

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING, held 15/2/90

The meeting was opened in prayer by the Secretary with thirteen members and friends being in attendance and Mr. Watkin-Smith in the chair.

Apologies were received and accepted from Miss H. Burton, Mr. and Mrs. F. Church, Mr. J. Church, Mr. D. Henderson, Mrs. E. Linklater, and Mrs. L. McDonald.

Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th October, 1989, as published in The Recorder, were confirmed.

Business Arising from Minutes

* Dept. of Missions Project on Papua New Guinea Missionaries. The Chairman reported that progress was being made following two consultations with the Missions Department.

* Essay Competition. Details of the winner of the Competition were given in the last issue of The Recorder and in Australian Baptist.

Correspondence

Receipt of the following correspondence was noted:-

- (a) R.A.H.S. Latest issues of the Journal.
- (b) Information Australia Group, seeking an update of information concerning the Society for its Directory of Australian Associations. The Secretary would supply this advice.
- (c) President, Baptist Historical Society of Queensland, seeking support for a small brochure to be produced for the Churches on archival and history-writing matters. If our Society were interested the costs could be shared on a pro-rata basis. Members decided to allow the Executive to make a decision in this regard at its next meeting, 15th March, 1990, giving it time to examine the submitted manuscript. In the meantime the Secretary would contact the Queensland Society and inform it of the decision.
- (d) The Chairman reported on a letter received by several members from the previous Chairman, Dr. K. Manley, seeking help and support for a book he is proposing to write on the history of Australian Baptists. Members agreed to help and support this effort where possible and commend Dr. Manley on his enterprise.
- (e) The Chairman also reported that following his visit to Hinton to speak on Baptist extension into the Hunter, copies had been made of his address by our member, Mr. Max Brown of Newcastle. The sale of these had resulted in a profit of fifty dollars which had been forwarded for our Publications Fund.
- (f) Mrs. Rosemary Worboys wrote thanking the Society for advice that her essay had won the recent Essay Competition.

Treasurer's Report

The financial statement presented by the Treasurer and showing the following balances for the period ending 15/2/90 was adopted.

General Fund	\$1374.36
Publications Fund	\$2386.71
Essay Competition Fund	<u>172.40</u>
Total	\$3933.47

Membership subscriptions have brought membership to eighty-four, the highest in the Society's history.

Mr. Petras also reported on the latest position regarding the printing of Professor Cable's addresses.

Archivist's Report

Rev. E. Archer reported on the latest acquisitions by the Society.

Speaker

Rev. E. Archer addressed the meeting on the topic "Emphases apparent in Presidential addresses 1868-1919".

At the conclusion of an interesting talk members engaged in lively discussion of the issues raised.

Close

The meeting was closed at 9.30 p.m. in prayer by Rev. M. Chavura.

O.C.N.

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THE SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT
FOR OUR SIXTEENTH YEAR - 1989-90

During the year, the sixteenth of the Society, there has been a steady growth in its work and audience. The upsurge in interest in all things historical, undoubtedly caused by the Bi-centenary, has subsided and the challenge now is to again foster an informed awareness of our Church heritage. Too often the stories of those who struggled against tremendous odds to build Churches and change lives by the preaching of the Gospel are being lost to today's generation. To correct this imbalance should be the aim not only of the Society but all individual members.

An interesting development this year was an approach to the Society by the Department of Missions to assist in a project on the early days of missionary work in Papua New Guinea and West Irian. Members have volunteered to help and the project is now under way.

New members continue to join and the number of financial members is now the highest in the history of the Society.

Again this year we have been well served by our speakers. A wide range of interesting and well-received topics was covered:- "The place of religion in Colonial Australia after 1850"; "The evangelistic fervour of C.J. Tinsley"; "Recent trends in the writing of History with reference to Churches in N.S.W."; "Baptist Relations with other Churches"; and "Emphases in Presidential Addresses".

The Society through its Archivist, Rev. E. Archer, continues to provide an invaluable service to the countless number of enquirers seeking information on their forebears, and also to the Society by cataloguing material received from Churches and individuals.

In conclusion I would thank our Chairman, Mr. Watkin-Smith, the other members of the Executive, and all members for their help and support over the past year. Let us all continue to do whatever we can to encourage the study and preservation of our history and heritage.

O.C. Nannelli
Secretary.

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Baptist Historical Society of New South WalesANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT for the year ended 28th February, 1990General Fund

March 1	Balance b/f	\$824.76	Postage and Stationery	171.90
	Subscriptions	852.00	Advertising	215.60
	Donations	10.00	"Baptist Recorder"	72.00
	Bank Interest	34.34	Membership Subscriptions	62.50
			Cassette Tape purchase	6.00
			Bank charges	4.30
				<u>532.30</u>
			Balance c/d	1188.80
		<u>\$1721.10</u>		<u>\$1721.10</u>

March 1 Balance c/f 1188.80

Publications Fund

March 1	Balance b/f	1763.86	Book postage	63.85
	Book sales -			
	Soldier & Evangelist	58.00		
	First Aust. Baptists	44.45		
	Ext. or Extinction	15.75		
	Baps. cradle City	48.05		
	Aust. Baps Past			
	& Present	<u>520.45</u>		
		686.70		
	Bank Interest	<u>214.15</u>	Balance c/d	<u>2600.86</u>
		<u>\$2664.71</u>		<u>\$2664.71</u>
March 1	Balance c/f	2600.86		

Essay Competition Fund

March 1	Balance b/f	322.40	Essay Prize	150.00
	Bank Interest	21.92	Balance c/d	194.32
		<u>\$344.32</u>		<u>\$344.32</u>
March 1	Balance c/f	194.32		

Funds as at 28.2.1990

General Fund	\$1188.80	Represented by -	
Publications Fund	2600.86	Cash at Bank	\$2122.19
Essay Competition Fund	<u>194.32</u>	Term Deposit	<u>1861.79</u>
	<u>\$3983.98</u>		<u>\$3983.98</u>

M.J. PETRAS
Honorary Treasurer.

N.S.W. BAPTIST PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES, 1868-1919

**Rev. E.A. Archer's Paper
at our February Meeting**

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As a preliminary to his consideration of the Presidential addresses Mr. Archer reviewed the circumstances of the formation of the Baptist Association in 1868 against its background in English Baptist history. He reminded us that one characteristic of Baptist Churches from their earliest days has been insistence on the autonomy of the local Church. Strong differences, theological and ecclesiological existed in England from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century. Following an article by J. Ivey in 1811 "Union essential to Prosperity" the General Union of Baptist Churches and Ministers was founded, but tensions over practices and principles continued to hinder full union until 1891.

Baptists in the colony of N.S.W. brought these tensions with them. In the 1830s there were three Baptist Congregations in Sydney Town and still three in the 1850s. Daniel Allen, pastor of the Castlereagh Street Church, 1871-91, formed the Particular Baptist Association of Australia and widened the gap between Particular Baptists and other Baptists in the colony. By the mid-Nineteenth Century Baptists were very unsettled and very scattered. An attempt in 1858 to form an Association failed but in January, 1868 an Association was formed and Rev. Allan Webb, pastor of Masonic Hall Church (about to become Harris Street Church), gave the inaugural address in the Castlereagh Street Church to representatives of Masonic Hall, Newtown, Araluen and Wallsend Churches. A.C. Prior in "Some Fell on Good Ground" speaks of it as "a prophet's vision of a great future tempered by a solemn recognition of the realities of the difficulties of the present. Its phrasing reveals a masterly concept of the faith held by the Baptists and its spirit shows the great heart of 'the father of the Baptist Union'." Webb insisted that "Vital godliness was an indispensable prerequisite to Church fellowship." He referred to the damaging divisions of Baptist Church life in England and expressed a purpose that we "welcome all immersed Christians to our fraternity without infringing on their liberty of thought and expression in minor matters".

In 1869 there were eleven Churches in the Association, Harris Street, Gibson's Rooms (in Pitt Street), Smithfield, Wallsend, Newcastle, Hinton, Lambton, Maitland, Kiama, West Kempsey, Araluen (Newtown had withdrawn). The next year the Association adopted the following resolution: "that for the purpose of uniting in one organization the Baptist Churches of N.S.W. this Association now unites with the Churches of Bathurst Street, Bathurst and Orange to form the Baptist Union of N.S.W."

It was inevitable, said Mr. Archer, that the Presidential addresses for many years majored on the problems which affected Baptists in N.S.W. Most of the addresses over fifty years (1868-1919) were described by Mr. Archer as typical Sunday morning sermons, excellent addresses, sound expositions of the Scriptures, calls to holiness to loyalty, to commitment. Nevertheless other concerns were expressed from the earliest days of the Union. A circular letter from Rev. Dr. W. Hobbs to the Churches of the Union in 1869 urged that Baptist principles should be openly discussed and error exposed. Dr. Hobbs also raised questions about an educated ministry, the apathy of the colonial Churches towards missionary responsibility and support for the Temperance movement. Another circular letter from Rev. P. Lane (Chairman in 1869) stated: "the present spiritual condition is more autumnal than springtime - due to the absence of a careful culture of the inner and higher life of God in the souls of His people." Also in 1869 Rev. A. Webb in an article in the Victorian Baptist magazine had pinpointed problems which were to plague our Churches for many years and to be referred to by many of the earlier Presidents:- the relative smallness of the denomination, the numbers of Baptists joining other denominations for better temporal prospects or from a weakness of Baptist convictions and the paralysing effects of poverty upon the Baptist Churches. "We long to occupy many areas", he said, "but our poverty renders this impossible."

The 1870 President, Rev. Robt. Morton of Newcastle, echoed Webb's complaint condemning those Baptists succumbing to Latitudinarian compromise with false ideas of unity and Christian charity. Morton called for a fearless evangelism - the sending forth of even one bush missionary would be a happy beginning. In that year, 1870, the Union resolved to publish a magazine which lasted only a year; and the Baptist Home Mission was formed with plans for preaching in various localities, but little tangible work was done. There was little practical result from these resolutions but they were a preparation for more aggressive work.

In 1871 an Auxiliary of the Baptist Missionary Society was formed as also was an Educational Institute, which lasted only a short time. By 1874 a growing feeling of unity was apparent. Ministers met monthly for prayer, conference and interchange of thought on Biblical themes. In 1875 a Baptist Evangelists Society had been formed. These forward moves had not come suddenly, said Mr. Archer. He found one cause for them in recent presidential addresses. In 1872 Rev. A. Webb, in speaking on "The Work, Duties and Prospects of Australian Baptists" called for a qualified ministry, a Lay Preachers Society and increased liberality to support them. In 1873 Rev. F. Hibberd deplored the small numbers in our churches as compared with the numbers of Baptists revealed by the Census and decried the fact that "we have neither the means nor the men to do the work our hearts desire". In his third term in 1875 Rev. A. Webb urged an "immensely increased spirit of liberality".

The first sign of the forward movement was the sending out by the Baptist Evangelists Society of Thomas Llewellyn. In 1876 Rev. D. Fenwick deplored the dependence on the Mother Country for ministers, the miserable underpayment of ministers and the absence of a fund to sustain aged ministers. He criticized the multiplication of small Churches and proposed circuits of small Churches circumjacent to the centre with its minister. His insistence on developing the material God has placed at our disposal was beginning to happen as Llewellyn, Jagers and Harvison penetrated the colony as evangelists, colporteurs and home missionaries to towns, hamlets, lonely homesteads and barns.

In the closing years of the Nineteenth Century the messages of the Presidents were almost entirely on consecration and commitment. Home and Foreign Missions were subjects for discussion and concern but social problems and aboriginal missions were almost ignored. Departures from the call for evangelism came firstly in 1880 when Rev. William Taylor supported the Public Instruction Bill but denounced Government endowment of denominational Colleges and secondly in 1882 when Rev. W. Clare attacked State Aid for Religion, criticized the Free Thought movement and emphasised the spiritual nature of true religion.

1889 saw the induction of Joseph Palmer, the first layman to be President. In his address on the Bible as a direct revelation from God to man he attacked spiritualism, materialistic evolution and rationalistic criticism of the Scriptures.

The 1890s saw a plethora of Presidential calls for consecration and loyalty with two outstanding exceptions, Rev. Wm Coller in 1894 and Dr. Thomas Porter in 1899. Coller's subject "The Baptists - their position and tenets in History" was a most interesting and lengthy discourse on the place of believers' baptism in history. "To look back through the centuries helps us to stand strong amid the depression and difficulty that surround the work peculiar to this new land."

Rev. Dr. Porter's subject was "Baptism as it relates to the pardon of sin", and he protested against the habit of belittling the ordinance of baptism and treating it as one of the non-essentials. He said there are numerous Baptists in paedo-Baptist Churches because they believe baptism is non-essential. There are thousands who believe as we do who have not been baptized because they believe baptism is non-essential. He went on to expound the New Testament passages on baptism.

From 1900 to 1919 the number of Churches doubled from 37 to over 70 and there were healthy increases in membership until the Great War drained the manpower of the Churches. Rev. W.R. Hiddlestone in 1904 expressed Baptist attitudes towards higher criticism and Baptist insistence that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Charles Lane's subject (1905) was "Socialism, Human and Divine". "The Church of the Spirit" was the subject of Rev. A.J. Waldock (1906). He stated "We are in danger of growing eloquent about the power of the Holy Spirit yet reducing His sovereignty to a mere theological term." The layman, Herbert Priestly (1907) speaking on "Our Secondary Needs" was uncommonly frank. He attacked Baptist convictions which were leading to bigotry and sectarianism. He appealed for less of the emotional, the effervescent, the theatrical and more of practical and applied Christianity in the common events of daily life. He wanted less misdirected effort and more systematic organization. He condemned the miserable stipends of the ministers. He said that "the meanness of the pew is largely accountable for the poverty of the pulpit". Rev. William Cartwright in 1908 pleaded for a Social Christianity in the face of the masses' resentment of injustices and the Church's failure to act.

The first President from a country Church, Mr. G.W. Griffiths of Manildra, in 1909 urged support for the Home Mission and criticized the unreadiness to meet the spiritual needs of large numbers of migrants. Rev. James Barker in 1910 asked "What is the Christian Church?" He questioned "the attention being given to the accessories of public worship as to suggest that the main thought was rather of entertainment than of edification". He concluded with two practical suggestions - the training of ministers and the training of young people in non-conformist and Baptist principles. In 1911 Mr. William Ardill was concerned with the Church being out of touch with the populace and the lack of liberality to foreign missions. To increase evangelism as a dominant passion in our Churches was the purpose of Rev. C.J. Tinsley's 1912 address. Mr. William White in 1913 was concerned with "our primary responsibility - our young people".

The Great War had surprisingly negligible effects upon the Presidential addresses of Rev. B. Gawthrop (1914), Mr. J.A. Packer (1915), Rev. D. Steed (1916) and Mr. J.H. Burnet (1917).

In the Jubilee Year of the Baptist Union (1918) Rev. A.J. Waldock returned to the Chair and called for the militant mood of the apostolic days.

Mr. Archer stated that having commenced with the majestic concepts of Rev. Allan Webb he would conclude the fifty year survey with the majestic personality of the pulpit, Rev. W.C. Black (1919). In W. Cleugh Black we have a blending of melody and artistic language with the spirit of devotion. He asked that thought be given to three things:- "Our denominational Uplook, Outlook and Inlook." He said that God wanted the local Church to be aflame with the primal passion of Pentecost. He called for Independence to be replaced by Interdependence with district associations and Churches. "The unapostolic word 'independency' was a synonym for selfishness." He made a plea for more support for ministers standing on the slippery rocks of financial embarrassment and for the extension of the fund to benefit our aged ministers, who have so nobly borne the brunt of battle in the heat and burden of our denominational day."

RESTORATION OF HISTORIC CHURCH BUILDING

Newcastle Tabernacle since the Earthquake

In our last issue, under the heading "One Hundred Years Ago" reference was made to the laying of the foundation stone of the Newcastle Tabernacle on 25th December, 1889. On 28th December, 1989, just three days and one century later, the Church suffered severe damage in the Newcastle earthquake and reference was also made to the main extent of that damage and its effect upon the congregation.

At the time of writing this (1/3/90) the pastor, Rev. D. Baker, advises that services continue to be held, under permission, in the Lower Hall and the Church is able to use the new hall and the associated offices. They are completely excluded from the main Church and vestries for safety reasons.

Restoration was expected to commence in early March and it was anticipated that the full building would be available for occupation during June. The only demolition expected is a small portion of the rear wall. It is thought that only a few courses of bricks need to be replaced. The portions of the Laman Street (front) facade which were removed for safety reasons were all preserved and will be re-instated. New braces will need to be installed in the roof. The Church is happy to have been allocated a sympathetic Heritage Trust Architect to advise them and supervise the restoration. The cost of the structural work required is assessed at somewhat over \$150,000 and with other necessary work, the total cost is expected to be somewhere about or a little above the amount which has been granted by the insurance company.

A NOTABLE BAPTIST BUILDING

Newcastle Tabernacle is one of the outstanding Baptist buildings in the State. The Australian Baptist of 9/2/1983 quotes from a feature article on "Frederick Menkens' Newcastle Heritage" in Heritage Conservation News published by the Heritage Council of N.S.W. The article comments favourably on the Tabernacle. "Menkens was a practicing Newcastle architect 1884-1906 and apparently made an outstanding contribution to the architecture of the then growing city of Newcastle" is part of The Australian Baptist's summation of the article. It then makes this quotation from the article:

"The year 1889 was probably the most memorable for Menkens because he saw the creation of two of his most notable churches, the prize-winning St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Laman Street and the Baptist Tabernacle also in Laman Street. St. Andrews was designed in the 15th century gothic manner while not a direct copy of the style. The spire stands sentinel over Newcastle's Civic Square fronting the same Civic Square the Baptist Tabernacle stands as a unique example of Corinthian architecture in Australia. It is a thorough piece of craftsmanship and its design, at the request of its owners, was similar in character to Spurgeon's great Metropolitan Tabernacle in London."

In passing it may be noted that St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, mentioned above, suffered more than the Tabernacle, losing much of its spire. It is expected to take at least six months before the Church can be occupied.

The Tabernacle Church had planned special Centenary services for September to commemorate the opening services in the Tabernacle in September 1890, but these will now be amalgamated with the services to be held when the Tabernacle is re-opened for worship after the present restoration is complete.

THE ORIGINAL OPENING

This took place on Thursday, 25th September, 1890 when the pastor, Rev. Seth Jones, preached and was assisted in the service by Rev. J.H. Pryce of Islington and Rev. D. Young of Lambton. The collection amounted to 250 pounds of which 150 pounds came from the personal canvas of Seth Jones, bringing to one thousand pounds the amount collected by this energetic pastor. On the first Sunday in the new building, 28th September, the preachers were Rev. Dr. Whale of the Brisbane Baptist Tabernacle in the morning and Rev. A. Parr, Primitive Methodist minister, in the evening. On Thursday, October 2nd, a great Public Tea Meeting was held in the Lower Hall. The following Sunday, October 5th, the preacher was Rev. William Coller, the young minister at Newtown Church. Mr. Coller was obviously asked because of his valiant efforts to resuscitate the Church during his pastorate 1880-82. He came as a twenty-two year old pastor from the Richmond River pastorate to a Church which had become almost defunct and he raised its membership to seventy-five.

THE BUILDING

The cost of the new Tabernacle for land, building and furnishings was six thousand pounds, a considerable sum in those days. At the laying of the foundation stone the Building Fund stood at 918 pounds, the offerings over the period of special opening meetings amounted to 450 pounds. Sacrificial giving between the laying of the foundation stone and the opening had lifted the Building Fund. One sacrifice was each family going without sugar for the period and giving the amount saved to the building fund. The debt was finally cleared in 1916.

The Tabernacle was built on the corner of Laman and Dawson Street, Dawson Street sloping steeply away from Laman Street so allowing an entrance to the Lower Hall from that side street. The main floor was four feet six inches above Laman Street and reached by moulded steps to a fine portico with mosaic paving and measuring fourteen feet by seven feet, and opening into vestibules on either side each fourteen feet wide. The body of the Tabernacle measured seventy-one feet by forty-two feet and was twenty-five feet high. The original seating capacity was for 500 persons. At the end of the main body was the baptistry and the pulpit with vestries on either side measuring fourteen feet by eleven feet. The ceiling was an attractive feature being sky blue, picked out with numerous stars in gold leaf, and featuring artistically designed ventilation domes.

The Tabernacle was the third building erected by the Newcastle Church. The first was a small slab building on leased land and when the lease expired and the building was lost they used the Oddfellows Hall nearby until their second building was erected in Sydney Street in 1865. The Sydney Street building was extended in 1883, but in 1887 the land on which the Tabernacle was erected was purchased with the purpose of making a greater evangelistic venture in the growing city. The driving force behind this move from Sydney Street was the new pastor, Rev. Seth Jones, but it was not made without some opposition.

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CHAPLAINS - WORLD WAR II

Our Secretary, Mr. Nannelli, proposes to undertake research about Baptist Chaplains in World War II. Any member who served in this capacity or who can share perhaps an experience of being helped by a chaplain in the armed services are asked to contact Mr. Nannelli. Alternatively, members who know of those who served in this way are asked to pass on their information so that it can be followed up. Thank you.

SIDELIGHTS ON CHURCH BEGINNINGS

The following has been contributed by Mrs. Lily McDonald. It is a story told to her by a gentleman whom she met during a period of relaxation and recuperation following an accident. She passed it on as it was told to her. It reveals how sometimes a cause may come into being through what seems a mere co-incidence. The second part of the story shows how every seeming opportunity does not develop as might have been expected.

The teller of the story and his wife visited the North Manly Church where they met another visitor and offered her transport home to North Narrabeen. He learned that a number of people had formed a prayer group meeting regularly since the Billy Graham Crusade, 1959. Rev. Edward Clatworthy, then Superintendent of Home Work, met the group with the result that the North Narrabeen Fellowship was formed, meeting in a Community Hall. The Northern Suburbs District Association approached Rev. S.A. McDonald, then living in retirement at Chatswood after many years' service as Superintendent of the Sydney City Mission. He accepted the challenge, persuaded the group to drop the "North" from the name and so the Narrabeen Baptist Church was formed. Then the search for land commenced.

Mr. McDonald found a vacant triangular shaped piece of land belonging to the Main Roads Board, realized he had a contact there and began negotiations. After a good deal of writing and talking the Board agreed to sell the land to the Church at a reasonable price. The Warringah Shire did not approve of the proposed building but S.A. McDonald persevered and finally permission was granted. A friend who was dealer in glass offered a substantial amount of heavy glass and when the Church was built on the site it was mostly glass. The builder was Mr. Norm Bennell. The Narrabeen Church has gone on from strength to strength in the same location and I am told the glass is still part of the building which is now the Sunday School Hall.

Some time later a weekly gathering met once a week at Mona Vale. A member of the Anglican Church loaned her private kindergarten hall for use for Sunday Services and Sunday School. Later the Sunday School was transferred to a private home and continued for seven years with about twenty children in regular attendance. After that period no one was available to take charge and the cause folded up. The District Association was not prepared to take responsibility. Rev. T. Ecob was available for a while and finally the Mona Vale Fellowship ceased to exist and has never been revived.

Thank you, Mrs. McDonald.

Supporting Information, from Union Year Books

Formation of North Narrabeen Fellowship was reported to the 1959 Assembly Meetings. The Narrabeen Church was formed with twenty members on 9th April, 1960. The Home Work Council made a grant towards cost of the site at Narrabeen of 800 pounds in the year ended June, 1962. The building was erected in 1963.

The Mona Vale Fellowship is reported to the 1964 Assembly, and a Secretary for the Fellowship is given in each Year Book up to 1971.
