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# The Baptist Recorder

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

## Next meeting:

### *What ever happened to world mission?*

One hundred years ago the Protestant Churches of the world met in Edinburgh for a World Missions Conference. Under the enthusiastic chairmanship of Mr John Mott they eagerly anticipated completing the evangelisation of the world. Graeme Chatfield will explore what happened to those expectations and why the Centenary celebrations went largely un-noticed among Baptists in Australia. Missions minded people will not want to miss this meeting.

## When:

Thursday 5 August  
2010

## Where:

Faculty Lounge,  
Morling College,  
120 Herring Rd,  
Macquarie Park

## Time:

7.30-9.00 pm

“Pioneers, ‘barley loaves’, Jubilee Five, evangelists, teachers and helps: Women in the early overseas missionary endeavor of Australian Baptists”.

Rosalind M. Gooden

Paper presented to the Baptist Historical Society of NSW  
May 6 2010

Barley loaves and fishes are the symbol of the numerical superiority of women to men in the early Australian Baptist Overseas missionary endeavour.

So said Stuart Piggin in *Spirit of a Nation. The Story of Australia's Christian Heritage*.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike the ‘Serampore trio’<sup>2</sup> of the Baptist Missionary Society (B.M.S.) the Australian Baptist mission’s icon, is ‘five barley loaves’, single women who left Australia for East Bengal in 1885. They were not the first. Arnold and Gilbert were the pioneers who left in 1882. The “barley loaves” went to Bengal at the end of 1885. A New Zealander, Macgeorge, joined them in 1886 and it wasn’t until the “jubilee five” arrived in late 1887 that the first man joined the fledgling work. Eleven to one, there was more bread than fish at the first Australasian Convention held in Faridpur that year.

Numerical superiority can’t be disputed. In the 1918 Convention photo there were eight men, twenty-one women and three children. The farewell photo for 1916 shows 10 women, 3 men and 3 children

In 1992 Margaret Clark<sup>3</sup> writing for the W.A. Baptist Historical Society said

In short women were the first representatives of Australian Baptists in overseas missionary outreach ... at no time have there been more men than women in the A.B.M.S. team. The present day Honour Roll ... lists all who have served for 20 years or more: 61 women and 21 men are named. Predictably, however, if one looks at the composition of the A.B.M.S. Board over the years, the imbalance is the reverse.

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The initial Home Board photo of 1913 when the colonial societies federated were twelve men, five women (of whom three were in fact missionaries from India). So 12 to 2. There was a glass ceiling in Australian Baptists life, on the Australian end. But was this so overseas? After federation in 1913 the Field Council always contained women, and they participated in field decision-making.

Gordon Soddy, a B.M.S. historian writing of Baptist work in Bangladesh records 'In 1885 some ladies from South Australia arrived in Faridpur for Zenana work'.

They actually arrived in 1884 after a year in Calcutta. He adds

It is most unfortunate that in those days 'female co-operation' in the Mission earned only the slightest of mentions in the official reports! This makes it all the more significant and interesting that the first Australian Baptist missionaries in East Bengal were ladies, and that it was a year or two before they were joined by any men.<sup>4</sup>

Ours was not the British pattern for mission work where the wives were the legitimising force for single workers.<sup>5</sup> Even their zenana women wrote

In most places our mission ... agents are kindly superintended by the wives of the missionaries - an arrangement which gives our work a status as connected with the larger work carried on by that Society....

Nor interestingly was it the New Zealand Baptist pattern. They recruited an experienced B.M.S. couple to lead their work, although Macgeorge and Newcombe chose their first site before they were joined by St Dalmas.

In 1935 Rollings for the N.Z.B.M.S. history writes

These workers [Arnold and Gilbert] claim a place in our memory. They were the pioneers from southern lands of mission work in East Bengal. In point of time all our New Zealand workers stand in their succession, and out of all proportion to the number sent out the majority belong to their sex.<sup>6</sup>

So our story starts with two pioneer women, Marie Gilbert (twenty-six) and Ellen Arnold (twenty-four) sent out from Adelaide by the Furreedpore Baptist Missionary Society in October 1882. At the time they arrived in Calcutta there were said to be four hundred zenana workers in all India and Burma.<sup>7</sup>

They spent their first year in Calcutta. In 1884 they moved to Furreedpore,<sup>8</sup> with no resident B.M.S. missionaries. They were on their own (although there was the

preacher Punchanon Biswas and his family who had been employed by the Furreedpore mission for a number of years, four other 'native preachers', and a Bible woman.<sup>9</sup>)

Arnold's return to Australia in 1884 was important. It gave her opportunity to give 'the real live missionary story' so soon after the beginning of the work. Mead seized the opportunity, wrote to leadership in Baptist churches in the colonies, Tasmania and N.Z. and Arnold visited a large proportion of these churches stirring up interest. This is often referred to as the Arnold Crusade. How I wish we had better records of what she said in our churches, but rarely do reports mention more than an 'interesting talk', memorabilia or Bengali singing. She ultimately recruited four other women to return with her to East Bengal.

So in 1885 a group of five, Arnold and Pappin (S.A.), Fuller and Wilkin (Vic.), Plested (Qld) gathered in Adelaide for a great farewell in Flinders Street Baptist Church. Silas Mead in his address said

Tonight we are bidding farewell to five women going to the millions of women in what I shall designate the Australasian District of East Bengal. What are these among so many? Possibly in some degree what the five loaves were to the hungry thousands around him in Judea. Yes, five Australian sisters; ....<sup>10</sup>

Five barley loaves<sup>11</sup> became the icon for Australasian Baptist mission work.

The six women in Bengal were joined by further recruits.<sup>12</sup> In all Australasian colonial Baptist societies women were their first recruits. Stuart Piggitt got it right when he said the barley loaves were the symbol of the numerical superiority of women over men in the Australian Baptist missionary beginnings. The links were firmly formed for the single women by living as a single household in Furreedpore initially. From there they scattered to their own work and more women joined them.<sup>13</sup> Pubna was the one station opened by an Australian male missionary, Summers, after he had lived with B.M.S. missionaries for his initial two years. He then married Annie Hearne.

The women started a round-robin correspondence<sup>14</sup> which makes fascinating reading, much more revelatory than the later printed version that became a tool for informing the churches and supporters. Even that is interesting for it gives the insider view rather than the edited home version published in the magazine *Our Indian Field*, or in the State papers.

In both Mymensingh and Comilla B.M.S. couples were at work when the Australian women arrived.

In Comilla, which was the New South Wales field, the work had been started by visits from Dacca and then by the Rev and Mrs Jewson for the BMS. They were joined by Ellen Arnold as NSW's first 'real live missionary' and Martha Plested, the Queensland founder. It wasn't for lack of trying for one of their own that SA's Ellen Arnold became NSW's first missionary. None was available to go in 1885. SA built an extra floor on their Furreedpore house so they could accommodate them all, and the inevitable happened. Expenditure exceeded donations. So when NSW offered to contribute £100 to the cost of the extensions, and have Arnold as their missionary, Ellen took this as God's call to transfer, as she felt responsible for the overrun on expenditure. Such is guidance.

Early in this joint Comilla work a delegation from England visited the 1889 Convention of the Australasian missionaries (9 women and 1 man) and asked them straight out whether they wanted to work together with the BMS people.

Let me quote the record of the Convention.<sup>15</sup> (It was not minutes as the Convention had no decision-making authority)

(Rev CH Baynes) thought the time had arrived when for our mutual happiness and usefulness it was most desirable for us to come to a distinct understanding as to our relation to the BMS.

Wouldn't you like to know what triggered that comment? The Victorian ladies worked in Mymensingh alongside the Ellisons and there were housing issues. Arnold and Plested were both in Comilla with the Jewsons. And nobody was senior and experienced.

Is there to be one Conference for the English and Australian Baptists or do the colonial churches prefer to be quite independent and manage their own mission affairs? ...After an interchange of opinion Mr Baynes gathered that the colonies preferred to carry on independent work, and in this way accomplish more probably: Then he considered it most desirable that some distinct fields should be decided upon... He further thought that it would be best for the English missionaries to be withdrawn altogether from the stations taken up by the Australasians....

He also indicated

That all of our [ie Australasian] fields were at present greatly undermanned and that we were in immediate need of considerable additions... and particularly enquired as to what prospect there was of the colonies sending out men.

I do not think that in his work with BMS staff he was used to having to deal with a group of women.

Unfortunately the analysis of much of women's work is from understated records and involves 'reading between the lines'.

To continue the NSW story a bit, there was some disagreement between NSW and Queensland over the financing of the Comilla house, a loan became a gift that caused the problem, and Martha Plested moved to Noakhali to open up work for Queensland and NSW received Denness, another SA export, to work with Arnold.

There is a long saga over getting land for the Zenana Missionaries from the Maharajah of Tipperah, building the house, incurring the opposition of local Christians. Arnold went home on leave, again broken in health, retraced her steps around the colonies telling of the growing work, and eventually rejoined the SA team. NSW found another import in Emily Lynne, but then in 1890 they sent out Annie Bacon, who married Walter Barry a New Zealander and Cissie Middleton who married the Rev John Ings also from NZ. David Findlay was the first man for NSW arriving in 1896 and left 1906, but it was ultimately the Barrys who established the Comilla work. The Ings moved on to work for Queensland.

### On Whose Shoulders Do We Stand?

Let me ask the important question on whose shoulders did they and, therefore, we stand?

There are two streams – South Australia and Victoria. Yet underpinning them is the first era<sup>16</sup> of the 'modern missions movement' and the colonial world with its industrialization and developing colonialism.

The following are important 'shoulders' – the British India movement, Carey and the Serampore mission, the zenana mission movement in general and the Baptist Zenana Mission in particular, the Baptist women's scene in Victoria, women's situation in South Australia and finally Mead and South Australian Baptists.

In regard to British India, the East India Company had become the British Raj (rulers). There was an expatriate presence in the towns of East Bengal, both of government and business. Missions history had been affected by the Indian Mutiny. Educational expectations were influencing regional areas, and mission agents were viewed as contributors to the British ideals of civilizing.

The partitioning of Bengal in 1905 was the trigger for the 'Quit India' agitation and that affected Australasian work, and was a contributing factor to institutionalise work on the relative safety of mission compounds.

Our Australian Baptist roots were Carey and the B.M.S. British Baptists were at the forefront of modern missionary endeavour. Stuart Piggott outlines missions at the end of the eighteenth century as

... built on broad foundations: the biblical imperative to make disciples of all nations; the humanitarian duty to eliminate ignorance, vice and suffering; a philosophy of history in which God was seen bringing in the millennium with the help of the faithful; and voyages of discovery which demonstrated that the whole world could now be reached with the gospel.<sup>17</sup>

Much could be said of that inheritance and its impact on people like Silas Mead, but allow me to confine my comments to Carey's attitudes to women workers. Karen Smith<sup>18</sup> quotes that as early as 1796, Carey claimed women were needed to 'communicate the gospel ... in a situation where superstition secludes all women of respectability from hearing the word unless from their own sex'.<sup>19</sup>

In the Serampore Agreement of 1805<sup>20</sup>

We see that in primitive times the Apostles were very much assisted in their great work by several pious females. The great value of female help may be easily appreciated, if we consider how much Asiatic women are shut up from men .... It behoves us, therefore, to afford to our European sisters all possible assistance in acquiring the language, that they may, in every way which Providence may open to them, become instrumental in promoting the salvation of millions of native women.

This language learning opportunity was to be for their wives. Carey and colleagues did not approve of unmarried females. Ann Grant, who married John Chamberlain and stayed on in India after his death, wished that her three daughters were sons 'that they might go out to preach Christ the Saviour'.<sup>21</sup>

Daniel Potts dismisses the contribution of women by saying that they were not involved on a regular basis with their husbands in the mission work at Serampore. In his words, Hannah Marshman<sup>22</sup> (whom he elsewhere describes as 'Marshman's dominating wife') was the 'only missionary wife who took a constantly active part in the Mission's work'.<sup>23</sup>

However attitudes did change and missionary wives became more active for the women of India, particularly after 1862, with the pioneering work of Sale and Lewis in reaching the zenanas.

In 1867 twenty-five Baptist women met in London to hear Mrs Lewis' appeal. As a result they formed the 'Ladies Association for the support of Zenana work and Bible-women in India'. It had a twofold purpose - supply women missionaries and train and support Indian Bible women and teachers. This was later called Baptist Zenana Mission (B.Z.M.) and operated independently of

the B.M.S. The missionary wives on each Station conducted the zenana work and supervised workers who were recruited, sent out and supported by the 'Ladies Association'.

Brian Stanley wrote to me

My conclusion that the B.M.S. remained, even after the formation of the Baptist Zenana Mission, a predominantly male society, staffed and controlled almost entirely by men, reflected a view of the B.Z.M. as an important auxiliary to the work of the B.M.S. but nothing more. Women had a specific but limited role to play on the field. In the B.M.S., as in other missionary societies, and as in church life, the assumption of male leadership and control remains inviolate. However, my impression was that the women who gained a substantial degree of independence of action in running the B.Z.M. were then reluctant to cede that independence when the B.Z.M. was absorbed into the B.M.S. in 1914.<sup>24</sup>

Much enthusiasm was generated by the new Association and leading Baptist women were invited to join the committees in various places. Mrs James Martin in Nottingham became involved almost immediately and when she and her husband came to Collins Street in 1869 she brought her commitment to work among Indian women and so Victorian Baptists are direct heirs of the B.Z.M.

In 1871 Hannah formed a Victorian Auxiliary and sent donations directly for Bible women in Calcutta. Prayer and giving were fuelled by letters from missionary wives. In the first year they raised £56.3s. She even printed and circulated five hundred copies of Lewis's paper 'A Plea for Zenanas' in that initial year. Hannah believed that women could be educated to the significance of this cause.<sup>25</sup>

The paradigm had shifted. Women were seen as a necessary part of the missionary task force if India was to be reached. The Victorian giving doubled in four years. The money was sent for two Bible women in Calcutta and one in Delhi with Mrs Smith.<sup>26</sup>

Mrs Martin had enquiries from women who wanted to serve. In 1875, seven years before the sending of the pioneers, she wrote

A young lady, a member of one of our Victorian churches has expressed her earnest desire to devote herself to the work of the Zenana Mission and we hope that the way of her going to India may be made plain.

Marie Gilbert, a member of Aberdeen Street church, offered to the B.Z.M.<sup>27</sup> and was accepted on the condition that support came from Australia. Her church at the time

was committed to a building programme and she subsequently moved to Adelaide teacher training and the influence of Silas Mead.

In 1886 this auxiliary was absorbed into the V.B.M.S. and subsequently Hannah Martin was to be a member of the V.B.M.S. Committee until her death in 1905. For years she was a forceful woman in the deliberations of the mission, and she was the first lady delegate to the B.U.V.<sup>28</sup>

Stirrings among women in South Australia led to the granting of suffrage to women in 1894. Important women in SA history were listed in a Diary for *Women's Suffrage Centenary: South Australia 1894-1994, Votes For Women*.<sup>29</sup> It contains the following entry '1858-1931 Ellen Arnold Baptist missionary, initially at Flinders Street Baptist Church and the rest of her life in Bengal (Bangladesh)'.

Lillian Mead, the daughter of Rev Silas Mead, was asked to give a paper to the W.C.T.U.<sup>30</sup> on 'The Awakened Women'. This is a significant paper of women's responsibility by a Baptist woman, and worthy of wider circulation. But note the 'barley loaves' precede the granting of women's suffrage in S.A. by a decade.

Another influence in SA was women preachers in Adelaide churches. In 1882 in the newspaper that advertised the farewell meeting to Arnold and Gilbert there was also one for meetings of evangelist Emilie Baeyertz.<sup>31</sup>

While the strong influence on Baptist women in Victoria was the B.Z.M. through Hannah Martin, in South Australia it was the influence of Rev. Silas Mead, particularly on the young people of his church. He gathered support for the formation of the S.A.B.M.S. by 1865. 'Small is beautiful' sums up his attitude. It was better for South Australia to have its own Society than to be an Auxiliary for the B.M.S. and send funds to London. In 1873<sup>32</sup> Mead believed that

1. Nine out of ten persons living in these colonies are already acquainted with the truths of the Gospel.
2. The dispatch of fifty Christian men from our colonies ... would not in the long run materially diminish the total amount of spiritual agency put forth here, and any gaps temporarily caused would be speedily filled up.

He was a visionary. But his was the masculine statement of need for missionaries. There is no specific mention of women, although from 1868 he was

reporting on the zenana work in *Truth and Progress*.<sup>33</sup> South Australians needed 'to give money, to send men, to pray unceasingly for the Lord to bless the million of souls'.

For years the Furreedpore Mission only had men on its committee. But in 1873 they noted the value of women as collectors of funds.

In 1880 Furreedpore Mission brought Panchanon Biswas, the first convert of their work, to Adelaide. His impact on the thinking of the women of the churches was profound. In his final address he said 'Respected mothers and dear sisters, do not forget the souls of thousands of your own sex who are perishing for want of the bread of life'.<sup>34</sup> Arnold heard him speak.

Why women? The answer is simple. They were available, they were offering and there was more concern to obey the great commission than to question who could do it. They came at a time when the zenana movement was only about fifteen years old. It had already captured the imagination of the Baptist women in Victoria and South Australia. I've not discovered any contrary opinion in what I have read in Australian Baptist's papers, most comments are hagiographic. For instance comments of Rev. F. C. Buckingham to the N.Z.B.U. Assembly in 1908 are typical

Think of our missionaries - how God has blessed us in them. They are the sons and daughters of our own Churches, some of the choicest spirits of our Christian faith, called out by the Head of the Church for this work; loved at home for their splendid character, their devotion to the Master's service, shown in their study to equip themselves for this work; ...watched with the deepest of interest.<sup>35</sup>

It was not until the 1970s and the women's ordination debate in Baptist circles that the expectations changed for women missionaries on deputation.

The Queensland B.M.S. drew up a memorandum for the formation of its society in 1885. Its rationale was basically: women reach women, because men can not. Reaching women is significant work. Men for ministry here are scarce. It costs less to support a European woman than a man. Funds are scarce in our own work. The women should be given the work of engaging and dismissing teachers and preachers. They can be trusted to use their judgement in organising the work. It was this sense of trust that was so different to B.M.S. situation, whether it was due to colonial expediency or Australian independence.

So what actually did these women do with this opportunity? What did they do in East Bengal in their numerical superiority?

Odetta Ferreira<sup>36</sup> concludes that women succeed in ministry for three reasons. Firstly their human warmth compensates for the machine coldness of emerging industrialisation in areas of mission. Secondly, theirs is the power of endurance, adaptability and even wholesome stubbornness. And thirdly they have an ability to address other women's needs that often prepares the road for male missionaries. I can see all three reasons for success in the women we are considering.

So I'd like to consider this from several angles.

1. First our women conformed to the expected image of that time, both for single zenana workers and as wives,
2. but secondly they broke out from the mould in opening up new stations and institutions.
3. Thirdly the key to their contribution is to be found in the relationships they formed, and this may well be the defining contribution of women to missions. To measure relationships you have to look at the lives not only of the women but of those they influenced.
4. Finally the reflex influence of women missionaries on the home constituency is immense.

### Conformity to the Image

Catherine Ross<sup>37</sup> examines the categories of 'separate sphere' and 'shared dominions' for evangelical missions history. As a product of the Industrial Revolution there developed a separate sphere for women, a marginalisation, a domestication that was reinforced by evangelical theology of the time. The woman was to be 'pious, pure and domesticated, uncontaminated by the dirty world men had to occupy'. Home was a haven and place of retreat. The zenana movement in India was the logical outworking of this. My argument that our Australasian women conformed to an image, well defined both for singles and married, is an argument of conformity to 'separate spheres'. Women's work is with women.

At that initial Decennial Conference in Calcutta in December 1882 Gilbert and Arnold heard Miss Greenfield speak. She has been much quoted for

Let us, in our Master's name, lay our hand on the hand that rocks the cradle, and tune the lips that sing the lullabies. Let us win the mothers of India for Christ, and the day will not be long deferred when India's sons also shall be brought to the Redeemer's feet.

Greenfield is the idealist, Marianne Lewis<sup>38</sup> the realist. She described the role of zenana workers. She calls attention to the amount of self denial required to discharge it. The journey to the houses she had to visit, made in the very hottest part of the day, and taking her through dusty and squalid thoroughfares, was of itself fatiguing. Sitting and teaching in the close, dirty apartments, or in the ill-screened veranda, where women congregated around her, was attended with no small inconvenience and exhaustion.

As Pappin said

There is not money enough in all this world to hire me to do house to house visiting in the villages of India. And yet the love of God constrains me, and makes *fascinating* what would otherwise be utterly repellent and intolerably disagreeable.<sup>39</sup>

There is plenty of evidence that they accepted the expectations. They did their zenana work in groups, they did it accompanied by Bible women, they lived on boats for months, they constantly appealed for more workers to be sent. Wives, when possible, accompanied their husbands to the villages and taught the women at the door of their tent or from the boat's deck. They did it to sow the good seed, living in hope that it would take root in the lives of women, and ultimately impact the men of India.

Arnold, towards the end of her life, summed it up at a time when more and more work was being located in the towns or in institutions behind compound walls

Of all our efforts I do think village preaching and living is the last that should close. Of course you know I have been in every other kind of mission work at one time or another, and this in my 45th year, so know a little of relativity of things... and it will not be done by Indian women to any extent... Pray the Lord of the harvest for more women.<sup>40</sup>

Village itineration seems to have far greater importance in Australasian circles than the local visits to zenanas in the towns. This would seem to be a much more scatter-gun approach than working in depth with the few. One can only ask the question would a different methodology have achieved more? Certainly the lasting results in Pubna district are not in the thousands of villages where the women visited occasionally, but in the dispensary contacts and in the village of Ataikola where Arnold chose to live.

The mould for the married women was different at least in theory. They were expected to be occupied with household, husband and family. But the picture is much less clear. Annie Summers, who came out to marry Arthur, arrived on 3 November 1890 and married at Serampore a week later. He had moved to Pubna late in 1889, so she joined him in this new location (but without the benefit of language). There is very little written of her or by her.

Their first child was born in August 1891, so she was pregnant for most of that first year. The Summers were retrenched because of lack of funds in 1901, but stayed in India and worked first for the 'Society for Protection of Children' and later re-opened the B.M.S. work among the Santalis in Dinajpur. Their two daughters went to school in Darjeeling, and were sent home to be with relatives. The Summers returned to Australia in 1927 after thirty-eight years in India.<sup>41</sup> Annie fits the mould, but we lack information. Perhaps the only way we are going to know more is to research what husband's write about their wives – an exercise fraught with the difficulty of interpreting the royal 'we'.

The next marriage in the Australasian ranks was that of 'barley loaf' Ruth Wilkin to Abia Neville. Wilkin had been a zenana missionary for eight years and responsible for the development of the Girls School in Mymensingh. She knew Bengali. Abia asked for permission to marry her in May 1892, but was told the rule of his two years on the field had to be adhered to,<sup>42</sup> and he was asked to abstain from visiting her in Mymensingh.<sup>43</sup> She chaired the 1893 November Convention and they married at the end of it.<sup>44</sup>

The financial arrangements were to be that from the wedding Neville's salary would be Rs.200 per month, (I think hers was Taka 80). Her salary ceased the day they married and they were expected to pay house rent out of his salary. She no longer had the status of a missionary, but in practical terms I fail to see the difference in the work she did. True, when they returned to Mymensingh she was not given back the oversight of the girls' school, but she ran C.E. and visited zenanas and dispensed medicines at her door. It was a case of once a missionary, always a missionary, no matter what the official status in the eyes of the home committee.

While the details are different, the marriage of Alice Pappin to Dr Cecil Mead follows the same pattern. The official subsuming of the identity of Pappin under that of her husband resulted in little difference in terms of her work and involvement. She certainly felt the increased responsibility of bringing children up in East Bengal, and gave them her time. She was quite prepared to leave them with Arnold while she went to the villages with Cecil. She writes of family restrictions and how she collected Indian embroidery which she sent home for sale<sup>45</sup> to raise money to sponsor hostel students. She wrote 'while my children are growing up I cannot get out in the district as I used to do, and so this is a small piece of work which I can do, and I am glad to do'.<sup>46</sup>

There is a crucial question of separation. In many cases it was the children who paid the price. The Nevilles left Emily in Australia with relatives as a five year old. Then the family was apart for two years when Ruth brought the children to Australia while Abia stayed in East Bengal.

The Mead girls were sent to Darjeeling to Boarding school, so were the Summers girls. But there were always the complications of Southern hemisphere schooling dates for the furlough year and the loss of a year's schooling. Peter Masters he was sent home by sea with the Misses Grace Thomson and Grace Brown to go to King's College, Adelaide.<sup>47</sup> Wives spent extended time living in cottages on the Darjeeling estate to be with the children away from the heat. So in order not to separate the husband from his ministry, he was often separated from wife and children.<sup>48</sup>

Even on this issue of the priority of the 'work' there was some feeling that providing facilities for missionary mothers and children was a lesser priority than services for Bengalis. Arnold wrote

I wonder which the Master wants, Pubna women's hospital or cottage at Mt Hermon? Help for suffering women's bodies and souls or more comfort for missionaries. No public services in India have such conveniences provided and are missionaries to be more 'comfortably' placed than people of the world? Where is 'taking up our cross'?<sup>49</sup>

These women were helpmeets in their husband's endeavours, and able to cope with the demands of living in a hostile environment. But there was an expectation from the home committees of the role of a wife in this early period. And maybe there was a significant difference between women who married after service and those who came out to marry.

There is no doubt that the single women, despite the expectations of separate spheres, considered their role to be their vocation, and despite the frustrations of singleness and harsh conditions there was a degree of contentment and fulfilment in what they did, even if they were not plaster saints. Many of them served for more than thirty years.

But I think that the important question is one that should have been asked at the time of the women's ordination debates. Just what role did these women have? Did 'we' allow them to go overseas to do what we would not allow them to do at home?

### Breaking Out of the Mould

From my research I have found little evidence that these women were pastors of emerging local churches, although this was so in some missions. If they conducted baptisms or communion services, it is an exceptional event justified by the circumstances. Each colony had its preachers and they conducted the formal worship on the various stations. One of the major tasks of the men

missionaries became the supervision of the paid preachers. The men were better trained in theology than any of the women for a number of decades, and the women came to take the lesser role in their Conventions. I guess even here we see conformity to expected roles. The women were basically evangelists, who saw their role as proclaimers of the good news. But they were financed by the societies.

However, there was consistent evidence that many of them were quite content to have men in their audiences or to converse with them. I quote Arnold :

You will rejoice to hear that the gentleman of the very first house I visited here ... has become very earnest about his soul. Although always polite and grateful for what God enabled us to do for his wife in her sickness, he was only inclined to make fun of religion. A week ago I met him in the road and had a very earnest conversation. Amongst other things he said he now and then felt he *must* settle his soul concerns.<sup>50</sup>

Also

We get as large audiences of women in these village houses as the men missionaries do in the bazaars and markets. We always tell the men to go away, as we talk to women only, but I find here they are so anxious to hear that they sit *behind* me, and leave the women to get the front view, so of course I don't see them.<sup>51</sup>

Bertha Tuck sums it up 'We women workers, of course, stipulate for audiences of women, but we always allow large and small men to be present if the master of the house has no objection'.<sup>52</sup>

The task of evangelism is more important than conforming to the mould.

Some other obvious breakings out of the mould are to be seen in the roles the women accepted in the choosing of locations for work, purchase of property, the supervision of buildings and the raising of funds. Much could be said on each of these, but there is not time. I think the women would have been more than happy to leave such tasks to the men. But nevertheless they did them when the need arose.

The role of these single women in the work of the preachers could benefit from more study. The relationship between Panchanon Biswas and Arnold did not cease when Arnold transferred to Comilla for N.S.W. He was the one who supervised the building of the Comilla zenana house under Arnold's oversight. She would trust him to manage projects, and

advocated for him with the Committee on issues to do with his retrieval payments. Women were encouragers of pastors, rather than managers of them.

The women were responsible for the founding and developing of some significant institutions. Myensingh women developed the Girls' School, with its boarding facilities for girls from other stations. The Birisiri Girls' School was another. Pubna had its hostel for women and girls, and the Orakandi Widows' home was an important contribution of the mission to the uplift of the Namasudra people. Medical institutions were more obviously a 'shared dominion'. Brahmanbaria was the location of a cottage hospital, whereas S.A. resisted the pressures to develop its medical programme beyond the day care of patients in a Dispensary.

Something more could be said of the role of one or two of the Australasian women in founding missions. Arnold had a pivotal role in the formation of colonial societies. But there is also the role of Agnes Pearce in the formation of the Mayurbhunj Mission and the pivotal role of Kate Allenby. Newcombe/Driver founded the Dunedin Women's missionary Training Institute. Reta Dixon, a candidate for N.S.W.B.M.S. unaccepted on health grounds, founded the A.I.M.<sup>53</sup>

But to me the most important contribution that the women made was in the area of building relationships.

### Maintaining of Relationships

There is some interesting analysis on gender differences in missions literature in terms of understanding of relationality.<sup>54</sup>

Bryant Myers<sup>55</sup> mentions Susan Juster's research of the early conversion stories published in 1800s in American mission publications.

Her conclusions are that

- \* Women had an image of God that was relational. God was described as father, friend, soul-mate and lover. Men saw God as law-giver, sovereign and king.
- \* Women thought of sin in terms of failed and flawed relationships. For men sin meant breaking the laws or rules.
- \* For women, conversion sometimes was a form of liberation from oppressive fathers and husbands, whereas for men conversion sometimes was motivated by a reaction against unjust rules.<sup>56</sup>

I must admit that I am uneasy with most suggestions

of significant gender differences. I think there are always exceptions that are so marked as to invalidate the thesis, but nevertheless there is enough to warrant consideration. The more I have thought about it, the more convinced I am that the measure of women's effective contribution needs to be made from the lives of the people they influenced.<sup>57</sup>

There are a number of categories of relationship we could examine: among themselves, with their male colleagues, with employees, preachers, children, the zenana women, other missions, expatriates etc.

At the Convention in 1894 the women gave a series of addresses on relationships. Gilbert wrote on 'The relationship of the missionary to fellow workers'. Arnold spoke on 'The relationship of the Missionary to the native brethren and sisters' and mentioned 'our duty towards them to help them in Bible study, to show hospitality to them, to give them free entrance to our homes at all times, to talk over the work with them, to show our self-denial and to encourage them to practice it also'. Mrs Neville followed on 'The relationship of the Missionary to the Home Churches' and the duties involved.

The other lasting legacy from that early era was the Annual Convention that started not as a business- conducting, decision-making body, but as a resource for spiritual nurture, missiological thinking, mutual education and fellowship. The emphasis was on their relationships with each other and with God.

There is no doubt that the model of those first missionaries was an apprentice one, where the senior missionaries shaped the thinking and ministry patterns of newcomers. There may have been struggles for the younger missionaries,<sup>58</sup> but there is no doubt that the older generation did shape the younger, and the key to it was relationships.

Another area of interest is the relationship of the single women missionaries to their male colleagues, whether on the field or on the home committees.

Glory Dharmaraj<sup>59</sup> argues that the centre was patriarchy, and women had to negotiate with it, submit to it, circumvent it, challenge it and transform it.<sup>60</sup> This might be a useful way of looking at the complex question as it relates to Australian Baptist missions. I can find examples of each in our early records. There is plenty of negotiation regarding salaries, (and reductions so more workers are sent). The women at Convention negotiated with the B.M.S. regarding their relationship. Married housing was distanced from zenana quarters for appearance's sake. They had to submit, ignore and circumvent at times, and in many cases retreated to their separate spheres. A big challenge was from feisty Arnold when she learned that the mission had been paying an insurance policy on her life. Her letter to the General Secretary ends with

I must be allowed to obey Mat. 6:19, and if the mission wishes to hoard, I do not judge, let them do it, but they must not do it in my name, or I shall lose the blessing of the Lord. I am not ranting or blind, but writing from my long experience of the Lord's leading. I want to see souls saved, but recently see the opposite and have been searching round for causes, when this printed page falls under my eyes. ... I fear some Christian who sees it and know of my profession may be stumbled. Please remove what I regard as a stigma on my name.

However I am surprised that she did not know of the insurance policy, because there are minutes of its transfer to the NSWBMS when she joined them and back to SA when she returned to their service. But she certainly made her point!

There is no doubt that the mission circles at home were male controlled, whilst the committees in East Bengal were more egalitarian. But those home committees in each colony were a long way from the villages of East Bengal, and the day-to-day working out of relationships. There was always the possibility of being forgiven for action rather than waiting for permission, but men could be as guilty of that as the women.

Relationships with nationals are, of course, the crucial issue. What impact did the women have on the Bengal population in general and the Christian community in particular? Did the women see people impacted, converted as fruit of their work?

Yes, there were a few among the Bengalis, particularly from the hostels and orphanages. Mymensingh Women's log book makes encouraging reading, with its record of baptisms and spiritual growth. For example 'five of the girls (boarding) confessed our Lord in baptism. This had been deeply affected by the death of Miss Fuller, of whom they were very fond. This probably influenced them in deciding for Christ'.<sup>61</sup>

The results among the Garos were more exciting. I'd like to have the time to consider the winning of the Garos in relation to the role of women, a much more successful venture than the Bengali work. What impact did a matrilineal culture have on missionary methods?

From the work of Seymour, Fuller reported

Miss Seymour has been instructing a class of sweepers - Cooli came from that group. The man spoke to all and preached Christ in the simplest manner in season and out, and with a radiant face said he was only waiting to be baptised.<sup>62</sup>

This is the type of evidence needed of the effect of min-

istry on the lives of people, who, in themselves, make the impact. It is indirect or delayed effectiveness but nevertheless valid, if difficult to document.

I've been working on the question of Arnold's knowledge of Islam in her work and have found a record of one of her Sunday School class, a Muslim, accepting Christ as a sixteen year old in 1896 in Pubna and was able to trace a relationship until 1931. Rev Moses wrote to the Rev Grace

Miss Arnold's death leaves a blank in my life... For over 30 years we were one in spirit. There was hardly a sorrow or joy in my life that she did not know, and the same was with her... With us there was no race or colour prejudice..... She not only cared for my body for some years but she faithfully cared also for my soul. What I am today, I am first by the grace of God and then by the love and prayers of Miss Arnold. She was an ideal missionaries and one of the best soul winners I had known. Miss Arnold was one of the most unselfish European missionaries I had ever come across. Very early days of my acquaintance with her I was very much struck with her love and sympathy for the poor and suffering ones. .... I, a fruit of her labour, have travelled, throughout the length and breadth of India and up in the Himalayas preaching the everlasting Gospel of our God. Her sympathy, prayer and letters always followed me. I feel all the more keenly now to go and faithfully fulfill my calling....<sup>63</sup>

Another specific area of ministry of the women was the widow's home associated with the social uplift of the Namasudras, based in Orakandi. Again there is not a systematic record of what happened to those women. Some of them were child widows. There were arranged marriages for some, skills development and employment for others. Tuck wrote in 1928

Widows first learned that in the eyes of the followers of Christ widows counted as somebodies rather than nobodies. Gradually the Hindus became accustomed to the situation and decided that for widows to become Christians was inevitable if they came to the Home.<sup>64</sup>

The women's relationship with the Bible women they employed could do with more study. There is a pau-

city of acknowledgement of their part in the work in the official records. The testimony of an Indian Bible woman who had worked alongside the British missionaries acknowledged that impact 'You sister, have grasped my hand and Christ has grasped yours'.<sup>65</sup>

I've spent time talking to the mothers of some of the significant present leaders. Their memories of these early missionary women give a picture of work under colonial conditions, in a specific cultural setting. Arnold was quite convinced that the Bible women were not going to be effective evangelists in the villages, but what of the impact of their children – the Simon Sircars, Prakrithi Naths, Nanki Debnaths and Jason Das?

The Bangladesh Baptist Fellowship (B.B.F.) continues to designate ninth July as Ellen Arnold Day. Needless to say the memories of her influence are dimming. I am still asking why Arnold and not Sutton or one of the men. It was not because she was our pioneer, or longest serving missionary. The B.B.F. was formed in 1919. In the 75th Jubilee brochure of the B.B.F.<sup>66</sup> Arnold is the only missionary mentioned for the early years. For 1925 the brochure records that Arnold was present at the Assembly and that the major question for discussion was the Union being able to have their 'own' preachers, and how they would raise the necessary finances. Arnold felt strongly that for the A.B.F.M. to bring a couple of Bengali preachers onto their committee was tokenism, and it was far better for nationals to undertake their own work. In 1928 she offered the Fellowship to take over her work in Bera, and they appointed a committee for this responsibility, Ataikola was added to their responsibilities soon after.

For years the work of the Ataikola Medical Dispensary was seen to be that of the B.B.F., (even when a missionary staffed it). Arnold, despite the opposition of the Board, returned to East Bengal after retirement, went and lived at Bera and Ataikola, and died there in 1931. Her grave-stone is by the road through Ataikola.<sup>67</sup>

So I conclude it was because of her trust and confidence in Bengali initiative and her desire to see something with a Bengali flavour to the shape of the Church. In other words her relationships are what were valued. She lived close to the people.

### Reflex Action – The Education of the Home Constituency

Finally, mention must be made of the reflex influence on the sending church. Deputation was a regular commitment during home leave. These were the chief means of passing on the message of prayer, per-

sonnel and financial needs for the work. Most churches in the colonies were opened to them, right from Ellen Arnold's early medical leave in 1884.

Also there was the prodigious flow of information from East Bengal. Not only did they publish *Our Bond* within Bengal each month, but they supplied their home committees with information for their publications.

They published books – the earliest being Ruth Wilkin's *Gleanings from a Foreign Field*.<sup>68</sup> In 1912 Arnold published *Gems in the Rough* in order to raise funds to provide Women's Quarters in Pubna for the sake of rescuing women and girls of India 'from the gravest moral peril'.

Some of them were effective raisers of funds. There are plenty of anecdotes. For instance it is reported in 1892 the 'Miss Arnold spoke of the Zenana work in Furreedpore and made a strong appeal to Christians to deny themselves in order to be able to help the mission'. She said that at one country town in Queensland five men gave up smoking, with the net result of £13 a year for missions. She asked a minister to give up his pipe, and he offered to give his horse a quart of meal a day less.<sup>69</sup> She certainly had a gift of reducing action to the capacity of the audience.

A question that needs documenting is what contribution did returning women missionaries make to their home churches. A large proportion of them stayed until retirement, so were only looking for volunteer activity, but others went into significant work in prisons and aged care. They served on committees, accepted leadership in women's organisations. But I don't think any found a paid role in a local church.

Finally there is the formation of the Senior Girl's missionary Union in 1922. Alice Barber had the idea of banding together the elder girls of our churches in the interest of missions.

... the girls in these groups set to work firstly to study missionary conditions in East Bengal. A knowledge of workers and their problems soon meant the girls were praying earnestly for India - and then desiring to show their interest in a practical way, they learned to give.<sup>70</sup>

## Conclusions

In my reflective moments I asked myself how did we get from these early women to where the church in Bangladesh is today? Did they do anything of significance in those early years as zenana missionaries in colonial societies? Were there any structural changes to the society in which they worked? Were the out-

comes more profound on our Baptist constituency in Australia than in Bengal?

As early as 1898 Abia Neville wrote 'Formerly the education of girls was considered unnecessary, but of late years opinion has undergone a great change on this point, and schools for girls have been established in all important centres of population'.<sup>71</sup>

And in 1923 William Goldsack claimed

The emancipation of India's women comes slowly, and many are coming to see that Christianity alone can bring freedom from the bondage in which the superstition of ages has kept our Indian sisters. ... Freed from seclusion of the zenana and the fatal bar to educational progress resulting from early marriage they stand in a class by themselves and wield an influence and power for good which can scarcely be exaggerated.<sup>72</sup>

These general national achievements had their local 'face' in Mymensingh, Pabna, Comilla, Brahmanbaria et al.

It has been the impact of women on the individuals with whom they spent their time and prayers. The institutional results are only the tip of the iceberg.

The zenana mission movement, the separate sphere of women working for women, has been called the first feminist movement by Pierce Beaver.<sup>73</sup> Our Australasian Baptist history of women in missions (overseas) was part of much wider developments. Ian Brown the general secretary of the New Zealand Baptist Union and N.Z.B.M.S. wrote

No other public ministry of the church, as a whole, has captured the vision, single-minded commitment and passion of women as the task of working in and for the support of overseas mission work. Perhaps a significant reason for this is that the western institutional and male dominated church has restricted women in ministries they have to offer. On the other hand mission agencies - because of their compulsion to reach the 'lost' world for Christ, have been (generally) open to the uniqueness of ministry by women. In doing so they have released a tremendous resource for mission. It's at this point perhaps we have missed an extremely important link. Men are very good at devising structures of things, but it is the passion, and 'single-minded' commitment of many women that actually makes things work!<sup>74</sup>

Mead's vision of a growing work needs modifying to

that of a Bangladeshi Church at work and witness, growing both in numbers and influence, with the scaffolding of missions either removed or under the control of the Church. What started with barley loaves and fish in that pioneering stage has progressed to independence or partnership. But that does not complete our responsibility as Australasian Baptists. Our later history shows strength in handing over and moving on to new challenges.

Dana Roberts writes a salutary comment on the current situation in mission 'That women are now having to struggle to do what they took for granted seventy-five years ago signifies a monstrous failure of collective mission memory'.<sup>75</sup>

We, as Australian Baptist, do have a significant collective mission memory, and women have had a very significant part in it, and not just in numerical superiority or strength. May we not have a failure of that memory now.

Let me give Ian Brown the final word and contextualise it for Australia as well as overseas missions 'We need to work much more closely together to utilise the giftings of both men and women to understand and carry out our task of mission in [Australasia]. After all we are called to it!'

Rosalind M. Gooden

## ENDNOTES

1. Stuart Piggin, *Spirit of a Nation. The Story of Australia's Christian Heritage*, (Sydney: Strand Publishing, 2004), 71.
2. William Carey, the translator and called the father of modern missions, William Ward, the printer and Joshua Marshman, the school teacher. This fails to credit Hannah Marshman with significance.
3. Paper to W.A. Baptist Historical Society, 1992.
4. B.M.S. Archives, Soddy's Book on Baptists in Bangladesh, TH /24, 95.
5. Report of the Ladies Association for the Support of Zenana Work and Bible Women in India, 1883, 10.
6. Rollings, *A Story of Faith and Adventure*, (Wellington: N.Z.B.M.S., 1935), 8.
7. Letter, Rosalind Gooden to Ken Manley, 1993, 'Ellen Arnold who attended the Decennial Conference in Calcutta virtually as soon as she arrived there claimed there were about 400 zenana missionaries in India, Ceylon and Burma at the time she and Marie Gilbert arrived'. *Statistical Tables of Protestant Missions in India, Burma and Ceylon, Prepared on Information collected at the close of 1881 at the request of the Calcutta Missionary Conference & with the concurrence of the Madras and Bombay Missionary Conferences*, (Calcutta: Thacher, Spink & Co., 1882).
8. There are variant spellings for this town. Faridpur is more common but Furreedpore is the registered name of the Mission.
9. Report from Silas Mead given in 'Zenana Mission Work at Furreedpore' in *Our Indian Sisters*, Vol. 1 (July 1885): 20-21.
10. *Truth & Progress*, 1 November 1885, 138.
11. Rosalind Gooden, 'Five Barley Loaves: An Icon for Australasian Baptist Missionary Work'. Paper given at Trans-Tasman Missions History Conference, A.N.U., Canberra, October 2004.
12. First missionaries  
1882 S.A. Arnold and Gilbert  
1885 Vic. Wilkin and Fuller  
1885 Qld Plested  
1886 N.Z. Macgeorge  
1886'7 N.S.W. Arnold and Denness (on loan from SA)  
1891 Tas. Kealley (from SA)  
1899 W.A. Carrie Brown
13. They lived in Mymensingh (Vic.) Comilla (N.S.W.), Brahmanbaria (N.Z.), Noakhali (Qld), Chandpur (N.Z.) and Pubna (S.A.), later Rajbari (W.A.) and Sirajunge.
14. The extant copy of these handwritten letters is for 1889-1892. After this they were printed in Calcutta and circulated as *Our Bond* (1893-1933) a field version of news.
15. Minute Book of Australian Conventions from 1888-1919, p.3.
16. The second era is considered to be the inland movement epitomized by Hudson Taylor, and the third era that of the peoples group understanding that saw people first of all in terms of language, with Cameron Townsend starting Wycliffe Translators, and social groupings with Donald MacGavran and the Church Growth Movement.
17. Stuart Piggin, *Making Evangelical Missionaries 1789-1858; the Social Background, Motives and Training of British Protestant Missionaries to India*, (Abington: The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1984).
18. Karen E. Smith, 'The Role of Women in Early Baptist Missions', *Review and Expositor*, 89 (1992).
19. Periodical Accounts Relative to the Baptist Missionary Society, I (1792-1799), 347; Carey to B.M.S., 'Houghly River' 28 December 1796 as cited by E. Daniel Potts, *British Baptist Missionaries in India, 1793-1837: The History of Serampore and its Mission*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 38.
20. Form of Agreement Respecting the Great Principles Upon Which the Brethren of the Mission of Serampore think It Their Duty to Act in the Work of Instructing the Heathen, (Serampore, 1805), 7-8.
21. Periodic Accounts II (1799-1804): 445, 'Amy Grant to Miss Fenn', Serampore, 6 August 1803 (may also be in B.M.S. M.S. box IN4).
22. It is a pity that so little has been written on Hannah Marshman's role in modern missionary history.
23. E. Daniel Potts, *British Baptist Missionaries in India, 1793-1837: The History of Serampore and its Mission*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 18.
24. Letter, B. Stanley, Trinity College, Bristol to Rosalind Gooden, 5 January 1994.
25. She quoted Mrs Lewis as saying 'I have known no form or variety of mission work attempted that to my mind is so deeply interesting as the work at pre-

- sent going on among these poor women, nor any given such glorious promises of results’.
- 26 Rev. and Mrs Smith had earlier come to Victoria to recover following the Indian Mutiny.
- 27 M. Gilbert, 1875, ‘One day I was reading in an English Baptist paper that the committee of the Zenana Mission wanted to send one more worker to India. They already had several. So I spoke to my minister ... This was a woman’s mission to women’.
- 28 The New Zealand Baptist of January 1893 recorded this accolade. ‘The Baptist Union of Victoria has been the first religious assembly to receive a lady delegate and to elect her to council. That honour has fallen to Mrs Martin widow of the Rev. Jas Martin B.A.’. ‘In the Colonies’, *N.Z. Baptist*, Wellington, January, 15.
- 29 *Women’s Suffrage Centenary: South Australia 1894-1994 Votes For Women*, (Kent Town, S.A.: Wakefield Press, 1994).
- 30 Lillian Mead, *The Awakened Women*, (Adelaide: W.C.T.U., 1895).
- 31 This was not her first visit and she had the blessing of the Baptist Association.
- 32 1873 Mead’s analysis of Missions, *Truth & Progress*, Vol. 6 (June 1873): 61-62.
- 33 *Truth & Progress*, 1868 December Report.
- 34 *Truth & Progress*, 1 May 1881, 56.
- 35 N.Z.B.U. Baptist Handbook 1908, 19-20.
- 36 Odetta Ferreira, ‘Where have all the women gone?’, *Ministry*, (November 1993): 10-11.
- 37 Catherine Ross, ‘Separate Spheres or Shared Dominions’. Paper given to the Trans-Tasman Missionary History Conference, A.N.U., Canberra, October 2004.
- 38 BMS wife, who worked in the zenanas of Bengal.
- 39 C. S. Mead, Interest in Missions: An Address delivered at the Baptist Union Meetings, Adelaide, September 1900, 1.
- 40 Letter, E. Arnold to Martin, 24 February 1927.
- 41 These details have been put together from scrappy notes in C.E. Thompson’s envelope and information from a grand-daughter.
- 42 V.B.F.M. Minutes, May 1892, 42.
- 43 V.B.F.M. Minutes, May 1892, 42.
- 44 *Our Bond*, December 1893, 3.
- 45 This work of sales for missions funds was conducted by Mrs Mead after she came home and then by both her daughters for years.
- 46 News and Notes, letter, Mrs Mead, *M.E.* (10 July 1907): 8-9.
- 47 Peter Masters, *Born Lucky*, (Adelaide: Seaview Press, 1998).
- 48 Much more could be said about this one.
- 49 Letter, Arnold to Martin, 27 September 1929.
- 50 1887 Arnold – Comilla, *The Baptist*, Vol. 111 No 2 (5 November 1887): 29.
- 51 Letter, E. Arnold from Ataikola, 3 January 1895, *The Southern Baptist*, 28 February 1895, 56.
- 52 B.S. Tuck, ‘News from the fields’, ‘Magic Lantern’, *M.E.*, (3 July 1903): 3.
- 53 See Anne O’Brien *God’s Willing Workers; women and religion in Australia* p.142 – 155.
- 54 Denise M. Ackermann, ‘Women, Religion and Culture: A feminist perspective on ‘freedom of religion’, *Missionalia*, 22.3 (November 1994): 212-36.
- 55 Bryant Myers, ‘Women in Mission’ in *Marc Newsletter* No. 93-3, September 1993, 4.
- 56 This pattern of gender differences resembles the differences reported by Carol Gilligan in her work *In A Different Voice*.
- 57 It is interesting that in some cases the work of women evangelists in Australia has been looked at in terms of the important people they influenced or won. It is a quality argument rather than a quantitative one, but no less valuable for that.
- 58 I could document some of these (particularly with Arnold, who offered to take cuts in allowances on behalf of her co-worker). But it is only where you can get private correspondence that that is possible. The secretary of the F.B.M.S. is a good source of this if you can decipher the letter copies of his correspondence, but that means that most of my examples are South Australian.
- 59 Executive Secretary for Justice Education for the Women’s Division, General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church at the Church Center for the United Nations, New York.
- 60 Glory E. Dharmaraj, ‘Women as Border-Crossing Agents: Transforming the Center from the Margins’, *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. XXVI No. 1 (January 1998): 55-66.
- 61 Mymensingh Log Book, 7, entry for 13 February 1898.
- 62 *Our Bond*, March 1896. Report by M. Fuller.
- 63 Letter M Moses to Rev Grace from Calcutta July 23 1931
- 64 Tuck’s notes 1928, 9.
- 65 Gwenda Bond, *The Answered Call – William Carey and the Dawn of Modern Mission*, (London: Marshal Pickers/HarperCollins Religious, 1992), 112.
- 66 75 Year Jubilee Celebration; Bangladesh Baptist Fellowship, Dhaka, 1994.
- 67 It was the B.B.F. decision to make a permanent headstone at that place.
- 68 R. Wilkin, *Gleanings from a Foreign Field*, (Melbourne, Private publication 1891).
- 69 T.B. ‘Celebration of the Missionary Centenary in South Australia’, September 1892, 7.
- 70 A Broad and Illuminating Survey of the S.A.S.G.M.U. by Miss Nancy S. Wadey.
- 71 Abia Neville, *White Unto Harvest: An Account of the Mission in Mymensingh, East Bengal*, (Geelong: Victorian Baptist Foreign Mission, 1898), 34.
- 72 William Goldsack, *New India: An address delivered at the Annual Meetings of South Australian Baptist Union, September 21st 1923*, (Sydney: Australian Baptist Publishing House, 1923).
- 73 R. Pierce Beaver, *All Loves Excelling. American Protestant Women in World Mission*, (Grand Rapids: Willaim B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968).
- 74 Ian Brown, ‘The Single-Minded Contribution of Women’, *N.Z. Baptist*, Wellington, 3 November (October 1995).
- 75 Dana Roberts, ‘Revisioning the Women’s Missionary Movement’ in C. Van Engen and D. Gilliard and P. Pierson, *The Good News of the Kingdom*, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993), 112.

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## ARCHIVES REPORT FOR THE AUGUST 2010 EDITION.

The last quarter has seen plenty of activity in the Archives. As earlier reported we have had the incredibly good (many might say providential) fortune to acquire a considerable area of long-term storage in an excellent facility nearby in the now disused Baptist Community Services former records and archives storage area in the Illiffe Centre in 'Willandra' village. It is just a few minutes away so is readily accessible. The facility is dry and secure, complete with several large compactuses and plenty of floor space for bulky items (especially vintage media equipment which can play/screen old films, open reel tapes, slides etc). This facility will especially be used to store duplicate documentation such as spare copies of Year Books and *The Australian Baptist*, and other reference books. This will enable partial satisfaction of the policy to have any duplicate material stored off-site.

We will also store material there which must be kept and is historically important but to which we need access only occasionally. An example of the latter is the Dulcie Oldfield collection, which includes many of her unique teaching aids. A large number of past College student dissertations and a growing collection of former well known ministers' sermons is another example. Many old Baptist Union files are rarely accessed but do hold irreplaceable records and are in fact occasionally accessed.

Some interesting collections have recently been acquired, or are about to be. Former Principal Ron Rogers' library was offered to the Society and is currently held pending an assessment of its content. Well known scholars' libraries are often of interest to future researchers and the Archives took advice from a number of well known scholars who all advised that such a collection should be retained. The Archives intends to raise some funding to have the collection accessed and catalogued. As a matter of interest, the Rogers collection included a number of F.W. Boreham books - some first edition and some with Boreham's signature on the fly-leaf.

Another collection is of special interest. A couple of years ago the Archives was asked if it could accept custody of the records of the former South Seas Evangelical Mission (SSEM), which began life in 1886 as the Queensland Kanaka Mission and became the SSEM in 1904. It closed in 1964 and remerged shortly after as the South Seas Evangelical Church, which still exists. A number of Baptists were involved with it over the years. The collection is extensive - about equal to the Archives current #1 compactus in size and is well arranged and catalogued in standard archive boxes. Professor Stuart Piggan at Macquarie University and Professor Bob Linder both regard the collection as very important. The collection apparently contains important genealogical records of South Sea Island people and will be of special importance in years to come. At the time, it was impossible for the Archives to even consider

acceding to this request as the space needed was prohibitive so the collection looked like being given to the National Archives - which would make it difficult to access by future researchers and could include only paper records (there appear to be artifacts involved as well). The now available space has suddenly made consideration of this request feasible and discussions have begun as to the practicalities and legal issues involved. The Committee responsible for the collection is greatly relieved that we can help and somewhat to our surprise a couple of august external authorities consider that its custody elevates the Archives into a further step-up in international recognition. At this stage we see the Archives as offering safe custody only, with the SSEM committee retaining control of accessibility.

In the 'bread-and-butter' area we have recently been asked to assume custody of the Burwood Church records which, *prima facie*, appear to be a very good collection, including original minute books and early members roll books, plenty of photographs and general ephemera.. We have been involved with the coming centenary histories of Eastwood and Croydon. Our offer of financial and administrative assistance in obtaining ISBNs (International Standard Book Numbers) and arranging legal deposit for church histories is now a well established and much appreciated service.

The Society's recent publishing of *Born to be a Soldier*, the Ridley diary at Fromelles, has been a block-buster and our first print run sold out. At least a couple (but usually more) of orders have been received almost every day for nearly two months and some orders have been multiple. Our printing costs have long since been recouped. An interesting associated event has taken place at Fromelles: the Belmont Baptist School has been chosen by the Government to represent schools at the recent dedication of the new Australian War cemetery at Fromelles and the school requested two of the Ridley Diaries so that they could take the books on the trip as references. We expect an article from the school on their return and will print it in a future issue of this journal.

Professor Bob Linder, Distinguished professor of History at Kansas State University is here for his annual research sojourn on Australian Evangelism and this year is here for nearly six months. Rev. Dr Vic Eldridge, Principal Emeritus, is well advanced with the centenary history of the College. The Archives is privy to the draft so far and there is no doubt that this will be one of the best works ever produced by the Society. It is very readable, while being well researched and referenced. Rev. Dr Jim Kime has taken-over the desk originally occupied by the late Rev. Seton Arndell as the ABFM/ABMS/GIA history takes shape.

Dr John Stanhope has recently joined the volunteer staff and his excellent skill at researching has already made its mark. He has published short articles in *The Recorder* before and has nearly finished the herculean task of compiling a list of everybody who has ever worked at the NSW Baptist Theological College from its inception in 1916. This project arose from a request by the College Principal for a list of Principals, faculty and senior students over the years but since a host of records would need to be searched

we decided to include all staff and part-time lecturers - even kitchen staff. John is up to 2002 so the end is in sight. A new 'outposted' researcher has joined the volunteers (from a distance - Canberra in fact): Barbara Coe is a professional editor and those who read the Union 'TIM' magazine will find her name in the front section as one of the sub-editors. Barbara has offered to undertake research for us that involves finding obscure references and was spurred to offer her services on reading recent articles on *Missing, Mysterious and Forgotten Churches* and John Stanhope's article on Araluen. She has already turned-up hitherto unknown information on such vague places as the Pitt St Baptist Church and is making long inroads into the Braidwood Baptist church. Barbara and her husband are regular haunters of the National, NSW State and Mitchell Libraries with Barbara having an unusually honed skill at finding old newspapers and other such material that contain secrets long unknown. We have a host of vague knowledge that requires time to pursue and Barbara's capability in this area is a rare gift. She joins a select group whose time and skill is moving us forward in increasingly long steps.

In a soon-future article we will report on how the Archives is looking after its opening back in 1999. The genesis of the Archives is interesting and although detail is sketchy we know enough to show a timeline. There will be a report on our now substantial group of volunteers and associates (a couple already described above). It should be remembered that the Archives is actually the practical support arm of the NSW Baptist Historical Society and is not an entity in itself. As Society Members are already aware the Society is moving towards incorporation as an Association (as opposed to an incorporated company) and will become an official organisation within the Baptist Churches of NSW and ACT. One immediate benefit of this will be the certain likelihood of being able to attract tax deductible donations and bequests.

We are also in the process of applying to the National Library for the Society's journal being accorded an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) which places us on the international register. This was generated by a Sydney University contacting us with the comment that *The Recorder* is of sufficient stature and quality to warrant wider recognition and application should be made.

The Society is now amassing a major archival collection approaching world standard for a small organisation and has become a significant publisher. We are entering the World stage!

None of this is achieved without some seriously dedicated people and we shall look at them shortly



## -: New Book Release :-

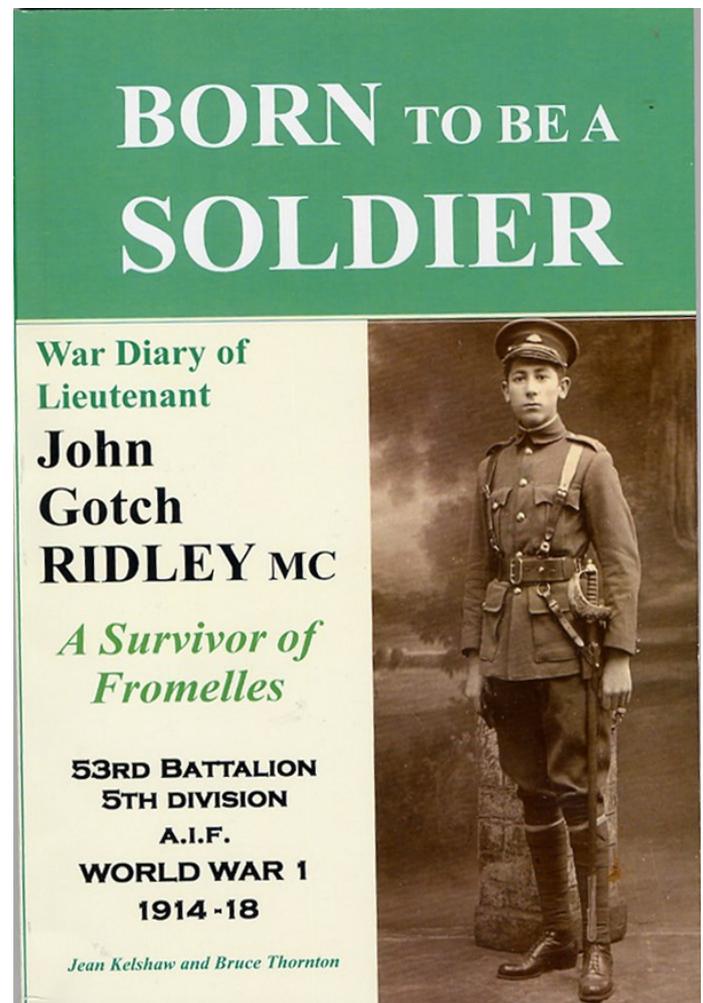
### **Born to be a soldier**

The recent discovery of some 250 World War 1 soldiers in a mass grave in Northern France and their reburial has renewed interest in the Battle of Fromelles. Whilst Gallipoli has generally captured the imagination of the country over the last 94 years there is a growing awareness of the equally dreadful conditions and acts of superhuman endurance endured on the Western Front and this book provides a graphic account of that phase of WW1. In July of 1916 the 5<sup>th</sup> Australian Division and the 61<sup>st</sup> British Division lost some 6,000 soldiers in only about 12 hours of fierce bombardment and sometimes even hand-to-hand rifle and bayonet fighting.

“Born to be a Soldier” is the previously unpublished War Diary of Lieutenant John G. Ridley, MC, a survivor of Fromelles. It was Ridley who, in later life, motivated Arthur Stace to write the word “Eternity” on the streets of Sydney. The book includes graphic descriptions of life in the trenches, encounters with the enemy, work among the wounded and dying and Ridley’s own thoughts and feelings as he faced the prospect of his own death. At Fromelles he was seriously wounded but refused repatriation and rejoined his unit, later winning the Military Cross (a medal of high distinction rating only slightly below the Victoria Cross). The work is especially valuable as a historical record because private diaries were not allowed during war but many men did keep them and this is one such work; they are now highly sought by the Australian War Memorial. It is a day-by-day record of a literate young man who only a few months before sailing off to the other side of the world had become a Christian but whose faith and Christian ideals were thrust

into the horrors of war. His faith held and he even organized Bible study groups while idling away endless dreary days and nights in what had become a hell-on-earth. He arrived in France as a sergeant but was quickly promoted to lieutenant.

This book has been jointly edited by Jean Kelshaw (Ridley’s niece) and Bruce Thornton, the Society President. It is well illustrated and with 151 pages represents unusually good value at \$15 (plus \$3 p&p). Copies are available from the NSW Baptist Archives at 120 Herring Rd, Macquarie Park, NSW 2113.



# *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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**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> November**, Rev. Rod Benson will discuss Baptist Social Ethics. Baptists have sometimes been ambivalent about social outreach and when ethics are overlaid the field can be tricky. Rev. Benson has developed a respected reputation in this field and the evening should be both informative and stimulating, maybe even provocative.

## **2011 The year of anniversaries**

Not only will 2011 mark the 400th anniversary of the Authorised Bible, or KJV, it is also the year for significant anniversaries of churches in NSW and ACT.

The Baptist Historical Society of NSW will therefore dedicate the meetings of 2011 to exploring the history of some of those churches of NSW and ACT holding significant anniversaries.

These meetings will be memorable!

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