

Number 106

May 2009

# *The Baptist Recorder*

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

**Next meeting:**

Dr Stuart Piggin explores the impact of the 1959 Billy Graham Crusade on Australia.

**When:**

Thursday 7 May 2009

**Where:**

Faculty Lounge,  
Morling College,  
120 Herring Rd,  
Eastwood

**Time:** 7.30-9.00 pm

Open to everyone.

Supper follows the presentation.

## **Ron Baker**

### **This is my story**

Excerpts from an interview with the editor, Graeme Chatfield.

Editor: Ron, it's a pleasure to be able to speak with you about your involvement in the 1959 Billy Graham Crusade. How was it that you became associated with the 1959 Crusade?

Ron Baker.

I was driving buses at the time, based at the Brookvale depot when the Billy Graham Crusade was in Sydney. All leave was cancelled and we were driving bus loads of people to the Showground every night. On the last Sunday I drove a double decker and it took over two hours to get over the Harbour Bridge.

Drivers could go in to listen, and I did on one occasion. It lasted about 10 minutes. It all sounded like garbage to me then. At that time I hated everything to do with the church. I'd been an altar boy in a High Anglican Church in the country for about 3 months, then worked for a fellow who was a warden at local the church, but hadn't been treated well at all by him as an employer.

I didn't hear about the love of God at all in my early home life, school or work experience. By the time of the Billy Graham Crusade I was bitter and hated God and anything related to God, especially the church.

Driving these religious types into the crusade every night didn't help. I can remember

thinking if they keep up this singing I'm going to roll this bus over, I was so cranky.

We were living at Collaroy Plateau at the time and having a house built. The builder was Martin McMann, a Christian fellow, who'd been witnessing to Beryl, and had convinced her to go to the Crusade. She asked me if she could go, and I said if she was stupid enough to want to go she could. So she went. Billy was preaching on the home that night and challenged people with the statement that 'every child has the right to a godly mother'. That triggered something in Beryl and she responded to the gospel.

When she got home she told me she'd given her life to Christ, and I flew into a rage, I went ballistic! Next morning I couldn't believe it, she was a different woman, absolutely radiant. I went to work livid, and would have shot Billy Graham if I had access to a gun.

A fellow driver wanted to swap shifts with me and it meant I did a day shift instead of the evening shift I was scheduled to do. I got home to discover Martin McMann and his wife there with Beryl. Martin asked me if I'd go to the meeting that night, it was the 5th of May. I said if I went I'd only do so to kill Billy Graham, I was so mad at him for influencing Beryl. But Martin insisted, he said, 'If I get down in the dirt to beg you, will you come to the meeting?' I couldn't believe it, this guy was really going to get down in the dirt to beg me to come. That was too much for me so I said alright, and we went.

I didn't want to be there, and the longer it went on the more I didn't want to be there. I'd been involved in witchcraft for many years, so I decided to start a spiritual warfare against Billy. Years later Cliff Barrows told me about that night from the point of view of those on the stage. Billy was set in concrete, utterly immovable, it was the longest appeal of the crusade, four times right through 'Just as I Am'. He just kept saying, 'God's talking to a man; He's waiting for you'. The crowd was already down the front, everybody had already moved. All of a sudden I heard a voice I'd never heard before in my life. It said 'Go'. Next thing I know I'm standing down the front beside a 19 year old young fellow. He asked me my name, so I told him. He asked, 'Why did you come forward', so in true bus driver style I told him

'I want to become a bloody Christian'. I didn't realise that such language wasn't appropriate! So he pulls out his Bible and I say to him 'That won't help, I can't read mate.' So he says I'd like to share three verses with you. They went into my soul like a blade: God so loved Ron Baker ... somebody called God loves me. It was incredible, and I responded. Then, 'the wages of sin is death ...' I can still hear Peter Stiles clear as a bell reading those verses.

So I went home and told Beryl. John Giles was the student pastor at Collaroy Plateau at that time, and Beryl had been sending the kids to Sunday School there for a while. If I'd known I would have stopped that smartly. So John gets the referral and he comes to see me. Beryl was being counselled by an Open Brethren lady.

I agreed to go to church with Beryl. When I got there, it had no similarities to the High Church Anglican services I'd experienced as a child. These people were happy and they were going places. When John Giles preached I was sure he was having a go at me. So I went outside, and lit up a smoke. One of the ladies of the church followed me out and said, 'We know you've made a commitment to Christ, what are you smoking for, its of the devil'. I felt so distant, so like a leper. I understand now that they just didn't know how to talk to someone with my background, but at the time I just wanted to be accepted, to be gathered in and loved, but this was the absolute opposite. If this was church I didn't need it.

But Beryl persevered; she read me the Bible and prayed. One old deacon helped me with the idea of prayer: 'Just talk to God', he said. So I did. I'd be driving the bus and I say, 'God I need your help here, I'm getting cranky'.

I had somehow built into my mind that once I'd made a commitment everything would be alright, but instead all hell broke loose. My family turned on me, I couldn't make any sense of church. In July 1960 it all became too much and I picked up a drink again, and wound up at Dee Why. I had to leave the car there and get a cab home.

When I got home, there was John Giles. In a real

work of the Spirit of God, John had been prompted to leave the College where he was a residential student and come to out house. Instead of judging me, he just said come and sit down and we can talk, and I did. He explained about what a relationship with the Lord is really about. From that night I began to get a little bit about church, and I started to understand a bit more from sermons.

Just before Easter of 1961 I had gone to The Answer Crusade, where I'd been sitting in the shadows and had heard that distinct voice say to me 'Follow my Son'. I heard the voice say exactly the same thing later that night about midnight, but I went back to sleep; then again about dawn I heard the voice for the third time. By this time I was a totally broken man. Not long after that I was carted off to Manly Hospital for an operation to deal with some internal bleeding. I was sharing a room with a fellow who was dying and had been praying that the Lord would take him home. About 2am I had gone outside his window to have a smoke and was about to light up when I felt a presence, so real, flooded into me, and the voice, that same distinct voice said 'I love you. You have been set free'. At that instant the cigarette dropped from my hand, the desire to smoke disappeared, as did the desire for grog, the lust in me left, the filthy language evaporated. It was like the demons all packed up and went. I was transformed, utterly, completely. It didn't matter anymore if I was accepted at the church, I was accepted by the Lord and that was all that mattered. And the Lord provided a speech therapist for me, and someone who taught me to read and write.

Later I applied to the Baptist Bible College, and from there went on to do the full ordination course.

What keeps reaffirming me as a Christian is when I see other peoples lives totally transformed. I'm not looking for conversions or commitments, I'm looking to see God at work transforming peoples lives. That's what gets me excited, that's what keeps me preaching, passionately. If people love the one who set them free and transformed their lives, they'd be passionate about sharing that so others could have their lives transformed as well.

Editor: How did your story become so well known?

Ron: By 1979 I was an itinerant evangelist in my own right. I was to hold a crusade out in the country at the same time as the 1979 Crusade was happening in Sydney. The church sponsoring the country crusade was having a bit of a bun fight at that time, so I told them I couldn't take a crusade among them when they were carrying on like that. So I had a gap in my schedule, and I went along to help out at the Crusade. One night as I was chatting to Cliff Burrow's wife, Cliff came up and I introduced myself. He says to me, we've been looking everywhere for you. Is your wife here with you? Can we have coffee after tonight's meeting? Later, Cliff Barrows phoned to say he'd been talking with Billy and they wanted Beryl and me to go on the platform and share our story. I suggested he preach on the 'home' again like in 1959, and he could use our story to illustrate. From that time on we developed a very strong friendship with Billy and Ruth Graham, and we went along to crusades in the United States and all over the world. Billy even wrote up our story in two of his books.

It gave us wonderful opportunities to share the gospel. I remember being in the USA and being taken to a grid iron game. My host got us seats in the media box with the radio guys. We'd been talking with them during the first half, and the centre announcer had been involved. He asked me, 'Where are you from?'. I said Australia. He asked if I was a Christian. I said 'Yeah'. So he says, well you've got 10 minutes, I'll introduce you and you can tell everyone your testimony. What a wonderful opportunity, to speak to thousands of people as the half time entertainment!

Editor: You indicated earlier that you went to Bible College, then undertook full ordination training at the Baptist College in NSW. How did you move from being an ordained pastor of a local Baptist church to an internationally recognised itinerant evangelist?

Editor: How did you move from being a pastor to a ministry of itinerant evangelism?

Ron: As a pastor I'd always had an evangelistic heart. I followed Norm Nix at South Granville, and in the three years I was there saw 48 people converted, baptised and joined the church. Then I'd gone to Warrila where there had been a bit of a bun fight, and within two years it had grown from 88 to

over 200 in the morning service. I was baptising 18-20 people at a time. I had a heart for both the pastoral side of things but also a heart for the lost. Then they put me in at Bondi Junction where there were about 6 old ladies in the church. Things started to happen there too. I baptised a Jewish woman and all her children. It cost her total separation from her husband and family, all her relatives. She taught me a lot from a Jewish perspective.

Somebody, I can't recall who, challenged me that I should be in full time evangelism. The federal job came up so I applied. They knocked me back, their reasoning as I heard it was that I might be an embarrassment to them. It gutted me. I suppose if I hadn't been strong in the Lord I'd have finished up at that time. If any thing would have driven me back to the drink that would have been it. But then, I'd been delivered from it and I didn't go near a pub. But I did walk Bondi Beach, and I cried. It didn't just hurt me, it hurt Beryl and the kids. I remember someone having a go at Gary at the time. He was only a teenager. I was really proud of his response: 'If you had a good look at what Jesus did to my dad, you'd want him for the job'. That stopped them in their tracks. But the whole thing really hurt.

Next thing, on my door step were A.C. Prior, Doc Watson, Ron Farquhar, Ed Long and some others. Doc Watson was ropeable. Prior was adamant – 'You've got the gift'. So I wrote to this guy at Dallas Seminary about training for itinerant evangelistic ministry, and he wrote back a strong letter taking up such a calling would be a really rough road. I talked to a lot of people close to me and my family. I was down at the Gap praying and I put it to the Lord, 'If you want me to go to Dallas you'll make it happen. If one person is transformed tonight I'll that that to mean you want me to go'.

There was a fellow called John, a heroin addict, who we'd been ministering to. He'd come to a meeting after contemplating suicide on Bondi Beach, and he was gloriously saved. When I got home from the Gap, Galia said she was going out to mind John's children as his wife was coming to the meeting that night. During the appeal John had to carry her out to the front, she was sobbing so much. I was sobbing, she was sobbing. I'm broken because it was so clear, God wanted me to go. So I resigned from the pastorate, rang Prior and Dr Watson, and the Ron Baker Evangelistic Association was formed.

Over the next ten years there were only about three times when I ministered outside Baptist church circles. I ministered in church across Australia and overseas. I'd do 12 weeks in Western Australia, from Geraldton to Bunbury, to Maida Vale. They were incredibly exciting times. In Bunbury it was a taste of revival. I wouldn't have been more than a third of the way through the message before people began breaking down, coming down the front, lying on their faces and weeping. There was men's meeting where 143 men over 18 attended, and 141 made a response. The same thing happened in Kalgoolie. Over a period of a week we'd gone from having about 200 people in a room to using the main hall for the last two nights. It just took off. It's the kind of thing that you've just got to be where God wants you to be.

Editor: Did you work with other churches?

What's happening now and over the last few years was a result of a pretty terrible experience we had when I was doing an interim pastorate. I'd done a few Intentional Interim Pastorates with some degree of success. I went to this one, but didn't find that the ground work had been done, so when the church voted to accept me, they did so as an Interim Pastor, not an Intentional Interim Pastor.

We started, and I preach pretty straight, I don't muck around. Some people who'd come into the church had been stirring up trouble in the churches they'd come from and were now doing the same in this church. One in particular, an ex-Brethren fellow wanted to insist that the place be run by elders. So they got stuck into me even though we'd baptised 17 people by that stage.

Just as we're about to turn the corner, another consultant was brought in over my head without consulting me. In a public meeting of about 300 people, this consultant asked people to publicly demonstrate if they resented my ministry to stand on a sheet of paper that had been put out in front of me. About 30 did. But it broke Beryl's heart and mine. We could have walked out of the Baptist churches and never come back.

It triggered an emotional response in me, and I felt myself heading into depression. I knew the signs as I'd been there before. This time I got medical help early, and with the help of some drugs I got over it pretty quickly.

I didn't do anything for a while until Jeff Slade from Parkes asked me to get involved in Business Men's Conferences. I spoke at a few conferences, and then started mentoring business men. Beryl was also praying over this period and one morning came in to me to say God had clearly shown her that I had to preach again. Within half an hour a fellow was asking me if I could preach at their church for a little while to fill a gap. Once I started outside the Baptist circle it just developed. People got excited with the way I preach. I ended up getting into the Apostolic and AOG churches; they loved the style and the way I spoke about everyday practical things. I'd talk about who I see things from Scripture and how it relates to everyday life. The congregations were just spell bound and listened. This was especially true of the young people from Philipino churches.

These Apostolic and AOG churches gave me permission to preach about things Baptist churches just wouldn't consider, things like electromagnetics and laminates; how the cross is inherently in the way we are made, in our very physical structures; how the power has to flow through you using these laminates if there is to be total transformation. This time with the Apostolics and AOG have re-ignited by preaching ministry. It's been terrific.

Editor: What are some of the big lessons you've learnt over your years of ministry?

Ron: Leadership in Baptist churches is an issue. I think Australia is ready for a real Aussie concept of the church. The framework we had in the early days was brought over from the UK and it locked people in too tightly, and when the US influences started to come our way people over reacted in rejecting them. For example we fundamentalists over reacted to the Pentecostals when they first arrived. We put them in a box rather than ask what can we learn from these guys, and what can they learn from us. If you look at most AOG churches now they are swinging back towards us and away from the hype; they are coming back to the Word.

When I was in Brisbane I said to the Deacons we'll lead this together, we'll do the work together. It worked well, and the church grew. I had a bank manager on the Diaconate, so when we had a building project he took the lead. He'd do it better than I could ever imagine myself doing it. This was the one thing that I feel the Prof (G.H. Morling) got wrong. He taught us that the pastor is the sole leader, the dominant one, the one to be in control. If there was any church committee on, the pastor needed to chair it to have control. This was part of the old framework that got brought to this country. I'm wanting young men to move away from this solo leader idea and get back to the corporate model. Peter and Paul all practiced a corporate model where everybody was made special. Big churches led by a control oriented person can really blow up. Mind you, just because you focus on the corporate doesn't mean people still don't want things done their way. They sing 'Guide me O thou Great Jehovah' on Sunday and on Monday their singing 'I did it my way'.

Ridley's evangelism was also tied up with the old framework. It was evangelism based on fear. This doctrine of fear will always conquer a doctrine of love, unless that doctrine of love comes straight from the pages of the Bible. The Catholic Church had held this doctrine of fear over people, but as soon as people began reading the Bible, they could be released from that fear. A teacher of mine at Dallas had a real awakening of the Spirit when John White was minister of the church he attended. He recognised that the stuff he was teaching had been handed down to him by deists, and he was passing on to students what he'd been taught. It wasn't the New Testament pattern at all. The New Testament church had freedom, the pattern he was passing on was devised by humans to imprison people through fear. When I look back to when I first went into the church they were my fears, fears that needed control of people, not freedom in the Spirit. You can see how faith in Christ that brings true freedom creates love and overcomes fears in the 300 plus people who make up a group that meets at St Andrews. Druggies, prostitutes, non practicing homosexuals all have the freedom to talk about what Christ means for them.

Editor: Could you identify a couple of people who contributed significantly to your ministry, and what they contributed.

Ron: From the pastoral/caring side of things it would have to be John Giles.

From being encouraged to read and have an open mind, to analyse and not accept things at face value it would be Neville Andersen. He's the guy who gave me the tools to get through college. It was a rough road, but he encouraged me. If God has called you, you'll get through college. You might not do as well as the other students, but God will get you through, and He did.

When I was doing itinerant ministry I was at Lillydale with Neville and his second wife Marion. We were having dinner with them before the evening crusade meeting, and they said that their son Doug and his wife and family were coming to dinner. They warned me that Doug had switched right off and didn't want a bar of Christianity. So we all had tea together, then said we were off to the meeting. Right out of the blue, Doug says he'd come along, and he did. I'm preaching away, and some rat bag gets up and starts to take me on. I'm probably not as gracious as I could have been and told him to sit down, when God calls him to preach he can preach. I was pretty blunt. I go on preaching and even though it felt all wrong, I still made an altar call. Right at that moment, Neville who'd taken his grandchildren out comes back in, and Doug and his wife Jan are the first two to respond to the altar call. You can imagine Neville, tears in his eyes, saying to Doug, your mother prayed for you everyday.

It was a humbling experience. The guy who went to him raw, someone he'd encouraged to continue with ministry, was the tool God used to see his second son saved. Doug went on to David Tinsley's church and was baptised, went to the mission field and never looked back. Neville came to me later and said, remember the night you came to me and I said God would use you, well there's the living proof

## Minutes of Executive Meeting at the Tinsley Institute, Wednesday 15 April 2009

**Present:** Bruce Thornton, Michael Petras, Rob Robb, Graeme Chatfield, Janine Prior, Rod Benson

### Opening

Bruce Thornton opened the meeting in prayer at 6.40 pm. It was noted that Daryl Lightfoot, Ferguson Memorial Library, had been gravely ill and was recovering at home.

### Apologies

There were no apologies.

### Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted as circulated without alteration.

### Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the Executive Meeting held on 5 November 2008 were accepted as true and correct.

### Reports

**The President** noted several of his recent privately printed publications, and a brief biographical sketch of his wife Velma.

**The Treasurer** tabled a financial report for the period 1 March 2008 to 28 February 2009 (Attachment 1), indicating that there was \$699-78 on the General Fund, \$9394-16 in Term Deposit #2219, and \$2000-00 in Term Deposit #3168. Total funds available were \$12,093-94.

RESOLVED to accept the Treasurer's report.

**The Archivist** noted that the records of several NSW Baptist churches had been deposited in the Baptist Archives, but that negotiations were continuing with respect to the Milthorp and Earlwood records. Also noted that storage space in the Archives was critically short, that a small room in "The Cottage" on campus had been reserved for Archival storage, that some surplus storage cabinets had been obtained through the BUNSW move from Glebe to Epping, and that there had been some relocation of church and biographical records in the Archives.

### Business arising from previous minutes

*Arrangements for the meeting on 7 May* were proceeding smoothly with Prof. Stuart Piggins scheduled to speak on the 1959 Billy Graham Crusade. AGREED that Rod would prepare secret ballot papers, and that members would have the option to nominate persons from the floor to fill executive vacancies. All current executive members had agreed to stand for re-election, and there were no other known nominations.

*Publication of papers presented at the 11 Nov 2008 meeting.* Noted that the project was being managed by Michael and was nearing completion and delayed by the need for a transcript of the talk by Jim Wallace. AGREED that Rod would speak to Joy Dick about this to ensure swift transcription, and that a copy of the transcript would be sent to Jim Wallace for approval/editing, and then sent to Michael. Book expected to be 96pp. Ron Robb to obtain ISBN.

*BHS Essay Competition.* Noted that the competition was being widely publicized and that essay submis-

sions would close on Friday 19 June 2009.

*Website update.* Rod presented a verbal report indicating that only a limited number of documents had been uploaded but that “visits” were steadily increasing, and that a global Google search for “Baptist history” delivered 7.1 million page references with the third and fourth most popular being on our website. See Attachments 2 and 3.

*Hackworthy publication by Bill Hughes.* RESOLVED to make a donation of \$250-00 to the author in view of personal costs associated with research and publication of the biography which was now available.

*Purchase of computer printer(s).* These were in process of being purchased.

*Incorporation of the Society.* RESOLVED to proceed with plans for incorporation as an association in NSW, and to seek agreement in principle from the Executive Committee of the Baptist Union of NSW, and to seek approval from Society members at the AGM on 7 May, and to obtain all necessary documents in order to proceed. Rod to action.

*2009 program:*

**Thursday 7 May:** Stuart Piggin on the 1959 Billy Graham Crusade (Ron Robb organising).

**Thursday 13 August:** Baptist World Aid Australia jubilee (Janine Prior organising). Bruce Thornton to open proceedings; then four presentations of about 15 minutes from Bruce King, Trevor Semmens, Janine Prior and Ian Duncum. Supper to follow.

**Thursday 5 November:** Michael Petras on 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Baptist beginnings, on a subject of his choice.

**Theme(s) for 2010:** AGREED to defer this to the next meeting.

### **New business**

*Binding of old books.* RESOLVED that Ron Robb would obtain quotes for binding of four books as indicated, and that if quotes were less than \$200-00 to proceed.

*Payment of membership fees.* NOTED that the previous meeting determined the membership year to be Jan-Dec. AGREED that membership form would be inserted as part of the next *Baptist Recorder*, and that instructions on electronic payment be suitably advised to members.

*Posting of Baptist Recorder.* Arrangements to be determined at next executive meeting.

### **Correspondence**

No correspondence was tabled.

### **Next meetings**

*Executive meeting:* Wed 22 July

*General meeting:* Thu 7 May

### **Close**

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm.

# Minutes of Executive Meeting, Wednesday 5 November 2008

**Present:** Janine Prior, Graeme Chatfield, Michael Petras, Ron Robb, Rod Benson

## Opening

Graeme Chatfield was elected chairperson and opened the meeting in prayer at 7.45 pm.

## Apologies

Apologies were received from Bruce Thornton.

## Minutes of previous meeting

DEFERRED to next Executive Meeting.

## Reports

No reports were received.

## Business

### Arrangements for 11 November Quarterly Meeting

All arrangements were in place and all three speakers were confirmed.

### BHS Essay Prize

RESOLVED that the Society proceed with plans to relaunch the Essay Competition. NOTED change to essay length recommendations ("8,000 to 10,000 words including footnotes/referencing"), and preference for Chicago Style Manual protocols.

### BHS website and logo

Rod Benson provided an update on the website and demonstrated the prototype ([www.baptisthistory.org.au](http://www.baptisthistory.org.au)).

### ICOBS / ABRF conference support

NOTED that the Treasurer would take action as per item 5.10 in the previous minutes.

### Hackworthy biography project

NOTED that the Treasurer would investigate the amounts given toward previous publishing projects (e.g. David Parker's work on Higlett (\$1000-00?) and Roy Henson's on Waldock), and confer with Bill Hughes at the meeting on 11 Nov.

### Purchase of printers

NOTED that Ron Robb would take action as per item 5.9 in the previous minutes including purchase of one colour

### 5.7 2009 program [note change to 13 Aug]

*Thursday 5 Feb:* "This is my story" with Rev Ron Baker confirmed.

*Thursday 7 May:* on evangelism: suggested Mike Frost (on Small Boat, Big Sea), John North (on Lifeworks etc), and Geoff Folland (on student evangelism).

*Thursday 13 August:* Baptist World Aid Golden Jubilee event confirmed (Janine Prior to coordinate with BWAA staff)

*Thursday 5 November:* Event to mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Baptist beginnings (Graeme Chat-

field to coordinate)

**BHS payments**

RESOLVED that the BHS executive committee authorise the BHS Treasurer to pay bona fide expenses up to \$500-00 without requiring formal approval from the committee and that such payments be subject to the scrutiny of the subsequent executive committee meeting.

**BHS Incorporation**

DEFERRED to next meeting due to the absence of the President.

**Member data privacy**

NOTED that data provided by members must be treated confidentially and should not be distributed over a public network such as an email platform.

**Production and distribution of *The Baptist Recorder***

AGREED to do this as and when necessary.

**Signing of cheques**

RESOLVED to continue with the usual process (any two signatories).

**New membership form**

NOTED that a new membership form had been created (see attachment 1).

RESOLVED that membership would be for the calendar year commencing January 2009.

**Brief history of the BHS for website**

AGREED that Michael Petras would work on this and send to Rod Benson for uploading.

**Payment to Jim Wallace for travel**

RESOLVED to pay Brigadier Jim Wallace the amount of \$125-00 toward travel in relation to the 11 November event at which he spoke.

**Correspondence**

No correspondence was tabled.

**Next meetings**

*Executive meeting:* April 2009 (preferably on a Wednesday two weeks before May meeting)

*General meetings:* Tuesday 11 Nov 2008; and Thursday 5 Feb 2009.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

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## REPORT FROM THE ARCHIVES

Some heavy work in the Archives over the last reporting period has been undertaken. With the relocation of Baptist Union offices to Epping, and Bedford College re-equipping to cope with its recent spectacular growth, there has been some very useful office filing cabinets and cupboards in excellent condition made available to us. Morling College generously made its truck available to collect this equipment which has given us a small, but valuable and desperately needed temporary increase in storage capacity. This necessitated some major heavy lifting-and-shoving around the Archives to squeeze-in the new storage items. Opportunity was taken to re-organise the 'sectionalising' of the Archives as enough experience has now been gathered to estimate the relative size of different activities. These mainly comprise: Church Records, Missions, Biographies, General References and 'Museum' Memorabilia. There are sub-sets and other minor groups but those descriptions will give the general idea.

Everybody will be aware of the recent homecall to the Rev. Seton Arndell, whose memorial service was held in the Epping Baptist Church on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February. Seton had become a valuable member of the Archives volunteer team and was working with Betty Moore in the Missions section. His primary task was to draft the PNG section of the official GIA (formerly ABMS, and before that the ABFM) which is now in preparation under the leadership of the Rev. Gerry Ball. However, that primary task gave the Archives a lot of 'spin-off' and apart from that Seton's presence provided a marvellous source of general Baptist missionary historical reference. In particular he had organised some of the papers and records amassed by the Rev. Harry Orr – one of the famous 'Chaplains' Committee' that gave rise to NSW Baptists initiating the work in PNG. Seton's own private collection has itself been given to the Archives and comprise a valuable collection. It was Seton who 'brokered' the connection between the Archives and Sheila Draper, whose massive collection of papers and memoirs is another important collection. GIA is attempting to find a replacement for Seton to continue his work on the PNG history but his place will be an extremely difficult one to fill. His cheerful and enthusiastic presence in the Archives is still missed with real regret.

The Archives is now a well established reference source for many enquirers. In particular, BUNSW leaders are now regularly asking the facility to provide statistical and historical data. Recently the Baptist Foundation needed to update its trust fund histories and the Archives was able to provide much of the needed information.

On Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> February and Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March the Society was represented, and formally recognised, at the Canberra (Kingston) church 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary and history book launch (its second – the first was at its golden jubilee in 1979). The Society will be represented at a series of meetings over the next few months mounted by the Ashfield church to celebrate its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. On 25<sup>th</sup> October the Society President will be the guest speaker at the Mosman 123<sup>rd</sup> anniversary and a small ceremony will mark the church handing-over its records into the care of the Archives.

Sadly, the Strathfield/Homebush church has closed and its records passed to the Archives. These have not yet been accessed but appear to be a very comprehensive collection, especially marked as such by the fact that its very first Member's Roll is included – a rare inclusion! The Earlwood records are in process of being passed to the Archives, some already received.

An unusual – and extremely valuable - find turned-up recently. The Baptist Union of Australia was formed in the Burton St church in 1926. Each state was given responsibility for the oversight of various activities, NSW being responsible for growth and evangelism. For many years the minutes of this committee had been lost but were recently found in a long neglected box which arrived – it is thought – from a clean-out in Baptist Union HQs. These cover from 1926 to 1943 and are a detailed treasure trove of information about the establishment of the Canberra (Kingston) church. The founding of the Canberra church was the first project of the newly formed BUA. The BUA office in Melbourne and the Canberra church were amazed and overjoyed that these long-lost records have been found and their digesting will take some time – especially for Canberra. Eventually the books will be passed to the BUA but copies of them will first be made for our Archives and the Canberra church (this will be a fairly large project).

Another important biography has been given to the Archives. In 1869 Mr Charles Howard began holding Baptist meetings in his home at Kingsgrove, at first under the auspices of the Newtown church but eventually leading to constitution of the Kingsgrove church in 1881. Mr Howard's great granddaughter, Mrs Carol Eagles of Winston Hills, asked the Archives if we had any information on him and we were able to advise that we did. She and Mr Eagles spent a day in the Archives gleaning plenty of family history (more than we ourselves realised we had!) and a copy of the finished work has been given to us – another valuable addition to the bio section.

Dr Vic Eldridge has been working for some two years on the first definitive history of Morling College and has been allocated a permanent desk in the Archives. This is a major project and will be in progress at least until 2012 before the draft is ready but it is planned to publish this important book just ahead of the College's centenary in 2016.

Professor Bob Linder from Kansas State University will again be with us from 1<sup>st</sup> June for his annual two months research work on Australian Evangelism. He has an allocated desk in the Archives and will be remembered for his fascinating presentation at our recent November 11<sup>th</sup> Remembrance Day event. Incidentally – a major collection of papers from that evening is in course of preparation and will be issued as a Society publication later this year.

We sometimes have some interesting ‘wins’. Recently, the College Principal was given a donation for the College. There was only a lady’s name and that of her husband (in ‘a nursing home’) to go on as there was no return address or other identifier. Naturally, the Principal wanted to send a note of thanks – but where to? The Archives was asked if it could help and acting on a hunch contacted a possible minister who didn’t know the answer but thought that another one might. He did, and we in fact turned-up details of the lady concerned, her address, church connection and some history of her husband’s war service.

Our small team of volunteers has become absolutely basic to the work of the facility. Betty Moore has the missions section well under control and organised. She in fact has the most advanced data base records so far. Jan Plasto has become expert at accessing church records and right now she has plenty to tackle. Jan also raised the bio files and this section is rapidly growing to the extent that we have had to relocate it and find more space to house it. Arthur Pickersgill is our Property Manager and seems to be able to conjure-up desperately needed space when we appear to be at our wits end (notwithstanding, we’re really approaching a crunch point and a miracle is being sought!). Arthur also assists Jan with filing.

Jan Plasto, in addition to her other activities also maintains our register, which while not yet a true data base, has become an invaluable aid in locating topic material and references. The team has in fact overtaken the Archivist. Up until about three or four years ago if somebody needed to get some information the Archivist could lay his hands on it in a few minutes, but the collection has now grown so much that he no longer ‘knows everything’ and the register has become a vital reference. When biographical details are sought they are becoming increasingly more available in the bio section that Jan and Arthur are building-up. Even so, we still have a back-log of material that has yet to be accessed, or at best has been only rough sorted, so the rainbow’s end is still a long way out-of-reach.

The Society must once again acknowledge the valuable administrative support given by Morling College. This Archives receives excellent support from the College and the Baptist Union of NSW – much more so than other State Archives receive from their areas as far as we understand. Much of our success can be traced to that support for without it our work to date could not possibly have advanced as it has. We also maintain close links with the Ferguson Library, located in the Presbyterian headquarters in Strawberry Hills, the two organisations providing each other with information of mutual historic interest. And we are on distribution for information from the National Library in Canberra and the NSW Historic Houses Trust

With all the above activities taking place the Archives is a bit messy at the moment and there is a huge amount of accessing and filing to be done. However, Society Members are welcome to call-in (by arrangement) to see what’s going-on. Visitors are always welcome.

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## Financial Statement of the Baptist Historical Society of NSW for the period 1 March 2008 to 28 February 2009

	<b>Receipts</b>		<b>Payments</b>
1 March 2008 Balance b/f	14,519-84		
Membership Fees	875-00		Postage 145-00
Donations	160-00		Stationery 38-80
Book sales – Society publns.	30-00		BHS Website set-up 3605-01
Book sales – The Long Tragedy	195-00		Catering – Nov.11 718-91
November 11 meeting – meal	408-00		RAHS membership 105-00
Investment Interest	643-82		Travel expenses 125-00
			<b>Sub- total</b> 4,737-72
			Balance c/down 2,093-94
	<b>Total - \$16,831-66</b>		<b>Total - \$16,831-66</b>
1 March 2009 Balance c/forward	\$12,093-94		

The Society's funds are made up of the following:

General Fund -	\$699-78
Term Deposit No 2219 -	\$9,394-16
Term Deposit No 3168 -	\$2-000-00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$12,093-94</b>



# *The Baptist Recorder*

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

## **Baptist Historical Society of NSW**

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

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## **COMING EVENTS OF THE SOCIETY**

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# **Society Meeting Dates for 2009**

**7 May 2009—The 1959 Billy Graham Crusade: its impact on Australia**  
**Presenter: Dr Stuart Piggin**

Associate Professor Stuart Piggin is Director of the Centre for the History of Christian Thought and Experience at Macquarie University and Chairman of the Australian Christian Heritage Foundation. He lectured in History at the Universities of Wollongong and Sydney from 1974 to 1990 and was Master of Robert Menzies College, Macquarie University, from 1990 to 2004.

Stuart is interested in the contribution of Christianity to nation building, the relationship between church and state, religion and politics, spirituality and religious revival, and the human impact of natural and man-made disasters. He has written over 100 articles for academic journals and seven books, including *The Mount Kembla Disaster* and *Evangelical Christianity in Australia*, both published by Oxford University Press, and he edited *Shaping the Good Society in Australia*, which contains the papers given at the first National Forum on Australia's Christian Heritage in Parliament House, Canberra in 2006. Stuart is married to Rosemary, a medico, became a grandfather in November 2005, is a fanatical supporter of the Sydney Swans, and believes that we'll all be playing AFL in heaven.

**13 August—Baptist World Aid Australia—Golden Jubilee.**

**5 November—400 Years Being Baptist—Michael Petras**

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