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Next meeting:
Celebration of the
90th anniversary of
the 1918 Armistice

When:
Tuesday 11 Nov 2008

Where:
Morling Chapel,
Morling College,
120 Herring Rd,
Macquarie Park

Time: 6.30-9.30 pm

Cost: \$7.00 donation
to cover the cost of a
light meal

Baptist attitudes to war and peace

Ken Manley

As Baptists we do well to ask how earlier Baptists made up their minds on the complex moral question of war and peace. Baptists generally have been just as confused as most other Christian groups and have disagreed among themselves over whether it is ever right for Christians to take up arms in war.

But just as we know that we cannot easily transpose Biblical teaching directly into our own times, so we cannot lift the teaching of theologians of an earlier age and apply it directly to our own. Their social and political situations were very different from ours. In particular, earlier Christians, including Baptists, could not envisage the question of total global war such as our own day has posed.

Yet it is still necessary and helpful to trace how Christians of earlier ages faced these questions as they were presented to them. We should try to identify the theological principles which shaped their answers so that in turn we can frame our own questions and answers in a vastly different situation.

We should also try to recognise how often their responses were not necessarily the result of theological reflection but rather were shaped by their political, social and cultural contexts. Christians have often been, and still frequently are, captivated by a jingoistic nationalism. These reasons justify our consideration of Baptist attitudes to war and peace.

Baptists on war and peace prior to twentieth century

The first Australian Baptists were heirs to British Baptist traditions in this as in every other aspect of their life and thought. A brief survey of how Baptists, especially British Baptists, responded to specific crises in the period to 1900 will prepare us for an examination of Australian Baptists' attitudes during the twentieth century.

The first English Baptists were not pacifists. This is one of a number of issues on which they disagreed with the continental Anabaptists (seen in the Mennonites of today) who objected completely

to all forms of war and indeed had a different view of the role of a Christian in society. The first English Baptists specifically disagreed with them about the legitimacy of Christians serving as magistrates; defended the ethics of a 'just' war and recognised that coercion was a precondition of social order and toleration.

Accordingly, when the civil war began in England, Baptists were among the first to enlist. Many Baptists rose to senior positions in the new Model Army. Dr W.T. Whitley, the first principal of the Baptist Theological College of Victoria, claimed that the most popular drill-books for both cavalry and infantry were by Baptists. At one time every commander in Scotland was a Baptist. One Baptist preacher, Thomas Empson, was a lieutenant by 1647. He was said to be a better preacher than a fighter, a remark that prompted Oliver Cromwell to write, "Truly I think he that prays and preaches best will fight best".

Religion, politics and war were all one to these Baptists. As Professor G.E. Aylmer has observed, the Army's mental atmosphere was "something like a mixture of a revivalist religious congress and an extreme left-wing political debating society". Baptist involvement in the civil war, then, provides us with one notable instance of Baptists adopting what church historian Professor Roland H. Bainton categorised as the 'Crusade' attitude towards war, distinguishing it from pacifism and the just war theorists.

But in the next century Britain was confronted with another revolution as a number of its colonists rose against them. What position did Baptists take during the American War of Independence? Broadly speaking, Baptists in both America and Britain supported the cause of the colonists. In Britain Baptists felt themselves unfairly treated by the Anglican establishment. In America Baptists resented being taxed to support a Congregational establishment, as in the New England region, or by the Anglican establishment in others. The injustice of British Policy towards the colonists was sensed by Baptists in both countries.

Caleb Evans, President of Bristol Academy, publicly challenged by letters to the press and in pamphlets John Wesley's opposition to the colonists. A number of Baptist pastors preached in favour of the Americans. Young Robert Hall was brought to the school conducted by Baptist pastor John Collett Ryland. As a boy of ten or eleven he remembered Ryland saying :

Were I General Washington, I will tell you what I would do: I would call together all my comrades and brother officers. I would order every man to bare his arm, and then I would order one of them to bring a lancet and a punch-bowl, and he should bleed us all, one by one, into the punch-bowl; and I would be the first to bare my arm, and when the punch-bowl was full, and we had all been bled, I would call upon every man to consecrate himself to the work by dipping his

sword into the bowl, and entering into a solemn covenant engagement by oath one to another, and we would swear by Him that sitteth upon the throne and liveth for ever and ever never to sheathe the consecrated blade till he had achieved the freedom of his country.

In America, Baptists were patriots almost to a man. Their participation greatly impressed non-Baptists. Indeed their commitment to the cause of freedom enhanced their status and was at least a factor in the rapid expansion enjoyed by Baptists in the ensuing century.

During the nineteenth century leading Baptists as different as C.H. Spurgeon (1834-92) and John Clifford (1836-1923) opposed war. Spurgeon was not a pacifist but was horrified by the suffering created by war: "We regard war as something akin to murder done on a large scale". British Baptists were divided over the involvement of Britain in the Boer War. Clifford became an outspoken and courageous critic of the war and became president of a committee formed to oppose it. Resentment towards Clifford and his supporters was at times hostile and police protection was for a while needed at his Westbourne Park Church. Clifford believed the Boer War to be morally wrong:

Remember, nations are only instruments for securing the fullest and noblest life of mankind. They exist for the sake of right and truth and justice. We lost the United States by our corruption, our selfishness and our tyranny. We shall lose South Africa if we do not recover our heroic devotion to truth, our fidelity to justice, our spiritual magnanimity and unselfishness and apply them to our behaviour to the dwellers in the Transvaal.

He wrote to a friend, "I am boiling over with indignation against the iniquity of the Concentration Camps. I have again and again referred to them, denounced them and formulated protests against them; and shall go on doing it as far as I can". Clifford was the leading figure in the preparation of a Manifesto of Ministers of the Free Churches to the Government.

Baptists and the Great War (1914-1918)

John Clifford, cautious at first, was eventually to support Britain's involvement in the war against Germany as vigorously as he had opposed the Boer War. Keith Clements, in a detailed study on "Baptists and the Outbreak of the First World War", has traced how Baptists were actively involved in peace movements right up to the actual outbreak of war.

The first European Baptist Congress, an extraordinary success, had been held in Berlin in 1908. Clifford and J.H. Rushbrooke (one of a group of young men who entered the ministry from Clifford's church) were heavily in-

volved. A whole session of the Congress was devoted to “Baptists and Universal Peace”. Clifford and Rushbrooke were also involved in wider peace movements, such as the Anglo-German Churches’ peace movement.

Rushbrooke edited a quarterly journal, *The Peacemaker*, from 1911, published by an Anglo-German Council. In 1914 Clifford and Rushbrooke went to Constance to share in a conference of various European churches. It was that fateful August of 1914 when they met. After a nightmare journey for a man of 78, Clifford eventually arrived back safely in London. Rushbrooke and his family (he was married to a German) were detained in Germany for several weeks.

The shock of war was intense. The British Baptist Council issued a 1100-word manifesto on the war: “We believe the call of God has come to Britain to spare neither blood nor treasure in the struggle to shatter a great anti-Christian attempt to destroy the fabric of Christian civilisation.”

Young Baptist men, along with all others, enlisted in the war. What seems to have persuaded Clifford and others of the rightness of their cause was the violation of Belgian neutrality. As the war continued Clifford spoke out strongly in favour of the British involvement. Reports on the barbarity of the war prompted him to say in January 1916:

The effect of this revelation of the German mind on our selves is many-sided, deep, disturbing and yet strengthening. In its presence the last shred of doubt as to the righteousness of our cause has gone. We were sure of our ground in 1914; we are a thousand times more sure today ... With [British Prime Minister] Lloyd George we can say ‘We do not like this war, but there is one thing about this war we do like: we have entered into it with a perfectly clear conscience’.

Clifford, however, was opposed to conscription, introduced by June 1916. Not all Baptists agreed with him on this. His view was clear:

I have been throughout my long career a fighter on behalf of freedom and liberty ... Freedom is the breath of a nation’s life, and it is only as free-

dom is granted that it is possible for us to face our difficulties and master them ... And of all the liberties we should fight for there is no liberty so great and so absolutely essential as liberty of conscience.

The general position of Baptists on the war, however, was quite uniform. In the words of Baptist historian David Bebbington, “The Great War became a crusade”.

In Australia the churches’ position was generally a replica of Britain’s, although Catholic-Protestant sectarianism was to be an additional and divisive factor. In his important study, *Australian Churches at War: Attitudes and Activities of the Major Churches, 1914-1918* (1980), Michael McKernan reviews the attitudes and activities of the major churches. Baptists are not discussed, principally because they were thought simply to reflect the response of the larger denominations.

McKernan notes that little theology or ethics in regard to the war were produced in Australia. There was some simplistic discussion of the issues but little real theology. Baptists certainly come under this judgment. He also notes that whilst “there was heroism, generosity and devotion to duty this was undoubtedly outweighed by a response to war that was shallow, emotional and eventually, deeply divisive”. Australian churchmen hoped this would be an opportunity for new-found relevance, but in this they were disappointed. They “failed to demonstrate how necessary was wisdom, reason and calm at a time of national crisis.”

“Baptists do not include in their common witness the dogma of absolute pacifism ... While refusing to condemn all war unconditionally, Baptists have always regarded it as an evil which—like a criminal police and judicature—could have no place in a freely Christianised world. In the actual world they have to face the facts and to distinguish between aggressive and non-aggressive warfare. They hold, for example, that in the absence of an authority to maintain law and order, self-defence is an indispensable right, and that the form of its exercise must needs be determined by the form of aggression.”

—Dr. J.H. Rushbrooke

Several aspects of the Baptist response may be illustrated. Some few Baptists were pacifists. Before the war began, a number of evangelical pacifists joined the Australian Freedom League and opposed militarism in general and the new Defence Acts of 1909 and 1911 in particular. Many criticised compulsory military training. A prominent spokesman was Rev. Martin Luther Murphy (what a name!), minister of the Alberton Church in Adelaide. Rev. Francis Clemens, pastor of Murrumbena Baptist in Melbourne, was a member of the Melbourne Peace Society and an outspoken Christian pacifist.

Peace historians draw the distinction between *pacifists*, who regard participation in and support for war as wrong under any circumstances, and *pacifists*, who also believe

war can and must be abolished but in the interim accept participation in certain defensive wars can be justified. How many Baptists fell into this latter category awaits further research, but one suspects there were a number, at least in the early days of war, who were pacific-ists.

However, Baptists in their public statements uncritically and uniformly accepted that the war was just. At the 1914 NSW Assembly a resolution, typical of those passed in each state, was carried:

While we deeply deplore the present war in Europe and cherish an aversion to all wars, we feel that so far as Britain is concerned, this is a just war, and our people have entered into it with a clear conscience.

The observation that the war was a judgment of God was sounded, but only mutely, by Rev. W. Bell of Queensland in 1917. Questions about God allowing such a catastrophe were recognised but scarcely tackled. Resolutions of loyalty were repeatedly passed. Certainly much was said about the church's opportunity at this time of crisis.

The importance placed on freedom led Rev. D. Steed in his 1916 Presidential Address to claim that "the Baptist Church is indeed the only pure democracy in the world." His view was that the Baptist Church stood to gain from the increasing value man placed on freedom and democracy.

Meanwhile Rev. T.E. Ruth, minister of Collins Street Baptist Church, Melbourne, in an address early in 1915, 'Wanted Men - Wanted More Men', spoke of the haunting fear that Australia had not done enough. He could not understand how any fit, independent young man could shrink his obligations. Ruth became a leading opponent of Catholic Archbishop Daniel Mannix (1864-1963), supported the case for conscription and became an extreme example of British Protestant Imperialism.

By way of contrast, Dr. John Graham Hughes of Rockhampton in 1917 made powerful anti-conscription speeches and after a public press controversy was asked to resign from his church.

Patriotic sermons and addresses were the main order of the day. Pacifism received short shift in *The Australian Baptist* of December 4, 1917. The front page article, headed "The Conscientious Objector and the Unconscious Hero" (reprinted from the English *Baptist Times*), depicted a fictional chaplain telling a conscientious objector, "Great as is my conscientious objection to war, my objection to oppression is greater, and greater still is my conscientious objection to let other men fight for me whilst I do nothing for them."

Photos of war heroes, dead and alive, were reproduced. "Baptists who are doing their bit" was a repeated caption

for photos of groups from one family. One still looks at the young faces of some of those Baptists killed in action with great sadness. Some churches paid a high price. Of the 57 who left for war from the Wellington Church, eight were killed in action and ten were wounded. Baptists of German descent enlisted and of the three sons of Theodore (Fritz) and Mary Phlaum, prominent South Australian Baptists, two died in France.

Sentiment was understandingly rife. A page one pictorial letter "To a mother who has lost her son" is typical of the sentiments often expressed. One letter claimed that the Australian boys "go to their deaths with a smile on their lips, and when they are hit they bear it bravely and serenely ... The spirit of sacrifice is everywhere present, and selfish ideas are in the minority."

These sentiments sound strange to modern ears, especially those informed of the actual horrors of trench warfare. But it would be anachronistic not to give full weight to the sincerity and the heroism of many. The story of Rev. John G. Ridley is a familiar and outstanding example of an influential Baptist evangelist who demonstrated heroism as a Christian soldier. He was wounded during the Battle of Fromelles (1916) and awarded the M.C. for his bravery.

Ridley was not the only Baptist decorated for bravery. Among more prominent figures were Chaplain F.J. Miles, the first chaplain wounded at Gallipoli, awarded the D.S.O.; Lieutenant William Buckingham was awarded the M.C. and his brother R.E. Buckingham the French Croix de Guerre.

Sectarianism flourished during the war. One instance of this amongst Baptists was a front-page article, reprinted from "The Converted Catholic" in New York by Dr. Manuel Ferrando and headed, "Has the Roman Church anything to do with the war?" He was quite specific in his answer: "We do hold the papacy responsible for the war." His unsubstantiated arguments bear no repetition.

Sectarianism perhaps reached its nadir at a Melbourne Catholic thanksgiving service at the end of the war. When Bishop Phelan spoke of the dead he reminded Catholic mothers that their sons, who almost universally received confession and communion before battle, were assured of salvation. The mothers of other Australians had no such consolation for there was no salvation outside the church.

Michael McKernan concluded his study with a judgment which must, I fear, include Baptists:

An eminent British historian has argued that as a result of the, churches' enthusiasm for the war, symbolised by the clergy blessing the guns, British people turned from the churches which then lost the grip on society that had previously been theirs. This was not the case in Australia in that the churches had never yet won a secure place.

Churchmen dreamed that the war would provide the opportunity they had never had of demonstrating their relevance to the community and the importance of their message. Instead, the war denied both. Clergymen ... had shaped the nature of Australia's response to war by accepting it enthusiastically and as revulsion for war set in, people may have grown increasingly wary of [them] ... Clergymen had missed a major opportunity to speak about important things to the Australian people.

Baptists between the Wars (1919-1939)

Inevitably the first response to the Armistice was one of profound relief. Mr J.A. Packer, editor of *The Australian Baptist*, enthused:

This has been the greatest week in history. Besides this war all previous wars have dwarfed into insignificance, and all other victories have become local and circumscribed ... Let us pray that every one of us – individuals as well as nations – may be found worthy of the sacred trust which has come with this greatest day in history.

The question of peace drew the attention of all. After the War hopes were centred on the League of Nations. Many British Baptists spoke in favour of it and some Baptist churches joined the League of Nations Union. Associations passed resolutions in favour of the League. Many British Baptists adopted a pacifist position.

In 1933 the Welsh Baptist Union passed a pacifist resolution and urged the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland to do the same. That Union set up a strong committee which eventually presented a report "The Attitude of the Baptist Denomination to War," adopted in November 1936. This report urged the surrender of national sovereignty in order to secure the establishment of a really effective World Organization but admitted hesitation in connection with the "contention – endorsed by the majority of the committee that a peaceful world cannot be ensured apart from force organized in such form and on such a scale as to be equal to the task of restraining disloyal and aggressive States."

In the interim the Baptist Pacifist Fellowship had been set up in 1934. This Fellowship incidentally continued through and after World War II but a revulsion against the appeasement of the 1930s meant that the quest for peace loomed far less large on Baptist horizons in Britain.

The idea of the abolition of national sovereignty had been canvassed at the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) Congress in Berlin in 1934. A full commission report on "Nationalism" was widely distributed. "Selfish nationalism" was judged to be dangerous and a denial of true

Christianity. In Hitler's Germany this discussion was far from theoretical.

The next BWA Congress was held in Atlanta, Georgia, in July 1939, just months before the outbreak of World War II. A fourteen-page commission report, "What Baptists can do to Avert War and Promote Peace", may be the most comprehensive and most representative of Baptist statements on our theme. As a guiding principle the report cited the British Baptist Union report: "Our supreme loyalty is to the Kingdom of God, and if we are constrained to see in an ordered world a partial expression of that Kingdom, loyalty to the Commonwealth of mankind must take precedence even of loyalty to country." The report then condemned war:

War is organized violence on the part of States or nationalities. Bloodshed, taking of life and all kinds of violence are then considered permissible. War is enforced enmity, diabolic violation of human personality, distortion and suppression of truth and disregard of law and right. War is hatred and systematic brutality. War is one of the most appalling expressions of human sin.

War in principle and essence is incompatible with the teaching of Jesus. But Christians have adopted different positions. Some are pacifists, others see it as God's punishment for sins and therefore an expression of God's will. But the third standpoint between these two is the one taken by most of the committee and therefore it was believed most commendable to Baptists.

This view agrees that war is incompatible with the teaching of Jesus but nonetheless in an imperfect world "power and the exercise of power in the service of right and law is necessary in all human community life and therefore, also justified from a Christian, ethical standpoint."

The report commented about internationalism, lamented the failure of the League of Nations and then issued a fourteen point appeal to Baptists. This included an exhortation to work for 'a simultaneous and united disarmament, defended the rights of conscientious objectors and then added a characteristic evangelical plea:

None but changed people can change the world. What we can do as Baptists to prevent war and promote peace will, therefore, in the last analysis, always depend upon how far we ourselves have experienced the changing power of the Gospel in our own lives.

Two months later Britain and the Commonwealth had entered World War II. Australians who had been in Atlanta included J.A. Packer and C.J. Tinsley, but the ideas circulated there must have seemed like empty rhetoric by the time they had returned to Australia.

Baptists during World War II (1939-1945)

The Australian Baptist immediately offered guidance for its readers. In the issue of 12 September 1939 an article by Dr. Harold Dart appeared, "What the Bible teaches about war". This was scarcely a profound theological essay but doubtless is all the more valuable as reflecting current opinion.

Dr. Dart used the Old Testament to advance the view that wars were part of God's will. Indeed, he even ventured the view based on his reading of prophecy that "even today much of the unrest is because Israel is not in her own land and carrying out her Divinely ordained mission". He then advanced familiar arguments against pacifism and in favour of the just war.

Rev. Stephen Sharp assured readers of the same journal in the next issue that it was right to pray for victory. Rev. Archibald Jolly provided an article on "The Totalitarian State and the Christian Faith". He concluded, "There is no need to have fears about the issues of conflict". Rev. Les Gomm wrote an article, 'Hitlerism must Fall'. Dr Wilfred Jarvis organised a "NSW Loyalty Rally." This impressive gathering affirmed Baptist readiness "to assist the Government of the Commonwealth, in any way consistent with our faith, in its war effort."

As with the Great War, Baptists proved to be loyal and actively involved. Ladies in Newcastle formed a Baptist Women's Patriotic League on 19 December 1939. But the major NSW denominational effort was centred in the Baptist National Services Auxiliary (BNSA) formed in August 1940.

The BNSA, which had a distinctive badge, sought to assist the war effort and to help those in active service. It had various groups: hospitality, correspondence, chaplain's aid, comforts, emergency savings, war savings and transport. Each church was asked to convene a branch of BNSA and establish these committees. Dr Jarvis was its Chairman and the group raised £11,354 in five years.

Welfare Huts were erected at Ingleburn and Greta camps and Baptist welfare officers were appointed. Later, a mobile unit was equipped and sent into service in the Northern Territory. When Japanese invasion seemed a possibility the BNSA undertook a scheme for the evacuation of children to hostels at Narrabri and Quirindi.

Some fifteen ministers from the State served as Chaplains in combat zones. Many others served with the Y.M.C.A. as Welfare Officers. Rev. Jack Manning of Victoria produced valuable pen-portraits of these men in a series of articles

called "Baptists of the Red Triangle with the AIF". Some notable Baptist leaders like Tom Fleming, Frank Peffer, Max Lord, Les Taylor and Val Bevis served in this way. Rev. John G. Ridley performed a notable ministry at Ingleburn.

There were few absolute pacifists amongst Australian Baptists. Some served in non-combatant roles. But Queensland lay preacher Phil Hancox was a pacifist. His story is told in his 1984 book, *Cavalry or Calvary*. Hancox, then aged 28 and married and with a young child, was sentenced to six months gaol for his refusal to take the oath. He insisted that his beliefs would not allow him to undertake either combatant or non-combatant military duties.

The sentencing magistrate told Hancox he was a misguided young man. "This is God's war for the freedom of the world and to wipe out the tyranny of our oppressors," he said. Hancox had to endure much criticism and rejection from many fellow Baptists.

But during World War II Phil Hancox was very much an exception. Not that all Baptists simply supported prevailing attitudes. Rev. B.G. Wright, later Vice-Principal and Principal of the Baptist Theological College of NSW, in April 1942 wrote in the *Epping Evangel* (a

monthly paper of the Epping church): "Every true Christian hates war. It is hellish, devilish, horrible, and God Himself has given assurance that some day it shall be no more". He spoke out against a recent 'hate campaign' and insisted that we should never give way to the temptation to overcome evil with evil:

When the blast and bitterness of war scar our very souls nothing but the Spirit of Christ can subdue the fierce resentment and hunger for revenge that sweep over us ... Love is still the greatest thing in the world, and though almost obliterated today in the enveloping rain of tears and blood, individually we are to dedicate ourselves to demonstrate its eternal beauty and power.

Mr. F.J. Church, a member of the Epping church, noted that not all in the congregation agreed with the pastor. Mr. Church did agree, however, and acknowledges the help he and some of his friends found in Dr. Leslie Weatherhead's 1939 book, *Thinking Aloud in War-Time*. Weatherhead acknowledged the evil of war and had at one stage almost become a pacifist but felt this was not the real solution. He

"With respect to war, it may be noted that Baptists generally have agreed that it is an unsatisfactory and immoral method of settling disputes, but they have, by and large, refused to adopt a pacifist attitude, preferring to be free to support their country when the issues at stake seem to justify such extreme measures as a state of hostilities requires."

—Dr. R. G. Torbet

perhaps spoke for many when he said, "I hope I should be a pacifist in any issue which only involved myself, but I feel I must not refuse a method, however terrible, if it is the only method available which can save countless thousands from unspeakable evil."

It is doubtful, however, if many NSW Baptists would have read Weatherhead who was regarded with great suspicion by most. An article by Weatherhead called "God and the War" was published by *The Australian Baptist* on 8 July 1941. This brought a swift reply from Rev. Stephen Sharp, not on what Weatherhead had said about war, but because he had espoused an evolutionary view of man. Rev. F.J. Dunkley, the repentant editor, acknowledged his error. In the next issue Sharp had a long article on "Evolutionism in the Pulpit" but there was no discussion of the main points from Weatherhead's article on war!

There is one small but fascinating question which needs to be raised. Most, although not all, NSW Baptist preachers of the day would have espoused a dispensationalist premillennialist view of Christ's return. This teaching had caused a variety of positions to be adopted in the U.S.A. with regard to the war question back in 1917 and 1918.

Many adopted a pacifist position on the basis that it was hopeless trying to solve the world's problems through political or military effort. Others had become preoccupied with identifying various individuals and events with various "signs of the times". All in all, many Americans became convinced that the millenarian case was anti-patriotic and, it was even seriously alleged, was fuelled by the Germans to oppose the Allied cause!

How did Australian millennial Baptists respond to these events in World War II? Rev. W.L. Jarvis wrote a small article for *The Australian Baptist* (6 August 1940) in which he discussed the war and Christ's Second Advent. He listed questions being asked such as: "Is Hitler 'the Beast' of Revelation? Are Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini the 'three unclean spirits like frogs' mentioned in Revelation 16:13? Is the present war Armageddon, or is it just the prelude to that terrible conflict?" Jarvis cautioned against all such questions.

According to F.J. Church, he and the then Baptist Union President were asked by internal security to speak to two well-known dispensationalist preachers on the basis that their preaching could be taken as anti-Allied. They ran the risk of being interned unless they conformed. Apparently they did, but one wonders just what they were saying: presumably that evil (i.e. Germany) would have to win this last human conflict before the return of Christ.

Churches, of course, set themselves to minister to those in need. Central Baptist in Sydney had a significant ministry under the leadership of Rev. W.L. Jarvis. Its Sunday evening services were thronged with servicemen and women, there were many conversions and the 'Friendship Hour'

after the service became a significant ministry to many far from home. In general, however, there was little theological reflection on peace and war. The times were scarcely propitious for such an exercise.

Baptists in the nuclear age

In the aftermath of the first atomic bomb H.J. Morton, then editor of *The Australian Baptist*, commented: "This week has surely been one of the most momentous in the troubled history of mankind." He greeted use of the bomb with cautious approval. But Rev. B.G. Wright had a stronger note to sound:

There is little point in discussing the moral issues of the latest scientific discoveries as applied to war. 'Thou shalt not kill, stands as eternal truth for all men for all time. One bomb is wrong, every bomb is wrong; war is the spawn of hell, and the sin of men while it abides in the heart will continue to create war and rumours of war, to man's misery and despair.

The ensuing forty years have seen that issue of the nuclear bomb occupy central stage in much discussion. The Vietnam War eventually divided the American nation and caused much polarisation in Australia.

On a world level Baptists have in their World Alliance meetings passed successive resolutions affirming peace. The 1980 Toronto Congress, for example, called on all governments to adopt a policy of disarmament and "to stop the production of and trading in the weapons of war - conventional and nuclear". At Los Angeles in July 1985 the Congress again called on nations to end the conventional and nuclear arms race and encouraged all nuclear powers "to enact immediately a verifiable moratorium on manufacture of all nuclear weapons and to seek mutually the abolition by negotiations of all nuclear arms."

On a more personal level some Baptists have made strong stands for peace and justice, opposing all forms of violence. Here we must highlight the achievement of the Baptist pastor Dr Martin Luther King who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. King was not only influenced by the Bible but by Gandhi's teaching and example. It is worth stressing, however, what Dr King himself had to say in commenting on his opposition to American involvement in Vietnam:

I cannot forget that the Nobel Prize for Peace was also a commission - a commission to work harder than I had ever worked before for 'the brotherhood of man'. This is a calling which takes me beyond national allegiances, but even if it were not present, I would yet have to live with the meaning of my commitment to the ministry of Jesus Christ. To me the relationship of this ministry to the making of peace is so obvious

that I sometimes marvel at those who ask me why I am speaking against the war.

It is not easy to estimate the influence of Dr King or of the pacifist position on Baptists since the 1960s. Certainly Phil Hancox in Queensland continued his stand, as his book clearly traces. Extensive correspondence was featured in *The Australian Baptist* during July and August 1967. The issue was still pacifism or the just war. The Vietnam war gave focus to the debate but the arguments were all too familiar. One reader commended US Senator McCarthy and wished for someone of his like in Australia!

Rev. Frank Stone, then President-General of the Baptist Union of Australia, produced a timely article on war and peace (7 August 1968). The editor summarised it: 'Rev. F.J.C. Stone called on Baptist people to work for peace – but was critical of pacifism, picketing and protest'. He restated 'just war' theories but stung Mr. Hancox (a conservative Baptist in his approach to the Bible and most other issues) with his suggestion that the Christian pacifists took their interpretations of Scriptures from "the liberal school of approach which was strongly influenced by twentieth century humanism".

Hancox replied with vigour. Somewhat surprisingly, he became President of the Baptist Union of Queensland in 1972 and spoke on "The Price of Peace." His views were strongly stated and he commended Dr King even though many fellow Baptists were wont to dismiss King as a communist.

But not many Baptists seemed at that time to realise that the nuclear possibilities had changed the situation dramatically. The old "just war" arguments were judged by many not to be adequate for this new situation. In 1965 the BWA Congress had called on all the nations to "desist

from acts of direct or indirect aggression whether they be in Vietnam, Santo Domingo ..." It observed that "no nation wins a nuclear war – all are defeated."

To speak of "Baptist Peacemakers", as American church historian Martin Marty once observed, sounds like an oxymoron. The two words seem a contradiction, given certain well-publicised controversies of recent decades. But Dr. Paul Dekar has written a powerful book with that title: *For the Healing of the Nations: Baptist Peacemakers* (1993).

Dekar shows that for more than sixty years Baptist peace groups and individuals have worked for peace. More recently, former US President Jimmy Carter has also received the Nobel Peace Prize. Few Australian Baptists have been prominent in the peace movement, although an increasing number are involved. Whether the arguments for relative (or nuclear) pacifism, in which safeguards covering verifiable disarmament are included, will appeal to Baptists remains to be seen.

The current 'war against terrorism' has introduced even more complications for our faith and action, but we can be encouraged by the way in which at least some earlier Baptists faced these issues with faith and courage. Tony Cupit's excellent book, *Peace I Leave with You* (recently republished by the Baptist World Alliance) may well serve our churches to think carefully about war and peace, using the Scriptures as our guide.

Rev Dr Ken Manley is a Vice-President of the Baptist World Alliance. He was lecturer in Church History at Morling College (1971-80), pastor of Epping Baptist Church (1981-86) and Principal of Whitley College, Melbourne (1987-2000). His most recent book is From Woolloomooloo to Eternity: A History of Australian Baptists (Paternoster, 2006). This article is a revised version of his Annual Lecture to the Baptist Historical Society of NSW, delivered on April 17, 1986.

The Baptist Historical Society of NSW invites you to a special event...

The long tragedy

Australian Baptists and the Great War

Tuesday 11 November 2008

6.30 pm, Morling College Chapel

120 Herring Rd, Macquarie Park 2113

\$7.00 entry (includes a light meal at 7.45pm)

Please register by contacting Lieutenant Commander Ron Robb on (02) 9636 7330, or e-mail gloron@optusnet.com.au or write to The Baptist Archives, c/- Morling College, 120 Herring Rd. Macquarie Park 2113. Payment can be made on the night. **More details on pages 15-17.**

Archives report

Ron Robb

There is never nothing to do in the Archives so the volunteer team is always busy – even taking work home! Thanks to BCS generosity we now have a computer at every work station and these are slowly being brought on-line by Ernie Windschuttle. We again acknowledge the invaluable administrative support given by Morling College; our successes would be quite impossible without it.

Since last meeting the previously publicised Carlingford Golden Jubilee history has been published and launched. It is an excellent work by Irene McKilligan and the church still has copies available. The church records have now been deposited in the Archives and comprise a very good collection. The Wallsend team of Allan and Phyllis Ezzy are well into the sesquicentenary history for that church. This couple are most interesting: they are ‘older’ retirees but are computer literate and equipped with digital cameras to record articles etc.

The Wallsend church foundation precedes the formation of the Baptist Union so has a long history. Its sesquicentenary is not due until 2013 so it has sensibly started its research early (which is a welcome change from calls telling us that a church is about to write its golden jubilee or centenary history and plans to publish it in three months time! We urge churches to allow at least *four* years for such a task). The Ezzys are taking good advice from the Archives, they are supported by a committee and are very thorough in their methodology so this publication should be an excellent production.

The Society is concerned that from time to time it hears of records being discarded as being of ‘no further use’ and ‘just old records now outdated’. Generations after a church is formed it begins to take an interest in its roots but if there are no records that desire cannot be met other than in general terms of what the Archives may hold, which will not be the daily life and year-by-year local records.

Apart from that, minutes especially are legal documents. They belong to a church (they are not family heirlooms for some past Church or Sunday School Secretary). If the church is dissolved those records legally become the property of the Baptist Union, and the Archives holds them in perpetuity. Society members could make these points known to people with whom they come in contact. The Society officers, and especially the Archives, are always ready to advise on these matters. We intend to produce some basic guidelines on storage and care of church records and some information on why preservation of such material is important.

Finally, it is astounding to hear even some experienced Baptist Ministers and Church Officers flippantly dismiss local church history as what Henry Ford described as ‘bunk’. It may come as a surprise to these people that one of the strongest themes in the Bible is the imperative to honour history – indeed in the Old Testament it was part of Jewish law and in the New a number of writers urge Christians to remember their roots. A long list of such references will also be given in a future edition of this journal.

Editorial

Ron Robb

Our regular editor, Dr Graeme Chatfield, has been overseas during compilation of this issue of *The Baptist Recorder* so production has been a joint effort by others. We acknowledge with thanks permission by Dr Ken Manley to reproduce his paper, “Baptist attitudes to war and peace,” published in this issue of *The Baptist Recorder*. The Society published this article some years ago but it was considered that it would be a good ‘fit’ to again publish it on this special occasion. It had been intended to reproduce this work and have it available for sale on the evening but Dr Manley’s generosity has enabled us to include it in this journal for Society members. Non-members who would like a copy will be able to purchase it separately. Compilation of most of this edition was by the Archivist but the critical layout and graphics was by the highly capable Secretary, Rev Rod Benson.

THE NOVEMBER MEETING

Members will recall that the next meeting will not be on the usual scheduled date – normally it would be Thursday 6th November, but due to the significance of the date it will this year be on **TUESDAY 11th NOVEMBER**. The event will be in the Morling College Chapel, starting at **6.30pm**.

There will be a break for substantial refreshments at about 7.45 pm in the College dining room for which there will be a nominal charge of \$7.00 each (the Society is partially underwriting this event). This will be a major event at which memorabilia will be on display and a variety of publications and papers on Baptists and other Christians in wars will be available for sale or to order.

Ron Rogers: A man of God

Ron Robb

The Reverend E.(Eric) Ron Rogers, BA, BD, ThM, died to this world on Monday 8th September in 'Shalom' at Marsfield, in suburban Sydney. It is fair to say that he was second only to Principal Morling as a gracious and well loved leader in the Baptist community, and particularly as Principal of Morling College.

Ron Rogers was born on the 16th June, 1922, in the town of Berry, on the Murray River in South Australia. There was also an older brother and a younger sister. Although Ron's mother had a Christian background there was not a lot of church life in the family, although visits to their maternal grandparent's home in Prospect, S.A., included attendance at the Baptist church there. Ron's mother died in her forties and the children had a somewhat disjointed

and unsettled life for a while after, including for Ron some time in a Salvation Army boys home. It would come as a surprise to those who knew Ron in his adult years that as a boy he had a reputation as something of a firebrand – quick tempered and a bit unruly.

After his mother died the two boys and their father eventually ended up in the Eastern suburbs of Sydney, where Ron attended Sydney Boys High School. Perhaps surprisingly, he did well there and graduated as Dux of the Intermediate year (in those days an Intermediate Certificate indicated a very good level of education and was the key to most careers short of any that requiring tertiary education). Probably at this point Ron's ability to tackle academic studies began to reveal itself. However, the times



were hard and he had to leave school to find work (not easy during the dreadful Depression years) and concurrently studied accountancy.

About the age of sixteen Ron became peripherally involved with the Rose Bay Presbyterian Church (at which he became a bit wary because the folk there were 'a bit too enthusiastic') then the Waverley Baptist Church. There, he became involved with Christian Endeavour and came under the influence of Baptist ministers whose names will be well recalled by Society members of an older generation – John Morley, Ron Smith, and A.C. Maynard.

Just after his 18th birthday in 1940 Ron was baptised by the Rev. Ron Smith in the Waverley Baptist Church. As happened to many young people Christian Endeavour gave Ron a chance to test his skills at the popular 'five minute sermons' and he became gripped by a desire to know more about his Bible. The idea of becoming a professional pastor began to take shape in his mind.

When he was nineteen Ron was called-up for military service during the dark early war years. With his accountancy training he soon found himself as paymaster for his unit at Liverpool and later he served at Parramatta while awaiting overseas service. However, while there he became aware that one of the very few reasons that a release from the AIF was possible during wartime emergency was to enter training for the Christian ministry. He applied to the Baptist Union of NSW and was accepted.

The procedure in those days was that after a rather rigorous interview and selection process an intending minister was first given charge of a church – often in the country. It was a daunting prospect: young men barely out of their teens would be placed in charge of a congregation where some members of the Diaconate were old enough to be their father and probably had better knowledge of the Bible. Church Secretaries in those days were powerful people and could make or break a budding young minister; to their credit most of them were wise mentors and set many young fellows on a firm, confident path to long successful careers. One such was Mr Charlie Lawrence of the Nowra church (only recently constituted) where Ron was first appointed. He boarded with a lady who lived opposite the Lawrences (no manse supplied in those days!) and Ron took his meals with the Lawrences.

Ron developed a special bond with two of his contemporaries: Tom Cardwell and Fred McMaster. They were appointed to Port Kembla and Thirroul respectively so all three were on the South Coast and would get together when possible to practice their preaching on one another. The close relationship of these three men continued right through to the end of each of their lives, Ron being the last one. It is noteworthy that all three widows are still alive and keep in touch still. During his student years Ron subsequently pastored the Port Kembla Church (Tom Cardwell having moved to the Ashfield College and taken charge of the Chullora church), North Auburn, and Strath-

field-Homebush. In his final year he was elected Senior Student and began studies at Sydney University – clearly setting a course for academia.

After the first 'trial year, student ministers in those days were invariably required to live-in and at that period that meant the Ashfield College. Furthermore, they were not allowed to be married except in rare special circumstances so most Baptist ministers of the day were married towards the end of their graduation year – usually within a week or two of graduation. And so on the 14th December Ron and Nancy McLeod (formerly of Black Mountain) were married. Ron became the pastor of the Matraville church and their 'manse' was a converted billiard room in a local hotel, with walls partitioned to only part height. Two children arrived in due course – Paul and Diedre.

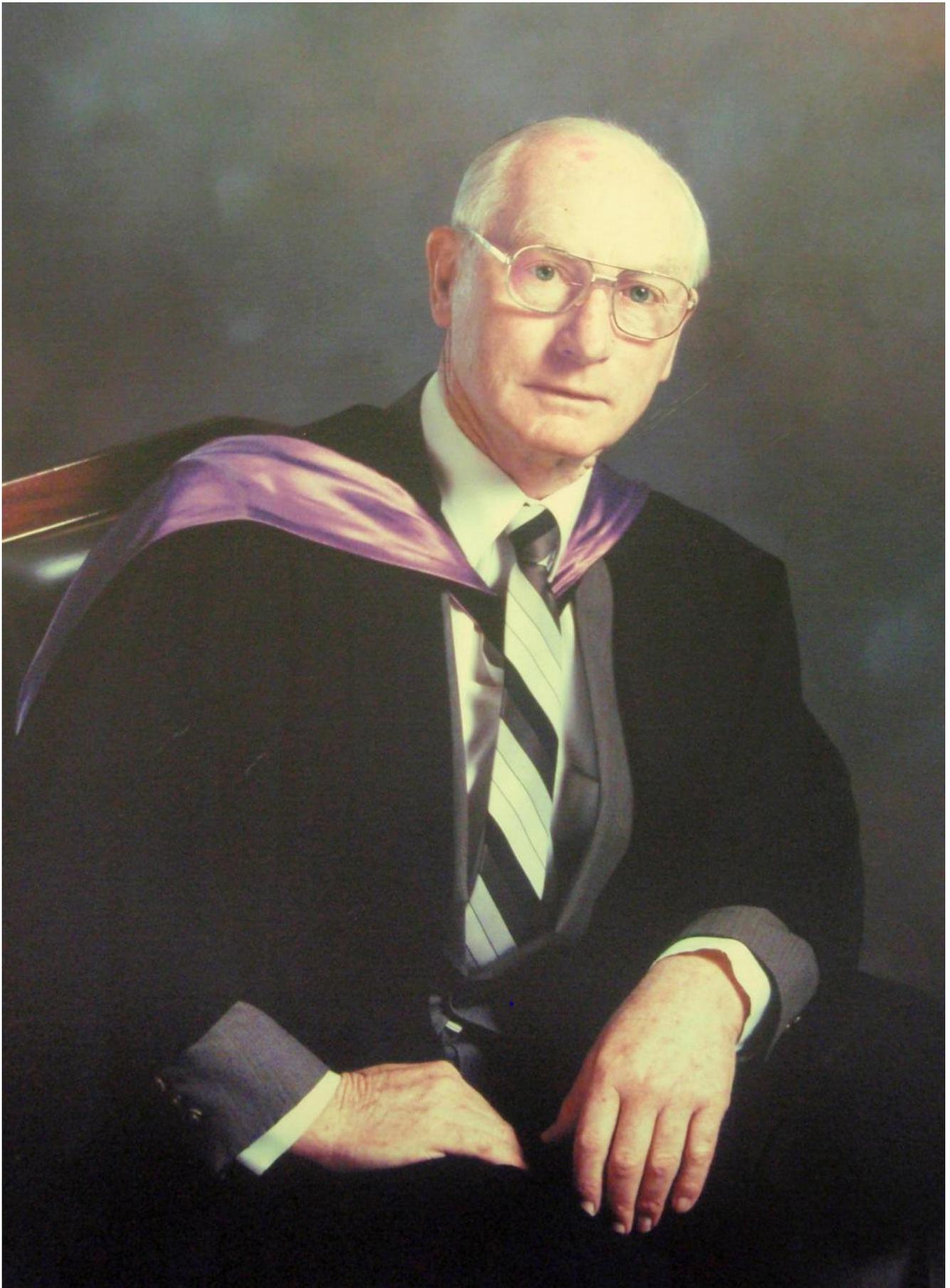
After Matraville, the Rogers moved to the Churches at Burwood, Epping and Hobart (Tas.). By that time Ron had established himself as an outstanding Biblical Scholar. His longest pastorate (1953-63) was at Epping and he subsequently tended to regard it as his 'home' church. Indeed, when he began a full-time academic career it was where the Rogers settled their membership. It was the Church in which Ron's funeral was held on Friday the 12th September recently.

During 1965 Ron received an invitation to become the Lecturer in New Testament at Morling College (or the Baptist Theological College of NSW as it was at that stage, having just moved from Ashfield to Eastwood). He struggled with this call and was initially reluctant to leave Hobart. Laurence Rowston, writing of the Rogers ministry in Hobart, noted the struggle that Ron had over this dilemma and especially mentioned his outstanding teaching and preaching, his adored pastoral skills and how the Sunday School had been greatly built-up during his tenure.

From February 1966 on, Ron's reputation was firmly linked with Morling College. In 1971 he was appointed Vice-Principal and in 1974 he became Principal, holding that office until retirement in 1987. His time as Principal was burdened with an uproar over Biblical interpretation, evangelical orthodoxy and other such issues that plague most theological colleges at sometime or other, but during Ron's tenure it was unusually protracted and savage.

Of particularly bitter and divisive attack was the now infamous struggle which became known as 'The Sydney College of Divinity' debate. Ron himself was as conservative an evangelical as one could hope to find but as College Principal he was inevitably drawn into the maelstrom. However, he survived this era – not least because of his personal openness, humility, lack of malice towards those who pilloried him and his gentle graciousness.

Ray Case, writing in *A Man of God*, well summed-up Ron's demeanour and behaviour during this time: "Although he experienced deep suffering throughout these



painful processes he always conducted himself in public with self-control and without rancour, and was a model of humility and love. As one President of the Union remarked: 'Ron Rogers is a true Christian gentleman'." Ray Case continued with the report that Ron remarked, "It has never occurred to me to be other than Baptist. There is no disaffection." He commented that "Baptist convictions are most agreeable, though we do not always practice them."

Dr Vic Eldridge has sometimes observed that Ron's main 'weakness' was that he was simply and patently honest to an unlimited degree and refused to stoop to any action or behaviour that might have avoided some of the brickbats he had to endure.

Ron and Nancy spent their retirement years at their home at 119 Midson Rd in Epping, where they were always glad to receive old friends. Ron preceded the Rev. Bruce Thornton as the President of the Baptist Historical Society of NSW, and even in his latter frail years in nursing home care at 'Shalom' continued to enquire about the Society's activities and was always delighted to hear of the rapid advances and growth in the Society's Archives.

As he began to 'wind-down' he started passing over some of his personal papers to the Archives and his outstanding

facility as a historical researcher was easily identified. Some of his work has added new knowledge to the Baptist historical corpus. One of his seminal papers was presented as a quarterly address to the Society by the Rev. Rod Benson—a detailed biography of the founding Principal, Rev. Alexander Gordon. Ron had something of an affinity with Principal Gordon, and with a later Principal, Edward Roberts-Thomson, because they too suffered the outrageous slings and arrows of misfortune and resigned their posts; however, unlike them, Ron survived with his reputation enhanced.

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy enumerating the characteristics of a man of God. A reading of these letters is instructive for anybody aspiring towards a true Christian spirit and if we 'tick the boxes' against the name of Ron Rogers the sum total leads inevitably to the conclusion that he was indeed "a man of God."

Ron Robb is Honorary Archivist for the NSW Baptist Archives. Details for this article were sourced from a number of references in the Baptist Archives including A Man of God by Rev. Ray Case, One Hundred Years of Witness: The Hobart Baptist Church by Laurence Rowston, Baptist Union of NSW Year Books, the Baptist Historical Society journal The Baptist Recorder, taped interview by the Archivist with Ron Rogers, and Morling College records.

[Cont. from page 14]

What I take to be an intentional and fortunate stylistic issue by Leonard was his superb use of brief quotations to illustrate the issue at hand. Throughout my copy of the book, I repeatedly wrote "good quotation" in the tragically small margins that Judson provides (Judson, please give us more "white" space in the next edition!). Leonard's quotations from Dan Taylor on page 97 and John Gill on page 99 illustrate my point, but such quotations abound in the book.

The artistic work on the cover of Leonard's paperback (surely Judson will one day give some of us a hardback edition) depicts numerous swirling ripples from a brightly illuminated center. That image may be an excellent logo for Baptists. In the face of all of our Baptist diversity, a center exists. Leonard, however, wants his readers to know that there are many, many ripples, many "Baptist Ways." Indeed, at points in the book, Leonard may accent the diversity at the expense of the illuminated center of Baptist life.

In the "Epilogue," however, he again explains the origins of the Baptist Ways. After stating that Baptists began as dissenting communions whose biblicism caused them to jettison ideas they considered unbiblical, he said, "Yet their concern for conscience, their emphasis on individual conversion, their mistrust of 'hierarchies,' and the centrality of their congregational polity made Baptists a People's Movement in which division was imminently possible." (422) *The Baptist Ways*, the great diversity in Baptist life, came from the illuminated center of a handful of Baptist principles.

I come away from Leonard's telling of the Baptist story with several convictions about Baptists. One, Leonard is absolutely correct; Baptists have diversity in abundance. A visit to a Baptist World Alliance meeting will confirm that for any skeptic in a hurry. Two, the impact of the charismatic movement upon Baptists in the twentieth century has not been adequately noted. While this influence shows up specifically in Europe, Asia, and Britain, it is much more of a story in the United States than is usually acknowledged. Music, worship, and architecture, among Baptists throughout the country, reflect the enormous influence of the charismatic movement upon Baptists. Three, the struggle for religious liberty was not a Baptist struggle that ended in the nineteenth century; it continued well into the twentieth and continues even into the present century. Baptists, therefore, must stay close to their heritage of freedom of conscience, and they must apply it vigorously to the contemporary world, something that Leonard passionately advocates. Four, many Baptists in the United States are blinded to the reality of the minority status of Baptists in other parts of the world. We, therefore, need Leonard's global stories of Baptists, even if in places they are necessarily limited.

I am using Leonard as my text in my class this semester on "The Baptist Tradition(s)."

Reviewed by Walter B. Shurden, Callaway Professor of Christianity and executive director, The Center for Baptist Studies, Mercer University. Published in Baptist History and Heritage, Winter 2004; used by permission.

Baptist Ways: A History

A review by Walter B. Shurden

First it was Henry C. Vedder, *A Short History of the Baptists* (1892); second it was Robert G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists* (1950); third it was Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (1987); now it is **Bill Leonard**, *Baptist Ways: A History* (2003). These are the four Baptist historians from the United States who have attempted a one-volume survey of Baptist history. Leonard's book is Judson's effort to replace Torbet's older and much used book. With this book, Leonard has made himself a part of the Baptist story.

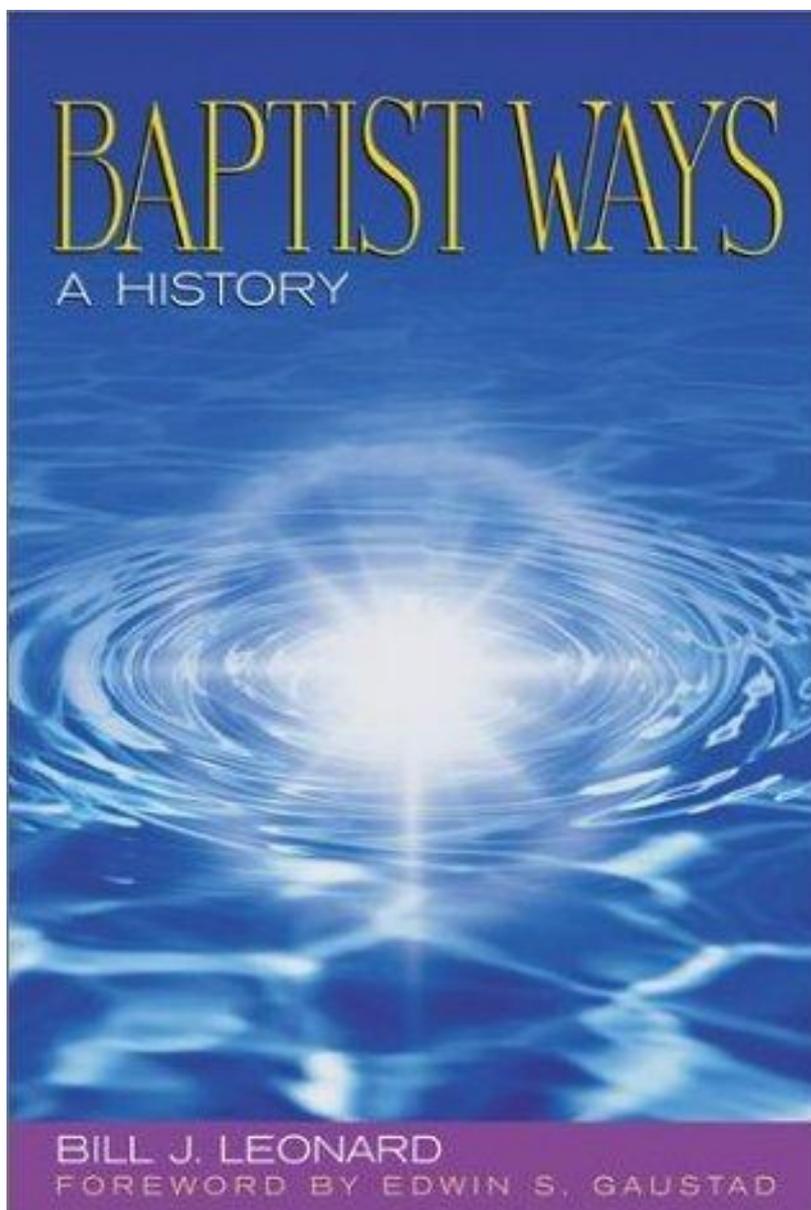
The very first thing to be said about writing a one-volume history of Baptists is that it is a gargantuan task. So huge, in fact, that some suspect that it cannot be done. And then when it is done, we critics tend to highlight what was left undone or, in some cases, overdone. In his "Foreword" to Torbet's survey, Kenneth Scott Latourette correctly said, "So varied and so rich is the record of the Baptists that to reproduce it in its entirety would require many volumes and would entail several lifetimes of research in the pertinent printed and manuscript books, reports, periodicals, diaries, and letters." But then Latourette added, "However, the main outline can be compassed in one volume." I agree. The main outline can be presented in a single volume. We are in Bill Leonard's debt for accomplishing this almost impossible feat in an admirable fashion.

A good assignment for students of Baptist historiography is to compare Torbet, McBeth, and Leonard (Vedder's older work is not in the same ballpark as these other three) at the point of organization of material. Torbet tells the Baptist story first in Europe, and he then starts over with the history of Baptists in America. While it may not appear so at first glance, Leonard takes a chronological approach, very much like McBeth. McBeth corralled his history under the rubric of centuries. With little effort, one could do the same with Leonard.

The Baptist story is exceedingly difficult to organize. I have longed for someone to come along who would provide a synthetic and integrative history of the Baptists. For example, rather than separate sections discussing Baptist Beginnings in England and Baptist Beginnings in America, why not a synoptic chapter on Baptist Beginnings with some effort to relate the two countries or an explanation of why this cannot be done. I repeat: I am not sure that one could wrestle the chaos of material into such a synthesis,

no matter how hard one tried. For now, we must live with the approach of McBeth and Leonard, a good approach to be sure.

Martin Marty, with a bit of tongue-in-cheek, hopes that some day historians will write a history of American Christianity based upon church bulletins and newsletters. Leonard obviously did not take that approach, but in terms of the content of Baptist history, Leonard lets one peek inside of Baptist churches in a way that other histories have not done. He opens the door of Baptist churches so that one hears the hymnody, sees the worship, and observes the role of women in ministry. **[cont. on page 13]**



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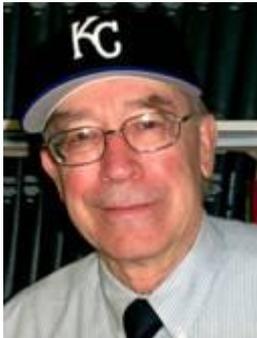
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Australian Baptists and the Great War

Tuesday 11 November 2008
6.30 pm, Morling College Chapel
120 Herring Rd, Macquarie Park 2113

\$7.00 entry (includes a light meal at 7.45pm)

Tuesday 11 November marks the 90th anniversary of the Armistice which led to the end of World War I. To celebrate this significant event the Baptist Historical Society is holding a special event at Morling College with addresses by two eminent Baptist historians and featuring a display of our collection of war memorabilia and publications. Brigadier Jim Wallace, former commander of the Special Forces and SAS of the Australian Army, will open the event.



Professor Bob Linder
Distinguished Professor of History
Kansas State University



Mr Michael Petras
NSW Baptist historian

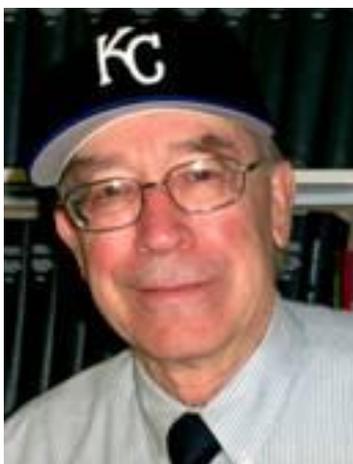


Brigadier Jim Wallace AM
Australian Christian Lobby

Please register by contacting Lieutenant Commander Ron Robb on (02) 9636 7330, or e-mail gloron@optusnet.com.au or write to The Baptist Archives, c/- Morling College, 120 Herring Rd. Macquarie Park 2113. Pay on the night. See next pages for detailed information on presenters.

OUR NOVEMBER GUEST SPEAKERS

Ron Robb



Professor Robert D. (Bob) Linder is no stranger to regular attenders of Society meetings or the Morling College campus. He is the Distinguished Professor of History at Kansas State University and has authored or edited more than fifteen books and over 100 articles in history and religious journals. His major interest is the relationship between history of religion since the Reformation and politics.

As well as being the visiting Fulbright Professor of History at Wollongong University (1987) he has been visiting Senior Research Fellow at Robert Menzies College and Macquarie University in the Department of History, Philosophy and Politics. He has been a research scholar in Europe for some 42 years. He served as a Councillor on the Manhattan (Kansas) City Council for eight years, including two terms as Mayor.

Bob has been coming to Australia for nearly 25 years every Northern Summer vacation period. Bob is an expert in the history of Australian evangelism – not just Baptist but all evangelical denominations. His geographical area of research has covered from Sydney to Perth and from Hobart to Darwin. It is undoubtedly true to say that he knows more about Australian Baptist evangelism history and the people involved with it than most, if not all, our own scholars.

The NSW Baptist Archives will shortly acquire Bob's staggering collection of research material – some 90 standard file boxes of documents, taped interviews, newsclips, books and other published records, photographs, research notes etc. In fact, the collection is already housed in the Archives (taking-up some five years worth of storage!) but is embargoed until the Professor completes the draft of the work he will eventually publish. It is believed to be the world's largest collection of evangelical research material after the Billy Graham Library's collection. It is certainly the largest in Australia and will eventually be the standard reference on this subject for Australian researchers. Bob is a Baptist but has developed friendships with most senior denominational historians in all states of Australia. He is coming out to Australia specifically for this meeting.

Bob's research in Evangelism in Australia led him along a sub-path which caught his interest: evangelical Christians involved in wars, especially the 'Great War' and World War -2. He was himself a Colonel in the US Army Reserve and saw service in Vietnam. His book, *The Long Tragedy: Australian Evangelical Christians and the Great War, 1914-1918* is the standard for research in this field and deals with 'those back home' as well as men and women on the front line. Enquiries are being made about the possibility of having some of these books on sale for the evening; the price, if available, will be in the order of \$21.

Mr Michael Petras is one of the Society's main researchers and authors. He completed the full theological course as a non-ministerial student at the Baptist Theological College of NSW (now Morling College) graduating in 1975. In the same year he commenced a Bachelor of Arts degree at Macquarie University majoring in Ancient History and completing the degree in 1977. He was then awarded a Commonwealth Post-Graduate Scholarship and completed his Master's degree in 1982. His thesis on Baptist growth and expansion in NSW 1900-1939 was published by the Historical Society. Michael also completed the Bachelor of Divinity degree from Melbourne College of Divinity in 1979. In 1981 he co-authored with Dr. Ken Manley *The First Australian Baptists* to mark the sesquicentenary of the first Baptist service in Australia. He edited *Australian Baptists Past and Present*, consisting of papers by the late Dr. Heather Vose, Dr. Ken Manley and himself presented to a symposium sponsored by the Historical Society during the 1988 Australian bicen-



tenary celebrations. He has presented a number of well-researched papers to the Historical Society over the years including studies of Rev Frederick Hibberd, Rev William Lamb, the influence of C H Spurgeon upon Australia and the exodus of Australian Baptist ministers to the Presbyterian Church.

Michael developed an interest in military history in childhood by asking his father (who died when he was 14) about his wartime experiences. Michael's father, Frank, originally from South Australia, served as an ordnance artificer (one who repairs artillery guns) in the 2/7 Australian Field Regiment, 9th Division in the Middle East (Egypt, Palestine, Libya, Syria), and at the tail end of the war on the North Borneo islands of Morotai and Tarakan.

What also excited his interest was the collection of photographs taken in the Western Desert with captions on the back that explained the photo. These photos also include 21 photographs taken by an Afrika Korps officer captured during the Battle of El Alamein. The Australian War Memorial expressed great interest in them and ten were published in the Australian War Memorial's *Wartime* magazine. There is one of the greatly admired German Commander, Erwin Rommel for which Michael's father wrote on the back, *Yes, it's the great Field Marshal Rommel*. Ironically, Rommel was as much admired by the Australians as their own General Thomas Blamey was detested when he visited the troops but staying, Michael's father said, in a 'palatial mansion' in Cairo.

Due to his father's untimely death great interest was shown in the welfare of his children by a member of the Unit who had moved to Sydney. Such are the bonds of friendship formed in wartime. In more recent times Michael has been asked to march with Sydney members on Anzac Day (possibly to help get them to the finish line as all are now octogenarians) and to attend with them the annual church service at the Garrison Church each December to mark St. Barbara's Day, the patron saint of gunners. Michael's maternal great-uncle served on the Western Front in World War 1 and his paternal step grand-father was a stretcher-bearer (or 'body snatcher' as they were sometimes called) in the 3rd Field Ambulance in the same conflict.

Few modern Australian soldiers have commanded greater respect or credibility than **Brigadier Jim Wallace**. In a 30-year plus career, he served with distinction in the Australian Army after graduating from Duntroon, the British Army Staff College (on which staff he subsequently served) and the Australian College of Defence and Strategic Studies. He commanded the Special Air Services Regiment and served with the United Nations in the Middle East.. He became a highly qualified strategist and led the army's mechanised 1st Brigade in Darwin. Recently, although offered promotion to General, he resigned his commission.



Jim is a respected commentator on defence and strategic matters and brings a valuable perspective as a recently serving and highly credible senior Australian Defence Force officer. Wallace was born in Sydney and is the son of a World War II soldier who served at Tobruk and Milne Bay. As a boy, he remembers taking himself off to church a few times, but really had no other grounding in religion. After initially regarding Christianity as an unnecessary crutch, a friend's challenge to consider the implications of the faith actually being true, proved profound.

In 1984, he was made a Member of the Order of Australia for his services to counter-terrorism. He commanded the terrorist squadron, including preparing and leading the counter terrorist response group capability during the Brisbane Commonwealth Games.

Jim is a member of the Hughes Baptist Church in Canberra and has been chairman of the Military Christian Fellowship. In 2001 he left the Army to set up the Australian Christian Lobby (ACL), an organisation that seeks to influence government, business and the community generally, to better acknowledge Christian values. He is married and his wife, Poppy, is a General Practitioner. They have two daughters.

Don't miss this very special evening of history, faith, courage and Christian witness!

The Baptist Recorder

*The Journal of the Baptist Historical Society
of New South Wales*

**Preserving, promoting and publishing
NSW Baptist history**

President: Rev Bruce Thornton
Vice President: Mrs Janine Prior
Secretary: Rev Rod Benson
Treasurer: Mr Michael Petras
Editor: Rev Dr Graeme Chatfield
Archivist: Mr Ron Robb

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The Baptist Recorder

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Website (coming November 2008)

www.baptisthistory.org.au

COMING EVENTS IN 2009

Thursday 5 February — “This is your life” (speaker to be advised)

Thursday 7 May — a lecture celebrating the 1959 Billy Graham Crusade Jubilee

Thursday 6 August — a lecture on the history of evangelism in Australia

Thursday 5 November— *To be advised*

Be sure to add these dates in your diary!

Meetings usually run from 7.30—9.30 pm.

www.baptisthistory.org.au
