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**Guest Editor  
Bruce Thornton**



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**Cyprian and**

***The Pilgrim's Progress***

*a paper presented to The Baptist Historical Society Inc. on Thursday, August 4, 2012 by Edwina Murphy, Lecturer in Church History, Morling College.*

Baptists have not typically devoted much attention to the writers of the early church, but there is much that we can learn from them to assist us in our own spiritual walk. Here I would like to introduce, or perhaps reacquaint you with, two prominent Christians in the history of the church – the church father Cyprian, and the more familiar Baptist, John Bunyan.

Cyprian was Bishop of Carthage in the mid-third century and is perhaps best known for his views on the unity of the church and the impossibility of salvation for those outside it. Born sometime between 200 and 210,<sup>1</sup> a man of considerable property and wealth, most likely inherited,<sup>2</sup> he became a Christian in middle age under the influence of the aged presbyter Caecilianus.<sup>3</sup> Echoes of his prior career as a rhetorician remained in his skilful use of words. Within few enough years to be still regarded a neophyte,<sup>4</sup> and possibly not even previously appointed as a presbyter,<sup>5</sup> Cyprian became Bishop of Carthage in either 248 or 249,<sup>6</sup> his election owing much to the support of the laity, and being opposed by a group of presbyters.<sup>7</sup>

John Bunyan was a dissenting preacher in seventeenth century England who repudiated the established church, identifying himself as a Baptist.<sup>8</sup> Born in November 1628 in Elstow, Bedford, he became, as his father had been, a tinker or brazier.<sup>9</sup> He had managed to gain but a rudimentary education.<sup>10</sup> Despised both for his lowly status and for his religious views, (which some feared were also seditious),<sup>11</sup> his scoffing contemporaries could not have imagined that one of the classic works of English literature would come from his pen.<sup>12</sup> Thus far, the two men would seem to have nothing in common except the designation “Christian”.

A version of this paper was published as Edwina Murphy, “Cyprian and the Pilgrim's Progress,” in David J. Cohen and Michael Parsons (eds), *Beyond 400: Exploring Baptist Futures* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 116-130. Used by permission of Wipf and Stock Publishers. [www.wipfandstock.com](http://www.wipfandstock.com)

Yet for all the differences of time and place, status and polity, Bunyan and Cyprian have a very strong, if at first glance unexpected, common understanding of what the Christian life entails.

At the most fundamental level, this is because Bunyan and Cyprian were men of one book. Despite his excellent education and prior career, Cyprian gave up almost all classical allusions and replaced them with the biblical text.<sup>13</sup> Bunyan, perhaps with less opportunity to do otherwise, liked to boast that his learning came from the Bible rather than classical sources.<sup>14</sup> Given that he was influenced by a number of authors, however, we should not take his claims of *sola scriptura* to extremes.<sup>15</sup> Galen correctly states the case: “Bunyan recognized the value of Christian tradition, though he refused to grant it equal authority alongside the Bible.”<sup>16</sup> In terms of wealth there was again an arrival at a similar position from different directions. Bunyan was poor by birth, whereas Cyprian demonstrated his commitment to his new faith by selling his property and giving it to the poor, although Pontius tells us that his *horti* were restored to him by the indulgence of God<sup>17</sup> and he remained a person of substantial means.<sup>18</sup>

However, the factor which produces such harmony in the views of two such different men, and which distinguishes them from any number of other faithful Christians with whom they share common ground on the first two points, is that both belonged to an essentially gathered church which was not looked upon with favour by the state. Greaves’ statement regarding Bunyan could equally be applied to Cyprian:

For Bunyan, as for his pilgrims, the world is the battleground between good and evil, light and darkness. Ostensibly, he restricted militancy to the spiritual realm, but his willingness to stand firm regardless of penal statutes and persecutory acts was by nature a political as well as a religious act in a society whose rulers claimed and exercised the power to compel obedience to their view of right religion.<sup>19</sup>

Both men knew what it was to live out faith in a hostile world, and they were alert to the dangers that must be faced and overcome in order to achieve the promised hope. The decade of Cyprian’s episcopacy in Carthage which ended with his martyrdom in 258 was a turbulent period for the North African church. The Decian persecution, schisms and plague raised questions regarding the identity of the community, its place within imperial society, and God’s control of history. As bishop, it was Cyprian’s responsibility

to provide answers, thereby uniting his flock and keeping them on the path to salvation. Likewise, Bunyan was a preacher and pastor who lived in a time when those who desired to worship according to their conscience rather than the dictates of the established church were liable to be persecuted by the state. Whilst not imitating Cyprian’s martyrdom, Bunyan did suffer twelve years of imprisonment.<sup>20</sup>

During his imprisonment, one means by which Bunyan sought to stimulate people to embark on the journey of faith, and having begun, to persevere, was through his most famous work, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.<sup>21</sup> By examining the events in Part I of the work and comparing them with Cyprian’s letters and treatises, the similarities between Bunyan and Cyprian in their understanding of the nature of this world, the trials and victories of Christian life, martyrdom, the dangers of wealth, death and the hope of the life to come will become apparent.<sup>22</sup> Their summary of the terrain may provide invaluable assistance for us in our own pilgrimages.

## The World

Bunyan and Cyprian shared a conviction that following Christ meant relinquishing this world, a world under judgment. Christian’s birthplace is the City of Destruction, signifying, as Stranahan notes, “the realm in which all persons begin their earthly lives,”<sup>23</sup> a city which “will be burned with fire from Heaven.”<sup>24</sup> To leave, therefore, represents no enduring sacrifice, given that ahead lays “Life! Life! Eternal Life!”<sup>25</sup> Understanding this, Christian responds to the concern of Obstinate for the loss of friends and comforts with the assurance that “all which you shall forsake is not worthy to be compared with a little of that, that I am seeking to enjoy.”<sup>26</sup> The Interpreter similarly shows a picture to Christian in which a man has “the World as cast behind him, and ... a Crown hangs over his head” to demonstrate “that slighting and despising things that are present, for the love that he hath to his Master’s service, he is sure in the World that comes next, to have Glory for his reward.”<sup>27</sup>

Whilst Cyprian makes use of pagan commonplaces regarding the old age of the world and its coming end in his apologetics,<sup>28</sup> he sees God’s action above all. He warns concerning the inexorable “day of judgement which Holy Scripture announces saying: ‘Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is near: it shall come as a destruction from the Lord.’”<sup>29</sup> Cyprian presents hope, as does Bunyan, in the context of a lack of hope in this world. In *Ad Donatum*, one of

his earliest works, Cyprian demonstrates to his friend the corruption of the world with the goal that he will “rejoice with greater joy that [he has] escaped from it.”<sup>30</sup> Even prior to the threat of persecution, Cyprian emphasises that the Christian hope lies outside the natural realm. True security is to be “released from the snares of the entangling world, to be purged of the dregs of earth for the light of immortality.”<sup>31</sup> The dichotomy between the temporal and the eternal is never far from his thoughts.

## **Trials and victories**

However, one is not translated from this world to the world to come, from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, in an instant. The journey which must be undertaken forms the substance of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*,<sup>32</sup> and there are many trials which the pilgrim must overcome.<sup>33</sup> Of the three figurative meanings of the Way that Stranahan identifies, the one most similar to Cyprian’s understanding is that which represents the “proper and necessary conduct of a Christian: those who leave it for other roads, or who take short cuts to enter on it, never attain the Christian’s reward.”<sup>34</sup>

If the Christian life is a pilgrimage, it is one in which there are many battles to be fought. Christian meets with the fiend Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation from whom he is tempted to turn and flee, but considering “he had no Armour for his back”<sup>35</sup> engages in the contest. Despite almost being slain by his enemy’s accusations, he overcomes him and quotes, “Nay, in all these things we are more than Conquerors, through him that loved us.”<sup>36</sup> So too he passes through the Valley of the Shadow of Death in the dark, with a Ditch on one hand, and a Mire on the other, emphasising the narrowness of the Way.<sup>37</sup> Fiends threaten to assault him, and it is only when he cries out, “*I will walk in the Strength of the Lord God*” that he is free from them.<sup>38</sup>

When Evangelist again meets with Christian and Faithful on the road and hears the story of their travels so far, he is glad “not that you met with Trials, but that you have been Victors, and for that you have (notwithstanding many weaknesses) continued in the way to this very day.”<sup>39</sup>

The overwhelming necessity of staying in the Way is again demonstrated when, finding it becoming rough, Christian disregards Hopeful’s concern and decides to leave it for a more pleasant path which appears to be going in the same direction.<sup>40</sup> This episode results in their imprisonment in Doubting

Castle, owned by the Giant Despair. Here they almost lose all hope until, after a night of prayer, Christian remembers that he has the key of Promise with which they gain their liberty.<sup>41</sup> As Furlong notes, “Whatever [Christian’s] weaknesses, however, he is a man armed with one important piece of knowledge; life as he used to live it is no longer tolerable, and the only remedy is to persevere in his difficult journey.”<sup>42</sup> Throughout, Christ is both the entrance to the Way,<sup>43</sup> and the means by which the pilgrim gains victory. It is his promises which provide liberty and it is hope in him which sustains pilgrim in their quest for a glorious eternity in his presence.

This perseverance in hope is a central theme for Cyprian. The one who endures to the end will be saved.<sup>44</sup> The Bishop expounds upon Romans 8:24-25:

We must endure and persevere, beloved brethren, so that, having been admitted to the hope of truth and liberty, we can finally attain that same truth and liberty, because the very fact that we are Christians is a source (*res*) of faith and hope. However, in order that hope and faith may reach their fruition, there is need of patience. For we do not strive for present glory, but for a future one, according to what Paul the Apostle teaches, saying: ‘For in hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is not hope. For how can a man hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.’ Patient waiting is necessary that we may fulfill what we have begun to be, and through God’s help, that we may attain what we hope for and believe.<sup>45</sup>

Here Cyprian’s strong orientation to the future, noted by Studer, is clearly discernible.<sup>46</sup> Hope is reliant upon patience to bring it to its fulfilment, but that same hope of glory is what provides the Christian with the ongoing motivation to endure. This patience is not only a passive virtue, but an active one,<sup>47</sup> as may be seen from the following:

It is patience that both commends us to God and saves us for God...It is this patience which strongly fortifies the foundations of our faith. It is this patience which sublimely promotes the growth of hope. It directs our action, so that we can keep to the way of Christ while we make progress because of his forbearance. It ensures our perseverance as sons of God while we imitate the patience of the Father.<sup>48</sup>

The importance of ecclesial discipline to Cyprian has been widely acknowledged, but the essential link between “keeping to the way of Christ” and hope

has been frequently overlooked. He advises a fellow bishop:

Accordingly, our dearest brother, you must ensure that the unruly do not die or perish, by guiding the brethren, as best you can, with saving advice and by taking counsel for the salvation of each individually. Straight and narrow is the way by which we enter into life, but great, exceedingly great is our reward when we reach glory.<sup>49</sup>

The maintenance of discipline is not an end in itself, but is always presented as a means of achieving the glorious hope to which Christians have been called.

## Martyrdom

In the often threatening world in which Bunyan and Cyprian lived, the dangers faced were not only metaphorical; martyrdom was a real possibility. In seeking to motivate pilgrims to remain steadfast, their language is at times almost identical.

When Evangelist meets with Christian and Faithful on the road, he encourages:

The Crown is before you, and it is an incorruptible one; so run, that you may obtain it...Hold fast therefore that you have, let no man take your Crown...Let the Kingdom be always before you, and believe steadfastly concerning things that are invisible...set your faces like a flint; you have all power in Heaven and Earth on your side.<sup>50</sup>

He warns them that they are about to reach Vanity-Fair, where

[One] or both of you must seal the testimony which you hold, with Blood; but be you faithful unto Death, and the King will give you a Crown of Life. He that shall die there, although his death will be unnatural, and his pains perhaps great, he will yet have the better of his fellow; not only because he will be arrived at the Cœlestial City soonest, but because he will escape many miseries that the other will meet with in the rest of his Journey.<sup>51</sup>

As predicted, Faithful is tried and sentenced to a cruel death, but is immediately taken by a waiting chariot “the clouds with Sound of Trumpet, the nearest way to the Cœlestial Gate.”<sup>52</sup> Christian, however, is remanded back to prison and then escapes, the song on his lips honouring his companion’s profession and contrasting Faithful’s immortality with the punishment destined for his persecutors.<sup>53</sup>

As Bunyan used the term “crown” to designate what is the martyr’s due, so it is Cyprian’s favoured way of describing the rewards awaiting those who confess their faith, drawing on Paul’s language of the arena.

This is the contest of our faith, wherein we do battle, wherein we conquer, wherein we are crowned. This is the contest which the blessed Apostle Paul has also revealed to us, the contest in which we are to run and to attain to a crown of glory. *Do you not know*, he says, *that of those who run in a race, all indeed run but only one receives the palm. So run that you may win it. In their case their object is to receive a corruptible crown, but ours an incorruptible.*<sup>54</sup>

Martyrs are not alone in their struggles, however, for Christ wrestles within his servants, “He joins battle Himself, in the blows of our contest He Himself both gives and wins the crowns.”<sup>55</sup>

In *Epistle 58*, his letter to the laity in Thibariss written around May 253, there is a heightened apocalyptic mood.<sup>56</sup> There is a clear sense that the final battle is approaching, and Cyprian uses all his considerable powers to motivate his brethren to withstand the assault. At such a time “we should have no thoughts other than for the glories of eternal life and the crown that is won by confessing the Lord.”<sup>57</sup> It is a matter for rejoicing “for it is when persecutions come that the crowns of faith are awarded, that the soldiers of God are tested, and that the heavens stand open for the martyred.”<sup>58</sup>

As Christian’s song suggested, a time is coming when the present order will be reversed. Martyrs will reign with Christ and judge those who are currently putting them to death.<sup>59</sup>

## Wealth

In another inversion of worldly values, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* displays what we might call “God’s preferential option for the poor”; wealth is depicted as an impediment to salvation. As Hill notes, “Undesirable characters in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*...are almost obsessively labelled as lords and ladies, gentlemen and gentlewomen.”<sup>60</sup> In one demonstration of this, Christian and Hopeful (converted by the witness of Christian and Faithful in Vanity Fair) are joined by By-ends of Fair Speech who claims to “differ in Religion from those of a stricter sort, yet but in two small points: First, We never strive against Wind and Tide. Secondly, We are always most zealous when Religion goes in his Silver Slippers; we love much to walk with him in

the street, if the Sun shines and the People applaud him.”<sup>61</sup>

This attitude is all the more stark for its juxtaposition with the pillorying of the pilgrims in Vanity-Fair, where Faithful has given his life for his faith. Christian proclaims: “If you will go with us, you must go against Wind and Tide; the which, I perceive, is against your opinion: You must also own Religion in his Rags as well as when in his Silver Slippers; and stand by him too when bound in Irons, as well as when he walketh the streets with Applause.”<sup>62</sup>

Such a commitment is rejected by By-ends and unsurprisingly, it is not long before he and his companions are lured by Demas and the promise of riches and perish from the Way.<sup>63</sup> Christian and Hopeful, having avoided the danger, then see the “Pillar of Salt into which *Lot’s* wife was turned, for her looking back with a *covetous heart*, while she was going from Sodom for safety.”<sup>64</sup>

It is perhaps unsurprising that a man of humble circumstances such as Bunyan would believe wealth to be a danger to faith, but a similar attitude is held by Cyprian, one of the privileged few of his society.<sup>65</sup> In *De lapsis*, he identifies the attachment of the rich to their riches as the cause of their failure to confess, and declares that if they had followed the Lord’s admonition to “*sell all thou hast and give to the poor*” they would not have been able to be overcome, since their treasure, and heart, would have been in heaven.<sup>66</sup> He further elaborates on this theme, dwelling on the rich compensation that will be received in return for the “small, insignificant losses of this world”.<sup>67</sup> Those who leave property or family for the sake of the kingdom of God will receive “*seven times more in the present time, and in the world to come life everlasting*.” Such losses are not to be feared, but rather desired, because of the great heavenly reward.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, these treasures are eternal and free from the potential of loss or damage which may be suffered by those on earth.<sup>69</sup> Cyprian urges his flock not to increase their patrimony to the detriment of their standing before God, but to go into partnership with Christ in their earthly possessions, that they may be made co-heirs of his heavenly kingdom.<sup>70</sup>

## Death and the life to come

When Christian and Hopeful arrive at the River which separates this world from the next, Death is presented as an unavoidable part of the journey.<sup>71</sup> Christian suffers from the doubts which have plagued

him at various times throughout his journey and is almost overcome, but encouraged by Hopeful and again recalling the promises of God, he makes his way across.<sup>72</sup>

Cyprian wrote *De mortalitate* in 252 or 253 to exhort his congregation during the plague which was ravaging Carthage.<sup>73</sup> In it, as Scourfield notes, he presents death as something “positive and advantageous.”<sup>74</sup> Cyprian does not so much console those who have lost loved ones, as emphasise the advantages of death as a means whereby the Christian is freed from the devil, the storms of the world and temptations of the flesh to join Christ and those who have gone before in the heavenly kingdom.<sup>75</sup> To die is to “pass by death to immortality,”<sup>76</sup> so one should not fear death, but rather dwell on the immortality which follows.<sup>77</sup> This is not true only of this work, but is a constant theme in all his writings. To be summoned from this world is to enter paradise and the kingdom.<sup>78</sup> All the faithful will join the martyrs in living and reigning with Christ.<sup>79</sup> To die is to be reunited with dear ones (parents, brothers, children) who await us, and to enter into “the highest possible and everlasting happiness”, celebrating eternity with all the faithful: apostles, prophets, martyrs, virgins and the merciful.<sup>80</sup>

The Shining Ones present a similar vision to the pilgrims as they ascend the hill beyond the River. In a fairly traditional account,<sup>81</sup> a distinctive note is that “the joys of the city are a relief from suffering – both from the fear of death and judgment that causes the pilgrims to flee from the City of Destruction, and from the perils that they encounter along the way.”<sup>82</sup> Further, Bunyan emphasises “the reality of this transcendent community of the blessed who enjoy actual communion with God and express their joy in melodious praise.”<sup>83</sup>

## The Christian life: Pilgrimage and contest

As Greaves notes, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is predominately about sanctification.<sup>84</sup> “This is not a period free of recurring struggle, doubt, and even despair...From the moment of justification the believer does not experience perseverance as absolute certainty, but must resolve, as Evangelist tells Christian and Faithful, to run for the crown.”<sup>85</sup> Temptations which may waylay the pilgrim seem to lie at every turn. One of the more subtle, and perhaps all the more dangerous for it, is that of conforming to “this world”. The Baptist ideal to which Bunyan

bore witness was that of a holy community, men and women regenerated by grace and living in accordance with the hope to which they had been called. Perhaps this is part of our heritage that needs to be reclaimed; to be distinguished by our growing conformity to Christ and alignment with his purposes for the world.

If for Bunyan the Christian life is a pilgrimage, for Cyprian it is a contest. This is not a matter for despair but a cause for rejoicing, as there is no crown without a victory, no victory without a preceding battle.<sup>86</sup> We may not confront the persecution that the North African church faced, (and which is still a reality for many of our brothers and sisters around the world), but that does not mean we are not involved in a spiritual struggle. Every challenge of life is an opportunity for the Christian to respond in a way consistent with the gospel:

Peace also has its crown, by which we are crowned as the victor of many a varied combat, after the adversary has been laid low and subdued. To have overcome lust is the palm of continence. To have resisted wrath and injury is the crown of patience. Triumph over avarice is to spurn money. Praise of faith is to endure the adversities of the world by faith in the future.<sup>87</sup> And he who is not proud in prosperity obtains the glory of humility. And he who is inclined to the mercifulness of befriending the poor gains the retribution of a heavenly treasure. And he who knows not how to be jealous and, being of one mind and kind, loves his brethren, is honored with the reward of love and peace. We run daily in this contest of virtues; we arrive at these palms and crowns of justice without interruption of time.<sup>88</sup>

We tend to be people who seek immediate gratification. Bunyan and Cyprian remind us that the Christian life is a matter of faith and hope. Following Christ and living in accordance with his commands will require us to make difficult decisions in everything from how we spend our money to how we treat those who we feel have wronged us. The rewards are often not instantaneous, but if we persevere we will experience a reward far greater than we could hope for or imagine.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> See Michael M. Sage, *Cyprian*, Patristic Monograph Series (Philadelphia: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, Ltd., 1975), 103-04.
- <sup>2</sup> For discussion see Sage, *Cyprian*, 104-07. G. W. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, vol. 1 (New York: Newman Press, 1984), 14-15.
- <sup>3</sup> *Vita Cypriani*, 4.
- <sup>4</sup> *Vita Cypriani*, 5.
- <sup>5</sup> The dating of Cyprian's baptism and whether or not he was appointed as a presbyter remains unclear. Jerome believes he was a presbyter, albeit briefly. *De viris illustribus*, 67.
- <sup>6</sup> The dating is based on Cyprian's defence of his ministry in *Ep.* 59.6.1.
- <sup>7</sup> *Vita Cypriani*, 5.
- <sup>8</sup> His church did, however, practice open membership. J. Gordon Kingsley Jr, "John Bunyan and the Baptists," *Baptist History and Heritage* 13, no. 4 (1978): 6-7.
- <sup>9</sup> Gordon Wakefield, *Bunyan the Christian* (London: HarperCollinsReligious, 1992), 6. He described his family's background in *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*: "For my descent then, it was, as is well known by many, of a low and inconsiderable generation; my father's house being of that rank that is meanest, and most despised of all the families in the land." John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1907), 17. This had not always been the case, however, but was the result of the family's decline from being landowners several generations earlier to living in one of the "humbler abodes in Elstow". Richard L. Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory: John Bunyan and English Dissent* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University 2002), 3-4.
- <sup>10</sup> Bunyan, *Grace Abounding*, 18.
- <sup>11</sup> Christopher Hill, *A Turbulent, Seditious and Factious People: John Bunyan and his Church 1628-1688* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 107.
- <sup>12</sup> Christopher Hill, "John Bunyan and his Publics," *History Today* 38, no. 10 (1988): 13.
- <sup>13</sup> As Clarke notes: "This can only be the result of onscious rejection and restriction." Clarke, *Letters*, 1:17. For a detailed account of Cyprian's use of Scripture, see Michael Andrew Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible: A Study in Third-Century Exegesis* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1971).
- <sup>14</sup> Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory*, 5.
- <sup>15</sup> Hill, *Turbulent, Seditious and Factious People*, 157-69.

- <sup>16</sup> Galen K. Johnson, *Prisoner of Conscience: John Bunyan on Self, Community and Christian Faith* (Milton Keynes, U.K.: Paternoster, 2003), 198.
- <sup>17</sup> *Vita Cypriani*, 2.7; 15.1.
- <sup>18</sup> From his place of withdrawal he was able to send his own funds to assist those in need. *Epp.* 7.2; 13.7.
- <sup>19</sup> Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory*, 250.
- <sup>20</sup> Hill, *Turbulent, Seditious and Factious People*, 109. He did consider that he might be put to death and struggled for many weeks, questioning whether he could die with courage and whether in the end he would indeed be saved, until he came to a realisation “that it was for the word and way of God that I was in this condition, wherefore I was engaged not to flinch an hair’s breadth from it...I am for going on, and venturing my eternal state with Christ, whether I have comfort here or no.” Bunyan, *Grace Abounding*, 177-79.
- <sup>21</sup> The edition used here is John Bunyan, *The Company*, (1990). Recent scholarship tends towards dating its composition in the second part of this main period of imprisonment rather than to the six months he spent in gaol several years later. Hill, *Turbulent, Seditious and Factious People*, 197-98; Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory*, 210-27.
- <sup>22</sup> In restricting the discussion to a more manageable Michael Austin, “The Figural Logic of the Sequel and the Unity of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*,” *Studies in Philology* 102, no. 4 (2005).
- <sup>23</sup> Brainerd P. Stranahan, “Bunyan and the Epistle to the Hebrews: His Source for the Idea of Pilgrimage in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*,” *Studies in Philology* 79, no. 3 (1982): 284.
- <sup>24</sup> *Pilgrim’s Progress*, 4.
- <sup>25</sup> *Pilgrim’s Progress*, 4.
- <sup>26</sup> *Pilgrim’s Progress*, 5.
- <sup>27</sup> *Pilgrim’s Progress*, 25-26. The Interpreter also shows Christian two children, Passion and Patience with the lesson understood by Christian to be that ‘it is not best to covet things that are now, but to wait for things to come’. The Interpreter affirms him: ‘For the things that are seen are Temporal; but the things that are not seen are Eternal.’ *Pilgrim’s Progress*, 27-29.
- <sup>28</sup> Most fully in *Ad Demetrianum*, 3-5. Cyprian is at variance with the ancient traditions in that, as Castagna notes, “in Cyprian, the old age of the world is laden with implications of hope, not of pessimism.” Luigi Castagna, “Vecchiaia e morte del mondo in Lucrezio, Seneca e San Cipriano,” *Aevum Antiquum* 13(2000): 252, n. 23.
- <sup>29</sup> *Dem*, 22.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ad Donatum*, 6.
- <sup>31</sup> *Don*, 14.
- <sup>32</sup> Greaves provides a succinct summary of the plot. Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory*, 227-28.
- <sup>33</sup> Hill summarises the discussion regarding possible antecedents for *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Hill, *Turbulent, Seditious and Factious People*, 201-09. Stranahan believes that Bunyan’s primary written source was the eleventh and twelfth chapters of Hebrews. Stranahan, “Bunyan,” 280.
- <sup>34</sup> Stranahan, “Bunyan,” 289.
- <sup>35</sup> *Pilgrim’s Progress*, 58.
- <sup>36</sup> *Pilgrim’s Progress*, 63, quoting Rom 8:37.
- <sup>37</sup> *Pilgrim’s Progress*, 66.
- <sup>38</sup> *Pilgrim’s Progress*, 67-68.
- <sup>39</sup> *Pilgrim’s Progress*, 96.
- <sup>40</sup> “The Pilgrims now, to gratify the Flesh/Will seek its Ease; but, oh! how they afresh/Do thereby plunge themselves new Grievs into!/Who seek to please the Flesh, themselves undo.” *Pilgrim’s Progress*, 128.
- <sup>41</sup> *Pilgrim’s Progress*, 125-135.
- <sup>42</sup> Monica Furlong, *Puritan’s Progress* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1975), 106.
- <sup>43</sup> *The Wicket Gate. Pilgrim’s Progress*, 4.
- <sup>44</sup> Mt 10:22b, cited 6 times by Cyprian with slight variations in the wording. See Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible*, 296-97.
- <sup>45</sup> *De bono patientiae*, 13; see also 21.
- <sup>46</sup> Basil Studer, “Hoffnung,” in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, ed. Ernst Dassmann (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1991), 1211.
- <sup>47</sup> Kossi Adiavu Ayedze, “Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine on Patience: A comparative and critical study of three treatises on a Stoic-Christian virtue in early North Africa,” (Unpublished dissertation: Princeton, 2000), 214-17.
- <sup>48</sup> *BonPat*, 20.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ep.* 4.5.1. See also *De habitu uirginum*, 1 and *De dominica oratione*, 1.
- <sup>50</sup> *Pilgrim’s Progress*, 96.
- <sup>51</sup> *Pilgrim’s Progress*, 97.
- <sup>52</sup> *Pilgrim’s Progress*, 109.
- <sup>53</sup> *Pilgrim’s Progress*, 110.
- <sup>54</sup> *Ep.* 10.4.2-3, quoting 1 Cor 9:24-25, omitting verse 25a. See, among others, *Epp.* 6.1.2; 6.3.1; 6.4.
- <sup>55</sup> *Ep.* 10.4.4.
- <sup>56</sup> G. W. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, vol. 3 (New York: Newman Press, 1986), 3:226.
- <sup>57</sup> *Ep.* 58.1.2.
- <sup>58</sup> *Ep.* 58.3.1. Such rewards are available to all those who have stood fast in their confession, regardless of the direct cause of their death. *Ep.* 58.4.2.
- <sup>59</sup> *Ad Fortunatum*, 13. This element is also present in the words of the Shining Ones as they escort the

pilgrims to the Celestial City. *Pilgrim's Progress*, 185.

<sup>60</sup> Hill, *Turbulent, Seditious and Factious People*, 215.

<sup>61</sup> *Pilgrim's Progress*, 111.

<sup>62</sup> *Pilgrim's Progress*, 112-113.

<sup>63</sup> *Pilgrim's Progress*, 122. As Sharrock notes: "Demas is chosen as the symbol of covetousness because of St. Paul's words about him ("Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world", 2 Timothy, iv, 10)." Roger Sharrock, *John Bunyan* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1954), 85.

<sup>64</sup> *Pilgrim's Progress*, 123.

<sup>65</sup> Clarke, *Letters*, 1:14.

<sup>66</sup> *De lapsis*, 11, quoting Mt 19:21.

<sup>67</sup> *Laps*, 12.

<sup>68</sup> The same pattern, Luke 18:29 followed by Luke 6:22, is found in *Ep.* 58.2.3.

<sup>69</sup> *De opera et eleemosynis*, 7 quoting Mt 6:19-21; *Hab*, 11 (allusion).

<sup>70</sup> *OpEl*, 13.

<sup>71</sup> *Pilgrim's Progress*, 181.

<sup>72</sup> *Pilgrim's Progress*, 181-183.

<sup>73</sup> It is probable that the plague reached Carthage by 252, and the treatise is often dated to that same year, although Scourfield believes it may have been written in 253. J. H. D. Scourfield, "The *De mortalitate* of Cyprian: Consolation and Context," *Vigiliae Christianae* 50(1996): 23.

<sup>74</sup> Scourfield, "*De mortalitate*," 15.

<sup>75</sup> *Mort*, 3, 4, 22, 26.

<sup>76</sup> *Mort*, 22.

<sup>77</sup> *Mort*, 24.

<sup>78</sup> *Mort*, 18, 26.

<sup>79</sup> *Fort*, 12. See also *Mort*, 2, 21. Daley correctly emphasises the distinctiveness of Cyprian in this respect. Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 42.

<sup>80</sup> *Mort*, 26.

<sup>81</sup> Angels, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the Prophets all welcome the pilgrims to the Heavenly Jerusalem where they will wear Crowns of Gold and see the Holy One as he is. *Pilgrim's Progress*, 184-188.

<sup>82</sup> Stranahan, "Bunyan," 287.

<sup>83</sup> John R. Knott Jr, "Bunyan and the Holy Community," *Studies in Philology* 80, no. 2 (1983): 203. The present dimension of the corporate Christian life is more fully rendered by Bunyan in Part II of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Knott Jr, "Holy Community," 208.

<sup>84</sup> Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory*, 262.

<sup>85</sup> Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory*, 262.

<sup>86</sup> *Mort*, 12.

<sup>87</sup> Compare *Dem*, 18: "But there is no grief from the attack of present evils for those who have confidence in future blessings."

<sup>88</sup> *De zelo et livore*, 16.

## The Baptist Historical Society of NSW Inc

### Financial Statement for the period 1 March 2012 to 30 September 2012

**1 March 2012 Balance b/f            \$12,434-90**

<b>Receipts</b>		<b>Payments</b>	
Membership Fees	1230-00	Book Binding	1,850-00
Donations	230-00	Accommodation	94-00
Term Deposit interest	595-61	Book Purchase	25-00
Bank Interest	15-70	Society Incorporation	163-00
		Postage	86-40
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>2071.31</b>	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>2218.40</b>
<b>Balance c/d</b>	<b>\$12,287-81</b>		

**1 October 2012 Balance c/f            \$12,287-81**

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

General Fund -	\$2,647-81
Term Deposit No 11704	\$3,640-00
Term Deposit No 2219 -	\$4,000-00
Term Deposit No 3168 -	\$2,000-00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$12,287-81</b>

**Michael Petras - Treasurer**



# **An Appeal to Church Historians**

## **By Neville Callam, General Secretary, Baptist World Alliance**

The BWA General Secretary, Dr Neville Callam, has recently published this challenging editorial.

Recently, I read the book, *New Century/New Directions* edited by James and Carole Spickelmier. The volume helpfully brings together insights from a number of carefully chosen persons who are committed to the effectiveness of Converge Worldwide, the organization under review. The result is a very useful product! We commend the authors and the Baptist organization they serve for supporting a publication of this kind. They reflect the maturity and openness that are required of all church leaders who affirm their role as servants of Christ.

While reading *New Century/New Directions*, I remembered something that Socrates said many years ago. Not everything that Socrates said is worth repeating, but perhaps few persons would challenge one of the sayings attributed to him at his trial for heresy - An unexamined life is not worth living.

This maxim is as applicable to the life of individuals as it is to that of organizations. However much we try to dodge the language of institutions, substituting for it the language of movements, as Hugo Hecla has so expertly explained in his book, *Thinking Institutionally*, there is no escaping the significant role that institutions play in our lives. We may seriously distrust institutions, but institutions fulfill community-building and community-supporting roles that connect us to purposes that are larger than ourselves.

To retain vitality in an organization - which, of course, is not identical with an institution, but which is closely related to it - one indispensable requirement is the periodic subjection of the organization's aims and modus operandi to rigorous evaluation. If done fairly and thoroughly, this is likely to help governors, managers and all "stake holders" associated with a particular organization to be aware of the tendency to depart from the lofty, and still reasonable, goals espoused when the organization was born. It will also alert those concerned of the inclination to resort to strategies, methods and approaches that are no longer effective.

The analysis of what an ecclesial organization does may be undertaken by persons from several fields of study. From the work they do, much can be

learned and needed changes may result. In many cases, however, those who are called upon to undertake the task are handicapped by many personal factors that impinge upon their work. Sometimes, personal agendas mar clear vision. Especially when dealing with worldwide organizations, too often, evaluators work with templates from their own residential geographical sphere, believing that these offer great clues that enable them to provide answers to the peculiar challenges that face multi- and cross-cultural organizations with a global reach.

Competent historians, and especially gifted church historians, are among those on whom we depend as we seek clarity on how our church-related organizations are pursuing their mission. These men and women have an important vocation to assist the church and its related organizations in the critical evaluation of their life. Part of the reason for this is the penchant for good historians to take context seriously. The capacity to understand the relationship between context and process enables historians to interpret trends and offer insights that can help advance positive developments and reverse negative trends.

Ecclesial organizations need church historians who focus on happenings of yesteryear; this is a function the church needs them to perform. We also need historians who are willing to risk analysis of more recent, and also contemporary, situations and to make available to the church community the benefit of their carefully honed research and analytical skills. This is part of the responsible stewardship of church historians.

If the unexamined life is not worth living, the unexamined life of organizations may cause them to be banished to the scrap heap of history. This may be prevented if those whom God has gifted for the task put their hands to the plough and produce material that can help guide those who must make decisions that affect the future of vital organizations. The findings of gifted church historians may not cause accolades to be heaped on their heads. Nevertheless, their contribution could potentially help church organizations, like the Baptist World Alliance, to be more faithful in the way they fulfill the mandate the triune God has given them.

# Baptist History in Great Britain

The modern Baptist movement was born in the 17th century and is now a worldwide denomination with millions of believers worshipping in Baptist congregations.



1612

The first Baptist church met in Spitalfields, London. Thomas Helwys, a founder of the Baptist denomination, published A Short declaration of the mystery of iniquity, one of the first books to call for religious liberty. In the 17th century Baptists refused to conform and be members of the Church of England, arguing that Christ, and not the King (or Queen) was head of the church and were persecuted for their beliefs.



1689

Act of Toleration passed allowing freedom of worship.



1792

Baptist Missionary Society founded by William Carey. It is now known as BMS World Mission.



1812

A group meet in Dr Rippon's Vestry, London to discuss the forming of a Baptist Union.



1813

The first Baptist Assembly held in London.



1832

The formation of the Baptist Union was completed. 1837

The Revd George Cousens, was the first reported West Indian minister to hold a pastorate in Britain, becoming pastor of Four Ways Baptist Church in Cradley Heath, Staffordshire.



1854

CH Spurgeon, one of the most famous Baptist preachers, began his ministry.



1855

The Freeman, now The Baptist Times, first appeared.



1891

General Baptists (who believed that when Christ died on the cross he died for everyone in general) and Particular Baptists (who believed that Christ died for the elect i.e. a particular group of people) came together to form the present Baptist Union of Great Britain.



1905

The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) was formed and held its first Baptist World Congress in London.



1912

The Sustentation Fund started. It is currently known as Home Mission.



1922

Violet Hedger became the first woman to qualify as a probationer minister.



1955

The BWA celebrated its fiftieth anniversary Congress in London.

## BRITISH BAPTISTS (Contd)



1989

The BUGB moves its offices to Didcot and commits to participation in national ecumenical life.



1998

A Denominational Consultation in 1996 led to the BUGB adopting Five Core Values.



2001

New regional association structure for BUGB inaugurated.



2005

The Baptist World Centenary Congress celebrated in Birmingham, England. BUGB General Secretary, the Revd David Coffey, became President of the Baptist World Alliance.



2006

The Revd Jonathan Edwards voted in as new BUGB General Secretary. The Revd Kate Coleman became the first black woman to be BUGB President.

### ***A FRIENDLY REMINDER***

***Membership Fees for 2012-13 are now due and payable. Please forward to Treasurer, Michael Petras, 31 Oakleigh Ave., Thornleigh 2120.***

A number of members have failed to renew their membership despite being sent membership subscription forms in the Recorder.

As there has been no indication that they do not wish to continue their membership it would be greatly appreciated if the matter could be addressed and membership renewed promptly.

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

**1st November, 2012.**

**Morling College Faculty Lounge**

**7-30pm**

The speaker is Gareth Rowland. Gareth is a Welsh-born member of the Sydney Welsh Choir who will speak about his Welsh Baptist heritage. Michael Petras will speak about Welsh Baptists in Australia.

### **PROGRAMME FOR 2013.**

***Thursday, February 7, 2013***

#### **Rev Ron Hansard -**

will present "This is My Story". Ron was in the Air Force before entering the ministry and serving in several significant pastorates. He is a direct descendant of the British Parliamentary Printer whose son was the original "Hansard" Reporter.

***Thursday, May 2, 2013***

***(including Annual General Meeting)***

**Australian Baptists in Tekin.**

#### **Rev Keith Bricknell**

the founding missionary of Baptist mission work in Tekin PNG will mark the 50th anniversary of its beginnings that was celebrated in July.

#### **Other Meetings -**

**Thursday, August 1, 2013**

**Thursday November 7, 2013**

**Speakers to be advised**

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY** is open to persons and churches who make application and are accepted as members by the Executive Committee. Membership Fees are Ordinary \$20, Concession \$15, Churches and Institutions \$25. Membership Fees are due before the Annual General Meeting in May each year. Please send to the Treasurer, 31 Oakleigh Avenue, Thornleigh NSW 2120

# Fifty years at Macquarie Park

Address by Dr Victor Eldridge,

Lecturer in Old Testament(1966-86), Vice-Principal (1975-86) and Principal (1990-96) at a Dinner to celebrate the occasion, Morling College, 19th September, 2012.

If I may borrow from Dickens I am the ghost of Morling past. That may make Ross (Clifford) the ghost of Morling present and Mark the ghost of Morling future.



I was never a student at the Eastwood or as it is known today the Macquarie Park campus. I belong to that rapidly diminishing group who trained at Ashfield. I finished college in 1960

and the College moved here in 1961-2. I was not at the opening of the present College in 1962 because I was doing my country service at Grafton. I came back to Sydney in 1963 and was the pastor at Carlingford until 1966 when Ron Rogers and I began to teach here in the same year and my family moved onto the campus. We were to live here for 27 of the next 31 years though both the houses we lived in have now been replaced by a large hole in the ground. It was a semi rural area. We could look out of our kitchen window and see horses grazing across the road, and a peach orchard. There was another peach orchard next door and we used to pick blackberries where the Macquarie shopping centre now stands.

I took the place of **John Thompson**. John had gone to teach at Melbourne University and was highly qualified with an MA, MSc, BD, BEd, and a Cambridge PhD as well as being the author of several scholarly works on the Old Testament. I had a B.A. Dip.Ed. But John was a friend as well as a mentor for me and I survived those early years because he gave me all his old handwritten lecture notes.



When I first started teaching here the lecturers wore academic gowns to lectures and the students stood up when the lecturer entered the class room. The same old fashioned courtesy was shown by the students at meal times when the faculty sat at the top table and were served by the students. The changes in socially acceptable attitudes over the past fifty years may well be expressed in the way I was addressed by the students. When I began teaching in 1966, only a little older than the students I was called Mr Eldridge. When I came back from the US in 1978 with a doctorate I was called Doc. In 1986 I returned to the pastorate and when I came back to the College again in 1990 as Principal the students all called me Vic. The change in the way we dress and our behaviour at meals etc are a reflection of the changes in society.

Perhaps I need to add that one of the major changes was that although students worked as hard as students today all they received was the College graduation certificate. Degrees did not make their way into College life until the 1970's and our involvement with the Australian College of Theology.

Ross particularly asked me to reflect on **the property**. When I came there was an administration block, a library, both much smaller than they are today, three staff cottages, a house for the cooks, and a men's and a women's block and the dining room and kitchen. There was a notable lack of classrooms. We taught our classes wherever we could. There was a make shift class room at the end of the admin block about where David Starling's office is. There was another one where the students' common room is. There was a third one at the end of the library about where the stairs are from the ground floor to the mezzanine and right next door to

the small office I had in the library so when a class was on I could learn from whatever lecture was on at the time. Apart from these we also taught in the dining room at the far end pulling a curtain across to keep us separate and any where else we could find.

You can imagine the improvement when the **John Deane lecture rooms** were built. John Deane was the first Vice Principal of the College. As a lecture block it was not ideal being no more than four rooms without



any teaching aids in their original form, even a built in blackboard. Other transformations were to follow. The college had been built to accommodate the kind of students we used to have. At Ashfield almost all the students were accepted candidates for the ministry and most were single. There was an easy explanation for that. We were not allowed to marry until the completion of our fourth year though we did get them to knock it down to three years. When we moved to Eastwood more and more of the students were married. Not only that, the addition of the Bible College in the late 1950's meant that there were several women students living on campus. The rules had been changing to allow some students who were not accepted for the ministry to do the full College course. For some reason they were called "special course" students.

There were problems with filling the **Men's block** and university students were allowed to board here. But the most dramatic change was in the pressure to build **accommodation for married men and their families** to live on campus. And so at first in a very limited way, one bedroom units but increasingly more suitable married accommodation was built until now there is a small village of families at the bottom end of the property

Two major improvements were the **chapel and the library**. The chapel represented the desire of graduates of the college to pay a suitable tribute to their much loved Principal, George



*Morling College Chapel*

Morling. Again it wasn't an ideal building. An error by someone, surveyor, architect or whoever, meant that it had been built a few feet lower in the ground than was intended to and that caused a few initial problems with water running downhill into the building. It was not adaptable to alternate styles of worship with seats actually made immovable but under Doug Mills enthusiastic drive and leadership the money was raised and the building said something about the way people felt about the "**Old Prof**" You will remember that the College then was called the Baptist Theological and Bible College of NSW not Morling College. The change of name to Morling did not happen till the late 80's.

The second major addition was the **extension to the library**. An anonymous donor who rumour claims went broke a few years later gave, I think, about \$150,000 (Ken Clendinning's memory may be better than mine) and the library as we know it today with the second floor added was built, a vast improvement on its much smaller predecessor. It included two rooms dedicated to people who had played a significant role in the life of local churches and the College, the **Harold Gow room** which acknowledged the long term service of Harold Gow as secretary of Epping Church and the **Doug Mill room** to recognise not only Doug's twenty years at Eastwood but his contribution as chairman of the College Council. The new library gave due honour to another past Principal who had been Vice

Principal for 15 years and Principal for another 10. It was named the **Gilbert Wright library**. Gilbert was a man who had kept the College solvent and together in so many ways by his self sacrificial service.



A much smaller addition was an extension



to the **Administration building** and the construction of the **Ron Rogers lecture theatre**, a tribute to a great man of God who served as Principal for 13 years and a total of 23 years as a lecturer.

So into the bricks and mortars which make up this college are the memories and acknowledgement of some spiritual giants whose legacy is also built into the lives of the students they taught. The changes that are coming, about which Ross who is now the second longest serving Principal will speak, mean that some of these memories may be swept away by the developers machinery but what cannot be swept away are the contributions made to the kingdom of God by all that Morling College and those who have taught and studied here have made. May the College always strive to live up to its motto, a motto chosen in the earliest days of the College in 1916, **Summa Supremo, The Utmost for the Highest.**



## BAPTIST HISTORICAL STUDIES.

Over the years the Baptist Historical Society (B.H.S.) has published various Historical Studies. The titles are

**Harold E. Evans**, *Soldier and Evangelist: The Story of Rev. John G. Ridley, MC* (1980)

**Ken R. Manley & Michael Petras**, *The First Australian Baptists* (1981)

**Michael Petras**, *Extension or Extinction: Baptist Growth in New South Wales 1900-1939* (1983)

**Hubert Watkin-Smith**, *Baptists in the Cradle City: The Story of Parramatta Baptist Church 1838-1986* (1986)

**Michael Petras (Editor)**, *Australian Baptists Past and Present* (1988)

**Kenneth J. Cable**, *Religion in Colonial New South Wales* (1993)

**Roy B. Henson**, *And One was a Doctor: A Life of Rev. Dr. A.J. Waldock* (2003)

**Michael Petras (Editor)**, *Australian Baptists and World War 1* (2009),

**Jean Kelshaw and Bruce Thornton (Ed's)** *Born to be a Soldier, War Diary of Lieutenant John Gotch Ridley, M.C. A survivor of Fromelles.* (2010).

## MORLING BOOKS

The Society has also published several books by or about Rev G.H.Morling, Principal of the Baptist Theological Collee of NSW (now Morling College) 1923-1960. These are- **George Henry Morling, The Man and His Message for Today** (Greenwood Press, 1995)

**The Quest for Serenity** (Young and Morling 1951, Second Edition Morling Press, 2002)

**Living with the Holy Spirit** (Morling Press 2004).

**The Franciscan Spirit and other Writings** (Baptist Historical Society of NSW, 2008).

**The Upper Room Discourses** (B.H.S. 2010)

**The Incomparable Christ** (B.H.S. 2010)

**Journeys with God.** (B.H.S. 2010)

**The Romance of the Soul.** (B.H.S. 2010)

**Jesus and the Life of Prayer** (B.H.S. 2010)

**Faith and Works,** (B.H.S. 2010)

**Living in the Will of God,** (B.H.S. 2010.)

**The Acts of the Holy Spirit** (B.H.S. 2011)

**Amos/Hosea** (B.H.S. 2011)

Copies are available through BHS, Care Morling College, 120 Herring Road, Macquarie Park, 2113, Telephone 9878 0201 or [www.baptisthistory.org.au](http://www.baptisthistory.org.au). click on Shop

## HOW HISTORY CAN MAKE THE FUTURE PROSPEROUS

**Ron Robb**

An interesting article recently appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald* Business Section on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> October. It was by an advertising consultant named Harold Mitchell, commenting on the woes expressed by a number of long established large retail companies such as Harvey Norman, David Jones, Myers and others about internet competition. These once mighty firms were bemoaning the rise of internet purchases by more and more people, one of the companies (David Jones) even facing the threat of demise.

Mitchell recounted that some time ago he had warned a prominent retail executive that internet buying was going to take-off and that businesses should be thinking how to meet the seismic shift of customer loyalty. The executive scoffed, averring that people would always want to 'touch the merchandise, make sure they had the right size and be reassured and assisted by a charming sales assistant'. He considered the then embryonic internet craze to be just a fad which would soon lose its appeal. How wrong he has been!

Mitchell remarked that they should have seen the new era coming - because it had all been done before. One hundred years ago in fact. In 1910 a firm called Grace Brothers introduced a whole new idea: an incredible thing called a mail-order catalogue. It was glamorous, showed many pictures of the goods being offered, details of size, style, colour etc. It was highly effective and opened Grace Bros' market to isolated and remote customers in the outback and even within the cities where Grace Bros had a store. In fact, Grace Bros actually sold more goods from their catalogue than from their store. The rise of Grace Bros as a mighty retailer is well known to an older generation.

People who didn't have a car (most people in those days) or were not near a railway nor able to afford the time and expense of getting to a big city became a vast customer base. And today - driving a car into a big city then finding parking is a nightmare - just as difficult and uninviting as being able to get to the store in 1910. Being crowded into a packed train with a pile of purchases is just as uninviting. Sure, ladies (for example) can go into a change room and try a new

dress or pair of shoes on (and if they're honest won't be wearing them out of the store having left the old dress or shoes behind) but today that lady can order a couple of dresses or shoes on line and return the ones that don't fit or that she doesn't like under the fairly common return policy. She can shop with any firm she likes in any country without even leaving home or being diverted from other things she wants to do. It's a boon to busy working families. Nor do they have to hunt around to find a shop assistant to make a purchase (one of the major complaints these days because the shops can't afford to employ many of them). Moreover, they don't have to trapse all around a business precinct to find who has the best deal - they can do it at home in front of a screen over a cup of coffee at any time - in their pyjamas if they feel so inclined.

In fact, some data are already in: even at this early stage of on-line shopping some firms where the penny has already dropped are reporting a 5% increase in sales and rising.

So - if what you're doing is not working - research history to see what worked before. It might have some lessons that can be modernized and reapplied. History often has useful lessons.

\* \* \* \* \*

# MAKING THEIR MARK NSW/ACT BAPTIST BIOGRAPHIES

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Mail to The Baptist Historical Society of NSW Inc., Care Morling College, 120 Herring Road, Macquarie Park NSW 2113.

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**HISTORY**

plays strange tricks on the reputations of people. Some it deflates into obscurity. Others it lifts to surprising eminence. It was this that led the poet Gray in his "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard" to write -

*"Full many a gem of purest ray serene;  
The dark unfathomed aves of ocean bear;  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen;  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."*

How soon we forget the hero's and benefactors of the past. So Gray continues -

*"Beneath those rugged elms, the yew tree's shade,  
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,  
Each in his narrow grave forever laid,  
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep."*

oooOOOooo

History is not just a subject that some people like and some do not. It is the means by which the past and the present are kept together. The past is never over - something of it remains and is still alive and is momentous for us. Someone has said -"Man is an omnibus in which all his ancestors are seated." All that has gone before us has helped to make us what we are and what we do will shape the destiny of future generations.