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**IN THIS ISSUE:**

Minutes of the Annual Meeting, 5 May 1994 .....	Page 2
Riverina, Nursery of Saints .....	Page 3
Why Study Church History? .....	Page 7
Our Roving Reporter .....	Page 10
Society Officers .....	Page 10

**OUR NEXT MEETING:**

**Thursday 4 August 1994  
in the  
MORLING CHAPEL, EASTWOOD**

**Speaker: Rev G R Beckenham, B Th, B Pharm**

**Topic: MINISTERS OF THE HABERFIELD CHURCH  
Men who shaped the denomination**

Haberfield Church has been served by and has produced a list of impressive men. If you knew any of them come and add your recollections; if you knew none of them came and be informed.

It will be a night to remember!

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## MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING HELD 5 MAY 1994

The Annual Meeting was opened in prayer by the Chairman, Rev E R Rogers, at 8.00pm with twenty-nine members and friends present (details in attendance book).

Apologies were received and accepted from Rev S Arndell, Miss H Burton, Mr B & Mrs J Burton, Rev R Briggs, Rev N Cowling, Rev Dr V Eldridge, Rev J Godwin, Rev P Kilkeary, Mrs L McDonald, Rev R Pope, Mrs J Prior, Rev R Sindel, Rev D Taplin and Mr H Watkin-Smith.

A special welcome was given to our guest speaker Dr K Cable, who was accompanied by his wife, to Rev I B Thornton, General Secretary of the Baptist Union of NSW, and also to Dr G Chatfield (with congratulations being extended to him on his recent academic achievements).

### Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of general meetings held 5 August 1993 and 3 February 1994, as published in the latest edition of *The Recorder*, were confirmed.

### Adoption of Annual Reports

\*Adoption of the Secretary's Annual Report, as published in the most recent edition of *The Recorder*, was approved.

\*Adoption of the Treasurer's Annual Report as published in *The Recorder* was approved, subject to audit.

### Annual Elections

After bringing a greeting from both the President of the Baptist Union of NSW, Rev E C Yu and also President Elect, Mr P Dart, Rev I B Thornton spoke of the importance of maintaining and promoting the work of the Society and gave details of some of the recent archival discoveries made at the Union office. He then declared all positions vacant and conducted the elections. The following members were elected:-

Chairman .....	Rev E R Rogers
Vice-Chairman .....	Mr P Young
Secretary .....	Mr O C Nannelli
Treasurer .....	Mr P Hayward
Archivist .....	Rev E Archer
Editor, Recorder .....	Rev P Kilkeary
Essay Competition Secretary .....	Mr P Young

It was agreed that the position of auditor would be discussed at the next executive meeting.

In accepting congratulations from Rev Thornton on his re-election as Chairman, Rev Rogers commented that the Society in its twentieth year continued to contribute in a real way to the furtherance of Baptist history. It was critical, however, that this work was maintained and he called on all members to encourage others to become involved in the work of the Society.

### Guest Speaker

The Chairman again welcomed our distinguished speaker, Dr K Cable, who then addressed the meeting on the topic "Why Study Church History?" At the conclusion of his talk, members gave their thoughts on this important issue.

### Close

After a special vote of thanks to Dr Cable was moved, the meeting was closed in prayer by the Chairman at 9.25 pm.

# RIVERINA NURSERY OF SAINTS, BUT ...

## “CHURCH PLANTING IN RESISTANT RIVERINA SOILS”



A summary of a paper given by Mr L G Young on 4 November 1993

The thesis: Against obstacles of nature and human nature, God established Baptist churches in all major towns in the Riverina except West Wyalong.

In 130 years of Baptist witness there have been about 4000 converts of whom about 400 showed leadership gifts. Of the latter only some 40 are still in the area.

**A. OBSTACLES OF NATURE:** In the early days distance and poor means of transport made church attendance difficult. Moreover, few persons of Baptist persuasion made their way to the area. Therefore Baptist growth was slow and difficult.

**B. OBSTACLES OF HUMAN NATURE:** There was strong resistance to Baptists who were seen as ‘sheep-stealers’. From 1890 Anglicans embraced sacramentarianism and other mainline churches moved to liberalism. Baptists who rejected both were unpopular. Moreover they were seen as ‘wowsers’. Then too their stress on believers’ baptism created tension. And Baptist church government with its stress on local autonomy was unwelcome to churches dominated by clergy and with hierarchical structure. So any attempt to start a Baptist church met with opposition. This was true also of other ‘minor’ denominations. The charismatic movement, entering into the mainline churches, has broken some of the barriers down.

It is also to be noted that for all Protestant churches work in the Riverina has proved to be difficult.

### The Three Phases of Baptist church-planting

#### A. SELF-HELP — 1871 to 1912



For reasons noted above it took great faith in God to begin a church in the Riverina in the 1870's. Moreover it needed a nucleus of at least three large families in reasonable proximity. The following were begun in this period.

1. Goombargana — 1871. In 1866 five Howard brothers arrived from South Australia to take up land under the Robertson Land Act. Five years later seven Howards and two Morgans signed the following statement, “On the Lord’s Day, December 10th 1871, we, as immersed believers in Jesus Christ, gave each to each the right hand of fellowship in Christ, uniting ourselves together as a church of our Lord Jesus Christ — holding the doctrines of repentance towards God, faith in Jesus and immersion in water of those who believed”.

They further agreed to hold a monthly church business meeting "on the Friday evening before full moon". Through all the years the church has maintained a faithful witness in its farming district. At the present time at least 80% of the district's youth attend the Baptist Youth work. Subsequently the church has taken a leading role in the formation of the Mulwala and Corowa churches and has faithfully supported Baptist Association work.

2. Ariaiah Park —1895. In 1888 Mr J Baker took up land at Merool Creek and soon gathered three families for worship. At their request the Baptist Home Mission Committee in 1894 sent an evangelist, Charles Palmer. He stayed three months and had some success. In 1895 eight believers from three families united themselves together as a Baptist Church. A visiting evangelist presided. By the following year the membership had increased to 20 with 20 adherents. Among the newcomers was the Davey family, so vital to the church ever since. For some time the church was pastorless. In 1898 Fred Davey started a Sunday School in his home and the Christian Endeavourers built a mud hall on his property for church services. From time to time the Baptist Union supplied pastors but often in conjunction with Temora. The church has a fine record of outreach and of support of missions.

3. Temora. In existence in 1895 but officially formed as a church in 1909. The work was greatly helped by the coming of John Baker and family from Ariaiah Park and later by the dynamic ministry of Rev L E Tranter who at one time served 20 outstations. In 1909 he had a church and manse built.

In 1915 the district Baptist work was divided into Temora, Ariaiah Park and Barmedman. The last named fell a victim to the Depression. The work at Temora was greatly advanced by the incredible labours of Albert Mitchell. A Baptist by conviction he has had a huge worldwide missionary influence.

Temora has given Max Howard, Ian Flatters, Ian Walsh and John Reid to the Baptist ministry. From one of its outstations came the Lindner family the founders of the Wagga Church and in 1948 it sponsored the Cotamundra Church.

## B. AID FROM SYDNEY — 1912 TO 1956



1. Leeton — 1913. In 1912 the Home Mission Committee sent Richard Dobbinson to be the first resident minister in Leeton and the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. He lived and conducted services in a tent and until Methodist and Anglican ministers were sent served all denominations. Later he served with distinction in the Great War.

There were nine foundation members of the church from six families including the Kidds and Priors. From the church many went into Christian service, including Fred Roberts (missionary martyr on the Amazon), Lloyd George, Edward Archer, the Max Wynns, Herb Sutties and Beulah Soper.

Leeton received more help from the Baptist Union than earlier churches being regularly supplied with pastors (40 in all). In turn it reached out, establishing many outstations and giving vital help to the Griffith Church and loyalty to the District Association.

2. Griffith — 1924. The work was started by local initiative but was supported by student ministers from Sydney, at one time 28 in 26 years. In 1945 it was given fresh impetus by Rev Jim Waugh. Help was given to Hillston and Hay.

3. Junee — 1938. In 1938 the Elphick brothers rallied other Baptists and the church was formed. It has relied largely on the Baptist Union for pastors but in lean times has been pastorless or has relied on untrained pastors. It has majored on work with children and young people.

4. Wagga Wagga — 1941. In 1941 several young men (Fred McMaster, Wal Casperson, Jim Waugh and Herb Hines) sharing in open air work discovered that they were Baptists. They called a meeting and the church was born.

The Baptist Union supported the new work, sending senior pastors by rail each weekend. In 1946 the Union appointed Rev Alwyn Le Claire as pastor. He was followed by Rev Alan Logan whose radio ministry proved very successful, leading to a work at Brookdale. From that work have come numerous Christian leaders, including Rev Ray Taylor. From 1947-75 it continued as a fellowship marked by harmony and effectiveness. Wagga Teach-

ers College began in 1947. Through contact with the Wagga church many students were converted with not a few of them becoming Baptist ministers.

5. Cootamundra — 1948. After two earlier failed attempts a church was established. With union support and occasional pastoral cooperation with Young and Junee churches it survived. Rev Alex Brown had a notable seven year ministry and a Gene Jeffries mission had a great impact.

6. Young — 1954. The Baptist Home Ministries sent Rev Wilbur Fletcher to evangelise in Riverina. When he preached in Young local believers asked to be formed into a Baptist Fellowship. The church has had many notable conversions including Chester Carter now minister of Newcastle Tabernacle.

#### C. AID TO NEW CHURCHES FROM WITHIN THE REGION — 1956-1993



During the ministry of Rev Alan Neate, Wagga church grew in influence and built its first church building. As the first area superintendent he planned the Riverina Association's Tumut Youth Camp. Since then Riverina church planting has been locally generated, usually coordinated by the regional superintendent. The role of the Baptist Union has been one of endorsement.

1. Hillston — 1960. Hillston had a name for low intelligence, high crime rate and strong opposition to the gospel. In 1948 Keith Lynn went there for the Bush Missionary Society. He had a remarkable ministry especially among the young. A mission in 1956 saw over fifty converts, several of whom became missionaries. Keith saw a need to shepherd converts through a local church but this was outside the charter of the Missionary Society. The Baptist Home Mission accepted him as a home missionary and purchased the manse from the Society. His uncompromising and effective ministry continued to 1963. His successor, Lance Jackson expanded the social service of the church. Miss Annette Smith, school teacher, and then Rob Silver maintained the witness. It says much for the church that it survives and grows in so small a town.

2. Lake Cargellico — 1961. From Hillston Keith Lynn regularly visited many towns

and, in particular, Lake Cargellico with a population of nearly 2000. There he founded a fellowship which has survived despite many hardships. One former member is now pastor of Kerang Baptist Church in Victoria.

3. Tumut — 1963. When Riverina Baptists decided to built a Youth Camp, Tumut was chosen as the site partly in the hope that it would lead to a Baptist church in a town of 2000. The camp proved costly but annually up to one hundred commitments were made there. Rev 'Tim' Meyer felt called to Tumut to establish a Baptist church and used the Camp as a base. God sent Colin Shedden and a church emerged with him as an ideal secretary. So a Baptist witness was secured in a growing but unresponsive town.

4. Batlow — 1967. During World War II student-pastor John Drakeford was sent to plant a church in Batlow. There was an exciting but short-lived response to his ministry. Much later two Baptist sisters wed local men and an evangelical nucleus was formed. Through the work of colporteur, Rev Harry Cottrell-Dormer and the preaching of Evangelist Reg White a Baptist church began. Batlow later provided preachers for Tumbarumba and Corryong Baptists when they were in need. One of these, Charlie Quarmbly, a foundation members, became a prominent Christian worker in WA.

5. Tumbarumba Fellowship — From 1954 Rev Alan Neate visited every two months. School teachers, Ian Walsh and Ian Flatters, both to become Baptist missionaries, later led the work which, though it eventually failed, formed a stepping stone to Corryong.

6. Corryong — 1971. Bob McKissack, a farmer and later Riverina Regional Superintendent drew attention for the need for a gospel witness. Visitation was carried out and a plea was one day made to Bill Bartlett by Mrs Etta Dodson that a Baptist church begin there. Keith Lynn accepted a call as pioneer pastor. This meant financial hardship, poor living quarters and a disrupted education for his family but God honoured his faithfulness. Corryong nurtured many gifted Christian workers, including Rodney Lynn, now Principal of Green Point Baptist Christian Community School.

7. Deniliquin— 1964. Bill Bartlett, former Baptist Home Missionary and then insurance inspector, felt a need for informed evangelical preaching in the town and began a Baptist

work. It developed ideally and harmoniously at first, owing much to educated town workers.

8. Wagga-Ashmont — 1971. The new Housing Commission Area at Ashmont needed a Sunday School. One was started by Kevin Farrelly and was taken over by Peter Hester, now pastor at Toongabbie. The work grew and Wagga Church bought land and erected a multi-purpose hall. Sunday School enrolment reached 70 and Eric Schumacher was called to pastor the work. His nine year ministry saw growth. Over 45 people have gone to Bible College or ministry and this perhaps has kept the membership small.

9. Narrandera — 1971. The church arose in a town noted for its lack of evangelical vigour. A Leeton couple moved there and, wanting a witness for their family's sake, asked the District Association for help. The work started slowly but was greatly advanced by the coming of gifted persons including Jim Wilson, Keith Jobberns, Mervyn Olsen, and Eric Hudson, all of whom were to become Baptist ministers, Ken Martin, now Principal of a South African College and a policeman who is now Inspector Barrett. Among those converted there was Daryl Evans, also now a Baptist minister.

10. Hay Fellowship — 1972. The Baptist Association agreed to begin a work there to provide an evangelical witness. A generous gift by Dale Williams made a manse available and so ensured the permanence of the witness. A chapel was added behind the manse by Chris Francis during his nine year honorary ministry. Many have been converted and several gone into Bible College.

11. Holbrook Fellowship — 1984. A couple converted through the Wagga church moved back to Holbrook and found no evangelical witness there. Keith Benson, a WEC missionary candidate laid firm foundations for the Fellowship, and a manse was purchased. The work is in great need.

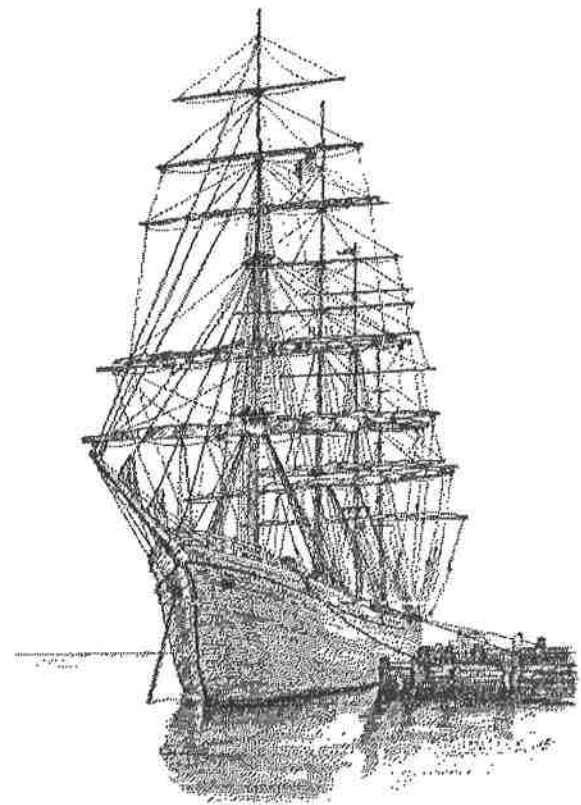
12. Gundagai Fellowship — 1985. Over more than a century unavailing efforts were made to start a Baptist witness. Allan and Denise Crooks of Cootamundra began a business in Gundagai and Allan became convinced that he should start a Baptist church there. He arranged a meeting and a Fellowship was begun with only two members. The work grew. The Fellowship has over the years conducted five missions with door to door visitation

three or four times, an annual witness at the local show and regular paid articles in the newspaper.

13. Corowa Fellowship — 1990. Corowa had 4000 inhabitants but no Baptist witness. This challenged the Goombarana church but unhappy experience at Mulwala had made this cautious. With the provision of a returned missionary from New Guinea and a young school teachers preacher they had a nucleus for a Fellowship. There are annual letter drops and the congregation is growing. Goombarana gives steady help.

14. Harden Bible Group — 1993. In response to a desire for reliable Bible-believing studies Young church sponsored this Group. Its future will depend on their appetite for the Word of God. Some feel a need for a Baptist witness.

4000 converts and 400 serving Christ elsewhere amply justify the effort and expense of tilling the resistant soil of Riverina.



# WHY STUDY CHURCH HISTORY?

A Summary of the Twentieth Annual Lecture by Dr K J Cable

**I**n response to the question, Why study church history? it could be argued that the Christian church should not be interested in history at all. Its concern is with the present and the future, not with the past. Because of this it is small wonder that many church people have no interest whatever in the history of their own or any other church.

Well, why study church history? I want to give some reasons moving from the most general to the most particular.



1. The most general and most important reason why we should study church history is that Christianity is an historical religion. Much more than any other religion known to me it is based on history; it is historical through and through. Its Bible is concerned from beginning to end with the study, historically, of God's dealings with man from the time of creation to the time ultimately of the last things. It says that at a crucial time in the history of God's dealings with man he physically entered into history and thereby sanctified the whole of human history. To understand Christianity you have to take its historical basis seriously.



2. My second point links in with that. This history is a straight line history. Now history doesn't have to be like that. The ancients, for example the Greeks and Romans, were obsessed with the idea that history was going round in circles with recurrent gold, silver and iron ages. The purpose of the historian

was to find where you were on the cycle so that you could make a fairly shrewd anticipation of where you were going. That was the whole motive of ancient history.

The Jews didn't share that idea at all. The Jews thought of history as starting with God's creation, followed by a continuous story of God's dealing with his people and moving on to a climax with the establishment of God's reign. Most modern historians also take a linear view of history. The Jewish view, then, is the basis of modern historical thinking. In one way this view got into difficulties. Last century the liberals agreed with it but they thought of history not only going along in a straight line but going upwards. The world was getting better as it went along. Then two World Wars totally changed people's ideas of whether the world was getting better. They had the right idea of a straight line but by pointing it upward they imported the wrong notion that by going along you were automatically improving and this is not true. Marxism takes a similar line. In Marx, history has a start and a finish but the finish is in this world and takes the form of a perfect society. For him the culmination is in the natural and not the supernatural

world. We owe, therefore, to the Judaic-Christian notion of history some things that have to be taken into our thought.



3. In the third place history has moulded Christianity. Christianity has taken a great many forms. There are various kinds of Islam, of Hinduism and of Buddhism but none of them has split up quite as much as Christianity. Many haven't stood the test of time but others have and some of the old ones keep coming back under different names. It is important for any church to see exactly where it fits within the kaleidoscope of various kinds of Christianity. Where does your tradition fit in relation to all the others. Some, apparently defunct, are re-emerging. You can, for example, find perfectly good discussions of the charismatic movement in 3rd century Christianity.

But where historically does the Baptist faith fit in? It is common knowledge that the Baptist Church arose in early 17th century England, and it was one of a group of Protestant denominations that maintained that the Reformation in England had only gone halfway between Rome and Geneva. The Church of England was insufficiently reformed. There were too many bags of Popery' about it. The Baptists said this but other 'Puritans', said it too. What then was special about the Baptists? How were they different from the other churches? Where do they fit in this kaleidoscope of denominations? The special thing about the Baptists was their insistence on believers baptism. You need, then, to ask what the various Reformers said on this subject? You find that a good many said something, much of it favourable. But you have to go back further than that. You have to establish yourself in the history of the Church, not just in relation to your immediate predecessors, perhaps the Anabaptists of Europe. You have to go back to the early days of Christianity. Where was your emphasis then? It was there. In about 200 Tertullian set out carefully all the arguments for and against infant baptism. He didn't come to much of a conclusion but nevertheless he set out the issue because in his day it was very important. He was trying to promote rational discussion about it because it was a significant issue. So

in your tradition of interpretation you are part of an important element within the history of the Church, and you have to know about it. It means that you are a part of something that Christians have thought seriously about almost from the beginning of Christianity. So you are able to authenticate your position as a member of the great Christian family.



4. History has not only moulded Christianity; it has challenged and changed all its branches.

Churches are always changing. However static they seem, they never are. History is always forcing them to adjust. Though a denomination claim to be rock-solid, it is not. You have to see the forces at work in your own tradition. One strikes me as of great importance, and Australian Baptists must always bear it in mind. The Baptist Church in Britain has always been fairly small. It has never been, in football terms, in the first division, never in the biggest three or four. It has been significant but never very large, and this has been true in Australia.

Could you say, therefore, that there is something in the nature of the Baptist Church that keeps it small? Of course you can't! Look at North America. The Baptists weren't the first to arrive there and when they did they were not welcomed by other 'Puritans'. Despite this the Baptists took root in the American colonies. Then in the late 18th century, and with increasing rapidity right through the 19th the Baptists grew dramatically, and it was not because millions of Baptists came from Europe and Britain. The growth occurred because they made other people Baptists. In 1750 Virginia was a solid Anglican colony, but by 1780, after the Revolution, half the population were Baptists. A great wave of change had come over them, and it kept on into the 19th century. So today there are more Baptists in the United States than any other Protestant denomination. Why? It is a point for historians to consider. When you look at your own church, see what has been happening in other parts of the world during the last couple of hundred years. It doesn't mean that it is going to happen to you. You may not want it to happen in quite the same way. Would it mean, for example,



to be subject to the same pressures as in the 1850's and 1860's when American Baptists agonised over the religiousness of slavery and Baptists in the north and the south were split on the question?



5. Which leads to my next point. There are within all churches inevitable differences. There will be differences of opinion, of practice etc. Even churches which look absolutely granite-like are honeycombed with differences — and they should be. That is what human association is all about. One thing bumps up against another and sets off another, and the resulting compromise is often creative — and it starts all over again. That is a Marxist view of history and there is a lot to be said for it. Creative tensions can be good. Some of them can be destructive, but they are there. It is not for the historian to pass judgment and say some are good and some are bad. On the other hand, the Baptist Church has to note that these things are there.

One tension in the Baptist Church is the tug between the General Baptists and the Particular Baptists — and it has gone on for generation after generation. It may not be in the same language or about the same issues but that kind of thing is going to continue. This is not peculiar to the Baptist Church. There is a debate in the Anglican Church about much the same issue. In a way it is to be found in every church for there is a tendency of some people to be more orthodox than others. Tension occurs all the time and is inescapable. You have to be aware of it for it is crucial to your life.



6. One problem for Christians in Australia has been adjusting to the changes brought about by our translation into a different environment. We tend to forget how big the change was for the early settlers. Let me give you an example that has nothing to do with religion. A lot of people in England farmed and some finished up out here. In England they had to contend with cold and excessive moisture. Here the enemies were heat and

drought. Their whole technique had to change. And that is true of so much life that comes from Britain to Australia. However, when it came to religion people didn't want to change. Firstly, because they took religion to be unchangeable, as in essence it is. Moreover, it was precious to them as a link with the 'home' they had left behind. They didn't want to change it at all but circumstances are such that they had to. Baptists were no exception. They had, however reluctantly, to make adjustments.

The new country presented other problems. For example, back home in the 19th century nearly all Roman Catholics lived in Ireland, nearly all Presbyterians in Scotland and most Anglicans and Methodists in England and Wales, as did the Baptists. But on the whole most of them were separate from each other. You didn't get many punch-ups between the Irish Catholics and the English Protestants, except in Northern Ireland. Then they came to Australia and found themselves living in the same street. It is an enormous strain for people to find that their religion isn't the dominant one that everyone takes for granted. So the history of Australia has been punctuated by sectarianism, with stresses between one form of Christianity and another. This is a very important element that you have to note.



7. And then there is experience. Religion is about life. Religion is about people and about the way people do things and think. You have to study people before you can have a successful evangelistic campaign, otherwise you don't get through to them. If you are establishing a church you have to make sure that the church is situated in the right area. Otherwise the people won't attend. Experience is needed to understand the way in which, in the Australian environment, your church can get on. In part that means finding how your ancestors did the same sort of thing. History is an indispensable tool. Someone said that history doesn't repeat itself and if we don't learn from former mistakes we are going to repeat them.



8. Finally, there is pride. Pride is one of the seven deadly sins. But there is a proper pride. We may have just pride in our spiritual ancestors of saintly character. The author of Hebrews speaks of our being compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses. He is thinking of the heroes of faith that have passed on, who are aware of us, though not physically present. Christianity has always been aware of this great cloud of witnesses inspiring them on. It has always believed that the story of its saints is crucial. Tertullian was the man who invented the phrase that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. Unless you know who your martyrs and saints were you don't understand how your church grew— and not just the spectacular saints, the first division ones, but the countless men and women who have always borne witness to the faith. A

committee charged with compiling a list of Australian Anglican 'saints' for a new edition of the Prayerbook found that it couldn't think of any. But it could think of hundreds of ordinary people who might be called secondary saints. It is the historian's job to search out and talk about these second division saints to serve as an inspiration for us.



The Baptist Historical Society, therefore, should know its task. It is an essential task, and it is a very testing one.



## FROM OUR ROVING REPORTER

— Hubert Watkin-Smith

I gave greetings from the Society at the 125th Anniversary at Thalaba, and was invited to pay a tribute to the Pioneers at the Sunday morning service. There was a great assemblage of descendants of those pioneers, especially on the Saturday evening when 380 were present. Many had to return to their own churches for Sunday. There were 240 present Sunday morning.

Saturday night was a program of hymn singing, solos and instrumental items by descendants of the pioneers, with greetings from clergy, State politicians and Local Government representatives. Rev Les Oakley from the Mother Church at Hinton gave the address on Sunday.

The Anniversary Project was the refurbishment of the Cemetery in the Church grounds. \$5000 was spent on this in addition to much voluntary work by families.

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