”. A biblical statement propels us to think about what kind of leaders Churches of Christ in Queensland is producing and encouraging: “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service...”⁴⁰⁰ If there is to be continuing momentum and building on the core quality of ‘service’, it follows that pastors (especially) must become, or be re-equipped, to be pastor-enablers more than pastor-carers. However, the purpose of this book is not to comment on, or explore this issue; this book is a recording of our history.

The gift of Christian service is alive and well among our churches in their recent history. It is the highest recorded strength of Churches of Christ in Queensland for the past five years up to 2011. Could this be a movement of God in our present history? Two questions should be asked. First, how do we continue to encourage and maximise this present wave? Second, and most crucial, how does evangelism and faith-sharing marry together with these acts of service?⁴⁰¹ Evangelism, the sharing of the good news of Jesus Christ, is a proven part of Churches of Christ’s DNA. What can we learn from our past history so serving others and sharing the story of Jesus can equally mark our present and our future?

“These days are given to us by God. They are ours, for this generation. We are servants of the Master and we must be about His business. Other times are for other generations. The challenge becomes theirs, the cloak falls from our shoulders on them.”

Clive Burdeu. April 1950

CHAPTER TWELVE:

The Shifting Context 1980s to Now

This period of time has seen the most significant and unimaginable changes in society in modern history. Massive shifts in communications and technology have enabled new ideas to garner momentum swiftly, regardless of distance. This, of course, has an impact on churches and ministry.

It has provided new ways of presenting the gospel and engaging with local communities through online support and online peers. A large independent church far removed from traditional locales of influence can inspire whole movements through improved means of communication and travel. One just has to examine the success of the Willow Creek and Saddleback churches that emerged from the United States to see that key influencers are no longer restricted to the Movement or denomination that a local ministry finds itself.

Other shifts have been significant. The emergence of post-modernism and pluralism has occurred at the same time as the weakening of the traditional form of church in many areas. The rise of consumerism as the most threatening ‘faith’ to Christianity has also eroded the church’s resources, both in terms of financial and human resources. The rapidity of the shift in the gap between belief and action, and the identifiers that people used to express that belief (such as attendance, giving and proclaiming) largely took the church by surprise. The public perception of the church had also changed dramatically – it has moved from being the conserver of societal values, to generally being seen as ‘behind the times’ and holding to outdated modes of belief and worship.

As chapter four explored, the Queensland Conference was experiencing a period of sustained growth in church numbers and its expressions of ministering to the community through aged care and other services throughout the immediate post war era. Its success at this was still strong in the mid-1970s, and it would not be until the turn of the millennium that the erosion in its church work would become noticeable.

The broader Queensland context was also one punctured by remarkable shifts in its once stable environment. In 1987, Premier Bjeleke-Petersen, who had held that office since 1968, was rolled by his own parliamentary colleagues in a move that opened the door for inquiries into corruption and other illegal activities that had been simmering beneath the surface. Change, which had been in the air for many years, now descended on Queenslanders with startling force.

In many ways, the Queensland Conference, for so long stable and healthy, would also experience a series of changes that would shake its foundations. Its return to its original DNA of partnership and unity would be a difficult but ultimately successful journey.

The long delayed decline in the churches

As previously mentioned, the Queensland churches had stayed quite buoyant in terms of numbers in the post-war era. While growth had not been spectacular, it had been solid, with intermittent periods where there was a Conference-wide focus on evangelism. However, by the turn of the millennium there were signs that this state of affairs was changing – and changing significantly. The following table shows this clearly.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Churches</i>	<i>Members</i>	<i>Largest Church</i> ⁴⁰²	<i>Churches above 100</i>
1920	29	1792	Toowoomba – 328	3
1930	37	2968	Brisbane (Ann St) – 298	12
1940	37	3065	Ann St – 280	7
1950	38	2704	Ann St – 380	10
1960	43	3697	Toowoomba – 457	12
1970	53	4424	Ipswich – 341	15
1980	63	5605	Southport – 415	16
1990	72	6667	Southport – 651	20
2000	73	5762 ⁴⁰³	Southport – 471	18
2005 ⁴⁰⁴	70	5126	HumeRidge – 486	13
2012 ⁴⁰⁵	69 ⁴⁰⁶	4919 ⁴⁰⁷	HumeRidge – 544	15

The period 1990-2005 saw the first decline in total membership numbers (from decade to decade) since the Second World War, while the numbers of churches remained relatively static. Some churches remained healthy in terms of numbers such as Westside, Withcott, Springfield, Southport and HumeRidge, to name a few. Notably, Westside and Withcott were relatively new churches. However, others were quickly facing the facts of declining numbers due to the shifting demographics in their area or a steep rise in the age of their congregations. Ann Street and Annerley, for example, were well down on their historical highs and, in the years since 1990, the number of churches above 100 members had dropped from 20 to 13, back to 1960 levels. One reading of these figures can arrive at the conclusion that evangelism either became more difficult post-1990 (a view that blames the receptiveness of the community at large), or that it ceased to be a driving force as many churches focused on maintenance as opposed to mission (a view that blames churches and Conference structures).

The reality is that there were many factors that led to a shift away from evangelism in the Queensland Conference. There was a change in public attitudes to churches, and many churches were suddenly consumed with maintenance as numbers of their congregation aged and died, buildings deteriorated and offerings were not able to keep pace with the new demands of funding ministry. There was also less of an evangelistic influence stemming from the Conference itself and, last but not least, by 2005 the Conference was exhibiting classic signs of internal division, which is always a drain on emotional, physical, financial and spiritual resources.

Division and conflict never sow the seeds of growth.

An overview of the conference commitment to evangelism

In 1980, eight representatives were sent from the Queensland Conference to the National Conference on evangelism, including the Principal of Kenmore, Frank Ewers, the then head of Churches of Christ Care, Don Stewart and John Timms, who had started as the State Evangelist/Director of Home Missions in February of that year. These eight men then formed a committee that focused on an evangelism strategy for the 1980s. The Home Missions Committee also began a search for a Director so as to relieve Timms of the dual nature of his task. Unfortunately, Timms would not last long in this onerous role, and by October 1981 had left the position, with the Committee acknowledging that he “has been so heavily committed that it has been physically impossible for him to cope with the ever increasing needs”.⁴⁰⁸ Timms was the last of the ‘old style’ evangelists/crusaders to lead the Home Missions Committee, and with the end of the brief tenure of this gifted evangelist, also came a decline in the regularity and success of Home Mission crusades to various parts of the state. The reports of the Home Mission Committee certainly began to focus on the subsidies being paid to developing churches, and an increasing range of diverse purposes that fell into its portfolio. For example, in 1984 the report states, “we rejoice in the opportunity to be available for the counseling of individuals in need and for our churches in the development of their programs”.⁴⁰⁹ Three crusades were held that year, but “the numbers of converts were small”.⁴¹⁰

In 1987, the Home Missions Committee reported to the Conference for the last time, and was replaced by a new department, known as the ‘Church Development and Education’ department. In May 1988 Colin Smith (who had succeeded Timms) tendered his resignation and finished in his role in December. Jim Deutschmann was given the task of being the Interim Executive Director of the new Department.

There had been a slowing of the growth of the churches in the late 1980s, and by the early 1990s this was being highlighted as a problem. Deutschmann reflected in 1991 that in response to Conference President Geoff Risson’s call to “Send One! Win One! Build One!” that, “I am too busy working with the churches...this is the problem. We are all too busy pursuing our careers to give time for the one thing God would have us do.”⁴¹¹ Deutschmann’s honesty in all probability summed up the issue regarding evangelism for many in the churches and the Conference structures.

By 1994, under Bob Smith’s leadership, the Department was engaged in a wide and diffuse series of objectives, which included evangelism, new church development, resourcing churches, youth, children’s and family ministries, the pastoral care of ministers and administration. In 1996, this also included coordinating the statewide camping program, providing a resource centre, producing *The Christian Echo* and providing stewardship programs. In 1996, the Department announced they had to restructure due to Alan Hermann moving on and “financial constraints”.⁴¹² Looking back, it is no wonder that the evangelistic zeal that had characterised the Queensland Conference during the post war era had begun to wane. The multitude of tasks given to one Department, with extremely limited financial and human resources, was simply too much.



1975 Home Missions Committee

Churches were still being established post-1980. Westside (1993 – an amalgamation of the Kenmore and Centenary churches) and Withcott (1982) have already been mentioned, but as well as them there were Browns Plains (1980), Nerang (1981), Burleigh Heads (1982), Logan City Aboriginal Community Centre (1985), Living Hope Christian Family at Caboolture (1986), Brisbane North (1992), Outback (1991), Riverwood (1992), Fernvale (1997), Citisouth at Mt Gravatt (2001), Cunningham Community Church (2002), Highfields (2002), Lakeshore (2002), Springfield Community Oasis (2002) and Warner Community (2005). Interestingly, of the 223 recorded baptisms by churches in the 2005 report, close to 50% (103) were recorded by five churches: HumeRidge, Westside, Springwood, Avenell Heights (Bundaberg) and Withcott.⁴¹³ The results in both 1980 and 1990 were not dissimilar, which saw the top five churches responsible for close to 50% of the baptisms. In 1990, they recorded 160 of the 369 baptisms, and in 1980 it was 182 out of the 404 baptisms.



Admin Building Opening 11 October 1987

The coming together of the Conference

As early as the 1970s, there had been discussions about the establishment of a ‘Brotherhood centre’, where the administrative functions of the Conference could be centralised and greater inter-departmental communication could occur. There was a renewed push for this idea in the early 1980s, and despite initial pessimism from some of the departments within Conference, at the 1984 Queensland Conference it was decided to proceed with a plan to establish the conference offices at the Kenmore Christian College property. The first sod was turned in May 1987, and the building was officially opened in October of that year.

Alongside this desire for a physical gathering together of the Queensland Conference, came a desire in some quarters to see the different committees and departments work together in a deliberate fashion. In October 1983, the notes of the ‘Meeting on Brotherhood Structure’ highlighted important points of tension within the Conference, which would flare up two decades later. Bruce Armstrong, then Senior Pastor at the Margaret Street Church in Toowoomba, outlined a series of points regarding the structure of the Queensland Conference that needed to be addressed, the most pertinent being: “Under the existing structure the work of committees and particularly directors is disjointed. It needs to be coordinated” and that the “Conference Executive needs to play a more important role in bringing the Brotherhood together”.⁴¹⁴ In 1985, the Towards 2000 Conference Executive Sub-committee also highlighted a similar theme when it stated that one of the objectives of the Conference Executive should be to “promote greater interaction and co-operation between Conference committees and departments with each other and with the churches and Conference Executive.”⁴¹⁵ Reading through minutes such as these some thirty years later reminds one that hindsight is a beautiful thing! The topics raised at these meetings were issues around structure, belonging, identity and the unity of the movement that no physical building alone could provide.

The continued growth of Care

The area in which the Queensland Conference most grew during this era was the Social Service Department, which was to become Churches of Christ Care (Care) in 1987, when it also moved into the present Kenmore site. Dr Donald Stewart was appointed Executive Director of the Social Service Department in 1979, and under his guidance and influence the Department grew enormously.

Stewart had a background in pastoral ministry after graduating from Kenmore Christian College, including ministry at Stafford, Leichardt, Traralgon (Vic) and Hobart churches before being asked to head up the Social Service Department in 1979. Reflecting on his time at Traralgon he realised he “was no evangelist!”⁴¹⁶ Under his leadership, however, the churches he pastored grew. He accepted the role as Executive Director of the Social Service Department because he believed that he “had gifts in administrative work and in looking after people.” These gifts certainly came to the fore over the next 22 years.

A snapshot of the work of the then Social Service Department in 1980 shows two things: how much it had grown from its embryonic start in 1930, and how influential it was becoming in both the Queensland Conference and the state itself.

By 1980, the Department was divided up into seven different divisions: Aged Care, Family Care, Pastoral Care, Welfare and Christian Fellowship Association, Social and Community Issues, Training and Administration. In 1980, the Aged Care Division reported that there was accommodation available for 952 aged persons in residential care; 201 self-contained home units, 248 hostel rooms and 302 nursing home beds. Five equity home units were completed at Fairhaven (Maryborough), and two equity home units at Bribie Island Retirement Village. The Queensland Governor, Sir James Ramsay, opened the Eric Franks Nursing Home at the Golden Age Retirement Village on the Gold Coast. The Family Care Division reported that it had 24 children in Family Group Homes, and eight in emergency accommodation. The Hervey Bay Day Care Centre cared for up to 120 children per week, and the Queensland Minister for Welfare, Sam Doumaney, opened both the Iris Blowers Youth Emergency Accommodation (Gold Coast) and the Bundaberg Family Group Home.⁴¹⁷ However, despite its growth since 1930, Don Stewart observed that when he came into the role, the Social Service Department was a relatively small organisation that was carrying a debt.

The Department was also active in chaplaincy: Colin Smith, for example, was appointed as the first full-time chaplain to the Brisbane Hospitals, Homes and Prisons. The Director, Don Stewart, was also assisting in marriage counseling and giving lectures on the reasons behind the break up of marriages; statements on drugs, alcohol, gambling and abortion were prepared for the Conference Executive by the Division of Social and Community Issues.⁴¹⁸



Celebrating 75 years of Caring cover (Beverley Grenfell inset)

By its 75th Anniversary in 2005, Care was being acknowledged as a significant provider of social welfare in the state, and the then Queensland Premier, Peter Beattie would write of Care that “it has grown to operate 125 welfare services and employ 1,800 staff supporting Queenslanders in urban, rural and remote communities. Its services span childhood programs, foster care, family reunification services, emergency housing, accommodation services and aged care.”⁴¹⁹ In a relatively short period of 25 years, Care had grown significantly under both Stewart and his successor, Russell Bricknell who took on the role in 2001.

This growth has continued on through to the present time. In the 2011-12 Annual Report, the growth of Care is a significant highlight. There were 152 care and support services in Queensland and Victoria, with 2,900 staff and over 600 registered volunteers. Those care services ministered to over 33,000 clients, with 952 foster carers, 895 housing places, 664 independent living units, 1,662 operational aged care beds and 357 family day and in-home carers.⁴²⁰ Care is one of the leading providers of aged care in Queensland, with 28 aged care facilities throughout Queensland (including three in Victoria). Care also has a significant involvement in foster care, emergency accommodation, early childhood learning and housing services.

However, such growth did not come without growing pains. While the period of the 1980s onwards saw a remarkable leap in the influence, fortunes and reach of Care, many began to see a discrepancy in the growth of Care and the position of the churches in the Queensland Conference. One example has already been alluded to, and Bob Smith, the Executive Director of the Department of Church Development and Education from 1994-97, recalls the small budget that his department experienced compared to Care and some of the other departments: “The result was an impossibly high set of expectations for a minimal staff to fulfill and a totally unrealistic level of funding to achieve it. I don’t say this to criticise...but merely to illustrate the disproportionate levels of expectation and logistic support that existed within the conference structure.”⁴²¹ Others from that era of growth in Care make similar comments. Malcolm Chandler, who worked in the Social Service Department/Care through the years 1981-2010 and was at one time the Deputy Executive Director, suggests that the Care structures in relation to the rest of the Conference was “dysfunctional in terms of its unity, not in its operation.”⁴²² It is no surprise that departments on smaller budgets would look at Care’s budgets and wonder how and why they were not being resourced according to their perceived needs – especially if their concern was to resource the local churches.



How did Care grow?

Leadership is a fairly obvious answer to that question. Don Stewart’s leadership from 1979-2001 was characterised by an avoidance of debt (“deal in cash, not in debt”) but lacked the ‘penny pinching approach’ that so often accompanies that quality. Stewart was a visionary, who often did not let the bottom line of finances dictate the growth and ministry of his department. If he believed that God was leading Care to build a certain project or create a service, then he also believed that God would provide the finances to do so – sometimes at the very last minute, as was the case with the opening of the Lady Small Haven facility on the Gold Coast. His confidence in the capacity of Care and the provision of God was unshakeable: “I always believed we could do it... People came looking for help with welfare, and we would find a way to do it. If you’ve got your mind set in a certain direction, you see possibilities. I’m a person who looks for possibilities.”

Another important aspect of the culture that was being created at Care was the fact that Stewart trusted his people. He appointed administrators to look after regions because “I couldn’t”, and on his desk, inscribed in Hebrew, was a quote from Isaiah that summed up his approach to team and leadership: “If you will not trust, you will not be trusted.” His reflection on the relationship between Care and Conference through his tenure was that it was one based on trust: “I would do whatever Conference asked me to do. If they gave me advice, I would use it. They were the people I felt responsible to.”

Care continued to grow, but was seen by its critics in Conference as an organisation that acted independently of Conference. Stewart reflects that Care would often make decisions about major projects without consulting closely with Conference, but also added that Conference was never asked to contribute funding to Care projects. While relationships were perceived to be functional across the Conference system, this approach – while not ideal – would not raise too many eyebrows. However, once relationships began to break down at the end of Don Stewart’s time, the situation began to turn toxic. It was no secret, for example, that the first Conference Executive President, John Crosby, and Don Stewart did not always see eye to eye. The relationship between the Conference Council and the Care Board did not improve with the rapid expansion of Care under Russell Bricknell as Executive Director.

The churches, too, were unsure of the correct balance between Care and themselves. Alan Sims, who would later Chair the Care Board from November 2008, would reflect that: “Care appeared to have transformed from localised management of its services and ministry alliance in conjunction with the neighborhood churches to become more focused on business under centralised governance. This transformation didn’t appear to be readily accepted by the local churches.”⁴²³

It was becoming apparent that there needed to be a deeper unity in the Queensland Churches of Christ.

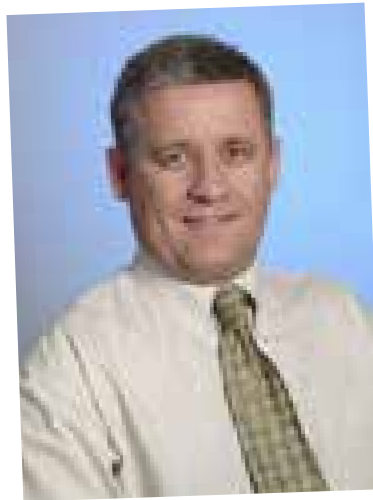
The appointment of an Executive President

John Crosby, the senior pastor of the Warnbro Church of Christ in Western Australia, was appointed the first full time Executive President of the Queensland Churches of Christ and began his role in January 2000. Crosby had experience in church planting, having planted churches in Rockingham (WA), Manila (Philippines) and in Ireland. He also had some experience in prison ministry.⁴²⁴

The creation of such a position would have a diverse range of reactions. For some, it signaled an opportunity for the various Departments and committees to be brought together, “so that they worked together as a single unit”.⁴²⁵ However, for others (who may have had a more autonomous view of the operations of local churches and agencies) such an appointment appeared to herald a time of Conference, through the Executive President’s Office, exerting unwanted control over the rest of the system. Those that appointed Crosby saw it as a visionary appointment, one that would spur the Queensland Conference and churches on to growth.⁴²⁶

However, there were significant difficulties with the appointment of an Executive President ‘over’ many other Executive Officers that existed in the departments of the Queensland Conference. The silo nature of the Queensland Conference system at the time was not simply going to be dismantled by an appointment of an Executive President. The whole system would need to be examined and reformed, and all the key players would be required to see the necessity of that reformation.

In the harsh reality of the following years, genuine attempts at unity would be at times clumsily handled, met with suspicion and resistance or simply falter in the face of structures set up for independence, not interdependence.



John Crosby was appointed the first full-time Executive President of the Queensland churches in January 2000

Having said that, in July 2002 a restructure of Conference and the implementation of a new constitution was approved despite the systemic difficulties that were in operation. John Packer, Conference President, had high hopes in the new constitution as being a stepping stone towards unity: “the new constitution acknowledges that we are a diverse fellowship of Churches, bound together and able to work cooperatively through our agencies, by the unity we share in Jesus Christ, and the heritage of the common background of our movement.”⁴²⁷ John Crosby suggested in his 2001-02 annual report that “the Queensland Conference has embraced the change process wholeheartedly”.⁴²⁸

Also of note in 2002, was the formation of the Resource Missional Team (RMT), which was yet another incarnation of the old Home Mission Department, and whose aim was to “help each church fulfill its vision”. Over the following years the RMT would be much better resourced than the previous models and so was able to handle its diverse roles ably.

The implementation of Care’s strategic plan under Russell Bricknell, who had followed in the large footsteps left by Dr Don Stewart in 2001 as Director of Care, was also begun. Changes were afoot.

The way forward

By 2006, under the direction of Crosby and the Conference Council, the future of the Churches of Christ in Queensland became an increasingly key issue in a tense environment. The relationships with the Care leadership and Board was an area of concern, as was – to a lesser extent – the relationship with the Centenary Development Foundation (CDF) leadership.

Despite many efforts, the process of uniting the separate parts of the Queensland Conference was a taxing struggle. John Crosby expressed his frustrations in his annual report of 2006: “As I work across the entire organisation with our churches and especially the agencies, it grieves me that there is still a profound, deep and independent spirit that operates within our movement”.⁴²⁹ He concludes his report with: “It would be my desire, but it is not yet happening, that we truly operate as one entity, which is the way our Constitution is written, and in so doing we would be more competent at making Christ known to those outside the kingdom of God.”⁴³⁰ After six years as Executive President, this report portrays a man struggling to come to terms with the continued existence of an “independent spirit”. Despite six years of Conference and agency ‘reforms’, constitutional changes and the departure of key staff, the systemic issue that the creation of Crosby’s role was intended to deal with was still a stumbling block to the evangelistic ministry of the Conference as a whole.

At the September 2006 Council Meeting, Jean Milligan (Conference President), John Crosby and Leo Woodward put forward a paper entitled The Way Forward (TWF). This paper would lead to the appointment of Di Feldman as the lead consultant who would orchestrate a thorough and consultative examination of the Queensland Conference structure, beginning in February 2007, with the initial aim of a final report being released in the 2007 calendar year.⁴³¹ A task force was set up of ten people to assist the process

for the Queensland Conference as a whole, and to “formulate direction and a strategic plan for our Conference structures”.⁴³² There was initially great enthusiasm that the TWF process would help bring the different and disparate parts of Conference together. The Conference Council, the Executive President and the Care Board all indicated that they were committed to seeing the process through, with Care indicating that it “unconditionally supports TWF” and promising to help finance what had the potential to be an expensive process.⁴³³

Despite this, the story would not improve in 2007, where it seems anxiety and suspicion were in play across significant people, relationships and departments in the Queensland Conference. With TWF gathering momentum and on the verge of releasing a raft of recommendations, Crosby concluded his 2007 annual report with a barely disguised ‘shot across the bows’. Again, this kind of public commentary showed a leader who was frustrated by a lack of process, and also displayed the conflicted environment people were labouring under. Discussing the process of the TWF, Crosby states: “The TWF needs to be given the opportunity to bring to the Conference the key strategic areas that have been identified and are causing enormous stresses within the organisation and holding us back from our Missional growth. The numerous tensions we have been witnessing over the past 12 months are a manifestation of deeper long-term systemic problems. I trust that the Conference allows these assumptions to be discussed quite openly and transparently without vilifying individuals, which I sadly believe is the way we normally act out in our church culture.”⁴³⁴

It went on to become more public, more damaging, and would eventually lead to the end of Crosby’s tenure as Executive President.

Internal rumblings

Areas of conflict emerged between the largest agency, Care, and Conference and the Executive President’s Office. In this set up, as Randy Edwards would reflect, “conflict seemed inevitable”⁴³⁵ As an example, the dispute over the Emu Park campsite between the Rockhampton church and the Conference went to court, showing that the system was still geared towards the defence of its silos rather than the unity of the different components of the system, despite changes occurring at a constitutional level.

The Conference Council was not spared the experience of conflict itself. Up until late 2006, it would be a fair assessment to say that the Council was united behind Crosby and the aim for systemic unity. With the progress of TWF, matters around leadership, styles of leadership and unity began to come to a head. It became apparent to the Council in May 2007 that the working relationship between Crosby, and the Chair of Council and new Conference President, Leo Woodward, had become untenable. At the same time, the working relationship between senior executive staff and Crosby became strained. Within the Council itself, minutes reveal a level of tension that must have been stressful to all involved, as an almost perfect storm of issues tore at the fabric of unity. Jean Milligan was quoted as saying that “innuendo and gossip are so divisive and dangerous, and they are rife in our Movement at present”.⁴³⁶ The Council met four times in a period of six weeks between the 3 May 2007 and the 21 June 2007, as it dealt with a range of difficult issues and relational breakdowns. The stress can only be imagined, and one poignant comment is enlightening, as a Councilor suggests that they “can’t continue to work in this environment”.⁴³⁷



Randy Edwards

In the August 2007 meeting, Woodward was provisionally stood down as Chair of the Council, but for obvious reasons the churches and agencies did not hear the full details behind this decision. Woodward continued to hold the office of Conference President and attended Council meetings.

It was now apparent that the Council, the Executive President’s Office and the Care Board were operating under a cloud of relational distrust and suspicion. One response to this state of affairs was to appoint the ‘four statesmen’,⁴³⁸ comprising of Randy Edwards (former Kenmore Christian College principal), Alan Hermann (formerly employed by the Department of Church Development and Education), Rob Warwick (Aged Care Regional Manager) and Bruce Armstrong, who were able to attend Council meetings, offer advice and were to be used as a relational conduit between the churches, the Conference and the agencies. As such, they could also operate with the official backing of the Council to deal with issues as they arose.

The storm breaks

The crisis came to a head with sixteen churches calling for a special meeting to be held the morning before the Annual General Meeting at Springfield Community Oasis Church on Saturday 3 November 2007. The meeting was called to address issues that were highlighted in a letter from the Fernvale Community Church summarising the position of the churches. The growing unease amongst the churches about the direction of the Conference, the conflicts within it and the unwieldy structure that it was labouring under were encapsulated in the letter calling for the special meeting. This letter highlighted five areas of concern:

- a) It called for an “affirmation and confirmation of the Christian values Churches of Christ in Queensland live and operate by”, and asked that the “leadership” of the Conference “re-focus” on these values, and that these values must express themselves through “our character and how we do business in a Christlike way”;
- b) A “full explanation” was requested regarding the standing aside of the President of Conference, Leo Woodward;
- c) The letter noted that there had been “major, unexplained conflicts between the executive of Council” and some churches and agencies, regarding “property ownership/stewardship”;
- d) “Major concerns” were noted regarding the “apparent lack of genuine accountability for [sic] Executive President and the Executive President’s office”, and, finally,
- e) A “full investigation into the breakdown of communication between the Council, churches and agencies.”⁴³⁹

It is this final point that summarises the perception of the relationship between the Executive President’s Office, the Executive President and the various other bodies in the Queensland Conference. The letter also foreshadowed a motion that asked for a group of 10 people to be elected from the special meeting to report on these issues. After Conference President Leo Woodward vacated the chair, Graham Robinson, an Anglican barrister, was elected as an independent chair of the special meeting. After much discussion, changes to the foreshadowed motion, and a longer than expected meeting, the motion was carried 102-71, and a group of 10 people were elected to examine the issues raised and to report back to the Conference as whole. Peter Hicks was to chair this group. John Crosby did not choose to speak to the criticisms that were leveled at the Conference and himself during this meeting.⁴⁴⁰ Given that 16 of the churches in the Queensland Conference had been moved to call a special meeting and that the confidence in the leadership of the Conference was being eroded, it is not too extreme to say that the united future of the Conference itself was at stake. Steve Slade recalls that the movement came “within a whisker of the Queensland Conference dissolving”.⁴⁴¹

While such a divisive outcome was avoided, it was now apparent the Queensland Conference of Churches of Christ structure was close to unworkable with its multiple boards, divisions and departments working to achieve different aims, with little regard for the unity of the Conference as a whole. Good relationships would struggle to keep the structure functional, while those that had descended into an atmosphere of deep distrust had little prospect of bringing about unity.

The ‘Group of 10’ (G10)⁴⁴² submitted their report that was discussed by the Council in December 2007. Given the short timeline before them, the G10 report acknowledged that more work needed to be done to deal with the issues that were plaguing the Conference. In response to the questions that they were called to address, the G10 acknowledged that they did not have enough time to develop a values document for the whole of the Queensland Conference, found that the standing down of Leo Woodward was a “well measured” action by the Council “with the goal of bringing repentance and reconciliation between all”.⁴⁴³ They made recommendations that the Council, rather than the Executive President’s Office (EPO), should handle property disputes. With regards to the accountability questions around the Executive President’s Office, the G10 felt that the appointment of an “administrator” would be appropriate, to “oversee and work with the EP, ED’s Councils, Boards and Agencies”.⁴⁴⁴ They also urged greater communication and relational networks between the Conference Council and the various agencies, as well as the EPO’s office. The report also sounded a dire warning for the movement in Queensland: “Churches of Christ in Queensland is in a parlous state, primarily due to a lack of relationship between key players and the insecurity and behavior which results.”⁴⁴⁵

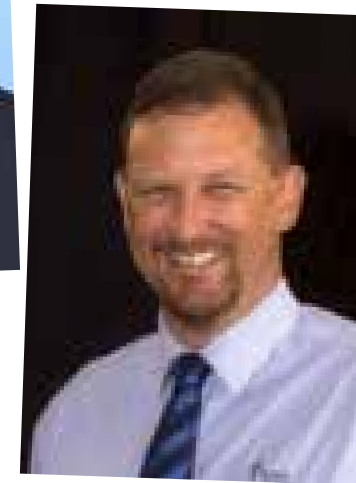
For many at a senior leadership level, this “lack of relationship” was further epitomised at the end of 2007 when the Executive Director of Care, Russell Bricknell, resigned. This was the second time that Bricknell had resigned, but he had been convinced to stay on previously, and mediation processes were put in place to resolve the issues evident in a difficult work environment. However, the relational breach was insurmountable. Bricknell’s role was filled by the interim appointment of Peter Cranna who was the Director of Finance for Care. However, the Council felt that they and John Crosby had been left out of the loop in this appointment. Given that the TWF findings would impact upon Care, the Care Board felt that an interim appointment was necessary to minimise the disruption to Care’s operations in a potentially shifting environment. With continuing questions from Care’s finances at this point, the gap between the Care Board, the Council and the Executive President seemed to be widening.

The G10’s recommendation for the appointment of an ‘administrator’ role was taken up by the Council in December 2007, although the title was changed to ‘Senior Advisor’. Ted Keating, former senior pastor of the Blackburn Church of Christ in Victoria, and Wollongong Church of Christ in NSW, was appointed to the role of Senior Advisor in January 2008 for what was to be a six-month appointment, but was later extended through to the 2008 Annual General Meeting. Keating describes the environment that he dropped into as “horrific”, with “very intense” conflict evident.⁴⁴⁶ By March 2008, Keating’s research and interviews with members of the broader Conference were well under way. Keating’s appointment also meant that issues of conflict between Council members, for example, were able to be delegated to him, and not be mired further in conflicts of interest.



Executive Director of Care, Russell Bricknell resigned at the end of 2007

Peter Cranna filled the role as Executive Director in an interim capacity until the restructure and appointment of Dean Phelan, Executive Director of Churches of Christ in Queensland in February 2010



Keating’s report, based on survey results and interviews, revealed that John Crosby’s leadership had been seriously damaged by the period of conflict. For the bulk of his tenure, Crosby had been supported by a united Council that was prepared to ‘back him’ in his mandate to bring unity to the Queensland Conference. Once the unity of the Council fractured, the conflict simply became too great for any one person to overcome. Keating spoke to his report at the Council meeting in April 2008, and recommended a clean slate, i.e. that the Council step down at the end of June 2008, that a special meeting be called for the 21 June, and that Keating and the senior statesmen put forward names for an interim Council. The report also recommended the resignation of the Care Board. The Council accepted the report and pledged to resign before the special meeting.

It was also at this meeting that, effective 30 June 2008, John Crosby’s resignation was accepted with “regret” by the Council.

How do we assess Crosby’s tenure? In the history of the Queensland Conference, there is little doubt that the years 2006-08 were tumultuous, divisive and incredibly painful to those caught up in the events. People acted badly at times, and without consideration for the welfare of others. Hindsight allows us the possibility of seeing where our allegiances lay and how they blinkered our views of the world. Less than a decade has passed, and it is barely enough time to assess this era from a historical perspective. One comment can be made with some confidence: without the tumult of the latter years of Crosby’s time, the systemic problems in the Queensland Conference would not have been portrayed as needing immediate and drastic action. History deals some hard lessons at times, and it is up to the future generations to make sure that the wounds from that era are healed. Randy Edwards, perhaps, summarises that period best when he wrote: “the Conference owes a great deal to John Crosby whose vision of a single organisation working towards a single goal of being Christ to our community was not realised under his leadership but may have never been verbalised without John.”⁴⁴⁷ At times the expression of this goal was badly handled, and perhaps the goal became paramount at the expense of relationships and good change management. Regardless, the Conference and its leadership became mired in the poor handling of relationships, confidentiality and structural silos, not just by Crosby, but also by many others in the senior leadership of the Conference. There have been many who are quick to blame conflict from that era on personalities alone. That is not the case. When personalities are backed up by autonomous structures, each with its own agenda, then both the personalities and the structures need to be reformed.

For the Conference, however, the resignation of some of the parties at the heart of the conflict was only “half the battle”.⁴⁴⁸

The interim – the drawing of breath

The man who would step into the gap after the resignation of John Crosby in 2008 was the Executive Director of the Resource Missional Team, Geoff Risson. Risson had been in his current role since June 2003. Prior to that he had been in local church ministry in Queensland since 1980, ministering at Arana Hills, Maroochydore and finally at Westside. Risson had also lectured in Preaching and Evangelism at the Kenmore Christian College (of which he was a graduate) and had been the Queensland Conference President in 1991. His knowledge of the churches and their background, combined with a depth of spirituality and a highly relational manner, made him the man for ‘such a time as this’. Risson was asked by Ted Keating, Bruce Armstrong and Randy Edwards to take on the Interim Executive President role in June 2008, which he accepted.

The mood of the Conference was certainly one of gloom, and it was particularly noticeable around the offices at Kenmore. Risson describes the environment there in the aftermath of Crosby’s resignation as “a dark place”. There was certainly a need for conflict resolution at Kenmore, and the need to build trust amongst the churches, the Conference Council and the key departments. At his second Conference Council Meeting, Risson recalls the handing down of the report containing the many recommendations of The Way Forward by Di Feldman. He felt that it would be poor leadership, in his time as the Interim Executive President, not to address the major recommendations as outlined in the report. One of these recommendations was to overcome the silo structures present in the Conference structure, and create a single entity. Risson gathered around him a small team of trusted advisors to ensure the achievement of this goal, including Ross Watkins (Retired CEO, Council member and previously a Care Board member), David Swain (Care staff) and Garry Edwards (Whitehill Elder and CEO R.T. Edwards and Sons)

as his core group, which he called the Strategic Task Investigation and Implementation Group, or STIIG. Risson recalls telling Peter Cranna, the acting Care Executive Director that “I would like David Swain to be my assistant on STIIG.” Cranna and the Care board agreed to this move. “This was a healthy indicator of positive relationships in the future,” Risson stated. Alongside this group was Steve Slade, who became Geoff’s assistant and whose governance skill contributed to the interpretation of the current constitution and the framing of a new one. Risson and Slade represented Queensland on the Council of Churches of Christ in Australia (CCCA) from 2008-10, bringing an active and engaged contribution.

The initial obstacle to be overcome – as is the case when groups and people have been operating in a publicly dysfunctional manner – was the lack of trust between the key parties in the Conference structure. Risson instituted an open door policy to his office, and he and Swain took it upon themselves to visit as many churches and their boards as possible, to alleviate the perceived gulf between ‘Kenmore’ and the churches. These “road trips” became valuable especially as the new Constitution and the new direction of the Queensland Conference began to be formulated and canvassed. “There were some churches that had doubts about what we were seeking to do,” Risson said, “but the road trips by David and I allayed most of those fears.”⁴⁹ Risson also noted that the darkness of the times also opened up many people and churches to the “opportunity for much needed change”. Swain’s comments on the cause of conflict are enlightening as well at this point: “I am of the view that too much conflict in the past has been created by a lack of empathy which stems out of simply a lack of knowing one another. It’s always time well spent just connecting with others.”⁵⁰ The road trips began a pathway to healing that was exemplified when the new Constitution was voted in at the November 2009 Annual General Meeting with a large majority, as well as the implementation of the recommendations from TWF.

The 2009 Constitution

The main architect of the 2009 Constitution was David Swain, whose role as Project Manager was to oversee the writing of the Constitution and the subsequent restructure of the Churches of Christ in Queensland. Given the complexities of the Queensland system, the lingering hurts from the end of the Crosby era, it is an extraordinary feat that this was achieved with as little dissonance as possible. I (Craig) attended the 2009 Annual General Meeting in my then role as Federal Coordinator for Churches of Christ in Australia, and for a meeting that was dealing with something so significant from a governance point of view, the feeling in the room at Caloundra was positive. The people in attendance were ready for change, and they had been ably led and encouraged to reach that point. David Swain reflects on that time: “I must say though, it was certainly extraordinary for things to go as well as they did in 2009 and in the years subsequent. I am of the view that the timing, the placement of the right people at the right time, was certainly of God and not man.”⁵¹ Gradually – but significantly – the Queensland Conference was shifting to a relational and holistic approach to how it envisioned and actioned ministry and change. People and relationships mattered more than positions. “The best thing is that the biggest changes in Churches of Christ in Queensland have come out of consensus. So, looking back, I am happier to support a consensus position that is less than perfect from a purist perspective, than doggedly sticking to a perspective that may alienate or erode relationships with others.”⁵²

The changes also meant that a new Board system was set up, with a Council chaired by Bruce Armstrong, and a Board that oversaw the governance of the whole organisation, chaired by former Care Chairman, Alan Sims.

Bringing the light of Christ: Kingdom access points

With the voting in of the new Constitution at the 2009 Annual General Meeting, the interim period of leadership was coming to an end. Indeed, this period under warm and irenic leadership had achieved what it had initially set out to do: to bring a sense of peace to the movement and lay the foundations for a new start. The next appointment of an Executive Director was crucial. If this appointment were to fail, or even to be seen to be ‘keeping things steady’, the hard work of the previous two years may well have been for nothing. By Christmas 2009, the Queensland Conference had their man in Dean Phelan.

Phelan was from Victoria, with a wide-ranging CV that included training as a spiritual director, an extensive business background as an organisational psychologist, some local church minister experience at Doncaster Church of Christ and, crucially, over 25 years of experience at a Churches of Christ Conference level in Victoria/Tasmania where he had been Chair of Conference Council and Chair of the Vic/Tas Community Care Board. In Phelan, the Queensland Conference had found a leader with an understanding of business principles, organisational systems, discernment and a reputation for being able to get to the heart of the matter. He had recently taken a sabbatical from his business interests, and was “open to a new direction.”⁵³ That direction – much to his and his wife Janette’s surprise – was north, and into a role that united his passions, experience and expertise.

Beginning in February 2010, Phelan found that his initial emphasis would be the continued building of trust with the churches and the departments, many of whom had been hurt by the infighting and dysfunction in the years before Geoff Risson’s tenure. Despite the groundwork put in by Risson and his team, the appointment of a new Executive Director meant that trust had to be re-forged in a new environment. Many still viewed the State Office in a distrustful manner, and there were some elements that feared that a “businessman” who was leading the churches might well resort to selling assets off to shore up the financial position. For the next 12 months, Phelan travelled the state and sought to relieve the fears that some stakeholders felt. What he found was not necessarily what he expected to find. Yes, there seemed to be a ‘silo’ situation occurring between the churches and Care, but there also appeared that there were silos within silos: “I discovered that in some communities we had staff working at our aged care service who did not know that we had a local church in the town (and vice versa), and we had staff working in childcare that did not know we had an aged care service.”⁴⁵⁴ Not only did a healing process have to occur with individuals, churches and departments, but a different story needed to be told, one that would help people to stand and look at things from a higher perspective, and so unite the disparate parts of the Queensland Conference in a common mission. The story Phelan, the Council and the Board chose to tell was one of the Conference being “One Body” (1 Corinthians 12:12-27) working together to bring the light of Christ into communities.

Ironically this story had the same goal as that articulated by the Council and Crosby nearly a decade before. However, now that structures had been changed, people were more ready to embrace change, and Phelan was able to seize the moment.

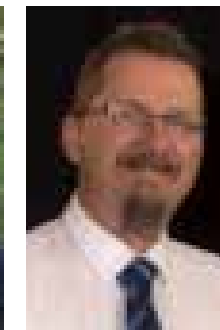
Phelan’s philosophy is best explained using his own reflections: “I spent much of my time speaking and writing to re-create a new Story, re-awakening in people the fact that we are Churches of *Christ* i.e. our identity and purpose is found in Jesus Christ who gave us three core commandments – love God, love our neighbors and make disciples. These three essentials were each about a Way of being and doing; that we were once a movement of people committed to a cause – not just running services and independent churches – and we could be a vibrant movement again.” In the new Story, the past was confronted – not shied away from – and a choice could be made for a new future, a new Story that emerged out of the present. The people of the Queensland Conference were given a stark choice: a default future living out their “greatest fear” by staying in the old Story, or to embrace a new Story, “that Churches of Christ [in Queensland] consisted not of 70 Churches, but rather 200 plus presences in communities around Queensland (70 + 130 Care ministries). Each of these presences could in fact be places in their community where people could experience something of the kingdom of God; they could be points where people can find their way back to God... The choice was a real one: which Story and future do you want to live in – as both are true?”

Around the new story came a different language, one that focused on “bringing the light of Christ into communities” through “Kingdom access points” which included churches, child care facilities and retirement homes. Phelan was not merely introducing semantics, he was introducing a hope that a new language and a new story would help bring a change in perspective, about what the Church is, and can be, in communities today. Language alone, of course, could not achieve this, and the new story needed to be enfolded with changes to structure, new initiatives and new mechanisms in order to live out and tell the Story. One of those initiatives was the launch of the monthly Networking magazine under Desley Millwood’s guiding hand (Director of Communications and Marketing), which gave space to the telling of the new Story and enabled the whole movement in Queensland access to the new realities the Conference was embracing: “Instead of having 7,000 people associated with our local churches, we have 45,000 people associated with our 200+ presences, plus nearly 4,000 staff and volunteers”. With the innovative use of metaphor and story combined with the highlighting of many lives being changed each month, a new energy was released into the Queensland Churches of Christ Conference.

A new energy needs a kingdom focus, and what also emerged was a renewed desire to use the resources of the Queensland Conference for a “whole-of-organisation approach to mission”⁴⁵⁵ into surrounding communities. The challenge facing the new Executive Director, the Board and the Council was how to initiate strategies that further connected the churches and the various departments, thereby enfolding the philosophy that all manifestations of the Conference, be it emergency accommodation, child care or a traditional church, could be a “Kingdom access point”.



Dean Phelan



Steve Slade



Gerry Weatherall

A Mission Division was set up in 2010, headed up by Director of Mission, Gerry Weatherall, to oversee this aspect of the Conference’s work. At the 2010 Annual General Meeting, Phelan set out a framework for the various areas of Conference to work together with local churches in the new Story. He stated publicly that “no church would be closed by the State Office on my watch” and spoke of working together in clusters to bring the gospel more effectively into communities. Weatherall developed the cluster framework through the implementation of Strategic Action Leadership Teams, or SALTs. These teams were comprised of a mix of local leaders and at least one member of the State Office Senior Management Team, thereby ensuring a connection between the ‘on the ground’ leaders and the State Office. What the SALTs first look at is not the finances available, but “their communities’ greatest need, greatest areas of darkness”.⁴⁵⁶ Further emphasising the “whole-of-organisation” approach is that the SALTs can access the State Office resources and a researcher who can provide information on the local demographics that the SALTs are dealing with. Under the new structure leaders from churches and the Mission Division can access considerable expertise which was, in years past contained in the Care department.

Having identified the greatest needs (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual), a SALT then formulates a Mission Action Strategic Plan, with a supporting financial plan. They are partnered with a Mission Action Partner whose job it is to help move things forward. Regular reports are submitted to the Executive Team in the State Office to continue that sense of partnership and enable what support is possible. Financing comes from a “revitalised Centenary Development Foundation (CDF)”;⁴⁵⁷ with funds that were sitting outside the organisation before the restructure, now invested in CDF and generating a profit to support of the organisation’s mission strategy – which was the original goal of those who set it up thirty years ago. In one year this generated over one million dollars profit that could be invested back into the mission strategy.

It could be argued that the SALT strategy best highlights the “whole-of-organisation” approach being embraced under Phelan’s leadership. In 2013, there were ten SALTs in action. Various new divisions were created, to further emphasise the need for the whole Queensland Conference to work together, and to end an era of silos.

At a governance level, the 2009 Annual General Meeting saw a new Council elected who then appointed a new Board, who in turn appointed one Executive Director for the whole organisation. Whereas in previous years there were a number of Boards and Executive Directors, there was one Board and one Executive Director responsible for all facets of the organisation. Bruce Armstrong was Chair of the new Council, Alan Sims was Chair of the new Board and Dean Phelan was Executive Director. Each worked hard to “reinforce the theme of one Body” and the “new directions”⁴⁵⁸ being taken on by the Queensland Conference.

David Swain, who had done sterling work in the formation of the new Constitution, was appointed to the new role of Director of Churches of Christ Care Division reporting to the Executive Director. Peter Cranna became Director of Finance for the whole organisation, entrusted with the task of “ensuring that we take a whole-of-organisation view of funding our mission whilst ensuring good stewardship and ongoing sustainability of our care and ministry services”.⁴⁵⁹ From the Council of Churches of Christ in Australia (CCCA) perspective, Cranna has provided a strong, cooperative and open Queensland voice in discussions around the sharing of resources and involvement in national partnerships, most importantly the National Churches of Christ Insurance program.

As already mentioned, Desley Millwood was appointed Director of Communications and Marketing and was given the task of communicating the new initiatives and ethos to the Queensland Conference, excelling in a job with rapidly changing and expanding boundaries. Steve Slade became the Director of the Secretariat, a role that put to good use his excellent governance and relational skills in helping to create a framework in which the new Board and Council could operate within. Slade has also served since 2008 as the Treasurer of the CCCA, further highlighting a shift towards partnership and involvement with the national body that was reinvigorated by himself and Geoff Risson. Gerry Weatherall (as mentioned earlier), was appointed to be Director of Mission, and has “significantly contributed to the development and driving of the Mission strategy”.⁴⁶⁰ Trent Dean (Director of Assurance Services) was given the task of taking the risk management, quality assurance, workplace health and safety and internal audit functions to the next level of professionalism in what was becoming a rapidly expanding and complex organisation.

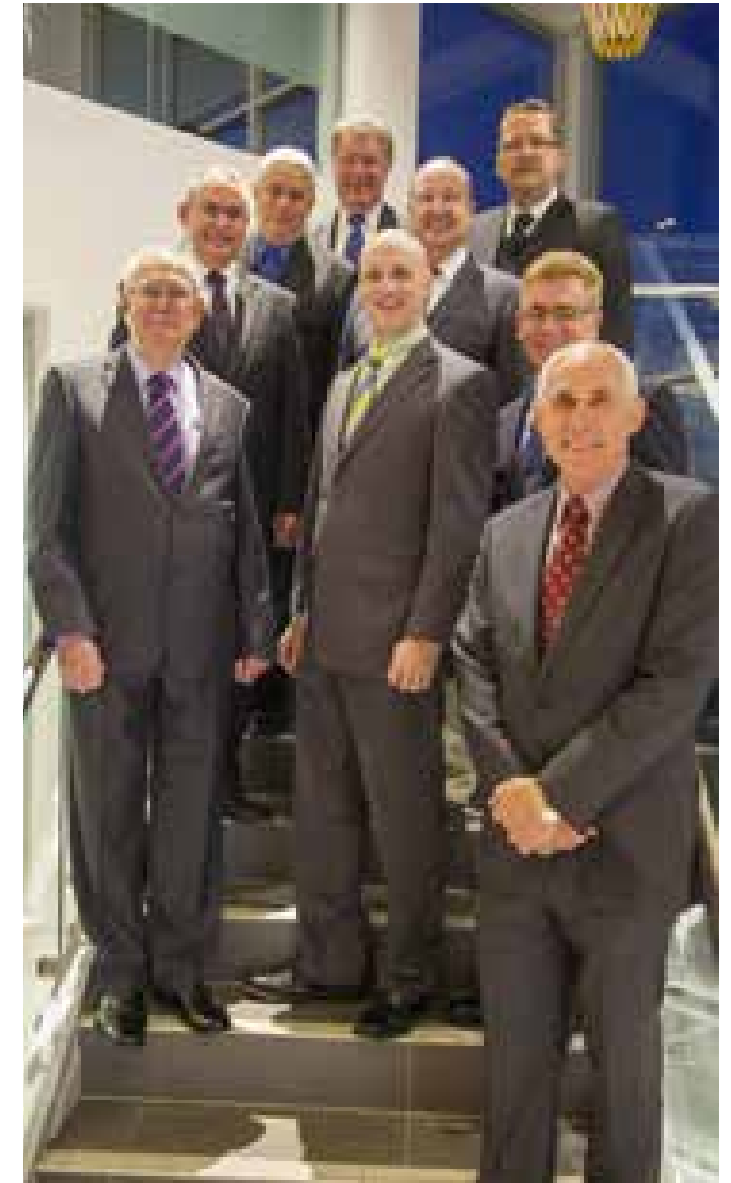


David Swain



Desley Millwood

While some may question this chapter’s focus on the dysfunction within the Queensland Conference, it is important to note that the recovery from that era has been astonishing. That is not to say that there have not been challenges, nor will the coming years be all smooth sailing. In order to not repeat the past, the past – even the recent past – needs to be openly displayed. The period of growth and unity that the Queensland Conference of Churches of Christ is experiencing has been hard earned. Tough lessons have been learned, and mistakes made that hopefully will never be repeated.



Conference Council May 2016

Front row: Geoff Charles

Second row (L to R): Greg Runge, Dale White, Gary Edwards

Third row (L to R): Myles Waldron, Steve Peach

Forth row (L to R): Chris Downes, Dean Phelan, and Steve Slade

Absent: Andi Owen, John Park, Ron Hawkins, and Steve Nixon



Lights in the community

EASTER AND CHRISTMAS

The Queensland Conference of Churches of Christ has sought to present Christ to its community despite the ups and downs of the past two decades. A successful strategy has been to connect deeply (through presence and sponsorship) with Easterfest, a Christian music festival that takes place in Toowoomba over the Easter weekend each year and draws upwards of 30,000 people. The Churches of Christ in Queensland have a strong presence there through a stand and a mass of volunteers, and now see it as an opportunity to reach out and connect with not just the local community, but with the broader community that this successful festival draws. In 2011, for example, despite heavy rain washing away the Churches of Christ stand, appreciation was expressed from the public for the work the organisation did, particularly in response to the recent natural disasters. The HumeRidge church also recorded its highest ever attendances over that Easter weekend, with 3,000 people attending their five services.⁴⁶¹

Easterfest is one example of where the Churches of Christ in Queensland have been able to display the actions and words of the body of Christ in tandem.

Another example has been the more recent decision to co-sponsor and participate in ‘Christmas in the Park’, first held in 2011 at the Roma Street Parkland Amphitheatre in Brisbane. In these events, the Queensland Churches of Christ Conference are participating in making the gospel known.

THE RESPONSE TO NATURAL DISASTERS

The Queensland Conference was able to show the words and deeds of Christ in action through the all too many opportunities provided by natural disasters in 2010-12. Having united itself through the constitutional change of 2009, the Conference was to see this unity tested and put to work as floods wreaked havoc over Queensland, and took their toll on agencies and churches alike.

In early 2010, floods hit the west of Queensland, impacting Roma where over 200 homes were flooded, although the Roma Church of Christ building itself was spared. The church then acted as a beacon of hope to the rest of the town, dispensing money and practical assistance to the townspeople who were not so fortunate. St George was also hit hard by the floods, and the Churches of Christ Care services were severely impacted. The Warrawee Aged Care Services (caring for 35 residents) needing to be evacuated to the Moonah Park Aged Care Services at Michelton in a sustained team effort.⁴⁶² Unfortunately, this would not be the last time the residents at Warrawee would have to be moved due to flooding.

In January 2011, flood waters returned but on a larger scale, and one response was that the Churches of Christ Queensland Flood appeal was set up. This appeal raised over \$400,000 in donations from Churches of Christ all over Australia. Areas that were impacted initially included Chinchilla (with church families being hit), Dalby (which was cut in two), Bundaberg, Maryborough, Mackay, Rockhampton, Gympie, Gladstone and St George, where the residents at Warrawee were again relocated to Moonah Park.⁴⁶³ As the days wore on, however, this flood reached frightening and tragic proportions and captured the attentions of not just Queenslanders but Churches of Christ Australia wide and members of the Stone-Campbell movement worldwide.

Toowoomba, already impacted by weeks of rain, had 160mm of rain fall in the 36 hours leading up to 10 January. A surge of water – an inland tsunami – rushed through the city and devastated the Lockyer Valley, causing much structural damage and over 35 deaths.⁴⁶⁴ The list of areas where there were Kingdom access points impacted grew to include Toowoomba, Gatton, Withcott, Marburg, Brisbane and its suburbs, Chinchilla, Caboolture, Maryborough, Hervey Bay, Gin Gin and Ipswich.⁴⁶⁵

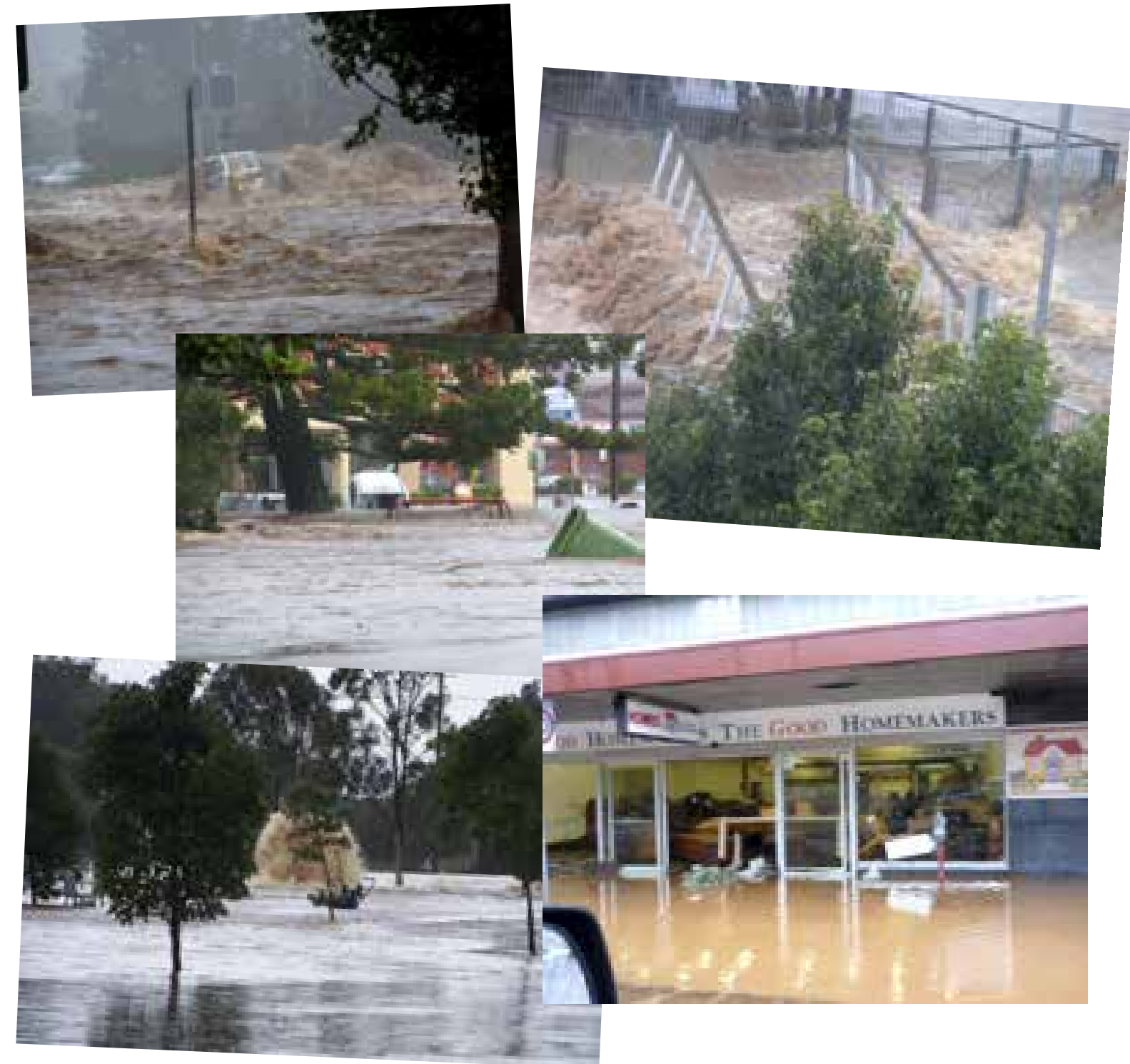
The Crisis Management Team, the Churches of Christ State Office staff, Care and agency staff, as well as churches and their members, worked tirelessly together to coordinate evacuations, provide support and volunteer for the massive clean up task that confronted the state. Care facilities opened their kitchens and laundries for those impacted in the churches. All available rooms in Churches of Christ owned housing were fitted out to provide emergency accommodation⁴⁶⁶ and other spontaneous acts of sacrifice and partnership were displayed by members and staff of the Conference of Churches of Christ in Queensland. The greatest crisis that Queenslanders had faced since 1974 was met in united fashion by the Conference. Dean Phelan would comment: “one really positive by-product of the floods has been the way our care services, churches, chaplains and state office staff have all been working together as one body to respond to the crises and to help each other.”⁴⁶⁷

On a much needed bright note for the residents of Warrawee, they were visited by the Governor of Queensland, Penelope Wensley, who presented the residents with two letters expressing support, sympathy and encouragement from the Queen and Prince William.⁴⁶⁸

DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS

While the unity of the Conference of Churches of Christ in Queensland was remarkably evident in the flood crisis of 2011, the Conference was also participating in the unity of the national body through its active participation in the Council of Churches of Christ in Australia (CCCA). Since 2008, Geoff Risson, Steve Slade, Bruce Armstrong, Greg Runge and Dean Phelan have represented Queensland at these meetings, and Queensland has been an active partner by seconding Steve Slade to be an effective and supportive Treasurer of the CCCA.

This sense of partnership and unity flowed into the decision between the Queensland and Vic/Tas Conferences in February 2011 to merge the Victorian residential aged care and independent living units into the Churches of Christ Care in Queensland. Talks regarding this merger – and even a national expression of Churches of Christ aged care – had been under way since 2009. The Victorian work was smaller in scale and the Vic/Tas Community Care Board recognised that they needed a partner in order to keep the aged care facilities operating under the Churches of Christ banner. On July 1, 2011, three Victorian aged care facilities (Arcadia, Betheden and Oak Towers) were merged into the Queensland aged care network under Care, adding a further 300 residential aged care beds to the Queensland operations and ensuring that the legacy of the Churches of Christ investment in Victorian aged care was honored. The Networking magazine described it as “a historic agreement which forges a closer working relationship between the Conferences in both states and indeed strengthens both Conferences and the mission of Churches of Christ in Australia”,⁴⁶⁹ and Paul Cameron, Executive Officer of Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania, reflected that the merger meant that “Churches of Christ are still continuing the ministry of Jesus through aged care” in Victoria.⁴⁷⁰



AN EXAMPLE FROM THE CHURCHES

It is understandable that in the reflections on the ‘Conference-sized’ issues that this chapter has undertaken to convey, that the stories of individual churches have not been given the detail that many would expect.⁴⁷¹ However, the churches have been involved in their own struggles at the turn of the twenty-first century as they battle to maintain the call to preach Christ in Word and deed in “a time of assertive atheism, widespread indifference and claims of other faiths”.⁴⁷²

To reflect on each individual church expression is beyond the scope and brief of this particular history, but what we can add here and in other relevant chapters are a couple of examples that highlight the Queensland Churches and how they “do love God and love one another” and how they “actually do bring the light of Christ into communities.”⁴⁷³ One example of stability of leadership through the tumultuous times of the recent past is HumeRidge Church of Christ (Toowoomba). Bruce Armstrong, former Senior Pastor, reflects that this church has “only known three senior ministers in 45 years”.⁴⁷⁴ Established in 1882, the Margaret Street church (now HumeRidge) is one of the oldest of the Churches of Christ in Queensland, as well as currently being the largest. Yet the 1980s onwards would not leave HumeRidge unchanged: the decision to leave the property at Margaret Street was painful for some members, as Beverley Grenfell records: “no major decision like this is without heartache... some went to other churches and sadly, some stopped fellowshiping.”⁴⁷⁵ The church relocated to impressive premises at Hume Street in 1994. Under the combination of the stable and visionary leadership of Bruce Armstrong, and then Dale White, the attendances at HumeRidge tripled from 1982-2006, from 327 in 1982 to 1061 in 2006.⁴⁷⁶ HumeRidge has also engaged in planting churches at Withcott (1982) and Kingsthorpe (1988). Along with the churches at Toowoomba North (Harlaxton St) and

Garden City (Crown St), the gospel is preached and exemplified in numerous ways in Toowoomba and its surrounds. Despite the ups and downs of the larger Conference setting, HumeRidge and other churches that seek to look beyond their own walls are a reminder that great energy and hope can be found in local church settings, large and small, traditional and experimental.

Conclusion

How does one summarise such a diverse period?

It is enough to say that history teaches us more than facts, figures and dates. The current state of the Queensland Churches of Christ Conference did not occur in isolation, and cannot be merely explained by pointing at tables and making comparisons. The Conference went through some dark periods that were painful and damaging to those who were caught up in the events of the time. Yet, if anything, the most recent past reminds us that it is always darkest just before the dawn and that, if we have the courage to confront that darkness and name it, we can participate in the bringing of the light.



HumeRidge Church of Christ celebrates 130 years

*Mike Armstrong, Kay Rademacher
and Eric King represent Centenary
Development Foundation at the
2011 Annual General Meeting*



CENTENARY DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

In 1983, the Centenary Development Foundation (CDF) was established by State Conference to mark the centenary of Churches of Christ in Queensland. This was seen as one of the positive ways to celebrate 100 years of Churches of Christ in Queensland among our churches.

As the visionary Clive Burdeu once commented to George Haigh, “There is plenty of money in the Brotherhood! ” The CDF was established to manage and provide funds for worthwhile projects that help our churches and church organisations to grow and extend God’s kingdom. However, it was not the first initiative with this purpose. What was known as Church Extension Funds was launched three times in Churches of Christ in Queensland’s history – in 1914, 1930 and 1950! Another initiative – the realisation of Burdeu’s statement by an individual – was established through the unique vision of a butcher from Ipswich, Cliff Coward. Any church member visiting his butcher shop in North Ipswich (joint-owned with his brother Cecil) were soon engaged by Cliff in animated conversation about what is now known as Inter Church Aid (ICA) as he wrote figures on butcher paper with his pencil. Today, it not well known that ICA first stood for Ipswich, Camp Hill and Annerley. Cliff Coward, visiting Annerley Church to worship one Sunday morning, became aware of the church’s financial stress, and soon dreamed of a way to assist by combining the financial resources of these three churches, and the finances of individuals within those churches.

As Haigh writes in ‘Venturing in Faith’, “Since 1970, when the scheme was founded, he has generated over \$1,300,000, which has been loaned out to churches, the Youth and Christian Education Department, and Kenmore Christian College free of interest. Churches have built chapels and halls, purchased manses, bought blocks of land: some have repaid loans in less than half the time applicable to an interest-bearing loan.”

However, to celebrate 100 years of Churches of Christ in Queensland in 1983, Conference recommended the establishment of the Centenary Development Foundation. In 1984, a Board was appointed to set up and administer the fund, with the first meeting held on 8 March 1984 at the then Brisbane Canberra Hotel. The original board consisted of Noel Leitch (Chairman), John Sherriff (Secretary), Len Brooks (Treasurer), Horace Risson and Allan Male. Len Brooks commented about the early beginnings of the CDF saying, “It is interesting to note that no funds were provided by State Conference as a ‘float’ to start. Each member of the Board gave \$50 to fund the cost of stationary etc., and open a bank account. It was a struggle in the early years to persuade churches, members, committees and departments to trust the Board by investing in the CDF.”

The CDF, under the leadership of its first Director, Rod Foster, in time became the managers of ICA.

Today, the CDF is the treasury arm of Churches of Christ in Queensland, financially supporting churches by providing loans for new churches, buildings, extensions, equipment, etc. Throughout its history, the CDF has contributed a percentage of its surplus into the annual Churches of Christ in Queensland budget to facilitate growth of its ministries. In its history, more than \$1 million has been given as direct grants to local churches.

Today, all profits generated through investing in the CDF are provided as funds for the Mission Division.

At the time of writing, the CDF has some \$73,000,000 under its financial management.

From small things, big things can indeed grow! The \$50 each from the original five Board members has grown to \$73,000,000!

CHAPTER THIRTEEN:

Women's Ministry in Queensland

Throughout the history of the Churches of Christ in Queensland, there has been an active ministry to and by women. Often their names – as per cultural norms – were hidden behind the names of their husbands, and they were given less space and words in Conference records. They were, however, indispensable to the growth of the churches, care services and the impact of various other committees across Queensland, and often they served internationally in roles that they were not permitted to in their home state.

The Queensland Christian Women's Fellowship (QCWF)

It has been suggested that the Women's State Conferences were often more 'progressive' than the general conferences held at state levels in Queensland and, especially in the early part of the twentieth century, often presented motions and reports on a wide array of topics. The Queensland Christian Women's Fellowship enjoyed a long history of impacting lives around them. In 1889, 'The Christian Pioneer' reported that a small group of women met in Toowoomba, in the hopes of creating an annual event. This hope was not realised until 1913 (again at Toowoomba) when women from Toowoomba, the West Moreton district, Chinchilla, Ma Ma Creek, Gympie, Moonee River, Tara and Brisbane gathered to form the 'Queensland State Sisters' Conference'. The next year the women met again, this time at

Despite the cultural norms of the day, there were many women whose active contributions to bringing the light of Christ into communities should be recorded. Often their work would be anonymous, like the many women who provided meals during the Great Depression at the Annerley Church of Christ. Though unnamed, many women whose work is unknown to us in the early twenty-first century made sterling contributions to the cause, and shaped a great deal of the foundations that the Queensland Churches of Christ currently stand upon.



the Ann Street church, and in 1915 the Queensland Conference recognised the Women's State Conference as an auxiliary conference.⁴⁷⁷ Broad and diverse ministries then followed rapidly for this vital collective – an Indian orphan was supported in 1919, hospitals were visited, prayer meetings were held, support to the general Conference work and meetings was also provided. The QCWF grew quickly in scope and stature, supporting – among other things – the Federal Conference held in Brisbane (1930), advocating for temperance issues, supporting the work of foreign mission, and supporting Indigenous ministry (1943).⁴⁷⁸ Of course, the work of women in the Queensland churches was not confined to conference auxiliaries, but was paramount in local churches throughout the state, often in unheralded and surprising ways. Yet they always were in keeping with their constitutional purpose: "Christian Women's Fellowships exist to develop a deeper understanding of Christ's love and salvation for ourselves and others and to provide channels of service to the Church, community and the world."⁴⁷⁹

The church at Rockhampton, which was founded in 1928 after a Hinrichsen and Stewart tent mission, can trace its existence in part to the active work of the Women's Conference, whose executive decreed that, "the work of the church be extended to Rockhampton".⁴⁸⁰ This decision was backed with funding from the women of the Queensland churches to the tune of £300 which, according to Haigh, led to the "establishment of a fully functional church".⁴⁸¹ These women did more than fundraise – they helped ensure that the kingdom expanded throughout Queensland. It was Ruby Hinrichsen, for example, who set up the Sunday school in September 1928 at the newly formed Rockhampton church. The point that needs to be made here is that women were not incidental to the work of developing and sustaining churches but, especially for the first 75 years of the Churches of Christ in Queensland, women were perhaps *reported* incidentally in regards to the development and growth of churches.



STUDENTS AT GLEN IRIS, 1928

Reading from left to right.

Back Row: J. H. C. Christensen, G. H. Arnold, T. W. Siderman, V. C. Dietrich, W. W. Sanders, E. J. Miles, A. H. Lloyd, W. F. Jackel.
Fourth Row: H. L. Williams, S. J. Jones, F. G. T. Turner, W. S. Bartlett, C. Thomson, C. W. Jackel, J. J. English, F. M. Fawcett, L. G. Young, W. T. Atkin, A. F. L.
Third Row: A. E. Brown, R. J. Sandells, A. W. Thompson, T. Hamford, H. E. Greenwood, J. C. Leyla, E. J. Waters, Jnr., A. H. Stanford, S. Neighbour, A. W. Grundy, W. W. Hendry.
Second Row: E. L. Williams, D. C. Ritchie, R. L. Arnold, A. B. Loring, L. H. R. Beaumont, R. A. Banks, V. C. Stafford, L. A. Treloar, J. H. McIlroy, J. H. Hay, R. J. Manning, Jnr.
Front Row: E. A. Paternoster, Jnr., S. A. Gresham, V. G. Whelan, C. J. Robinson, Miss B. R. Waggaman, Miss E. Leeson, Miss E. Bolton, Miss V. Callanan, Miss L. M. Foreman, Miss G. L. Lambert, I. J. Chivell, R. A. Jones, G. McA. Mathieson.

Violet Maud Callanan

One of those women who fits the above description is Violet Maud Callanan, whose historical significance is that she was the first ever female minister of a Church of Christ in Queensland (and Australia)⁴⁸², and the second only female minister in Australia overall.

Vi – as she was known – was born in Gladstone on 17 February 1902. She studied at the College of the Bible (1928-30) in Glen Iris, Victoria, after making a decision for Christ at a Hinrichsen-Morris mission in Bundaberg. Upon graduation, Vi returned to Queensland and began ministry at the Hawthorne church. Gordon Jones writes of her time there, saying that: “she probably saved the church from collapse” and that “she served the church as a pastor, builder and probably rescuer of the church from oblivion during the Depression.”⁴⁸³ It is hard to imagine now just how revolutionary this was in 1931. It took courage on behalf of both Vi and the Hawthorne church – Vi’s to accept the call, and Hawthorne’s to offer it in the first place. Vi has been described as “an extremely capable, confident lady”,⁴⁸⁴ and one would think she would have been, operating in a small church in the “relatively conservative”⁴⁸⁵ Queensland Churches of Christ culture of the day. Both she and the Hawthorne leadership could be considered distinctly counter-cultural.

To put it in its cultural perspective, Vi’s appointment occurred in an era shortly after a young George Haigh was appointed Hawthorne’s church secretary at the tender age of 14, because “he was the only other male in the church”!⁴⁸⁶ George, of course, went on to have a significant role in the Queensland Churches of Christ, and wrote the impressive ‘Venturing in Faith’.

At times, it appears that some of the members of the Queensland Churches of Christ were not sure what to make of Vi’s ministry. Her ministry was referred to – “jestingly” – as a “petticoat ministry”⁴⁸⁷ by contemporaries, and in ‘The Christian Echo’s’ report for 1931-32 it simply states that, “Miss Callanan has been acceptably assisting Hawthorne Church”.⁴⁸⁸ It is strange language – “acceptably assisting” – and certainly out of step with the language used to announce any other new (male) minister commencing ministry at a church.

During Vi’s time at Hawthorne she was well known as a solid and gospel orientated preacher who was dedicated to youth ministry. Vi left Hawthorne in 1934, and went to Victoria where, among other things, she worked on the Social Services Committee at the invitation of Will Clay. Upon retirement, she returned to Queensland and took on a counseling role at the Southport church, and was elected the Queensland Christian Women’s Fellowship President in 1970 – a role that she used to visit every Church of Christ in Queensland⁴⁸⁹. She died in August 1976 at the Golden Age Retirement Village, and was remembered as a woman who “at all times kept an unfailing attitude toward honouring the Master whom she loved so well.”⁴⁹⁰

Dianne Feeney: A gifted teacher

Dianne Feeney was born on 27 October 1946 and attended the East Ipswich Church of Christ. Dianne studied at the Kenmore Christian College, graduating in 1968.

In 1969, Dianne went as a missionary to Vanuatu (Pentecost Island) before leaving in 1970. This short-term experience led to a life-long “interest in anthropology” and “set her on the path she was to follow for the rest of her life”.⁴⁹¹ She returned to Queensland, working as a consultant in secretarial and administrative training. Dianne also applied her teaching gifts in two diverse settings and in two diverse subject areas: lecturing part-time at the Queensland Institute of Technology (Australian Government, Society and Economics), as well as lecturing at Kenmore Christian College (Anthropology, Sociology of Religion and Comparative Religions).⁴⁹² Dianne proved in these years to be an eminently capable teacher.

In 1976, Dianne graduated from the University of Queensland with a Bachelor of Arts degree, with Honours in Anthropology. In 1977, she was appointed to the Woolwich College in New South Wales, lecturing in Social Sciences, Sociology, Anthropology, Missiology and Homiletics. Dianne also guest lectured at the College of the Bible (Stirling) in Melbourne and the Baptist Theological College of NSW, where she became Registrar in 1980, and later Academic Dean. Dennis Nutt recalls, “Her teaching was superb. She had a love for her subjects which she communicated to all around her.”⁴⁹³

Her ministry took her further afield, including lecturing at the Margery Lectures in South Australia, and she also represented Australia at the Christian Conference of Asia in Seoul (1985). Dianne was also a founding member of the

Christian publication, ‘Zadok’. She contributed to Churches of Christ thought through articles in ‘The Australian Christian’ and the ‘Pamphlet Club’,⁴⁹⁴ speaking boldly on key issues: “It seems to me therefore that those who restrict women exercising their specific and unique abilities, are prohibiting them from responding to the call of God... In sadness and frustration, many women are opting to use their gifts in the service of the world rather than the church. The church is the weaker for it.”⁴⁹⁵

In 1981, Dianne married Ern Henry, and “they made a fine ministry team... their willingness to serve together was a hallmark of their relationship”.⁹⁶ Prior to that, Dianne had commenced her doctorate through the University of Queensland, and visited Papua New Guinea in 1981 to do field work among the Rao and Boten people.⁴⁹⁷ In July 1985, ‘The Australian Christian’ reported that Dianne had been appointed Lecturer in Applied Theology at the College of the Bible from the start of 1987. She and Ern planned to first move to the US where Dianne would study at Yale Divinity School, before she began her lecturing duties in 1988.⁴⁹⁸ Sadly, this was not to be. In November 1985, Dianne returned to Papua New Guinea to continue research for her doctorate. On the afternoon of 28 November, she and pilot Paul Summerfield were flying to Chungribu and their plane was brought down by bad weather. The last contact with the plane was at 1.20pm, when they were 10 minutes away from the airstrip. The plane hit a ridge, and both Dianne and Paul lost their lives.

Dianne Feeney contributed much to the movement in her too-brief life and, in many ways, was a pioneer for other Queensland women.





Dorothy Potter is seen in this photo (far right) with the Federal Conference Arrangement Committee 1964 at the Brisbane City Hall

*Dorothy Potter:
More than a “busy life”*

Dorothy Potter lived a self-confessed “busy life”⁴⁹⁹ that spanned the bulk of the twentieth century. When looking at her 94 years, “busy” is just one word to describe such a life. Other phrases that come to mind include: sacrificial, servant hearted and Christ-like. Allan Male writes of Dorothy Potter: “Her life has been unusually full of service and usefulness, motivated by her faith in and commitment to God, who in all her busyness has taken priority”.⁵⁰⁰

Dorothy was born in Taringa, Brisbane, on 24 June 1899 to Ernest and Dorothea Clapham, who were members of the Ann Street Church of Christ. Ernest died when she was two, and Dorothea supported them through a mixed business she owned in Spring Hill. AC Rankine baptised Dorothy at Ann Street when she was 15. She taught in the Sunday school, where she became Superintendent, before hearing that the church at Hawthorne was short of teachers. Volunteering to help out there, she also became Superintendent of the kindergarten at Hawthorne.

A gifted learner, Dorothy came sixth at the Public Service examination, played the piano and organ at Ann Street, passed the St John Ambulance examinations for First Aid and also passed numerous musical examinations, achieving an Associate of Trinity College London degree. In 1917, Dorothy started work in the Taxation Department. She was also the Secretary of the Bible School Union (later the Christian Youth and Education Department) from 1926 until she married Eric Potter in 1935, and the family settled at Redcliffe. In 1936, they had their only child, Ronald.

Having moved back to Brisbane to care for her aunt after the death of her mother in 1947, Dorothy’s involvement in Churches of Christ soon increased. In 1948, she became

Secretary of the Ann Street Women’s Fellowship, while also functioning as the Home Mission Superintendent for two terms (1949-51 and 1953-57) and becoming President of the State Women’s Conference (1951-53). Dorothy also became President of the Australian Women’s Fellowship in 1953, and was the President of the Federal Women’s Conference from 1952 until 1954.

In the space of a decade, her energy and capacity saw her heavily involved in the life of the Queensland Conference and beyond. In 1956, Dorothy was appointed the President of the National Council of Women (NCW), having previously served as Vice President and the representative of the Church of Christ’s Women’s Conference. “This meant I had an opportunity to witness for my Lord,” she recalled, “and with other church representatives we made our stand as Christians.” In a breathtaking statement, she declared: “after becoming President... my busy times really started”.

Those times are too “busy” to go into detail here, but suffice to say that in the four years Dorothy held the position of President, she represented women and Churches of Christ vigorously. Once, she inspected a children’s hospital with two other members of the NCW, was unimpressed with the conditions, and made suggestions as to how they could be improved. The government later granted over £60,000 for improvements. Her term finished in 1960, although she stayed on in various roles (including Vice President) until 1986. She was also active in the Churches of Christ Historical Committee, Save the Children and many other organisations.

Dorothy received the Queen’s Jubilee Medal in 1977, and in 1982 she was made a life member of the NCW. She died on Christmas Eve, 1993. In her obituary, she was described as one “of the most outstanding community leaders in Queensland.”⁵⁰¹

Dorothy’s, indeed, was more than a busy life.



Hazel Morris: Serving God for life

There are not many women who, having just arrived back from their honeymoon, would load up a truck and move interstate for a ministry appointment that promised a meager wage and a caravan as a manse! However, that is exactly what Hazel Morris did.

Hazel was born in Sydney, New South Wales, on 1 February 1945 to Bill and Hilda Quayle. Hazel and Hilda stayed with Hilda's family until Bill was discharged after the war, and then they moved to Gilgandra, New South Wales, Bill's hometown. Gilgandra would be a place where God would call and equip Hazel for her life's work. Noel Flint, one of the pastors at Gilgandra at the time said that: "Gilgandra was a country church, small in numbers but rich. Rich in that it had nurtured and sent out so many of its congregation to serve the Lord elsewhere!" This proved to be an apt description of Hazel's life and ministry.

In Hazel's own words, she "became a child of God at the age of 10", and when she was 15 she committed herself to "serve God for life". From then on she was focused on that goal. In 1962 and 1963, she trained at the Bathurst Teachers' College, which also proved to be a time of spiritual growth and nurture. A missionary speaker at the Teachers' College Christian Fellowship also spoke into her life, urging her from the Psalms to "trust God and allow Him to give you the desires for your heart", and encouraging her to allow God to "direct the matter of your life partner". This meant a lot to Hazel as "there had been a young teenage interest and although I would have loved to have been a farmer's wife I knew this was not God's plan. I took up the challenge of the verse and left my heart issues with God."

That 'teenage interest' was a young man also from Gilgandra who had gone off to Woolwich Bible College. It would not be until 1968 that she and Lyle Morris would be married at Gilgandra but, as she had known in her heart, it would not be to settle down as a farmer's wife. Just before Lyle graduated, he was invited by the Aboriginal Christians in Eidsvold, Queensland, to be their pastor. The fellowship there could only offer them an allowance of \$10 a week and there was no church building and no manse, just the promise of a caravan and a tent! Lyle summed up their thoughts: "If they believe this is God's direction and they have the faith to ask, we should have the faith to go!"

And so they did, loading up the farm's truck with furniture as God had already answered their prayers and provided the newlyweds with a one-bedroom house. So began a ministry to, with and alongside Indigenous people in Queensland that has spanned 45 years.

Hazel writes: "We have had so many amazing experiences of God acting on behalf of His children, providing for His children and protecting His children." One such experience was when Cyclone Sandy threatened Normanton: "One time at Normanton (when Lyle was away) Cyclone Sandy hovered in the Gulf of Carpentaria, building in intensity. Suddenly she began to move rapidly, bearing down on Karumba and Normanton. Karumba was evacuated. We worked at battening down. Exhausted, we gathered for the Wednesday night Bible study and prayer. An old Christian Aboriginal elder, Bynoe, stood up and with sincerity, conviction and authority prayed 'God – you turn that cyclone round and send it across the sea to cross the land at a place where no man lives.' What more could we do but say 'good night' and go home? I remember going to bed in peace, not fear. I slept soundly and woke at daybreak. There was an unusual quiet, a stillness and peace. I turned on the radio. Yes! During the night the cyclone had turned above Mornington Island, sped across the sea, and crossed the land at a place here no man lived!"



Hazel and Lyle Morris with Dean Phelan

As Hazel looks back on almost half a century of ministry, the joy is obvious in these words: "Most importantly we rejoice that Aboriginal Christians are now leading their churches in many ministry centres in Queensland and beyond. We have loved the times shared with the Aboriginal people at Eidsvold, Normanton, Mareeba, Brisbane, Logan, Mt Isa, Fingal and everywhere else in between! The faith, commitment and love of the Christians is such a joy and an encouragement!"

Hazel and Lyle have three daughters, Janelle, Lynne and Karen, and five grandchildren. Over their journey, they have also fostered approximately 50 children, most of whom they cared for on a short-term basis, but are still part of their family now.

Hazel's life has certainly been lived in service to God.

Jan Christensen: *Teaching the impact of grace*

Some lives are lived quietly in service to God and neighbor, not attracting too much attention along the way, but nevertheless leaving an impact on those that they minister alongside.

Jan Christensen was born on 23 November 1950, following her sister, Fay, as the second of twin girls to parents Horace and Shirley Christensen. Her brother, Les, was born in 1954 and the family lived between the then Margaret St and Harlaxton St Churches of Christ in Toowoomba. Jan was baptised at the Margaret St Church, where her family was heavily involved in service.

Jan pursued a teaching career, gaining her Certificate in Teaching from the Kedron Park Teachers' College in 1969. As she was doing this course, she “battled against the idea of full-time service for God on the mission field”. A visit to Vanuatu to see some missionary friends was to be a turning point. Jan writes that it “convinced me that if God wants me to be a missionary, I would say yes.” A short time later she felt called, not to Vanuatu at that stage, but to meet the need for Christian teachers to help the Indigenous work in Eidsvold: “I was convinced that this was my calling from God, and applied for a transfer to the Eidsvold State School,” where Jan spent her “spare time” in 1972-74 “helping in the Eidsvold Christian Centre as a Sunday School teacher, club leader and a general dogsbody”.

After attending Kenmore Christian College and receiving a Diploma in Missions in 1976, Jan returned to Eidsvold to take up a full time position at the Eidsvold Christian Centre through 1977-78. She would later chair the Queensland Aborigine and Islander Board (QAIB) during a crucial time in that organisation's history. Her teacher training and obvious gifting saw her return to Kenmore Christian College



to teach, as well as teaching at the Northern Rivers Campus of the Australian College of Ministries (ACOM). The Vanuatu connection, which had previously opened her eyes to the possibility of mission work, saw her return not as a visitor but as a lecturer at Banmatmat Bible College through 1990-94, teaching a diverse range of subjects from ‘Sex and the Christian’ to Revelation.

There were many amusing anecdotes and highlights of Jan's ministry, but one that has stuck in her mind was from her time at Springwood Church of Christ: “I used to go to the women's prison occasionally to speak at a service led by one of the Springwood women, who was a chaplain there. I sang the song ‘Amazing Grace’ with them, and then asked if they knew what grace was? They didn't, and they surely didn't experience much of it in prison. So I explained God's amazing grace to them. When I finished, one of the toughies who was at the service (just for something different to do, I think) gave a big sigh and said, ‘Don't stop! Oh, don't stop.’ I think I have understood the impact of grace better ever since.”

Jan continued to promote mission work in her role as the Queensland Mission Mobiliser for Global Mission Partners from 2010-15.

Beryl Wiltshire AM: *In her father's steps*

Beryl Wiltshire (1920-2008), as daughter of Clive Burdeu, probably had one of two paths before her in life. Like so many before her who had a parent who was a trailblazer in their community, she could have shied away from a similar path, or even be crushed by the burden of expectation of Burdeu's legacy. The second path was to walk in her father's footsteps while forging her own way, and leaving her own mark.

Beryl Wiltshire quite clearly chose the latter path.

Born in Melbourne to Clive and Pearl Burdeu on 5 May 1920, Beryl Mureil Burdeu traveled the country as Clive's work for the Commonwealth took him and his family across the length and breadth of Australia. As Allan Male wrote in her obituary, Beryl was “brought up in household that believed service to others was essential”.⁵⁰²

Beryl married Bill Wiltshire in 1940, and they had their only son, Ken, in 1944. Beryl later helped her father establish the first Home for the Aged (later Burdeu House) for the Social Service Committee of the Queensland Churches of Christ in 1950. In 1967, she took on the role of acting Executive Director of the Social Services Department (later Care) following David Baker's untimely death in a car accident. Beryl was also the first manager of the Social Service Department's emergency accommodation.



She was named Queensland Mother of the Year in 1995, an award that prompted her to reveal one of her joys in life, “it is satisfying to see people grow, to see people come alive.”⁵⁰³

In 1996, Beryl was made a Member of the Order of Australia for her service in the field of social welfare. Like her father before her, she saw beyond what was and imagined outcomes that would help the needy: “We took risks,” she said. “We had a vision.”⁵⁰⁴

It was announced at her funeral service that a scholarship would be created in her name, ensuring that Beryl's life of service would continue to create legacies beyond her lifetime. The Beryl Wiltshire Scholarship is designed to encourage the recipient “for study towards a career in the caring profession”. Her legacy remains, “to see people come alive” in caring for others.

EPILOGUE: *To all the Churches that Served in the Past*

For older residents of Brisbane, a drive east from the centre of Ipswich via Brisbane Road is a drive that evokes memories of the past.

Up the hill, through the parade of Jacaranda trees that line the road behind old rock walls, built by convict labour, we are reminded of our colonial past. Passing the Girls Grammar School, we are reminded of Ipswich's strong schooling history, boasting the first grammar school in Queensland – Ipswich Boys' Grammar – over 150 years old. Travelling east on this road, you can see the railway line, an extension of the first railway line built in Queensland. Queensland's rail network is different from most mainline networks in the world because of its narrow gauge. In 1863, the Queensland Parliament agreed to build the first railway line in the colony with a 3 foot, 6 inch (1067 mm) gauge. Up to this time, all mainline railways in the world were built with wider gauges. The reason for the narrow railway gauge? The answer was simply cost – it was cheaper to build. The line was opened on 31 July 1865. Further along the road there is a church building on the

southern side. Now a Samoan church, this used to be the site of the East Ipswich Church of Christ. The Church of Christ had outgrown the buildings on this road, and therefore moved to acreage on Whitehill Road. For the older folk who now worship at Whitehill Road, their memories can recall packed Sunday school anniversaries, hard wooden pews, and the tennis court where many a 'love match' was made!

At one time, there were five local Churches of Christ in Ipswich. These were (in order of when they were birthed) – Bundamba, East Ipswich, Leichhardt, Bellbird Park and Karalee. Now they are only two in the greater Ipswich area – Bundamba (part of The Oasis Church of Christ, which has two worshipping centres, Bundamba and Springfield) and Whitehill Road (the congregation at East Ipswich moved to Whitehill Road in 2000).



Leichhardt church members 1967



Memories of the past

This part of the story telling of the history of Churches of Christ in Queensland reflects on churches that no longer visibly exist today. So, what happens when a church closes its physical doors? Is its story finished and all that is left is a collection of varying memories of former attendees of that church? Or can its history impact lives today? This section of ‘The Church from the Paddock’ is dedicated to all the churches that have served Christ well in the past, but are now no longer numbered among our churches in Queensland today.

We have chosen three churches to represent those which no longer come together in worship. One of these churches is from Ipswich (Leichhardt church), another is a country church (Sixteen Mile), and the third from the city of Brisbane (Hawthorne).

Sixteen Mile Church of Christ⁵⁰⁵

‘Sixteen Mile’ is a district south of Chinchilla between the Warrego Highway and the Kogan-Condamine Road. In 1907, a number of Victorians came to Queensland to select land,⁵⁰⁶ and to settle in what was known as the Sixteen Mile Creek area. These blocks of land were not large enough for these early settlers to make a living, so, for a while, farming life was a struggle. A number of these early settlers had belonged to the Churches of Christ in Victoria. Remarkably, they lived in tents until they could build their own homes. These first homes were simple houses made out of mud. When the first mud house was completed, immediately a breaking of bread service (a church service) began to be held regularly. This was held in the home of Charles Gray.

Church life grew from this simple beginning. In 1923, Mr H Spratt, then minister of the Roma Church, began holding church services once a month on Sunday mornings at Wambo, and in the afternoons in the Sixteen Mile Creek Hall.

“These were great days in the life of the young church. Mr Stan Vanham succeeded Mr Spatt at Roma Church, and continued the meetings. People from all denominations attended of a Sunday afternoon, and the hall was often full. People came on all kinds of horse transport – some came by bike, some walked up to seven miles, BUT THEY CAME! Many were won and baptised at that time. The round water hole near the Sixteen Mile Hall was the place where they were baptised, and summer or winter, made no difference – they were baptised during the preacher’s next visit following their confession of Christ.

From that time morning services and Sunday School were conducted weekly in the Sixteen Mile Hall until the Sixteen Mile Chapel was built in 1939.”⁵⁰⁷

So, what happened to this church at Sixteen Mile Creek? In 1949, a Church of Christ building was opened at Hopeland. This ultimately led to the Sixteen Mile Creek congregation closing and then combining with the group at Hopeland in 1958. The Sixteen Mile church building was used to store hay. In 1996, the building was sold for removal. This ended the story of the Sixteen Mile Church.

But what are some of the stories from the Sixteen Mile Creek church? What influence did this country church have upon people? Several people were interviewed who fondly remembered their early years at Sixteen Mile, and then the Hopeland church.

Eula Holt-Vogler now lives in retirement with her husband Ross on Bribie Island. Her grandparents were there at the beginning of the Sixteen Mile church in 1907. She recalls the passed-down stories of the original mud houses, which were wallpapered with newspapers! Eula recalls, as a child, attending church meetings in the Sixteen Mile Hall, which has now disappeared. She said that the only visual memory today of this community hall is the umpire’s chair standing next to where the tennis court used to be. A keenly anticipated event for her was the Sunday school Christmas Concert. What was the means of transport to the Sixteen Mile Hall every week to practice for the concert? A horse and sulky!

The water hole near the Sixteen Mile Hall was the place for baptisms. Eula’s father was baptised in the nearby water hole. Eula recalls up to 50 people meeting together on Sunday in the hall for worship. The church had a very strong youth group, and also ran a Christian Endeavour for these young people. This Christian Endeavour proved to be a training ground for future leadership, not only for the local church,

but also for Churches of Christ in Australia. The youth group/Christian Endeavour used to run open-air meetings in the streets of Chinchilla before there was a Church of Christ in Chinchilla. Chinchilla church was birthed from the surrounding district churches. Without some folks whose Christian story began in Sixteen Mile and Wambo, there would be no Chinchilla church today. Ministers who have served Churches of Christ throughout Australia who knew these churches as their home church include: Eula’s brother Owen Clarke, who served for many years in our Victorian Churches and is now retired; Rob Holt, Eula’s first husband who was well known as a song leader in Missions, now deceased; Bill and Norm Flett, both now retired; Roger Wal, now retired to Bribie Island; and Muriel Holt, graduate of Kenmore Christian College and, for many years, a missionary among our Indigenous people in Western Australia and Queensland, now deceased. Not a bad roll call for a pair of small country churches!

A vivid memory for Eula concerns Keith Horne, one of the past ministers of the Sixteen Mile church. Keith was preaching one Sunday morning in the church building. Suddenly, without a word, Keith disappeared from behind the lectern to dash out the back door of the hall. After several minutes he reappeared before a somewhat puzzled congregation and continued his message without a word of explanation for his dramatic exit. When the church service was over, Keith apologised for his dramatic disappearance during his message. He had felt a wasp buzzing around inside his trouser legs and dashed outside to drop his trousers to remove the offending insect!

Hawthorne

The beginnings of the Hawthorne church can be dated back to an outreach to neighbouring suburbs by the Ann Street church in 1912. Under the leadership of its then Minister, WH Nightingale, the Ann Street church had a vision for the planting and encouragement of new churches. A Sunday school was the first step in engaging with this local community. The building for the Hawthorne Church of Christ in Malcolm Street was constructed during the history period marked by World War I. The church building (still there today) was built in one day on 14 November 1914! The voluntary workers came not only from Brisbane, but also travelled from Ipswich and the West Moreton area. One can imagine the excitement and the satisfaction when the building was completed with a day's hard work! The first service in the building, led by the Minister Nightingale, was held at 8:00pm that same night. This remarkable effort of building a church in a day caused great interest in the larger local area.

But to read the history of this church,⁵⁰⁸ in honesty, is to read the story of a church that always seemed to struggle. Following the completion of the church building, the church experienced rapid growth in its early years. However, it was not able to find a long-serving minister, which lead to the decline in attendance in the mid-1920s. From there on, history repeats itself for this church – spurts of growth followed by decline. It reads as if sometimes the decline in membership was caused by incumbent pastors or evangelists. For example, one such person had the desire to “cleanse the temple”. He sure did – he caused a number of people to leave the church! The church often continued its ministry by becoming part of a circuit with other Churches of Christ. An interesting circuit was with Boondall and Zillmere, which are on the other side of the Brisbane River to Hawthorne!



However, there is an interesting and innovative chapter in the history of this church. This small church was many years ahead of other Churches of Christ in Australia. Why? It was the first church to employ a female minister as its Pastor. Vi Maud Callanan was her name.

Hawthorne church gave this remarkable person her first opportunity in Queensland to serve Christ and His church. Hawthorne's story continued through 'Vi's story'.

The church doors have now closed to worship and Christian gatherings. But, in a different way, ministry continues in these same buildings.

Churches of Christ Care operated a Child Care and Kindergarten Centre in the Hawthorne buildings for many years, and it continues to be used for services supporting children and families in the local community.





Leichhardt⁵⁰⁹

Leichhardt is a suburb on the south-west side of Ipswich. Just south of the suburb is Amberley Air Force base. Amberley is the Royal Australian Air Force's largest base, employing more than 5,000 people. Leichhardt is an older 'Housing Commission' suburb that has also been a temporary home to many Air Force families.

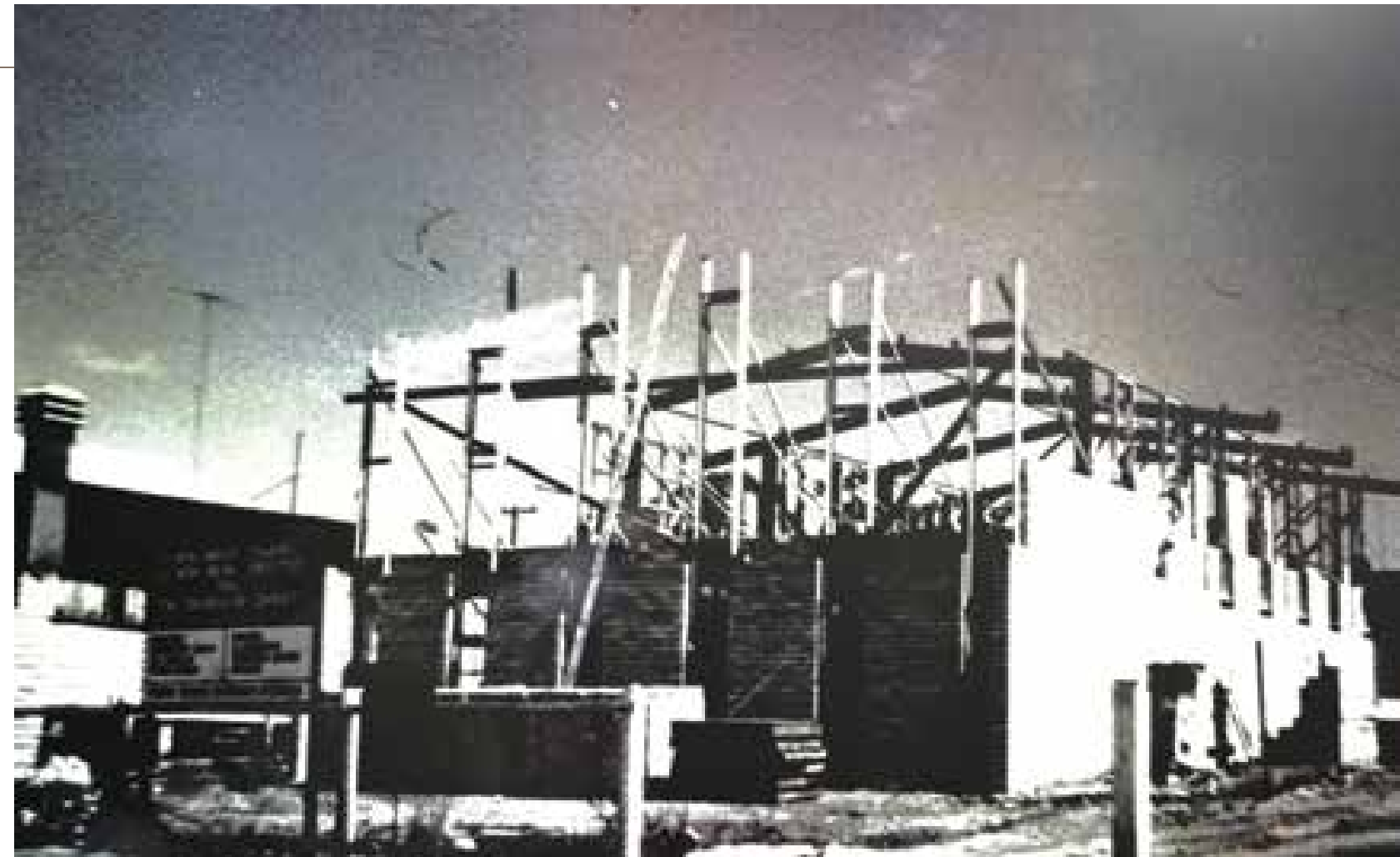
The then East Ipswich Church of Christ purchased land for future ministry in this area on 26 July 1952. The first ministry was a Sunday school, which commenced under a shelter of branches, laid on a rough frame of saplings from the local bush. Locally, this became known as "The Naked Sunday School"! Early visionary workers who unstintingly gave their time to this outreach of East Ipswich church were Don Risson, Keith Ludgater, Merle Jenner, Glad Fawdry (mother of Dr Don Stewart) and Mavis Fraser.



So, the work began. The next step was to build. A World War II Army hut was purchased from Archerfield Aerodrome in June 1953, moved and re-erected in one day by a group of willing, energetic men who at the end of that day were utterly exhausted! This building was opened on 22 November 1953. The number of people attending soon outgrew the building, and extensions were completed in 1955. A further increase in the number of people attending led to, in 1968, the construction of a brick chapel funded by interest-free loans from members of the East Ipswich and Leichhardt churches. This building was opened on 12 April 1969.

So, what has been the people story of this church?

Suburbs like Leichhardt invariably mean many people come, stay for a while, and move on. For many years the church had a large influence on Air Force families until the Air Force moved their personnel on to different areas. The church also had a ministry to many people in need, supplying basic food needs at low cost for families who had been going through difficult times. This provided opportunities to share the love of God with many people.



However, dwindling and aging membership caused the Leichhardt church to reluctantly decide to close its doors. The final service was held on 11 December 2011 and the doors were closed by Elsie Payne, the oldest member of the church, and the daughter of Mr and Mrs Madsen who opened the new brick building in 1969.

Was this the end of the story of this church? It is fascinating to note that its story continues state-wide, locally and overseas! The church, with its closure, handed the physical church properties to the Churches of Christ in Queensland, with an aspiration that some future unique ministry may begin on its site. Disbursements of its finances included monies being given to: Aboriginal and Islanders Christian Fellowship in Queensland; Footprints in the Park, a local group who in help in Ipswich the disadvantaged and homeless; and the establishment of a new church in Zimbabwe! The Leichhardt church contributed \$36,000 to help fund a place of worship and witness in Makwasha, Zimbabwe, which the local people refer to as the 'Leichhardt-Makwasha Church of Christ'.



Leichhardt Church Congregation 1977.

*The end of the story of a local church
is the beginning of another story...*

The closure of church doors – the physical end of the existence of a local church – is not the end of the continuing story of the work of the kingdom of God. A lesson learnt from the story of these three churches – Sixteen Mile, Hawthorne and Leichhardt – is that ministry that has begun or happened for a while in a visible location can resurface in another way and another place. God is still at work building and extending His kingdom.

‘Movements’ mean moving on. If Churches of Christ is really a movement, then it must follow that a local church in a physical locality is not there for eternity! With population declines in certain localities, and the abilities of people to travel greater distances to belong to a church community, we should not let physical buildings deny new opportunities in areas of population growth.

Biographies

Allan Male: The boy from the bush!

Len Brooks: “Church life – the key to my living”

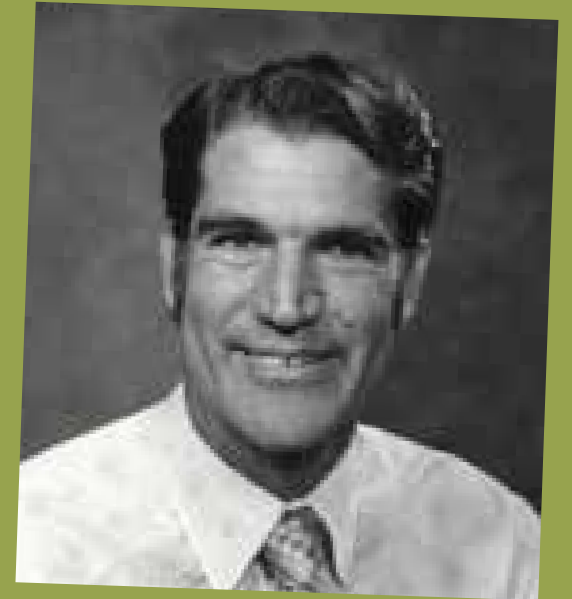
Allan Male: The boy from the bush!

Allan grew up in the Queensland country town of Richmond. Richmond is situated half-way between Townsville and Mount Isa on the Flinders Highway. Allan’s first employment was with the Queensland Railways. Allan spent eight and half years working for Queensland Railways, ending up as an assistant Station Master. Allan came into contact with Churches of Christ through a young girl who had grabbed his eye! This girl became his wife, Kath, who invited Allan to come with her to the Margaret Street Church of Christ in Toowoomba (now the HumeRidge church).

At that stage in his young life, Allan was more interested in Kath than the church and Christianity. He tells how he used to sit in the back seat of the church building doing cross word puzzles during the church service, until one night the then minister of the church, Eric Hart, spoke on “being a Christian”. That night, Allan made his decision to become a Christian. Sometime after his baptism, Allan sensed that “he received a call to College to train for Christian Ministry.”


His first reaction was “God must have gotten the wrong address”. This was a young man about whom his Primary School Headmaster once declared, “You will never amount to anything!” Allan had scrapped through the then Grade 8 scholarship. Grade 8 scholarship was a state-wide examination one had to pass to enter High School.

So, while still working on the railways, and now a Christian, Allan gave himself to studies at night and passed his High School matriculation in one year by correspondence. Having accomplished this, Allan was accepted into training for ministry at the College of the Bible (now Stirling College) in 1959.



With his new wife Kath, Allan travelled to Melbourne, his first step towards a significant life in ministry. Upon graduating from College, Allan’s first full-time ministry was at Portland, Victoria, for four years. In 1965, Allan received an invitation to come back to Queensland to become the first full-time Youth Director. The Youth Department had only sufficient funds for his wages for three weeks, but the invitation to Allan was extended to three years. Allan’s reaction was, “If you want me to come, the first term must be for five years, plus with the possibility of a second term of a further five years!” Otherwise, he declared, “I am not interested”.

Allan Male ultimately stayed 20 years in his role as State Youth Director, from 1965 to 1985. At the same time as holding the role of Youth Director for Churches of Christ in Queensland, Allan also developed the Shaftsbury Centre with centres at Spring Hill, Brisbane and Burpengary. The focus of Shaftsbury was troubled youth.



Celebrations for the centenary of Churches of Christ in Queensland were held in 1983. To mark the year, a fund named the ‘Centenary Development Foundation’ was established at the Annual Conference.

Len Brooks:
“Church life – the key to my living”

“My earliest memory of church life was attending Sunday kindergarten at the Gordon Park Methodist Church. I used to go there with my mother and my sister, Ruth, who went everywhere in her wheelchair.

I became involved in the Christian Endeavour movement there. Little is heard of Christian Endeavour these days, but it was a wonderful organisation for the development of young people, and aided my Christian growth. There you learnt to pray (“Chain prayer at first”), give papers, and lead in discussion. When I was a teenager, two significant occurrences shaped my Christian life. The first was a suggestion from my mother that I attend the local Gordon Park Baptist church. This was because, compared to the few young people at the Methodist church, there were many young people there. The happy years of fellowship at this church developed my Christian faith. The second event was when I accepted Christ into my life and I went forward at an evangelistic rally held in the Brisbane City Hall with the evangelist John Ridley. This was on 4 August 1944 when I was 15. It was a decision I have never regretted, and I have sought to serve my Lord all my life since.

My wife, who was Joan Stevens, attended the Kedron Church of Christ. She ‘persuaded’ me to attend her church, thus beginning my lifelong involvement with Churches of Christ. Our wedding in the Kedron church was conducted by Vic Parker. After our marriage, I served on the Board of Officers for the Kedron church for many years in various roles, including Treasurer and Chairman. I was also a Sunday school teacher and, for a time, the Superintendent of the Sunday school.



Up to this stage of my life, I have been a very busy and successful businessman. But my life suddenly changed when I suffered my first heart attack in the early 1960s. This was devastating for me and my wife, Joan, as well as for our three young children. But, I realised God had a plan for my life. I survived the heart attack for a purpose. I sold the business, which had become very demanding on my time and energies, and my life took a new and fulfilling direction. As my strength returned, I accepted opportunities to serve. Following are brief summaries of some of these opportunities.

I was involved in the establishment of what is now known as Drug Arm.

In 1964, I was secretary of the Arrangements Committee for the Federal Conference of Churches of Christ that was held in Brisbane that year. Part of this role included organising a post-Conference tour to North Queensland via a special train. This was a steam-driven train complete with 13 carriages. Because normal train services had to be maintained, the 13 carriages allocated to us were resurrected from old stock! Some on board dryly commented “from the Ark!”.

I spent many years involved with the Youth Department of Churches of Christ. In 1964, I was chairman of the Department when we called Allan Male to be our full-time Youth Director. Allan and I worked closely together for many years and oversaw the development of Camp Cal at Caloundra and the associated camping, and the Annual Sports and Swimming days.

I was the Conference President when the great flood of 1974 devastated south-east Queensland. My experiences in moving into the flooded areas to minister to the needs of our church members were unforgettable. I was one of the first church leaders in Queensland to organise a flood relief fund.

Celebrations for the centenary of Churches of Christ in Queensland were held in 1983. To mark the year, a fund named the ‘Centenary Development Foundation’ was established at the Annual Conference. I was the original treasurer for five years. It is interesting to note that no funds were provided by State Conference as a ‘float’ to start! Each of the original board members gave \$50 to help purchase stationery and open a bank account!

Finally, I would say that I trust I have served my Lord as He has planned my life. No doubt I have failed at times, but it has been a privilege, and is still a privilege, to serve Him.”



Testimonies

Bel Thomson: Blue hands, new hands

Brian Thomsen: The move of Gladstone Church of Christ into Shed 19

Trevor Meares: A good return on investment

Helen Probert: A simple invitation

*Jannene Holt: Why I enjoy being a Christian and working
for Churches of Christ Care*

Manh Nguyen: A remarkable story of rescue

Yvonne Murray: A book from Oprah

Bel Thomson: Blue hands, new hands

“It was an era of new birth and fresh beginnings. The early 1980s saw the emergence of shoulder pads, big hair and lycra... and amidst this fashion disaster a small group of brave people pioneered a new church in the suburbs of Queensland: Springwood Church of Christ. It was about this time that my parents became Christians, born again as young adults: born into new hope, new purpose and a whole new life. They hadn’t been part of a church before that, but the family environment at the Springwood church saw their new faith flourish. I was also born soon after, and grew up with wonderful memories of Sunday school, learning how much God loves me.

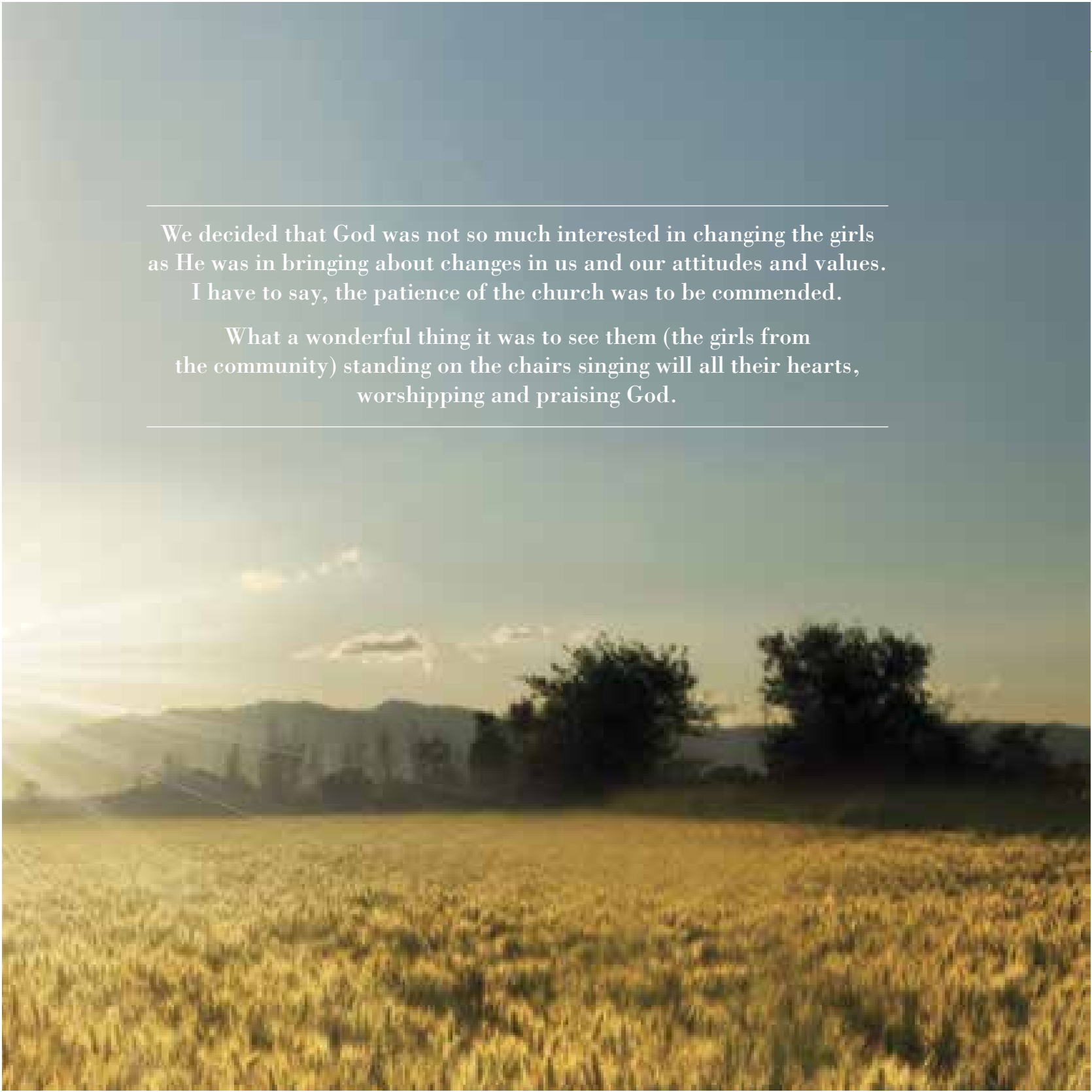
What many people don’t know is, I was born with something wrong with my hands. Every night as a baby they would swell up and turn blue, because the skin around my wrists was too tight for the blood to flow. This impacted my ability to move my hands properly. I was booked into hospital to have an operation to have it fixed – a distressing prospect for my new parents. The night before the operation my parents went to church, and after the service as they were chatting with people they mentioned that I was booked into hospital the next day. One of the men there said “have you prayed about it?” Surprised, they said, “No... can you pray about that stuff?” “Absolutely!” he replied. This man grabbed a few other people and they prayed that God would heal me. Nothing visible happened that night however, and, after the prayer, my parents took me home.

Well, the next day my parents couldn’t believe their eyes because I woke up without swollen hands! They thought, “What’s going on? That’s weird!” Mum actually thought,

“Oh great! Of all mornings to have healthy hands... now the doctors will question the problem!” Never thinking I was actually better, they took me to hospital for the scheduled surgery and the doctors looked at me and said that the problem was totally healed! I never needed the operation and my parents took me home, realising with amazement that God had answered their prayers! For mum, this was a defining moment where she understood that God really cared for them in a personal way.

My dad said he knew from that moment that my hands would belong to God, and that God would somehow use my hands for His purposes. In the years that followed, I started learning music and began writing songs. I loved music and I was encouraged to play at church. Over time, this has grown into a music ministry, taking me across the country to play at many churches, conferences and events, doing training with church musicians and recording albums of songs I have written. I play keyboard and guitar today with totally healthy hands!

God’s purpose for me has unfolded over many years, from childhood to adulthood, shaped through times of both blessing and adversity. As the journey continues, I hold to the words of Ephesians 2:10 “... we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” What a wonderful thing it is to belong to Him, and to know that the Creator of the whole earth has a purpose for each one of us. He makes all things new: new life, new seasons, new spiritual birth, new hope, new purpose... and in my case, new hands!”



We decided that God was not so much interested in changing the girls as He was in bringing about changes in us and our attitudes and values.

I have to say, the patience of the church was to be commended.

What a wonderful thing it was to see them (the girls from the community) standing on the chairs singing will all their hearts, worshipping and praising God.

Brian Thomsen:
*The move of Gladstone Church
of Christ into Shed 19*

“There was a team assigned to investigate the possible options for the church. The fact that the church was growing in numbers and that there was limited space for expansion on the current land meant that we could not just stay where we were. While this was being investigated, the church continued to pray and, in particular, 10 of us went every Saturday morning to pray on top of One Tree Hill.

At some stage, we felt sure God was saying that we needed to stay in the Toolooa area and so we stopped going to One Tree Hill and started to pray in Toolooa of a Saturday morning.

While this was happening, amazing things were happening in our church. It started with one of the girls from Toolooa turning up at church. Angela started coming to church like a stray cat comes into your house. She would come and watch and ask lots of questions and move around all over the place from seat to seat. Angela was very annoying, she would often bring her smelly dog into the church halfway through the service, she would cough raucously just to disturb things, and she would talk loudly. But, she seemed to love the company, often waiting for us to turn up for music practice early in the morning, and she definitely loved morning tea. It wasn't long before she invited her friends. The girls loved coming to church but the church did not necessarily love them coming – they weren't nice, well-behaved children!

There were two dongers that we used for Sunday school for the kids. The poor church kids (and the teachers) did not know what hit them when the community kids started coming to Sunday school. It was not long before the church kids would rather stay in church with their parents than brave the wilds of the dongers!

Often, at our members' meetings, the subject came up about the girls' unruly behaviour and what we should do about it. We decided that God was not so much interested in changing the girls as He was in bringing about changes in us and our attitudes and values. I have to say, the patience of the church was to be commended.

What a wonderful thing it was to see them (the girls from the community) standing on the chairs singing will all their hearts, worshipping and praising God.”



Jesus answered “I am the way and the truth and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through me.”

John 14:6 (NIV)

Trevor Meares: *A good return on investment*

“When you drop a pebble into the ocean, you don’t know how far the ripples will travel.

If Eric Neilson invested \$10 in the stock exchange 58 years ago, it would be worth approximately \$200 today. Fifty-eight years ago, \$10, or £5 as it was then, was equivalent to approximately one third of a tradesman’s weekly wage. As good a return as that \$200 may seem, that investment would not have kept up with inflation and Eric would have lost on the deal.

Instead Eric, a foundation member of the Mackay Church of Christ, invested £5 (not an insignificant sacrifice for a hardworking boilermaker and father of four) into the life of a fatherless housing commission kid to send him to a youth camp at Magnetic Island.

At that time, I was probably headed in the same direction as my older brothers, one in reformatory school at 13 and the other in and out of gaol until he was murdered at the age of 55. However, Eric’s investment and interest in my life brought me into contact with a Heavenly Father who loved me more than any earthly father could and called me to give my life to and for Him. This happened as I sat reading my Bible beside the creek near the youth camp on Magnetic Island.

In more than 50 years of ministry as a deacon, youth leader and pastor, I have been able to lead many people into this relationship that I discovered there on the Island, but like the apostle Paul, I haven’t kept tabs of those I have baptised, some in churches, some in the ocean, some in streams, rivers, lakes, dams and swimming pools – one bloke in a billabong out the back of the Barcoo. But, I do know that it probably would not have been me baptising them if Eric Neilson had not invested his £5.

Approximately 10 years ago, I was asked to induct the new minister into the church at Dalby, where I had ministered in the early 1980s. Somehow it seemed relevant to ask how many people present had been baptised by me. I was quite astounded to see about a quarter of the congregation put up their hands. It was then that the minister reminded me that I had baptised him as well during my ministry at Broken Hill. This brought into focus a number of people that God has enabled me to steer in the direction of full time service – more return on Eric’s investment!

It is not only in evangelism that God has been able to use me. My teaching ministry has also borne much fruit. This was recently driven home by a post on Facebook by a lady named Judith Curtis from Broken Hill where I ministered during the 1970s. Her doctors have told her that she does not have long to live.

From hospital she wrote...

‘I’m ready to go when God wants me. I want to keep my focus on him and bring him glory in all this. Pray I can do that. The hardest part is for John and the family. Pray for strength for them. How are you two keeping? I appreciate the part you both had in my life. The assurance of salvation that you showed me made such a difference in my relationship with Jesus. Whereas, in those early days, I was not sure of going to heaven, I am now absolutely sure of that being where I’m headed. What hope and comfort that gives. Jenny’s example with raising kids was such a help to me. I am very grateful to God that he put you in our lives. Love, Judith.’

Whenever people thank me for some contribution God has enabled me to make to their lives, I think of Eric and again thank God for that fiver, that he invested in me.

But, it doesn’t end there. Another lady posted her appreciation of Judith’s Bible teaching ministry:

‘Well Judith you certainly have passed on what you have learnt and experienced. I thank God that you have helped so many with that whole issue of assurance, so that we may live our lives in surrender rather than performance.’
1 John 5:11-13

And so the investment grows!

Eric, although church secretary for ever and a day, refused for many years to serve as a church elder. He did not think that he was worthy of the office. He never looked for status. He wanted nothing more than to invest his life in serving his King. He did eventually accept nomination and served well.

In 1986, as part of my ministry to isolated churches, I called on Eric’s daughter, Eunice, and her husband, Fred Schneider in Charters Towers. Eric was staying with them and was not very well. It was Sunday and I went to his bedside and shared with great celebration, some of the return on his £5 investment. We shared together in his last communion before he went, a few days later, to be forever in face-to-face communion with his Lord.

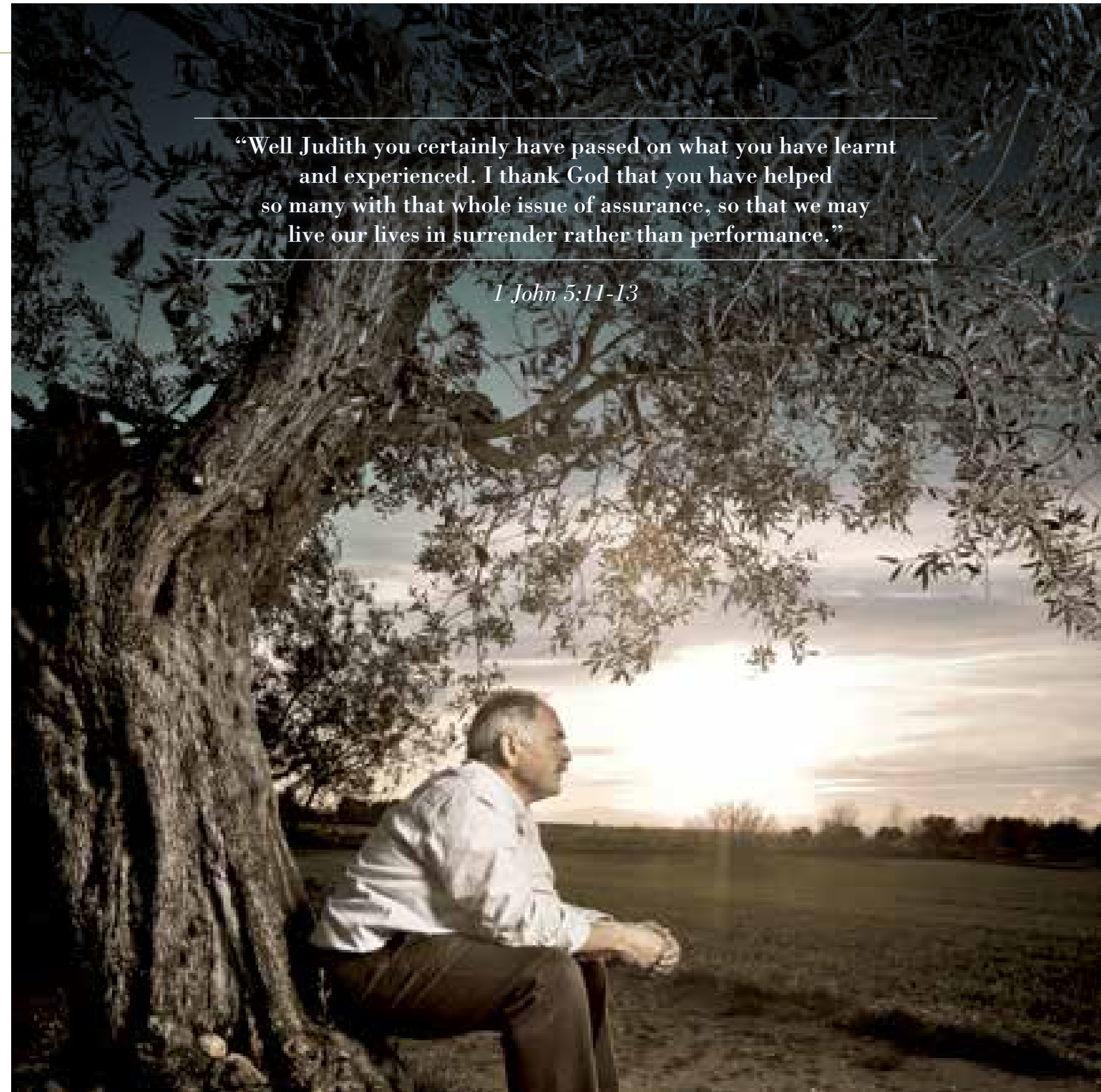
I was not the only one to visit Eric in the final days of his earthly life. Many of the young people from Mackay made day trips to Charters Towers to express their love for this patriarch of the Mackay Church of Christ.

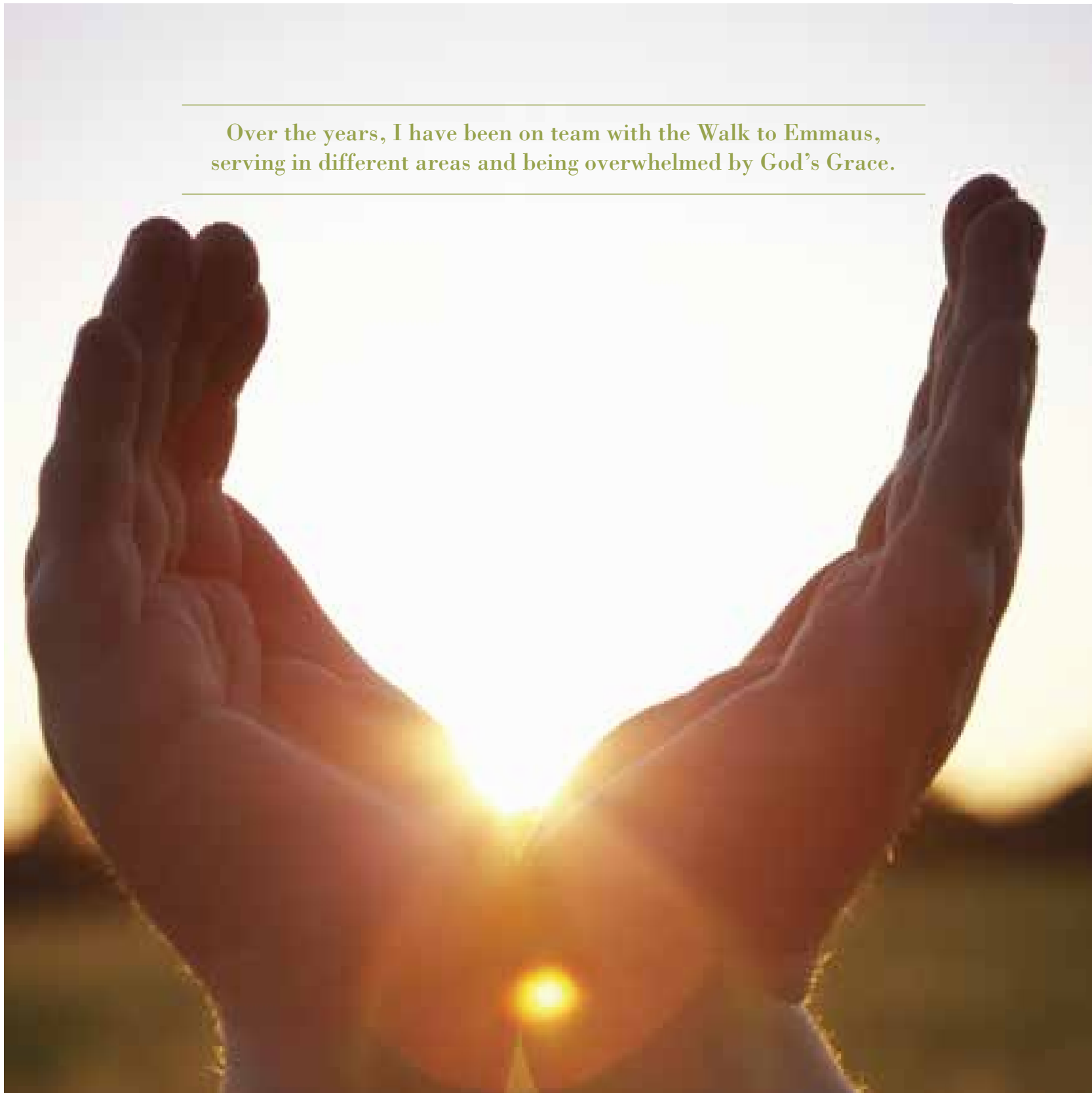
But, it didn’t stop there. I went on to found the Outback Church of Christ, which continues today to enrich the lives of isolated Christians throughout inland Australia and encourage them in their faith.

So mine was not the only life that Eric Neilson invested in. I know that in heaven there will be many, many people like Judith Curtis who will thank him for his investment in their lives too. His investment ripples on.”

“Well Judith you certainly have passed on what you have learnt and experienced. I thank God that you have helped so many with that whole issue of assurance, so that we may live our lives in surrender rather than performance.”

1 John 5:11-13





Over the years, I have been on team with the Walk to Emmaus, serving in different areas and being overwhelmed by God’s Grace.

Helen Probert: A simple invitation

Some years ago, my life was in turmoil. We had just moved into a brand new home, I had two wonderful young boys, but felt I was not able to cope with my marriage. I considered myself a failure, was unloved and worthless, and drank a lot of alcohol to numb all my feelings and hurts.

A young lady whom I met at the local kindergarten started talking to me and she realised I was in big trouble. Some weeks had passed and she extended an invitation to come to church, “What do you have to lose?”

It took me some time to do this, as I knew how my husband would react. I was a trembling wreck, but 19 years ago, I walked into the Westside Church of Christ, and my whole life changed. There was something to live for, and my thoughts of hopelessness began to take a different shape.

Next leg of the journey was Bible study. I found this a little difficult at first, as my background had been with the Jehovah’s Witness. The girls encouraged me to read scripture, ask questions and give my thoughts on what I had read. There was growth through study, a greater desire to know God and to have that personal relationship with him. I was baptised.

My friend told me I was going with her to assist with Christian education at the local school. Very reluctantly, I tagged along, and had the privilege of teaching for 13 years.

Westside church, embraced my family with the very tragic loss of my brother, through suicide. Prayers, visits and gentleness at that time were amazing.

The years have gone by and, constantly, my opinions, attitudes, nature, insight and direction are being changed through our Sunday services. We are challenged to get out of our comfort zones, work together as the body of Christ, utilise our hands and feet, take Christ to the world, and to be active disciples. Through these services, I was able to be part of a mission team that went to the Philippines November 2012 and share Christ with the community of Davao.

This year has lead me back to teaching at Sunday school, and working with the youth ministry on Friday nights. These young Christian children are mind-blowing, and what a pleasure it is to share in their journey.

Over the years, I have been on team with the Walk to Emmaus, serving in different areas and being overwhelmed by God’s Grace. It was quite amazing two weeks ago to be part of the men’s team as one of the Prayer Directors. My companion, Kerry and I were praying for three days for the team, seeing God work in mighty ways and answer many prayers.

This was the young lady who said to me “Helen, what do you have to lose?” My friend reached out in love all those years ago, and what a gift to be her friend and have this time together, with the Lord.

There have been a few detours and painful moments, but God has strengthened me, lifted and carried me along the way. I was a pitiful wretch, but have the joy of the Lord and the passion to be His servant in whatever I am called to do.

Jannene Holt:

Why I enjoy being a Christian and working for Churches of Christ Care

“It is difficult to put into words something that is so inherent in my life. I recall a quote by CS Lewis where he says ‘I believe in Christianity as I believe in the rising sun, not because I see it but because by it, I see everything’. I think Lewis and I are able to relate on this point as being a Christian permeates every aspect of my life. I am so blessed to have a blueprint for my life through God’s word, and my husband and I have been able to agree on many tough decisions using the Bible as our reference point. In adult life, we all go through some trials and tribulations and being a Christian has meant that I have the ultimate support of the creator of the universe to deal with problems that at the time seem overwhelming. I am so thankful that Christ has always been there to be my comforter and I am able to cast all of my cares upon Him, knowing that He has a perfect plan for me. There is no greater feeling than knowing that one day I will be able to meet my saviour and loved ones in paradise. However, I believe that even without the promise of heaven, being a Christian has allowed me to experience the true fullness and joy of life. Being a Christian also means I have an incredible support network of believers around me in my friends, family and church, and am able to call on them to lift me up in prayer at a moment’s notice. Even though sometimes it feels as though God is remaining silent, it is through the support network of believers around me that I am encouraged to go, and, in hind-sight, I always see the gentle hand of God guiding me through the dark valleys. Throughout my life as a believer in Christ I have witnessed some incredible answers to prayer and am continually amazed at the way God works all things together for the good of his people. I believe in all of us there is a deep-seated need to fill the ‘God-shaped hole’ in our hearts and I am so thankful that Christ has not only filled that hole in me, but He has filled it to overflowing.

How I became a Christian

I do not actually remember a time where the Lord was not a part of my life. I was born into a Christian home and watched both of my parents and grandparents serve the Lord. I officially gave my heart to the Lord when I was nine-years old at the Goonellabah Church of Christ, and was baptised a year later at the Lismore Church of Christ.

My involvement with Churches of Christ Care

My employment with Churches of Christ Care began in 1988 when my husband encouraged me to apply for a job as an Activities Coordinator, which was advertised in the Southport Church of Christ bulletin one Sunday. Though I was reluctant to apply, my husband and I prayed that God would make the choice for me and that if I was to be hired it was only to be if it was His plan for me, as I had no experience in the field. When I applied, the only qualification I possessed was a deep-seated love for the elderly and a desire to see them live their lives as fully as possible while in care, just as they did while living in the community. Thankfully, the Lord chose to bless me with this role and, 20 years later, I love my job as much now as I did when I first began.

I am now a diversional therapist at the Lady Small Haven Retirement Village and I spend my days coordinating activities for the residents and building relationships with them that continue to bless me each and every day. I believe that life in a retirement village should be no different to the life ‘outside’, other than the fact the residents have more time to relax when their meals are prepared! I truly believe my role to be one that supports the already-vibrant people that come into the home, and I am blessed to be able to encourage them to not only maintain their independence whilst at Lady Small Haven, but also to use the time they have been given to affect change in the wider community when they feel lead to.

Why I enjoy working for Churches of Christ Care

I know of very few working environments where you can truly live out your faith and I am truly thankful that the ethos of Churches of Christ Care is built on a foundation of Christian values and holds a commitment to quality care to all clients regardless of their religion, beliefs or background. Churches of Christ Care is an organisation where people come first and the residents’ needs are paramount over all else including funding. In fact in the 20 years that I have worked for the organisation, I have regularly been humbled by the way in which the organisation prioritises their clients over the ‘bottom line’. I believe this heart for people is apparent throughout all levels of the organisation, from high-level management to those of us ‘on the floor’.

I love my job, as it seems that I always receive more than I give.

Excellence in Service Award 2012

In 2012, I was honoured to receive an Excellence Service Award at the Churches of Christ in Queensland Awards Dinner. I believe that moving to an aged care facility should only be a change of address and it should not define who a person is or is going to become. I believe that all residents should be empowered to live their best life and to achieve both new goals and lifelong dreams. Through the programs we have at Churches of Christ Care Lady Small Haven aged care facility, the residents are encouraged to continue to be involved in the broader community through activities such as volunteering at a local school, participating in and conducting our choir, volunteering within the facility, and raising money for those less fortunate. Perhaps one of the more vital components to the programs run at the home is the fact that many of them are run by the residents themselves, with only the assistance they request from myself and the others in the divisional therapy team. It is my desire that the residents continue to be or become vibrant and active citizens regardless of their home address. In short, I want their lives to be as normal as possible. Lastly, it is my goal that all of the residents at Lady Small Haven realise that they still have an important part to play in the community and that retirement is a season to be lived to the full.”

Manh Nguyen: A remarkable story of rescue

“My name is Manh Nguyen, a former officer of the Southern Vietnamese Army prior to 1975. As such, after the fall of South Vietnam into the hands of the communists on 30 April 1975, I was sent to one of their re-education camps along with many other former Southern Vietnamese Army officers. At this time, I was only 26-years-old and had been married for less than three months.

My future was dark, as I faced the misery of my enslaved tasks during my many internments in the re-education camps. I endured bouts of hunger and was driven to exhaustion. I had to do arduous manual labour for 12 hours a day on the farms and received only two bowls of plain white rice a day – one in the morning and one in the evening. A couple of times I considered suicide, as my strength was fading and I could not continue to endure the hardship. I had lost all hope and had lost the will to live. That was until one day, on 27 December 1978, when an event scrambled all my thoughts, my will and my life. This is what happened:

In the afternoon, a group of people were captured and brought into our camp for having organised a Christmas celebration without first gaining permission from the authorities. They were members from a local church and within the group the pastor was the most ill and weak of them all. As the leader of the group, he was thrown into a darkened isolation cell. A cell that I knew all too well as I was held there many times. Every time I was thrown in there, without fail, I would faint within 15 minutes of the door being shut. The heavy wooden stocks pressing against my neck and the fact of not having enough air holes in an oven-like cell would cause anyone to have trouble breathing. I watched as the pastor was put in solitary confinement and felt such compassion for him, a man who was weak and much older than me. How would he be able to endure being in the darkened cell?

That night, as the whole camp settled and fell into a sleep getting ready for another day of hard labour, a loud song broke out shattering the quiet of the night, waking all in the camp with such a fright as to be stunned. Everyone was woken up by the strange sound of singing coming from the isolation cell. The song seemed to have wound itself into every wearied soul in the camp and woke us as if an amazing event was taking place. I was also awakened and my soul longed to understand what had empowered this man to be able to sing like this when it is near impossible for any ordinary person to breath properly in the isolation cell. What was it? What power had allowed him to do such a thing? This longing brought tears to my eyes and my soul yearned to know the answer. I knew that once I had the answer to that question, my life problems would disappear and that I would be able to survive the harsh conditions of the re-education camps.

From then, I went in search of the answer wherever I went, with all those whom I met and through all the books I read. However, my curiosity was not satisfied. It wasn’t until I escaped Vietnam and became a boat person that I found the answer I was looking for. When I landed in a refugee camp in Malaysia and was waiting to be resettled in Australia, I was given a New Testament and within its pages I read the account of Paul and Silas singing hymns while they were in stocks and chains, and Peter sleeping peacefully chained between two guards – these great men, while experiencing such hardships humbly declared, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13). I finally had my answer to the question raised on the night of 27 December 1978. Then, in 1982, I believed in Jesus and received his salvation. Thank you, Jesus.”

Yvonne Murray: A book from Oprah

“The family I was born into were good living people who taught me the highest of principles, but I had no Christian teaching at all. I met my future husband, Peter, in November 1956 and we were married on 12 December 1957. Peter had a godly Mum and Dad who attended church, but all the children hated it and left when they were old enough.

In 1979, my husband, my five children and I moved from Sydney to Longreach in Queensland. We purchased a sheep and cattle station where we weathered many droughts. In that time, we experienced three good seasons in 20 years.

One day, while I was viewing the Oprah Winfrey show on television, there was a guest speaker called Marianne Williamson. She was the author of a book called ‘Return to Love’. I was fascinated by her conversion from Judaism to Christianity. I purchased her book and read it many times. I tried to encourage my husband to read it, but with no success. He suggested I start to read the Bible. I wrote to my sister on the coast to post a Bible out to me. Not knowing where to start reading, my husband suggested I start somewhere in the middle, probably referring to Matthew. So, I commenced reading and, even though I did not understand it very well, I continued to pray as I felt God’s leading.

After many months of drought, my husband, in desperation, went out to a paddock and prayed for rain. God heard his prayers and watered a few paddocks, thus keeping the stock from perishing. I knew this to be a miracle and so did my husband. We soon started to read the Bible together.

In the year 2000, we sold the property and moved to Yeppoon, where we retired. We continued to grow in the Lord and having studied for two years, we decided it would be a good time to seek a church and obey the Lord through baptism. We attended three or four different churches before settling on the Church of Christ in 2008. The fellowship and love of the brothers and sisters there in the church, and their desire to serve the Lord, made us feel completely at home.

My husband has since passed away and I know that he is at home with the Lord Jesus. God has given me a real hunger for His Word and a passion for lost souls. He has shown me He yearns for a relationship with me and I love talking to Him, getting to know Him and worshiping Him. He has given me two prayer partners and we meet every Wednesday to pray for our unsaved ones, for the church in Rockhampton and the church world-wide, for persecuted Christians, and what He places upon our hearts. I praise Him for showing me my need for salvation and bringing me into His family. He alone did this, with no other person involved. In the meantime, I await the Lord’s return, and have great comfort from my church family whom I love dearly.”

THE FUTURE: *Is there a Future for Churches of Christ in Queensland?*

The third State of Origin Rugby League match between New South Wales and Queensland was played on Wednesday 17 July 2013 in Sydney. I (Geoff Risson) am somewhat of a Rugby League fan(atic).

For those who read this book and do not know of this great game of football, Rugby League is a 13 man a side game (with four reserve players). The game is played for eighty minutes and, when played at its best, is a hard and fast game. An ex-coach of League, Phil Gould, is now a perceptive commentator and astute reader of the game. The major negative comment to be made about this commentator is that he is a one-eyed New South Wales supporter!

Phil Gould always provides several minutes of incisive comments before an Origin match is played. Prior to the game, Gould stood on the playing surface and said, “The major lesson we learn from history is that unless we learn from past history, then past history repeats itself”.

If there is one lesson above all to be learnt by the readers of this book, it is this: learn from our past history to make a better history for the kingdom of God as expressed through our churches in Queensland. We need to learn from when and why we succeeded and were blessed by God; to learn from our failures, and to never repeat the failures of our forebears. As authors of ‘The Church from the Paddock’, we have had the privilege of researching the past history of Churches of Christ in Queensland. As we researched documents of our past history, we felt we walked with our forebears among their heady moments of success. We grieved when we read of divisions among our churches, and also in our Conference when the churches came together.

While it is of enormous value to be aware of our past history, even proud of, we cannot rest on it. Our churches and our movement need to be able to read the secular environment around us. We must adapt to our present times. But this does not mean we adapt the truths that have been at the core of the movement of Churches of Christ. In simple language, these core truths are: one – the person of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Son of Man, and God’s Saviour for all humanity; two – the authority of the Scriptures, God’s words for us; three – the urgency of the priority of bringing people to faith in Jesus Christ; and four – the desire for unity among all of God’s people.

These are the ‘shining lights’ that were the touchstones in our past history. What is needed is a diversity of fresh expressions among us that honour these same touchstones in the present and the near future. This is the only way to move forward and ensure our survival. Churches and denominations do die! In 2006, I was in the United Kingdom to visit with one of my sons and to attend a European Conference on the church in the twenty-first century. One night at this conference I shared an evening meal with several representatives of the British Churches of Christ. I inquired, “How many churches do you have in Great Britain?” Their answer? At that stage it was less than a dozen. This is in one of the birth places of our movement! Past glories are to learn from, and not to wistfully dream about. What a church does in the here and now is crucial.

Churches of Christ has typically called itself a movement. We know from sociological studies that movements, while they flourish in their beginning, will go through a life cycle. The natural peak of that life cycle is institutionalisation. When a church, or a denomination, becomes a successful institution, this is not a sign of success but a precursor to its demise.

In August 2013, my wife Margaret and I spent two weeks holidaying in Tasmania. Tasmania is an island that has much natural beauty, and its past history speaks of the early white settlement of our nation.

Churches of Christ in Queensland owes much of its birth story to one man from this state. His name is Stephen Cheek and we told his story earlier in this book. So, while holidaying in Tasmania, I suggested to Margaret that we find Rosevale, the farming district west of Launceston where Cheek’s family settled when he was a small child. On a cool wintry morning, we drove some 20 minutes past farms and sheep properties. Finally, we found Rosevale. Today, all that is there is a country sports field, a sign that declares “Rosevale”, and a former Anglican church building that has been converted into a house. I got out of our hire car, took some photos, then paused and reflected on Cheek and the story of Churches of Christ in Queensland. I thought of a young man, raised in the Christian faith, a farming boy turned school teacher turned preacher, his life captured by the person of Jesus Christ, who caught a vision of what this Christ could do for a person, and the joy and liberty of simple New Testament Christianity.

One person who gave his life to Christ, who came to Queensland and began to plant churches in this state – we owe much to him in Churches of Christ in Queensland.

I stood there, and reflected, “Who today will capture again Cheek’s vision, passion and drive and write new stories, and create new imaginative histories for Christ and His church into the twenty-first century?”

About the Authors

Geoffrey Kendall Risson
(20 December 1946 – 26 March 2015)

Second editions of books are meant to tidy up errors, to include new and updated information and to smooth over any grammatical or stylistic issues. There was no thought that I would have to make major revisions to the “about the author” section regarding my loved and esteemed co-author, Geoff Risson. I was working on revising one of Geoff’s early chapters of ‘The Church from the Paddock’ when news came through that the co-author, the man who had initiated and led our work on the project, had passed away. I had only spoken to Geoff the week before, and had made plans to visit again the next time I was in Queensland. Suddenly, the second edition became even more personal. Added to the importance of recording the history of the Queensland Churches of Christ, the second edition now shaped as a legacy to the work, passion and faithfulness of Geoff Risson, who had served his Lord with integrity throughout his ministry in Churches of Christ, both at a local and State level. What follows is a brief reflection – much of it written by Marg Risson – on a life that displayed so many of the values this book highlights.

Geoffrey Kendall Risson was born in Brisbane during the post-war baby boom on 20 December 1946. He was the third child of Horace and Noel Risson. Geoff’s early years were spent in South-east Queensland, primarily around Ipswich, where he attended Ipswich Boy’s Grammar School during his high school years.

During his last year of high school Geoff attended a Youth Camp held at Camp Cal. It was there he decided to become a true follower of Jesus Christ – and for Geoff that meant serving Jesus Christ in some full-time capacity. A little while after this, he attended a rally one Saturday night at the Rosevale Church of Christ. It would be here that his journey in ministering in Churches of Christ would begin, as he listened with a growing sense of excitement and call as students from the one-year-old Kenmore College spoke. As the students shared their experiences of Christian ministry, Geoff decided, “That’s for me also!” At the end of the rally, Geoff signed up to be a student at the emerging college, and went on to study at Kenmore College for the next four years. Of his experiences at Kenmore College Geoff wrote, “A good foundation was laid for the rest of my life as a Christian minister”.

In 1970, after graduating from College, Geoff married Margaret (nee Kingston) and together they moved to ministries in Charlestown (NSW) and Devonport (Tas), before returning to Queensland at the end of 1979. Geoff felt it a privilege to have had ministries at Arana Hills, Maroochydore and Westside Churches of Christ. It was while at Maroochydore that Geoff served as Conference President for a year, and during this time he began to develop an intimate knowledge of the churches in Queensland. In 2003 he became the Executive Director of the Resource Missional Team for the Conference of Churches

of Christ in Queensland, which gave him immense satisfaction. It would also be this role that Geoff was positioned to help guide the Churches of Christ Conference through its most critical time when he was appointed as the Interim Executive President in 2008. Geoff’s grace, determination, relational skills and optimism were key to navigating and leading the Movement through challenging times and to forming a new culture. These roles also saw Geoff leave a remarkable impact on a new generation of ministers and leaders.

Towards the end of 2011, Geoff was beginning to reflect of his future, and maybe even retirement. He suddenly became ill with pancreatic cancer and was no longer able to continue his role. But even during treatment and with it unclear what the future would hold for him, Geoff was not willing to just ‘sit back’. After a reprieve from the worst of the cancer, he called Craig Brown and convinced him that they should apply to compile the history of Churches of Christ in Queensland, which had been advertised in ‘Networking Magazine’. They applied, and Geoff was excited to successfully be selected to co-write the book with Craig. In 2013, Geoff and Margaret travelled to Tasmania and there visited the district where the young Stephen Cheek had lived before coming to Queensland and starting his pioneering work there. Geoff was also thrilled to be present at the launch of ‘The Church from the Paddock’, which had been researched, written and published in less than 12 months to coincide with the 130th anniversary Churches of Christ in Queensland.

Those who attended that event and the subsequent book-signings would remember his enthusiasm for the project, and for the work and life of the Churches of Christ in Queensland as a whole.



Sadly, the pancreatic cancer returned and Geoff succumbed to his illness, dying on 26 March 2015. He is sadly missed by his wife Margaret and four children, Nathan, Joel, Daniel, Rachel and their (now) seven grandchildren.

Geoff could say like Paul, that “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. And now the prize awaits me – the crown of righteousness that the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that great day of His return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to His glorious return”.

Geoff would want all who read this book to remember the Jesus we serve and the story we have to tell.

Craig Brown

Craig Brown was born in Melbourne, Australia, in 1970 and has had a lifelong love of history, having received a writing badge at Cub Scouts when he authored a pictorial history of the Kings and Queens of England, aged nine.



In 1991, he began attending the then Glen Waverley Church of Christ, and was converted some six weeks later. He went on to study at the Bible College of Victoria, hoping to be a missionary to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. When war intervened, he went back to his home church, became the youth pastor and married Danni. Craig has also ministered at the Upper Yarra and Carnegie Churches of Christ, before becoming the National Director of Media and Communications for Churches of Christ (2006), then moving into the new role of Federal Coordinator of the Churches of Christ in Australia (2008). In March 2013, he stepped down to become the Vic/Tas Mission Mobiliser (part time) for Global Mission Partners, and to also pursue his passion for writing, which led him to start his own writing, editing and writing-coaching business in 2016.

Craig and Danni have three children, Maddy, Owen and Aden, and live in Mount Waverley, Victoria.

‘The Church from the Paddock’ is his first published work.

Acknowledgements:

When I saw the advertisement to write the 130th History of the Churches of Christ Conference in Queensland in late 2012, I was in transition. God had made it clear to me that he wanted me to be more creative and use the writing gifts he had given me. So I decided to apply.

Then God intervened (again) through the optimistic and indestructible Geoff Risson who suggested that we could co-author the book. That was a great idea, not just because I liked Geoff, but he knew more about Queensland history than me! It was an honour when we were selected.

It has been a hectic six months of writing once I got back from long service leave. The new archives were a blessing, but in the early days of writing, most documents and books were still in boxes. I have been able to access many important sources, minutes, copies of The Australian Christian and The Christian Echo, alongside interviews, e-mails and ‘phone calls to write my contribution to ‘The Church from the Paddock’. I suspect that in later years – maybe in time for the 150th anniversary – that the archives will have yielded up more evidence for or against some of the assertions made in this book. With regards to more recent events, I hope that the passing of time may encourage others to speak out.

I also hope that some of the subject matter that is in chapter form due to the limitations of time and space will one day receive the more expansive treatment they deserve. It has struck me that we are losing sight of our story, and it is time that we made the effort across our Movement to record and reflect on the lessons of our history.

Writing is often seen as a lone art, but I am keenly aware that it is not. It has been a team effort, and I have many people to thank: Geoff and Marg Risson (without Geoff I am not sure how this task would have been completed), Desley Millwood, Dean Phelan, Steve Slade, Johanna Lawrence, Jonathan Smith, Lyle and Hazel Morris, Jan and Fay Christensen and John Gilmore. There are also the numerous people who got back to me on questions I was asking and provided me with some wonderful insights and stories. God has also been present in this process, and you, the readers, will best judge how I used the gifts he has given.

A writer is something I have always wanted to be, and my wife Danni has for many years lovingly supported me as I have slowly made writing a priority. She has been loving, patient and encouraging. My children, Maddy, Owen and Aden, have also supported me by keeping me grounded in the more important reality of being their Dad. Many friends have long put up with my desire to write – thanks for your patience!

People will not agree with everything we have written. I hope, however, that you find it enlightening and informative, and a spur to discover more of our story.

May God continue to tell his story through the Churches of Christ Conference in Queensland, and bless many through the working out of his story.

Afterword (June 2016)

It is three years since Craig Brown and Geoff Risson completed the 130 year story of Churches of Christ in Queensland in 2013. Geoff passed away on 26 March 2015, after walking his last years with pancreatic cancer.

In his last chapter of the first edition, Geoff reflected on some of the lessons of our story and what they pointed to in terms of the future for Churches of Christ in Queensland:

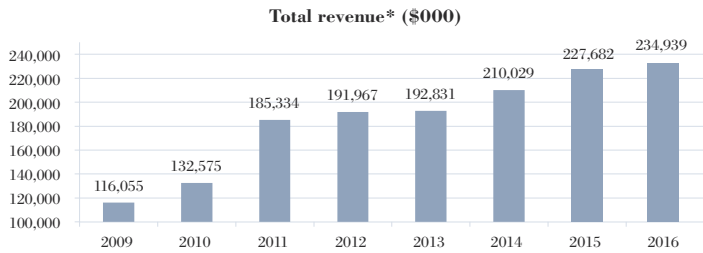
- We must collectively remember our history and learn from the successes and failures of our forefathers and foremothers.
- Let us never forget that divisiveness destroys, and unity amongst all of God’s people is paramount.
- The foundations of Jesus Christ, the Scriptures and enabling people to find faith are eternal; yet we must continually adapt how we forward these in each generation so that they are experienced in fresh ways.
- The importance of leaders who can influence and inspire people today with vision, passion and drive to write new stories for Christ and his Church into the twenty-first century.

When we look back at the new constitution and structure that was voted in at the end of 2009, we can see that they inherently encompassed these lessons. After a number of years in the wilderness, the collective desire to once more work together as one Body with one mission and a willingness to follow God’s leading in communities, has been blessed in so many ways.

From 2010 our Queensland movement has experienced significant growth in terms of people finding faith, lives being transformed, Kingdom Access Places in communities, and our overall finances. We have once again established a Medical Clinic on Santo in Vanuatu.

	2010	2016
People regularly attending a Church of Christ faith community [#]	6000+	10,000+
Number of Kingdom Access Places	200+	250+
Number of people that Kingdom Access Places regularly connect with	30,000+	40,000+

[#] In a local church meeting place or home – be it a local house, retirement village, housing community centre or seniors’ home.



*Consolidated income from all sources including Government grants and our caring ministries

The foundations that are being built through our Strategic Action Leadership Teams comprised of passionate local leaders in local communities augur well for continued growth into the future. In 2016 there are 29 Strategic Action Leadership Teams working on developing sustainable Mission Action Strategies to enable more of the light of Christ to be shining in their communities and to birth new Kingdom Access Places.

They are being assisted by Mission Action Partners and Community Chaplains who have been called by God to reach people with the Gospel. In older days these activities would have been called church planting and evangelism. The language, labels and some strategies may have been reinvented, but the call of Jesus to love God, love our neighbour, and make disciples, remains the same.

A further landmark and symbol of the new era of unity and mission that should be mentioned in this epilogue is the completion of Stage One of the new premises at Kenmore in 2016. As told in ‘The Church from the Paddock’, the acquisition of the site and establishment of Kenmore Christian College in the 1960s was part of a mighty vision and represented a significant undertaking by the Conference leadership at the time.

Some 50 years later, a similar dream for how the Kenmore site might be used for the movement over the next 50 years was envisaged at the time of writing in 2013.



Kenmore concept



Wednesday 6 August 2014. Left to right is Gary Edwards, Myles Waldron, Steve Slade, Greg Runge, Donna Savill, Andi Owen, Dean Phelan, Geoff Charles, Steve Nixon, Bruce Armstrong in the historical display set up for this milestone dedication and sod turning event.

On the 11 April 2016 over 300 staff and volunteers moved into the new building at Kenmore, which featured a large sign at the entrance “Welcome Colleagues in Mission”.

This 2016 Epilogue closes by continuing the prayer that I wrote in the foreword three years ago: *Our Father we pray for discernment, wisdom and courage to continue this Story of lives being transformed through your Churches of Christ in Queensland, and to exponentially forward the love and light of Christ in every community in the decades ahead.*

Kingdom Access Points*

Location	Churches	Access Places / Other expressions	Strategic Action Leadership Teams	Children, Youth and Families	Housing Services	Community Care	Home Maintenance	Residential Aged Care	Retirement Villages
SOUTH-EAST QLD – BRISBANE									
Acacia Ridge	✓		✓		✓			✓	✓
Annerley	✓								
Arana Hills	✓								
Bayside		✓	✓						
Bellbowrie				✓					
Boondall	✓								
Brisbane		✓							
Calamvale				✓					
Camp Hill	✓	✓							
Chermside					✓				
Darra					✓				
Forest Lake				✓					
Fortitude Valley					✓				
Goodna				✓					
Hamilton					✓				
Holland Park					✓				
Inner City Brisbane	✓		✓						
Jamboree Heights	✓			✓					
Kedron	✓				✓				
Kenmore			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Keperra						✓	✓		
Mitchelton				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Moorooka	✓								
Mount Gravatt					✓				
Murarrie					✓				
North Brisbane Corridor		✓	✓		✓				
Samford /Arana			✓						
Spring Hill					✓				
Sunnybank	✓								
Tarragindi	✓								
Zillmere	✓								

*As at November 2016

Location	Churches	Access Places / Other expressions	Strategic Action Leadership Teams	Early Childhood	Children, Youth and Families	Housing Services	Community Care	Home Maintenance	Residential Aged Care	Retirement Villages
SOUTH-EAST QLD – NORTHERN ZONE										
Bray Park						✓				
Bribie Island	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Buderim	✓	✓		✓			✓			
Caboolture	✓	✓			✓		✓			
Caloundra	✓					✓	✓			
Kallangur	✓	✓		✓		✓				
Nambour	✓	✓					✓			✓
Narangba	✓						✓			
Redcliffe	✓						✓	✓		
Sippy Downs							✓	✓		
Sunshine Coast		✓	✓							
Wamuran					✓					
Woorim										✓
SOUTH-EAST QLD – SOUTHERN ZONE										
Alexandra Hills	✓					✓	✓			
Benowa							✓		✓	✓
Berrinba	✓				✓					
Browns Plains	✓					✓				
Burleigh Heads	✓	✓								
Capalaba					✓					
Coomera						✓				
Gold Coast		✓	✓				✓			
Greenbank					✓		✓			
Hillcrest									✓	
Labrador						✓				
Logan			✓			✓				
Miami						✓				
Nerang						✓	✓		✓	
Ormeau						✓				
Pimpama						✓				
Robina						✓	✓			
Southport	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Springwood	✓				✓					
Springfield	✓									

Location	Churches	Aceess Places / Other expressions	Strategie Action Leadership Teams	Early Childhood	Children, Youth and Families	Housing Services	Community Care	Home Maintenance	Residential Aged Care	Retirement Villages
SOUTH-EAST QLD – WESTERN ZONE										
Beaudesert						✓				
Bellbird Park						✓				
Boonah	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Booval		✓				✓				
Brassall						✓				
Bundamba	✓				✓	✓				
Chuwar						✓				
East Ipswich						✓				
Fassifern		✓	✓							
Fernvale	✓									
Gatton	✓					✓			✓	✓
Grantham						✓				
Ipswich/Ripley		✓	✓			✓	✓			
Kalbar							✓		✓	
Laidley						✓				
Lockyer Valley			✓			✓				
Leichhardt						✓	✓			
Lowood	✓					✓	✓			
Ma Ma Creek	✓									
Marburg	✓					✓	✓			
Moggill						✓				
Mount Walker	✓									
North Ipswich						✓				
Raceview	✓			✓		✓	✓			
Redbank Plains						✓				
Riverhills						✓				
Rosevale	✓									
Silverdale	✓									
Withcott	✓			✓						

Location	Churches	Aceess Places / Other expressions	Strategie Action Leadership Teams	Early Childhood	Children, Youth and Families	Housing Services	Community Care	Home Maintenance	Residential Aged Care	Retirement Villages
NORTH & CENTRAL QUEENSLAND										
Atherton		✓								
Blackall							✓	✓	✓	
Cairns	✓									
Cardwell		✓								
East Mackay					✓					
Far North Queensland		✓	✓							
Gladstone	✓	✓								
Mackay	✓				✓					
Mareeba	✓									
Mount Isa					✓					
Normanton	✓									
North Queensland			✓							
Outback	✓									
Rockhampton	✓									
Tablelands/Walkamin	✓									
Townsville	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓
WIDE BAY BURNETT										
Bundaberg	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Fraser Coast			✓				✓			
Gin Gin				✓			✓		✓	
Gympie	✓									
Hervey Bay	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Kingaroy	✓		✓			✓				
Maryborough	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Murgon	✓									
Tiaro							✓		✓	
Torquay					✓					

Location	Churches	Access Places / Other expressions	Strategic Action Leadership Teams	Early Childhood	Children, Youth and Families	Housing Services	Community Care	Home Maintenance	Residential Aged Care	Retirement Villages
DARLING DOWNS AND SOUTH WEST QUEENSLAND										
Bongeen	✓									
Chinchilla	✓			✓		✓				
Crows Nest							✓		✓	✓
Cunnamulla				✓					✓	
Far West Queensland			✓							
Dalby	✓					✓				
Highfields	✓									
Inglewood						✓			✓	
Kingsthorpe	✓									
Lockyer Valley			✓							
Roma	✓					✓				
Stanthorpe		✓				✓			✓	
St George				✓		✓	✓		✓	
Toowoomba	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Warwick	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓
VANUATU										
Medical Santo		✓								
VICTORIA										
Cheltenham										✓
Essendon									✓	✓
Murrumbeena										✓
Oakleigh									✓	✓
Ormond										✓
NEW SOUTH WALES										
Ballina							✓			
Fingal Head	✓									
Murwillumbah							✓			

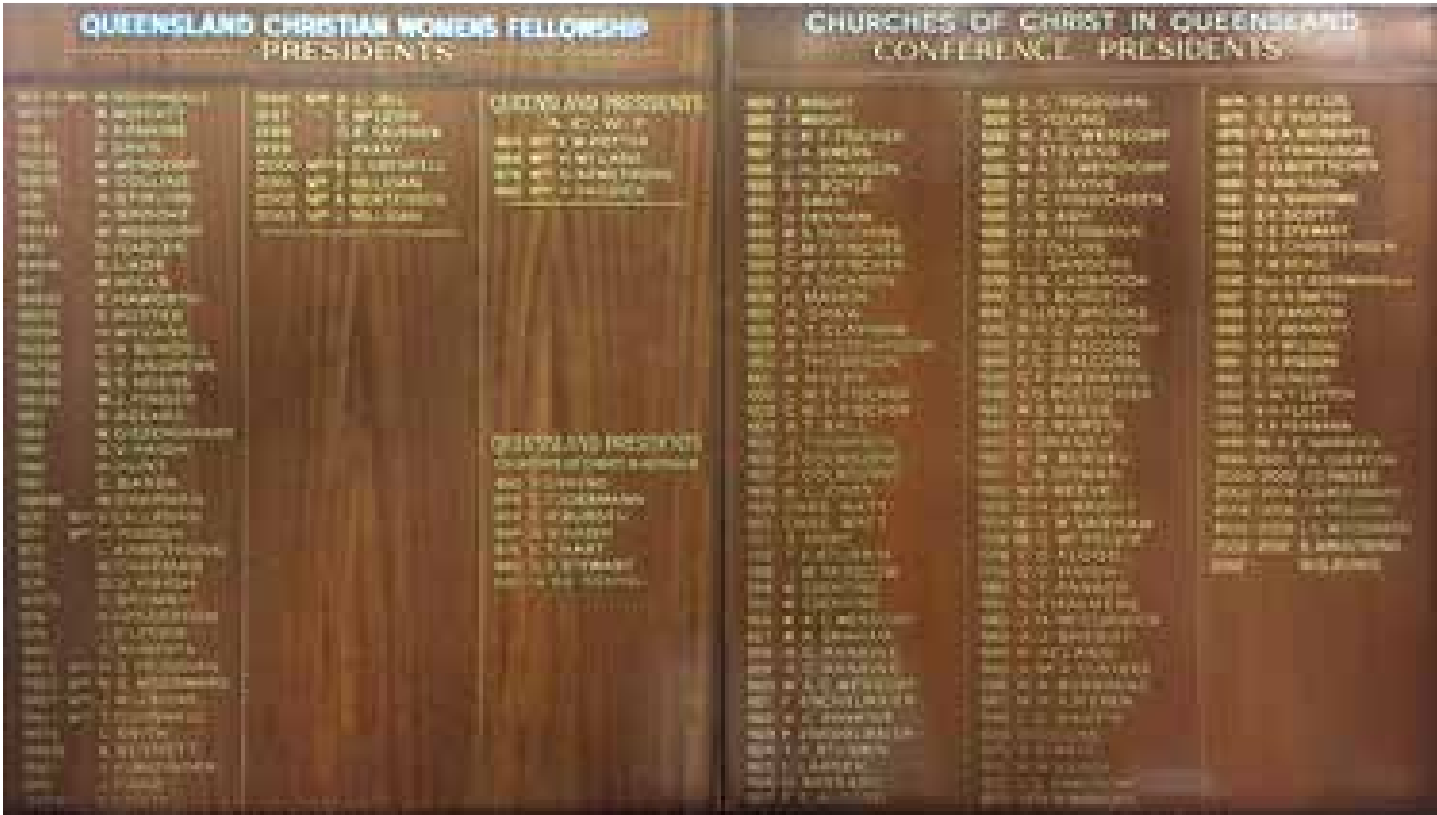
Directory of Affiliated Churches

Churches of Christ in Queensland is a Christ-following movement of people, who are a part of the broader Christian church.

Our purpose is to strive towards the goal of everyone, anywhere, being connected with someone who knows and loves Jesus. We resolve to model the imperatives of prayer, discipleship and mission as we seek to faithfully incarnate the purposes of Christ in the cultures that we live in.

Through our diversity, coupled with mutual support, and equipped through prayer, resources and action, we strive to achieve relevant and life-changing missional outcomes for the kingdom of God.

Local churches seeking to pursue the intents expressed above join as Affiliated churches of Churches of Christ in Queensland; acknowledging that this membership brings both privileges and responsibilities.



The President’s Board above lists all Queensland Conference Council Presidents from 1884 to 2012/16 and the Queensland Christian Women’s Fellowship Presidents from 1914 to 2003.

We are grateful and thankful for the past history of Churches of Christ in Queensland and the blessings we have received from the commitment of so many. Following pages list our Affiliated Churches.

Affiliated Churches*	Average total attendance to worship services (weekly)	Active members	Baptisms	Membership Year
Aboriginal and Islander Christian Fellowship	210	83	12	1929
Acacia Ridge Church of Christ	22	16	0	1953
Ann Street Church of Christ (Brisbane City)	80	35	4	1883
Annerley Church of Christ	31	6	2	1913
Arana Hills Church of Christ	181	115	6	1966
Avenell Heights Church of Christ (Bundaberg)	33	22	0	1970
Bongeen Church of Christ	53	59	2	1977
Boonah Church of Christ	78	77	0	1894
Boondall Church of Christ	32	48	2	1916
Bribie Island Church of Christ	75	40	0	1975
Brisbane North Church of Christ (Kedron)	36	52	0	1992
Browns Plains Church of Christ	32	37	0	1980
Bundaberg Church of Christ (Twyford Street)	196	120	0	1923
Burleigh Heads Church of Christ	75	60	8	1982
Caboolture Living Hope Church of Christ	54	33	0	1986
Caloundra Church of Christ	320	432	2	1974
Camp Hill Church of Christ	46	42	0	1957
Chinchilla Church of Christ	115	74	1	1951
Dalby Church of Christ	63	49	1	1956
Door of Hope Church of Christ (Maryborough)	80	84	4	1892
Fernvale Community Church	32	32	4	1997
Gatton Church of Christ	96	43	3	1955

* As at November 2016

Affiliated Churches	Average total attendance to worship services (weekly)	Active members	Baptisms	Membership Year
Gladstone Church of Christ	69	51	4	1953
Good Shepherd Church of Christ (Brisbane City)	47	28	2	2011
Gympie Church of Christ	70	32	0	1886
Hervey Bay Church of Christ	25	25	0	1974
Highfields Church of Christ	70	100	2	2002
Hume Ridge Church of Christ (Toowoomba)	996	586	29	1882
Kingaroy Church of Christ	131	76	2	1909
Kingsthorpe Church of Christ	40	29	2	1988
Lakeshore Community Church of Christ (Buderim North)	169	77	6	2002
Lowood Church of Christ	13	10	0	1949
Ma Ma Church of Christ	18	29	0	1885
Mackay Church of Christ	64	70	2	1937
Marburg Church of Christ	12	14	0	1895
Mount Walker Church of Christ	30	29	0	1884
Murgon Church of Christ	21	16	0	1960
New Life Community Church	36	30	0	2013
Oasis Church (Springfield and Bundamba)	65	50	2	2002
Outback Church of Christ	40	40	0	1991
Redcliffe Church of Christ	90	86	3	1956
Redlands Church of Christ	28	40	0	1979
Rising Sun International Church (Moorooka)	50	30	0	1931
Rivers Church (Moreton Bay)	305	341	6	1975

Affiliated Churches	Average total attendance to worship services (weekly)	Active members	Baptisms	Membership Year
Riverwood Ministries Church of Christ	20	20	0	1992
Rockhampton Church of Christ	55	32	1	1928
Roma Church of Christ	120	79	6	1888
Rosevale Church of Christ	36	31	0	1891
Sanctuary Park Church of Christ (Nambour)	121	106	0	1951
Silverdale Church of Christ	60	50	3	1920
Southport Church of Christ	479	270	16	1957
Springwood Church of Christ	215	162	12	1974
Sunnybank Church of Christ	112	65	5	1914
The Lakes Church (Cairns and Tablelands)	300	225	1	1969
Toowoomba North Church of Christ	280	203	6	1922
Townsville Church of Christ	52	41	0	1930
Vietnamese Church of Faith (Jamboree Heights)	23	27	0	2004
Warwick Church of Christ	52	51	0	1883
Westside Church of Christ (Jamboree Heights)	190	147	8	1993
Whitehill Church of Christ	324	190	3	1922
Withcott Church of Christ	108	104	1	1982
Zillmere Church of Christ	20	18	3	1882
TOTAL	6896	5169	176	

Care Services Listing*

Head Office

41 Brookfield Road
Kenmore Qld 4069
Phone: 07 3327 1600
Fax: 07 3878 1268

Children, Youth and Families

Long Day Care

Chinchilla
Cunnamulla
Kallangur
North Buderim
Raceview
Southport
St George
Withcott

Kindergarten

Cunnamulla
Goodna

Family Day Care

Chinchilla
Gin Gin
Hervey Bay
Jamboree Heights
Maryborough
St George

Prevention and early intervention

Jamboree Heights
Bundaberg
Torquay
Maryborough
East Mackay
Caboolture
Townsville
St George

Assessment and Intervention Services

Mackay
Maryborough
Springwood
Townsville

Fostering and Kinship Care

Bundaberg
Bundamba
Caboolture
Mackay
Maryborough
Mitchelton
Mount Isa
Springwood
Townsville

Residential out-of-home care

Bellbowrie
Berrinba
Bundamba
Calamvale
Capalaba
Forest Lake
Greenbank
Mount Isa
Townsville
Wamuran

Transition services

Berrinba
Bundaberg
Bundamba
Jamboree Heights
Mackay
Maryborough
Mount Isa
Townsville
Wamuran

* As at November 2016

Seniors and Supported Living

Retirement Living

Acacia Ridge
Benowa
Bongaree
Boonah
Bundaberg
Crows Nest
Gatton
Maryborough
Mitchelton
Nambour
Southport
Toowoomba
Townsville
Warwick
Woorim
Cheltenham
Essendon
Murrumbeena
Oakleigh
Ormond

Home and Community Care

Blackall
Boonah
Bribie Island
Bundaberg
Hervey Bay
Keperra
Southport
Sunshine Coast
Toowoomba
Townsville
Warwick

Residential Aged Care

Acacia Ridge
Alexandra Hills
Benowa
Blackall
Bongaree
Boonah
Bundaberg
Crows Nest
Cunnamulla
Gatton
Gin Gin
Hervey Bay
Hillcrest
Inglewood
Kalbar
Maryborough
Mitchelton
Nerang
Southport
Stanthorpe
St George
Tiaro
Toowoomba
Woorim
Essendon
Oakleigh

Endnotes

1. Chapman, G http://webjournals.ac.edu.au/journals/adeb/h_/hinrichsen-earnest-christian-1900-1956/

2. Jubilee History of the Churches of Christ in Australasia, p105

3. Inventing Australia, Patrick White, pp76,77

4. Cheek’s birth is listed at 20 December 1851 by Thomas Hagger (1938) <https://web.archive.org/web/20120114202216/http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/thagger/HERALDS.HTM#Page85> and as 20 December 1852 by RJ Clow, Evangelism in Australia (Warwick: The Warwick Newspaper, 1933) pg 6

5. Clow, p6

6. Clow, p7

7. Clow, p9

8. ibid, p11

9. The Life Story of Stephen Cheek, ed Brice W Nielson, Churches of Christ Historical Committee, p2

10. Harold Hayward: The Invasion of Bream Creek, Occasional Papers in History and Theology, Churches of Christ in NSW, p6

11. Hayward, p7

12. Clow claims this is a case of numerals being written down in the wrong order, and that Johnson arrived in Toowoomba in 1867. (Clow, p21) A W Stephenson also suggest the the 1867 date. <https://web.archive.org/web/20120130051957/http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/astephensoh/ohy/OHY.HTM#Page147>

13. Clow, p22

14. Cheek, Stephen Truth in Love, September 1882 p65

15. Clow, p26

16. Stephen Cheek: Truth in Love, September 1882, p65

17. ibid

18. Stephen Cheek Notebook, Churches of Christ in Queensland Historical Committee, p40.

19. ibid

20. Stephen Cheek: Truth in Love, October 1882, p73

21. Stephen Cheek: Truth in Love, September 1882, pp65-66

22. Stephen Cheek: Truth in Love, November 1882, p81

23. Clow, p33

24. Haigh, George Venturing in Faith pg9

25. Reported in the Warwick Examiner (13 December 1882) and cited by Clow, p35

26. Clow, 37

27. The Life Story of Stephen Cheek, ed Brice W Nielson, Churches of Christ Historical Committee, p7

28. ibid. Allen Elliott suggests it was “pneumonia and complications” in his book DA Ewers (p11)

29. Clow, p39

30. Clow, p39

31. “Death of Bro. Cheek.” No Other Foundation: A Documentary History of Churches of Christ in Australia: 1846-1990, ed. Graeme Chapman. [Mulgrave, Victoria: Privately published, 1993]. Pp451-452. Reprinted from Australian Christian Witness, 1883, pp122-123 <http://articles.ochristian.com/article16401.shtml>

32. ibid

33. Haigh, 27

34. Elliott, Allen G DA Ewers p12 ed. David Hammer, 1978.

35. ibid

36. Elliott, p13

37. Maston, AB (ed) Jubilee Pictorial History of Churches of Christ in Australasia (Melbourne: Austral Publishing, 1903) 129

38. Grenfell, B D (ed) Churches of Christ in Toowoomba – 100 Years (1982), pp32-33

39. Elliott, p16

40. Grenfell, p33

41. http://webjournals.ac.edu.au/journals/adeb/e_/ewers-david-amos-1853-1915/

42. Jubilee Pictorial History, 107

43. Jubilee History, p122.

44. Parker, D 2006, Baptist Relations with Churches of Christ, <http://home.pacific.net.au/~dparker/bapcc.htm> There was a small English-speaking Baptist church meeting in a chapel at Zillman’s Waterholes (Zillmere), which for about 10 years had been home to a thriving German Baptist church; then the majority of its members moved to the Rosewood Scrub area to take up farming in that area, leaving the building for an English-speaking church. In August 1882, a Church of Christ evangelist from Melbourne, Mr Stephen Cheek and a Queensland colleague, FW Troy, were invited by one of the church members (Thomas Geraghty, a brother-in-law of Troy, who was a school teacher formerly stationed in Toowoomba) to conduct a mission at the church. Each night of the week Cheek taught openly that ‘to be saved men must first believe, then repent, then make confession with the mouth, and then be immersed.’ Several people responded to this teaching which was claimed to be ‘the ancient order of things’ according to the New Testament, and were baptised on the Saturday night. At an unannounced meeting led by Cheek, at which only a few Baptist church members were present, the new converts were accepted for membership in the Baptist church. On the Sunday, Cheek once again took charge of the service, despite protests from one of the Baptist deacons, and welcomed the new members into the fellowship of the church. Cheek thus effectively took over the Baptist church and turned it into a Church of Christ.

45. Grenfell, Beverley (Ed) Churches of Christ in Toowoomba – 100 Years (1982) p14

46. ibid, p15

47. op cit

48. Jubilee History, p109

49. Fifty Years in Ann Street. Published September 1948.

50. Jubilee History, p119

51. Early shades of ICA! Now known as the Centenary Development Foundation.

52. Roma History – Archives Churches of Christ in Queensland

53. Jubilee History, p119

54. Venturing in Faith, p214

55. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Fisher

56. The Australian Christian, Vol XVII, No.32, p531

57. There were over 20 member churches in the Association in 1914.

58. Christian Echo, 1914

59. The Australian Christian, Vol XVII, No.17, p285

60. The Australian Christian, Vol XVII, No.17, p285

61. The Australian Christian, Vol XVII, No.33, p547

62. ibid, 547

63. The Australian Christian, Vol XVII, No.34, p572

64. The Australian Christian, Vol XVII, No.38, p642

65. The Australian Christian, Vol XVII, No.39, p660

66. The Australian Christian, Vol XVII, No.40, p676

67. The Australian Christian, Vol XVII, No.42, p708

68. The Australian Christian, Vol XVII, No.45, p756

69. The Australian Christian, Vol XVII, No.48, p799

70. The Australian Christian, Vol XVIII, No.18, p298

71. ibid

72. The Australian Christian, Vol XVIII, No.18, p289

73. The Australian Christian, Vol XVIII, No.18, p289

74. The Australian Christian, Vol XVIII, No.19, p306

75. The Australian Christian, Vol XVIII, No.37, p609

76. Christian Echo (1918), p7

77. Christian Echo (1919), p8

78. Christian Echo (1919), p11

79. Clay would go on to being a major advocate of social services in the Vic/Tas churches and was President of the Vic/Tas Conference in 1934

80. Associated Churches of Christ in Queensland 35th Annual Conference (1918), p9

81. Grenfell, Bev (ed) Churches of Christ in Toowoomba (1982), pp17-18

82. ibid, p18

83. The South Bourke and Mornington Journal has them in the 3rd week of a mission in Victoria (Dec 1919). <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/66197214>

84. The Australian Christian, 2 January 1919. It must be noted that George Haigh in Venturing in Faith lists the total at 702, regardless, it is a remarkable result

85. The Australian Christian, Vol 59, No.17, 1 May 1956

86. Caldicott, Arnold C, The Gospel Under Canvas (Austral Press: Melbourne, 1957) pvii

87. Woolwich Memorial edition, p8

88. Jubilee Conference Pamphlet, 1933

89. Souvenir: Hinrichsen-Brooker Tent Missions, Queensland (June-December 1923) p4

90. *ibid*, p7

91. *ibid*, p10

92. A handwritten note on the above souvenir booklet, p16

93. Jubilee Conference, 1933, p10

94. *ibid*, p5

95. Haigh, 174

96. Hinrichsen, EC, The Gospel Under Canvas: Sermons for Salvation (Austral Press: Melbourne, 1957) p146

97. Woolwich Memorial edition, pp5-6

98. *ibid*, p12. Includes all quotes from this paragraph unless otherwise indicated.

99. The Gospel Under Canvas pp vvii-ix

100. The Man With Whom I Served, Woolwich Memorial edition, p14

101. <http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/great-depression>

102. Evans states that it was at 19%; Fitzgerald et al in Made in Queensland (University of Queensland Press: St Lucia, 2009) suggest a higher rate of 22% in 1932 (105).

103. Christian Echo, (1930), p45

104. Celebrating 75 Years of Caring, p8

105. Christian Echo (1931), p27

106. *ibid*

107. Haigh, George Venturing in Faith, pp117-18

108. AC Male, Remembering Charlie Young, https://www.cofc.com.au/Media/Mar-Networking_WEB2.pdf

109. Haigh, 118

110. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1301&dat=19340721&id=f-pjAAAAIBAJ&sjid=9pEDAAAAIBAJ&pg=7208,6148674&hl=en> While the exact figure will never be known, the SMH figure comes out at roughly 77 meals per week, while the 4,000 figure is roughly 19 meals per week. It may be that over the years the 4,000 figure moved from an annual figure to a total figure.

111. Haigh, 118

112. AC Male, Remembering Charlie Young, http://www.cofc.com.au/Media/Mar-Networking_WEB2.pdf

113. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1301&dat=19340721&id=f-pjAAAAIBAJ&sjid=9pEDAAAAIBAJ&pg=7208,6148674&hl=en> The SMH records that Young was twice President of the Qld Conference but, in fact, he only achieved this position in 1929.

114. Christian Echo (1932), p21

115. Christian Echo, (1932), p21

116. Christian Echo (1934), p15

117. Christian Echo (1934), p15

118. RL Williams in The Australian Christian, 30 August 1939, p546

119. There is some suggestion that Brooke lied about his age in order to serve – on his enlistment papers it suggests that he is 17 years, 11 months old in January 1916. Regardless, he did not see combat until December 1916.

120. The Australian Christian, 17 May 1939, p313

121. The Australian Christian, 12 July 1939, p441

122. The Australian Christian, 30 August 1939, p548

123. *ibid*

124. The Australian Christian, 7 August 1940, p483

125. The Christian Echo, November 1940, p6

126. War Records, 23 May 1941

127. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/50115270>

128. *ibid*

129. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1300&dat=19680927&id=Re9UAAAAIBAJ&sjid=d5MDAAAAIBAJ&pg=3972,4972624&hl=en>

130. <http://www.bwa-baptist-heritage.org/hc-ozact.htm>

131. The Christian Echo, July 1944, p2

132. Evans, Raymond A History of Queensland (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p190

133. Evans, p191

134. The Church and War (1939), p1

135. The Church and War (1939), p3

136. The Christian Echo (1940), p11

137. The Christian Echo (1941), p12

138. *ibid*

139. The Australian Christian, Vol XLII, No.36, p569

140. *ibid*

141. The Australian Christian, Vol XLII, No.38, p601

142. The Australian Christian, Vol XLII, No.39, p617

143. The Australian Christian, Vol XLII, No.42, p665

144. The Christian Echo (March 1940), p11. Significantly, the mentioning of the need of the Indigenous people seemed to coincide with the years in the early 1940s where Burdeu was either Secretary or President.

145. The Christian Echo (1946), p17

146. The CFA was formed in 1939 but did not start operating until the following year.

147. *ibid*

148. The Christian Echo (1949), p34

149. The Christian Echo (1947), p37

150. The Christian Echo (1948), p28

151. Wiltshire, Kenneth C R Burdeu: A Living Legend (Brisbane: Baskerville, 1971), p7

152. Wiltshire, p12

153. Wiltshire, p13

154. Wiltshire, pp19-32

155. Wiltshire, p16

156. Wiltshire, p29

157. Christian Echo (April? 1948), p28

158. Wiltshire, p37

159. Wiltshire, p39

160. Evans, p197

161. The Australian Christian, Vol XLVIII, No.36, p422.
All quotes in this paragraph from the same article. (1945)

162. The Australian Christian, Vol XLVIII, No.38, p449. (1945)

163. The Australian Christian, Vol 67, No.7, p6. (1964)

164. The Australian Christian, Vol 67, No.7, p3. (1964)

165. The Australian Christian, Vol 67, No.7, p11. (1964)

166. The Australian Christian, Vol 68, No.20, p4. (1965)

167. The Australian Christian, Vol 67, No.9, p16. (1964)

168. The Australian Christian, Vol 67, No.27, p11. Phil Woolford, from the Dalby Church, was appointed in an interim role, commencing in August 1964.

169. The Australian Christian, Vol 67, No.24, p10. (1964)

170. *Ibid*

171. *Ibid*, p4

172. *Ibid*, p5

173. The Australian Christian, Vol 68, No.44, p6. (1965)

174. The Australian Christian, Vol 68, No.20, p4. (1965)

175. The Australian Christian, Vol 68, No.44, p6. (1965)

176. <http://www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/docs/bgeanzaustralia59/intro.htm>

177. The Australian Christian, Vol 73, No.22, p542. (1970)

178. Haigh, p30

179. Haigh, p133

180. Haigh, pp29-30

181. Chapman, Graeme One Lord One Faith One Baptism (Melbourne: Vital Publications, 1989) p167 Emphasis mine.

182. The Australian Christian, Vol 73, No.22, p541. (1970)

183. Commission on Evangelism (1968), p5	210. From a paper “College Image in the Eyes of the Churches” Strategic Planning Weekend, 11-12 August 1995	234. Curtis, JH (ed) Social Service Committee Homes and Hostel Report, p17	259. Chapman, p92
184. <i>ibid</i> , p17. Emphasis mine			260. Partners, pp8-9
185. Haigh, p61	211. This section of the book comes from conversations with R Edwards, now a Mission Action Partner and S Parker, a Queenslander, still is an employee of ACO.	235. Conversation with Chief Operating Officer David Swain 13 May 2016	261. Jubilee, p416
186. 75 Years of Care, p13		236. Grenfell, B D Churches of Christ in Toowoomba, p39	262. Hammer, p8
187. Haigh, p61	212. Memorandum to Churches for 2012 AGM dated 24/9/12	237. <i>op cit</i>	263. Warne, Graham Messengers of Peace (Kenmore: Kenmore Christian College, 1993), p4
188. Haigh, p63.	213. Camp Chronicle Xmas Camp 1943, original owner – M Enchelmaier	238. Celebrating 75 Years of Caring, p13	264. Warne, p5
189. Haigh, p107	214. Christian Echo Annual Report 1934	239. Celebrating 75 Years of Caring, p13	265. Partners, p9
190. Haigh, p133	215. Referenced from the Christian Echo Annual Report, 1934, 1946	240. The Australian Christian July 1966 Vol 69, No 29, p5	266. Partners, p55
191. Haigh, p135	216. Christian Echo Annual Report 1960	241. Haigh, p195	267. Hammer, p10
192. Haigh, pp139-140	217. Christian Echo Annual Report 1946	242. Haigh , p198	268. Warne, p5
193. The Australian Christian, Vol 81, No.20, p466. (1978)	218. Christian Echo Annual Report 1960	243. Haigh, p199	269. Partners, pp54-55
194. MacDonald, Bob Sunday Mail Color 27 January 1980, p3	219. Christian Echo Annual Report 1960	244. Social Service Report, 1971	270. FM records of the early work of Churches of Christ Missions
195. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1974_Brisbane_flood	220. From conversations with A Male	245. O’Brien, E, Social Service Report, 1974 p13	271. Partners, pp54-55
196. Male, Allan, The Christian Echo, February 1974, p4	221. These buildings had several lives. One life was accommodation for recovering Inebriates’. Another life was for hold German prisoners during the Second World War.	246. Last 2 quotes from Celebrating 75 Years of Caring, p23	272. The Australian Christian, Vol 73, No.23, p558 (1970)
197. <i>op cit</i>		247. 75 Years of Caring, p16	273. The Australian Christian, 5 July 1986, p14 (286)
198. <i>op cit</i>	222. From a Churches of Christ Care fact sheet	248. <i>op cit</i>	274. The Christian Echo, March 1941, p3
199. Henderson, Laurel, The Australian Christian, March 9 pg 79	223. Churches of Christ Care, Celebrating 75 Years of Caring	249. Conversation with Chief Operating Officer David Swain 13 May 2016	275. Stephenson, AW, One Hundred Years (Melbourne: Austral, 1946) p82
200. Brooks, Len, The Christian Echo, February 1974, pg 11	224. M Chandler, as Care grew, went on to become the Deputy Director of Care.	250. Jubilee Pictorial History of Churches of Christ in Australasia (Melbourne: Austral, 1903), p415	276. Harold Finger’s record of ‘The Churches of Christ Work in the New Hebrides’, p12
201. The Australian Christian, Vol 65, No.18, p281 (1962)	225. This section came from notes provided by S Parker.	251. Evans, Raymond A History of Queensland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p100	277. The Australian Christian 3 March 1943, p108.
202. <i>ibid</i>	226. From here on, Churches of Christ Care (Care) will be the name used to indicate the social service ministries of the Queensland Churches of Christ	252. Partners: One Hundred Years of Mission Overseas (Melbourne: Vital Publications, 1990), p8	278. Bowes, Keith (ed), Partners: One Hundred Years of Mission Overseas (Melbourne: Vital Publications, 1990) p62
203. <i>ibid</i>	227. Secretary of the Department, Charles Young (1931), as quoted in Haigh, George Venturing in Faith (Brisbane: Churches of Christ in Queensland, 1983) p52	253. http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~auscqfha/kanakas.htm	279. Finger, Harold – personal correspondence, 27 March 1990
204. The Australian Christian, Vol 65, No.42, p661 (1962)	228. All statistics taken from the 2014-15 Annual Report (p13)	254. Evans, p101	280. Finger, Harold, The New Hebrides Mission (Vanuatu) p3
205. For a full list of this committee see “Venturing in Faith” p76	229. Celebrating 75 Years of Caring, p24	255. Evans, p132	281. The Australian Christian 13 June 1945, p 280.
206. Sadly, at the time of the writing of this chapter, Haydn had just died. Haydn, on concluding his role as Minister at Annerley Church, began a career in the media, and for many years became the voice of Brisbane on Radio Station 4BC.	230. Haigh, p52	256. Evans, p101	282. The Australian Christian 15 October 1947, p436
207. The paper “Goals for the Future” unfortunately was not dated until hand written later on. The date appears to be the first month 1984.	231. Haigh, p169	257. Chapman, Graeme One Lord One Faith One Baptism (Melbourne: Vital Publications, 1989), p92	283. Bowes (ed), p63
208. There was a growing realisation in the early to mid-1980’s that “Preaching evangelism” was no longer working, and shifted to “Conversational and long term friendship” evangelism.	232. The Australian Christian, August 8 1970, p356	258. Hammer, Dr D G M John Thompson: The Birth of Churches of Christ Mission Work in the New Hebrides The Pamphlet Club (Australian Churches of Christ Historical Society: Digest 73, July 1981), p4	284. The Australian Christian 16 April 1957 p230
209. The Conference held an inquiry with resultant papers into the effects of the Charismatic Movement for good or ill!	233. The Australian Christian February 6 1971, p33		285. The Australian Christian, 16 February 1959, p68
			286. Grenfell, Beverly (Ed), Churches of Christ in Toowoomba – 100 Years, p20

287. Grenfell, p45	310. ibid	334. Haigh, George (ed) 100 Years: Venturing in the Faith (Brisbane: Historical Committee of Conference of Churches of Christ in Queensland, 1983), p96	362. The Australian Christian, Vol 93, No.17, p445 (1990)
288. According to Ian’s genealogy pages website (http://tng.cliftonbeach.net/getperson.php?personID=P1190586140&tree=CowanMacaulay), Frederick was born on 7 March 1876 and died on 13 February 1934. He is buried in Toowong Cemetery. Johanna’s birth details are not recorded, and she died on 9 September 1956)	311. The Australian Christian, 10 March 1904, p133	335. Sonny Graham was a high profile FAB worker, who The Australian Christian featured in its 1962 edition (Jan 9).	363. The Christian Echo, September issue, p2 (1989)
289. http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/148511897?searchTerm=Mrs%20Stubbin%20Courier%20Mail&searchLimits=	312. http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/58135194	336. The Australian Christian, Vol 65, No.8, p113 (1962)	364. ibid
290. The Australian Christian, 2 June 1898, p181	313. Brisbane Courier Mail 31 July 1907	337. ibid	365. ibid
291. https://web.archive.org/web/20120130051957/http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/astephensoh/OHY.HTM#Page59	314. http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/21684324?searchTerm=Stubbin%20Brisbane%20Courier%20Mail&searchLimits=	338. Haigh, p182	366. Federal Conference Executive Minutes, 6 February 1990
292. The Australian Christian, 1 December 1898, p389	315. http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/1170376?searchTerm=&searchLimits=l-publictag=STUBBIN+Frederick+Ernest	339. The Australian Christian, Vol 67, No.28, p7 (1964)	367. The Christian Echo, September issue, p37 (1990)
293. The Australian Christian, 9 May 1901, p222	316. Their children were Reginald Allan (20 February 1902-11 October 1955), Gilbert Earnest (b 1912-26 August 1912), Daisy Estelle (1914-22 August 1939) and Kathleen (15 November 1909-d?). However, this list does not include their baby girl born in India in late 190-early 1904, who is mentioned by at least two sources.	340. The Australian Christian, Vol 67, No.40, p12 (1964)	368. ibid
294. ibid	317. Partners, p95	341. Personal correspondence to the author from Lyle Morris	369. ibid
295. The Australian Christian, 9 May 1901, p221	318. Personal correspondence with the author	342. Haigh, p183	370. Vincent’s own words, via a story sent by Lyle Morris
296. ibid	319. Partners, pp97-98	343. ibid	371. Lyle Morris, correspondence, 16 August 2013
297. Reginald Allan, born 20 February 1902 and a girl born sometime in late 1903 and before Feb 1904.	320. Partners, p100	344. Letter by Dr Donald E Stewart to the Federal Aborigines Board, 2 May 1988	372. Accim Board Minutes, November 2013
298. The Australian Christian, 9 May 1901, p232	321. Partners, p95	345. The Christian Echo, September 1983	373. John Gilmore, personal email, 5 July 2013
299. The Australian Christian, 14 June 1902, p228	322. Missionary News, November 1989-January 1990, p9	346. Haigh, p163	374. RAP, p1
300. The Australian Christian, 11 June 1903, p340	323. Christensen, Fay Ramu Woman (Community Books: Darling Heights, 2008), p24	347. The Christian Echo, September 1983	375. RAP, p4
301. The Australian Christian, 28 July 1904, p415	324. ibid, pp50-51	348. Stewart, 2 May 1988	376. RAP,p14
302. The Australian Christian, 6 October 1904, p555	325. ibid, pp56-57	349. ibid	377. See the Introduction to this book
303. Rankine would later serve as minister at Ann Street (1915-22), as noted in A Century of Witness, p 57 http://www.430annstreet.com/pdf/A-century-of-witness.pdf	326. ibid, pp58-59	350. The Christian Echo, September 1983	378. was formerly the Director of Department of Church Development in Victoria
304. All quotes from The Australian Christian, 20 October 1904, p579	327. Christensen, p64	351. ibid	379. This word occurs some 55 times in the New Testament. This fact alone should provoke our thinking!
305. The Australian Christian, 16 February 1905, p86	328. ibid, p65	352. Federal Conference Executive Minutes, 7 June 1988	380. http://cofcaustralia.org
306. ibid	329. ibid, p81	353. The Christian Echo, September 1986, p5. There are suggestions that this is a conservative figure.	381. Jubilee History p103
307. ibid	330. ibid, p83	354. Federal Conference Executive Minutes, 29 March 1988	382. Jubilee History p103
308. ibid	331. Networking Magazine, May 2013, p21	355. The Christian Echo, September issue, p2 (1989)	383. Jubilee History p103
309. The Australian Christian, 23 March 1905, p146. It should be noted that Frederick and Johanna’s letters often contained a balance of good and bad news and, on the whole, should be trusted as reliable first hand accounts.	332. The Christian Echo, September 1988	356. QAIB Minutes, 11 April 1988	384. Christian Echo Annual report 1919
	333. Which would later become the Australian Churches of Christ Indigenous Ministries (ACCIM), until it wound up and placed Indigenous ministry under Global Mission Partners in 2013.	357. The Christian Echo, September issue, p2 (1989)	385. Christian Echo Annual report 1924
		358. ibid	386. Christian Echo Annual report 1957
		359. Letter by Dr Donald E. Stewart to the Federal Aborigines Board, 2/5/1988	387. Christian Echo Annual report 1967
		360. The Christian Echo, September issue, p2 (1989)	388. Christian Echo Annual report 1960
		361. The Australian Christian, Vol 93, No.3, pp66-67 (1990)	389. Christian Echo Annual report March 1970
			390. Christian Echo Annual report March 1973
			391. Christian Echo Annual report 2000

392. The author believes there is need to build a biblical frame around our understanding of this word	414. Notes on Meeting on Brotherhood Structure, 14 November 1983	442. Or G10	471. For more stories, see the ‘Stories from our Churches’ chapters
393. Thank you to all those who provided material in response to the survey of our churches! We apologise if your story has not been selected for this publication.	415. Towards 2000 Conference Executive Subcommittee, 29 March 1985	443. Report to the Churches of Christ in Queensland on the Five Issues to be Investigated by Ten Appointed Members, p7	472. Networking March 2011, p2
394. http://www.ncls.org.au NCLS have proven to be a valuable tool to evaluate the health of our local churches in Queensland. To quote from the web page of NCLS “Here are some fast facts about the 2011 NCLS participants:23 denominations plus independent churches, over 3,000 local churches, 260,000 adult attendees, 10,000 child attendees (aged 8 to 14) and 6,000+ leaders completed surveys. Surveys were conducted in eight languages.”	416. All quotes from Don Stewart in this chapter obtained in an interview on 14 August 2013.	444. Report to the Churches of Christ in Queensland on the Five Issues to be Investigated by Ten Appointed Members, p12	473. <i>ibid</i>
395. Response article by Geoff Charles to survey questionnaire to Churches, Feb 2013	417. The Christian Echo, September 1980, pp45-46	445. <i>ibid</i> , p10	474. Bruce Armstrong, personal correspondence, 30 July 2013
396. Churches of Christ Annual Report 2011-12	418. <i>ibid</i>	446. Ted Keating, personal e-mail, 31 July 2013	475. Grenfell, Beverley (ed) 25 Years of Witness, Mission, Worship and Services, p9
397. NCLS Regional Church Life Profile Churches of Christ in Queensland collated results, 2012	419. 75 Years: Celebrating 75 Years of Caring, p4 (2005)	447. Randy Edwards, correspondence, 12 August 2013	476. Grenfell, B (ed), p12
398. “Belonging” is one of the nine NCLS Core Qualities indicators	420. Churches of Christ in Queensland Annual Report 2011-12, p3	448. <i>ibid</i>	477. Haigh, George Venturing in Faith, p87
399. The core qualities are: faith, worship, belonging, vision, leadership, innovation, service, faith-sharing, and inclusion	421. Bob Smith, personal correspondence, 6 August 2013	449. Geoff Risson, personal correspondence	478. <i>op cit</i>
400. Ephesians 4:11,12a NIV translation	422. Malcolm Chandler, interview, 7 August 2013	450. David Swain, personal correspondence	479. Haigh, George History of Conference Committees 1883 -1983, p146
401. Note from above point 7. This is a core quality health indicator	423. Alan Sims, personal correspondence, 8 August 2013	451. David Swain, personal correspondence	480. Haigh, p158
402. In terms of members, not attendees	424. Queensland Conference Council Minutes, 18 November 2004	452. David Swain, personal correspondence	481. <i>op cit</i>
403. Total members	425. Randy Edwards, personal correspondence, 12 August 2013	453. Dean Phelan, personal correspondence	482. The Australian Christian 1 July 1995, p231
404. Average weekly attendance was 7,660	426. The Christian Echo, March 2000, p1	454. Dean Phelan, personal correspondence. As are all quotes here from Phelan unless indicated otherwise	483. <i>op cit</i>
405. Average weekly attendance total was 6,811	427. The Christian Echo, October 2001, p2	455. Dean Phelan, personal correspondence	484. Tabbernee, William, Women and Pastoral Ministry in Churches of Christ, Digest of the Australian Churches of Christ Historical Society No.103, December 1989
406. Includes the individual AICF churches rather than counting them as one	428. The Christian Echo, October 2002	456. Dean Phelan, personal correspondence	485. <i>op cit</i>
407. Active members	429. 2006 Annual Report, p2	457. <i>ibid</i>	486. Hawthorne Church of Christ 80 th Anniversary, p7
408. The Christian Echo, September 1981, p15	430. <i>ibid</i>	458. <i>ibid</i>	487. Hawthorne Church of Christ 80 th Anniversary, p9
409. The Christian Echo, September 1984, p14	431. Queensland Conference Council Special Meeting Minutes, 1 February 2007	459. Dean Phelan, personal correspondence	488. The Christian Echo, 49 th Annual Conference (1932), p12
410. The Christian Echo, September 1984, p15	432. Randy Edwards, 12 August 2013	460. <i>ibid</i>	489. <i>op cit</i>
411. The Christian Echo, September 1991, p45	433. Queensland Conference Council Minutes, 15 March 2007	461. Networking Magazine, May 2011, p7	490. The Australian Christian 25 September 1976, p422
412. The Christian Echo October 1996, pp6-7	434. 2007 Annual Report, p5	462. Networking Magazine, March 2010, pp11-12	491. The Australian Christian, Vol 88, No 22, 14 December 1985, p1 (Dennis Nutt)
413. Churches of Christ in Queensland – 2005 Annual Report, pp70-71	435. Edwards, 12 August 2013	463. Networking Magazine, January 2011, pp1-2	492. The Australian Christian, Vol 88, No 22, 14 December 1985, p18
	436. Queensland Conference Council Minutes, 7 June 2007	464. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010–2011_Queensland_floods#Toowoomba_and_the_Lockyer_Valley	493. The Australian Christian, Vol 88, No 22, 14 December 1985, p18
	437. <i>ibid</i>	465. Networking Magazine, January 2011, Vol 2, pp1-5	494. <i>ibid</i>
	438. Variously called the four statesman or the four elders or the senior elders.	466. Networking Magazine, February 2011, p1	495. The Australian Christian, Vol 88, No 12, 13 July 1985, p20
	439. All five points taken from the letter written by the Fernvale Community Church, dated and signed on the 24 September 2007	467. <i>ibid</i>	496. <i>ibid</i>
	440. John Crosby declined an offer to put forward his recollections of these events.	468. Networking Magazine, February 2011, p4	497. Partners: 100 Years of Mission Overseas (Vital: Melbourne, 1990), p112
	441. Steve Slade interview, 26 July 2013	469. Networking, March 2011, p4.	498. The Australian Christian, Vol 88, No 12, 13 July 1985, p4
		470. Personal correspondence, 22 August 2013.	

499. Unpublished memoirs of Dorothy Potter. All quotes from Dorothy in this profile are from this source.
500. Male, AC, Profile of Mrs Dorothy Elsie Jane Potter
501. Council on the Ageing Queensland News, January 1994, p2
502. Male, AC, The Courier Mail: A Mother Superior
503. The Christian Echo, June 1995, p5
504. Celebrating 75 Years of Caring p28
505. Much of this material came from “The History of the Chinchilla and District Churches of Christ” 1907-1976
506. “select land” – this phrase was used when early settlers were given permission by the Government of the day to take possession of virgin land for agricultural purposes
507. This is a direct quote from “The History of the Chinchilla and District Churches of Christ” 1907-76. This is deliberate as the reader can sense the vision and excitement of the writer about this church.
508. Hawthorne Church of Christ 80th Anniversary 1914-94
509. Much of the material on Leichhardt is from notes provided by Don Gehrke