

THE BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

THE BAPTIST RECORDER

APRIL, 1982

EDITORS:

M J PETRAS
R L CARDWELL

ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

120 HERRING ROAD
EASTWOOD NSW 2122

I take this opportunity to comment on how I see the present and future state of our Society.

We may be quietly grateful for the progress made since our humble beginnings on 18th April, 1974. Our major achievement must be the simple fact that we have continued to survive! (Earlier attempts to form societies have failed.) I thank my colleagues on the Executive and our loyal members for their support.

We began of course at a time of rising interest in Australian history generally and it is gratifying to note many encouragements in our own sphere of interest. We have begun to assemble a significant collection of archives. A constant flow of inquiries comes to us. Some original research has been encouraged and some has been published. Indeed the success of our first two books has strengthened our financial base and encouraged us to think of even more ambitious projects.

The future has three pressing needs. First, we need to strengthen our membership base. A more vigorous publicity programme must be considered, and we hope churches, as such, will join our society. Secondly, we need to find more writers willing to give time and effort to produce scholarly and popular productions. We are on the lookout for likely subjects and authors. Finally, I think the time has come to pursue the question of establishing an active national society. We have received some inquiries from interstate but it is evident the establishment of societies in each State is a first step. The day when we can draw on detailed local research to produce an authoritative history of Baptists throughout the Commonwealth must surely be drawing near. But some of us may not live to see this day unless vigorous initiatives are undertaken now. We would be glad to share from our own experiences (and frustrations) with interested persons in our sister States.

I commend the Society's work to you.

Ken R Manley
(Chairman)

SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR THE EIGHTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES, 1982

As our Annual General Meeting in April each year is the occasion of an academic address, often delivered by a visiting Speaker, it is considered appropriate for this Report to be put into print, so that the lecturer will have as much time as possible at his disposal, at the same time allowing our members to study the year's activities at their leisure.

During the past year, we have again undertaken many of the "usual" activities, but we have also been involved in some unusual and exciting projects. Large amounts of historical material are reaching us from our churches, and this is good, as we now have much better facilities for preserving it. As usual, man and woman-power is short, and we can always use more assistance; we would value more interest from more churches, particularly in the area of becoming corporate Members, which can so easily be accomplished by paying an annual subscription.

The first General Meeting of our new year was addressed by our Treasurer, Mr Michael Petras, and it is probable that, in the meetings of no other Society are the speakers of more consistently high quality than ours. Mr Petras then addressed the meeting on the Rev Frederick Hibberd, "The Forgotten Father of Baptists in NSW," saying it seemed strange that Mr Hibberd had been so forgotten, seeing many regarded him as "the father of the Baptist Union of NSW". Professor K J Cable, M.A., President of the Royal Australian Historical Society, had been our Guest Speaker at the Annual Meeting in April.

Our October meeting was unusual in more ways than one. To begin with, it was held in the new library building of the Theological College, opened on 9th August. It is not an everyday experience to hold our meetings in a brand-new building, and afterwards, we all went off to inspect our own new room, this being the first time the Society has been in possession of a room exclusively for the use of historical material, where it can be adequately preserved, used - and locked up when necessary.

The second departure from the norm was in the form of the meeting, ably guided by Mrs Margaret Manley, who gave us the benefit of her knowledge on Researching Family History, a subject on which we receive numerous enquiries. Incidentally, should any readers have, or research, information about any Baptists during the first 50 years of our existence, would you write it out legibly, or type it, and let us have it? Hopefully, we will be able to file this alphabetically, so that we will have more information available for those who enquire of us regarding their ancestors.

Our Chairman, Dr K R Manley, was the Speaker at our February meeting, on the subject of The Practice and Theology of Baptism concerning Australian Baptists.

Of the exciting new departures, one has been the production of two books, which hopefully, will be the fore-runners of many more. The first, Soldier and Evangelist, the biography of Rev J G Ridley, M.C., by Rev Harold Evans, has practically sold its first issue of 1,000 copies, and a reprint has been done. The second literary effort, The First Australian Baptists (K R Manley and M J Petras), was launched in connection with the Baptist celebration of 150 years of service in Australia, and is selling well. We are exceedingly grateful to the Baptist Foundation of NSW and the Royal Australian Historical Society for their financial assistance, which enabled us to speedily settle our debt to the Printer.

Profits from these books will enable the Society to continue with a programme of producing books of significance to our denomination and to others. They have also greatly assisted our liquidity, which is very necessary in our efforts to acquire the items essential to the proper preservation of valuable historical documents and artifacts. We are grateful to all those who have assisted in this regard, and also to the College authorities for providing us with such an attractive and functional "home".

Finally, I regret to have to say that this will be the last report I will write as Secretary, for I have occupied this position from the beginning of the Society in 1974. However, there always comes a time ... and health and other problems have forced me to curtail some of my activities. I have thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated my term as an executive of the Society, but this year, I will not be able to stand for re-election. I do wish the Society and all its members God's Blessing on a most important aspect of denominational service.

L Ollif
(Secretary)

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1982

Income

Balance brought forward, 1st April, 1981		\$1,681.36
Membership Fees		130.00
Donations		38.10
Book Sales: Soldier and Evangelist: \$ 569.68		
The First Australian		
Baptists	: <u>2,280.11</u>	2,849.79
Grants: Royal Australian		
Historical Society	: 150.00	
Baptist Foundation of NSW	: <u>250.00</u>	400.00
Book Bounty: Soldier and Evangelist		237.50
Other		33.00
Bank Interest		28.89
		<u>\$5,398.64</u>

Expenditure

Postage and Stationery		\$ 149.31
Production costs 'The First Australian Baptists'		170.05
Advertising		188.80
Printing Costs		1,841.32
Bank Investments		2,500.00
Shelving for Archives		374.40
Membership: Royal Australian Historical Society		17.50
Other		60.00
		<u>\$5,301.38</u>

Balance Carried Down 97.26

\$5,398.64
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1st April, 1982 Balance Carried Forward \$ 97.26

Bank Investments (as at 31st March, 1982

Term Deposit	Principal	\$1,500.00
(12.50% 3 months)	Interest	181.36
		<u>1,681.36</u>
'On Call' Deposit		1,000.00
(10.00%)	Total	<u>\$2,681.36</u> =====

M J Petras
(Treasurer)

NOTES ON BOOK SALES

Since Soldier and Evangelist was launched just over 18 months ago, 964 copies have been sold for which \$2,404.43 has been received. The First Australian Baptists was launched at our last Annual Meeting. In 12 months 583 copies have been sold and \$2,280.11 received.

We can be pleased that the second book, quite different from the first, has received wide acceptance. When the fact that a wholesale book distributor took 300 copies of Soldier and Evangelist is taken into account, it leaves a difference of only 81 in the number sold.

SOCIETY'S MEETINGS DURING THE YEAR, 1981-82

At the Annual General Meeting last April, Professor K J Cable, M.A., told us that the writing of Australian religious history is a particularly difficult task, as general histories only provide fleeting glimpses of religious history.

Many of our members cannot attend any, or all, of the Society's meetings, generally held at the Theological College at Eastwood, but like to have some idea of the views of our Speakers, who are all eminently worth hearing, so it is well worthwhile passing on very short summaries of their lectures. Where possible, notes of the full lecture are obtained for preservation.

The Treasurer addressed the June meeting on the subject of Rev Frederick Hibberd, saying he felt a warm attraction towards this Baptist leader, who has not had his name perpetuated. Mr Hibberd died in 1908, after having been involved in denominational affairs for 40 years. Aged 25, C H Spurgeon had sent him to the church meeting in the Assembly Rooms in William Street, Woolloomooloo, to comply with their request for a Pastor.

Our October meeting was most interesting, as Mrs Margaret Manley passed on her most instructive formula for Researching Family History, stressing that the obtaining of birth and marriage certificates is of the utmost importance. Michael Petras spoke of his experience with research into Mitchell Library documents, for which a Reader's Ticket is necessary, and the Secretary spoke of her research into regional history, as it affects families.

All took display material to illustrate their points, but the answer to all exhibits was supplied by Rev Seton Arndell. As the only member present who is the descendant of a First Fleeter, Dr William Arndell, he had with him a roll of parchment three feet deep, and three times that length, on which Mr Arndell's father had traced the family in all its branches. There would not be too many people in Sydney who could match that!

The final meeting of our year, that held last February, was addressed by Dr K R Manley, concerning the practice of baptism among Australian Baptists, and the relevant theology. He stressed that there is no index of all Australian Baptist periodicals, and he considers there should be a Bibliography of all Australian publications alluding to, and by, Baptists. Few books of any size have been published on the subject of Baptists and baptism in Australia, particularly in the pre-world war period, and there may one day be a project for the Society in this area.

Unfortunately, only very brief mention of the subjects of these meetings can be given, but it is stressed that our speakers put a tremendous amount of effort into the very instructive lectures they deliver to the Society.

MARY AND WILLIAM DAVIS

This couple lived in Kent Street, Sydney, and attended the Church in Bathurst Street. If anybody knows more about them than appears in The First Australian Baptists, this information, if sent to the Secretary of the Society, will be passed on to their descendant, Mrs D Ellerman, of Wagga Wagga, who is compiling her Family Tree.

The Society was formed on 18th April, 1974 and set down a number of objectives which were adopted. We should keep in mind that those objectives were:

1. To encourage research into the history of Baptists, especially those in NSW.
 2. To seek and obtain custody of important Baptist records, and to provide for their careful preservation.
 3. To encourage the collating and recording of Baptist history.
 4. To foster interest in Baptist history at the local Church level.
 5. To assist research students at schools, colleges and universities.
 6. To publish articles and historical information.
 7. To be alert to Church jubilees, centenaries and other significant anniversaries for Baptists, and where possible, to assist in the provision of relevant historical details.
 8. To promote care of buildings and sites of historical interest to Baptists.
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WRITING YOUR CHURCH'S HISTORY

Sooner or later every church will celebrate a silver or golden jubilee or a centenary. It is a function of the Baptist Historical Society to assist churches on such occasions. Several useful publications are available for churches to help them in the observation of their anniversary and in the compilation of the church's history. While these are American publications, a special Australian supplement is being prepared by the Society. Copies are available from the Society, C/- 120 Herring Road, Eastwood, NSW, 2122.

D C Woolley, Guide for Writing the History of a Church (\$1.50)
How to Observe and Write Church
Anniversaries and History (10 cents)
Suggestions for History Committee (10 cents).

FUTURE MEETINGS THIS YEAR

Please record the dates of the remaining meetings for this year in your personal diary and church calendar. Each meeting is held at the Baptist Theological College of NSW, 120 Herring Road, Eastwood at 8.00 pm.

Thursday, 17th June : Mr P G Young will speak on the
subject: Petersham After 100 Years

Thursday, 21st October : Mr R E Walker will speak on the
subject: The Life and Work of
A J Waldock.

A MISSION CENTENARY

This year the Australian Baptist Missionary Society celebrates 100 years of service. A number of activities have been organised by the A.B.M.S. to celebrate the centenary, one event being a Centenary Service in Adelaide at the Flinders Street Baptist Church on 26th October. This is indeed significant as the vision for the Mission came from the Rev Silas Mead in 1882.

This brief account of the Mission will be of interest in setting the scenario of the Mission in its early days.

About 1770, in a Northamptonshire village in England there was a boy who was nicknamed "Columbus" by his playmates. The name suited him, as nicknames usually do, not only because he was always reading and talking about the great navigator, but because his mind reached out to distant lands, and his spirit was that of a pioneer. Later there came to him an experience which caused his interest in other lands and peoples to glow into a burning passion. He came to know Christ, and the reality and rapture of his renewing power. Thereafter he lived to give the knowledge of Christ to people who had not received it.

No story of the Australian Baptist Mission can omit reference to William Carey - for such was the real name of the boy who had been dubbed "Columbus" - because Australian Baptists, in their missionary enterprise, are in the direct line of succession from him. In those days there was no missionary enthusiasm among Baptists. This was due to emphasis being placed on the doctrine of election to the neglect of other important doctrines, so that it did not appear to matter very much whether the Gospel was preached or not; if God intended people to be saved they would be saved even if nobody preached the Gospel to them.

Carey's father was a poor schoolmaster, and William had to start to earn his living when only fourteen. Later, as a cobbler, he earned a living for himself and family, served as pastor of a small Baptist Church, and studied hard to satisfy his hunger for knowledge. His chief interest in life, however, was to stir in others an enthusiasm like his own, for the evangelising of the world. He was grieved to find that his most earnest appeals and persuasions were unheeded. He came to be regarded as a fanatic. Undeterred, he kept at it, preaching, pleading, challenging, until at least one heart, Andrew Fuller's, responded and then another and another, until he induced twelve others to form a missionary society on 2nd October, 1792. This society was called the Baptist Missionary Society, and continuing to this day, has grown into a vast organisation carrying on missionary work in India, Africa, China, and the West Indies.

Carey was the first missionary of the new society, and eventually (1793) found his way to Bengal, India, where, on account of the unfriendliness of the East India Company to missionaries, he laboured as an indigo factory manager until 1799. This time, however, was well used in mastering languages, studying the customs of the people and the peculiarities of the country, as well as preaching Christ when opportunity occurred.

In 1799, under the protection of the King of Denmark, he, in company with two recruits - Ward and Marshman - established the first Baptist Mission settlement in Serampore, near Calcutta. These three men toiled hard and earned much money, all of which they spent on their missionary work. Carey earned £1,500 a year as a professor of languages, whilst Marshman and Ward earned large sums from boarding schools, printing press and paper mill. By these means they built a missionary College at Serampore, which remains a great missionary centre today.

Carey never returned to England, but devoted his life to planting the missionary cause firmly in Bengal. Before he died, at the age of 73, in 1834, all the chief Protestant denominations of Britain and America, besides several in Europe, had followed the lead of the English Baptists and had taken up the great task of world evangelisation. Naturally, seeing that the work was founded there, the Baptist Missionary Society devoted much attention to Bengal and the work, in course of time, spread out in that province.

It is interesting to note the sequence of events which link our Australian Baptist Foreign Mission with William Carey. The town of Dacca, in Bengal, came to be one of the centres of the work begun by Carey. In 1860 the missionary there, the Rev James Smith, suffered a breakdown in health and decided to make a voyage to Australia. He settled in Victoria for a short period, during which he acted as minister of the church at Castlemaine. When he returned to his work in Bengal in 1863, it was with a commission to arrange for missionary enterprise there for Victorian Baptists.

For the same reason, the Rev J S Page, of Barisal - another B.M.S. station in Bengal - visited Australia in 1864-65. He went through the colonies, stirring up his fellow Baptists to missionary enthusiasm. As a result a missionary society was formed in Adelaide in 1864, and another in Victoria in 1865. The Rev Silas Mead, minister of the Flinders Street Baptist Church, and father of Dr C S Mead, did much to foster the movement in Adelaide. The South Australian Society became interested in Faridpur, in Bengal, and supported Indian workers, who laboured there under the guidance of Baptist Missionary Society missionaries. It was arranged that the Victorian Society should similarly support workers at Mymensingh. For that reason it was called the Mymensingh Baptist Missionary Society.

Prior to the formation, however, of these two societies, Australian Baptists had sent occasional contributions to the B.M.S. in London. Seeing that the two missionaries of the parent society, who were used to lead Australian Baptists into the new venture, were stationed in Bengal, it was only natural that the Baptists of this country should be most interested in that field, and that they should undertake the support of work there. Thus the Australian Baptist missionary movement struck root in the soil of Bengal, side by side with and as a result of the work begun by Carey.

All the centres operated by the Australian Baptists today, and more, were visited by Mr Bion, and it was he who laid the foundations of our present work with the aid of funds sent from Australia. But up to 1882 Australian Baptists were represented only in the persons of Indian workers whom they supported. It was in that year that Baptist missionaries from Australia appeared in Eastern Bengal.

It was not until five years after the pioneers went forth, and there were already six ladies on the field, that the first man, the Rev A E Summers, of South Australia, went out.

The Rev Silas Mead, who was then at the zenith of his influence in Adelaide, was again the leading spirit. Among the many who caught the fire from that missionary enthusiast were two young ladies who were destined to be the first missionaries sent to India by Australian Baptists.

The Rev Silas Mead suggests to Miss Ellen Arnold, a young schoolteacher, that she accompany Miss Marie Gilbert, also a schoolteacher, to India, and, a few days later, the Missionary Committee makes the same proposal. Before the end of the year, Miss Gilbert and Miss Arnold arrive in India and settle at Faridpur. Thus Faridpur enjoys the distinction of being our oldest Baptist mission station.

Within eighteen months Miss Arnold had broken down in health and was compelled to return to Australia. This event, though disappointing at the time, proved to be providential, for Miss Arnold, once her health was restored, was used in a wonderful way to rouse the Baptist people of Australia to the great need of India's people.

There were others of our early Australian workers who followed Miss Gilbert and Miss Arnold so closely to India.

Miss Arnold was so successful in her appeal that four other ladies were led to go with her when she returned to India in 1885. They were Miss Wilkin and Miss Fuller, of Victoria; Miss Pappin, of South Australia; and Miss Plested, of Queensland. The party was described as "The five barley loaves". Miss Wilkin and Miss Fuller had been designated to Mymensingh, the Victorian station, whilst Miss Plested was commissioned to open up work for the Queensland Baptists.

The Rev John Ellison, of the Baptist Missionary Society, had taken charge of the work at Mymensingh for the Victorian Society in 1883. As there was no accommodation available there for Miss Fuller and Miss Wilkin upon their arrival they, together with Miss Plested, went to reside at Faridpur, where the South Australian Society had built a house in 1884. In due course, however, a house was built at Mymensingh, and the Victorian ladies moved in 1887. Miss Plested decided upon Noakhali as the scene of her labours, and took up her residence there in 1889.

It is interesting to trace the subsequent history of these pioneers. Miss Gilbert found that she could work more happily as an independent missionary. She became a "freelance" shortly after arrival in India and continued so until her death in Calcutta in 1926. She identified herself with the people of Bengal in her manner of living far more than the average person could. She had a peculiar gift for obtaining entree into well-to-do homes, and lived much of her life in India in such homes and exercised an unique influence in her own way. Whatever comforts existed about her, however, Miss Gilbert never departed from her habit of severe and simple living for the Gospel's sake. She maintained contact with our mission, always attending annual convention, and helping missionaries greatly on their occasional visits to Calcutta, where her work took her in the later years of her life.

Miss Arnold also had a gift for identifying herself with the people of the land. After serving successfully in various stations of the mission, she later settled down to work in the Pubna villages. She buried herself among the people at Ataikola and, refusing to leave them, passed to her reward from there in 1931.

Miss Pappin became Mrs C S Mead in 1895 and rendered distinguished service with Dr Mead, particularly at Orakandi. After fourteen years of retirement in Adelaide she died in 1935. Miss Fuller and Miss Wilkin laboured devotedly and successfully for many years. The former was fatally stricken by cholera in 1897. The latter married Rev A Neville, in 1893, sharing his labours until compelled to retire in 1907 through ill-health which, a little later, proved fatal.

Miss Plested has a long career of honorable service in India almost to the time of her death in 1923.

NAME :
ADDRESS:
.....
PHONE : (W)
(H)

Please find enclosed my membership fee for the Baptist
Historical Society of New South Wales.

FULL MEMBERSHIP : \$5.00

PENSIONERS & STUDENTS: \$2.00

PLEASE RETURN TO: The Hon Treasurer
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