

# Baptist The Recorder

The Journal of the  
Baptist Historical Society  
of New South Wales

No. 3 of 1995 (Number 53 in present series)

July 1995

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**NEXT MEETING:** Thursday 3 August 1995 in the Morling Chapel, Eastwood  
**Speaker:** Dr Graham Chesterfield  
**Topic:** The Clarity of Scripture and Authority of the Church—an Anabaptist Perspective

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# Twenty-first Annual Report

## of the Baptist Historical Society

This year marks an important milestone in the life of the Baptist Historical Society, twenty-one years of service to our denomination. As a member of the generation who can still remember the significance in one's life of this achievement, which has tended to be bypassed in our current society in favour of other celebrations, it is I feel an appropriate time in which to reflect on the early days of the Society.

The inaugural meeting was held in the Theological College at 7.30 pm on Thursday 21 February 1974 with the following foundation members in attendance: Dr K. Manley, Messrs K. Carlill, J. Maitland, P. Peffer, Mesdames J. Dick, G. Flood, L. Ollif and Misses M. Flood and Edna and Ena Holland.

The Society's objectives were detailed as including:

- to encourage the recording and collating of Baptist history
- to encourage the writing of Baptist history
- to foster interest in Baptist history at the local church level
- to assist research students at schools, colleges and universities
- to publish articles and historical information and to produce a journal
- to be alert to church jubilees, centenaries etc. and draw attention to material available
- to promote care of buildings and sites of historical interest

Dr K. Manley was appointed as Chairman with Mrs L. Ollif as Secretary of an interim committee and it was agreed that a draft constitution be drawn up and presented at the April meeting.

It is interesting then to look back and reflect both on the initiative and foresight of the foundation members and what has been achieved in the intervening years. The publication of six books, the establishment and maintenance of Baptist archives and the regular publication of a journal (*The Recorder*) are just some of the achievements of which the Society and its members can be justifiably proud. There still, however, remains much more to be done.

The aim of encouraging interest in the study of Baptist history in the denomination is still a challenge to be addressed. It is disappointing to note the seemingly lack of interest in the subject in the wider community and much work therefore still needs to be done to promote interest in our history and heritage.

Just a quick note on the activities of the past twelve months. Again, the Society has been well served by a quality range of speakers on a wide variety of topics. Our Archivist has again had a busy year with interest in genealogical research on the increase, although sadly this seems to be from those outside the denomination. All committee members have faithfully performed their duties, with a special note of thanks to our Chairman, Rev E.R. Rogers for his wise leadership over this period.

Owen Nannelli

## Minutes of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting was opened in prayer by the Chairman, Rev E.R. Rogers, at 8 pm with approximately one hundred and twenty members and friends present.

Apologies were received and accepted from Mrs B. Cardwell, Mr F. and Mrs A. Church, Rev N. Cowling, Rev I.B. Thornton, Mrs L. Ollif and Mr P. Petschack.

The Chairman extended a welcome to all those present for this 21st anniversary celebration program with special mention being made of Rev R. Briggs, representing the Baptist Union of NSW, and those who would be contributing to the service namely Rev E. Archer, Dr L. LeClaire, Mr H. Johns and Mr M. Crapp.

### Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the General Meeting held 2 February 1995, as published in the latest edition of *The Recorder*, were confirmed.

### Adoption of Annual Reports

- Adoption of the Secretary's Annual Report as circulated at the meeting (and which is published at page two of this edition of *The Recorder*), was approved.
- Adoption of the Treasurer's Annual Report as published in *The Recorder* and which had now been audited, was approved.

### Annual Elections

After bringing a greeting from both the President and Secretary of the Union, Mr P. Dart and Rev I.B. Thornton respectively, Rev R. Briggs extended congratulations to the Society on achieving the significant milestone of 21 years of service and spoke of the importance of its work. He then declared all positions vacant and conducted the annual elections. The following members were elected:

Chairman	Rev E.R. Rogers
Vice-Chairman	Mr P.G. Young
Secretary	Mr O.C. Nannelli
Treasurer	Mr P.E. Hayward
Archivist	Rev E.A. Archer
Editor, <i>Recorder</i>	Rev P.B. Kilkeary
Secretary, Essay Competition	Mr P.G. Young
Auditor	Mr J. Donald

### Twenty-First Anniversary Celebrations in Story and Song

The Special Anniversary Program involving the singing of hymns produced by Baptists from Australia, America and Britain and the stories behind hymn writing in these countries was presented by Rev Rogers, Rev Archer and Dr LeClaire. Mr Harley Johns (accompanied by Mr Crapp) concluded the program by singing Psalm 23 to a tune written by Rev Archer.

### Close

The meeting was closed with a prayer and benediction by the Chairman at 9.15pm.

# Annual Meeting Program

## 21st Anniversary Celebration Program

Introduction — Ron Rogers,

involving the singing of:

Our Father God, The Name we praise  
Who would true valour see  
All hail the power of Jesus' name

British Baptist hymn writers and their hymns — Ted Archer,

with hymns to be sung

Blest be the tie that binds  
Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah

American Baptist hymn writers and their hymns — Laurie LeClaire,

with hymns to be sung

Jesus, and shall it ever be  
Saviour, Thy dying love  
To God be the glory  
Wonderful words of life

Australian Baptist hymnody — Ron Rogers,

with hymn to be sung

I would follow where Thou art

and concluding special item

Psalm 23 — Mr Harley Johns

Hymn      Lord dismiss us with Thy blessing

Benediction

Dr Laurie LeClaire spoke of three characteristics of Americans which are reflected in the hymns chosen by him:

Conservatism

Dynamism

Emotionalism

Rev E A Archer's paper follows.

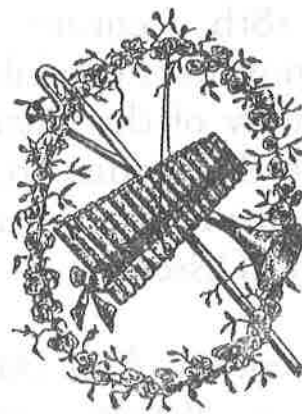
# History of Baptist Hymns and Tunes

Hymn-singing is the Christian's healthy participation in the praise and worship of God. But *what* is music? *How* does music communicate? *What* does music communicate?

Music is a universal means of expression. Plato and Aristotle taught that music affected human behaviour, for good or for evil. Certainly, music affects our emotions — Music, then, may be one of the most effective media for communicating the Gospel.

But when dissenting Baptists met for worship in 17th century England, their meetings were held in silence, as the sound of singing would have betrayed their meeting. In 1668, a curious division arose upon the question of hymn-singing. **Benjamin Keach** (1640-1704), pastor of a Baptist Chapel, decided that a hymn, as distinct from a scriptural paraphrase or a psalm, should be sung after Communion. Keach's son-in-law, Thomas Crosby, tells us that "Two members opposed this — 14 years later, it was

agreed to sing the praises of God on every Lord's Day; five or six dissented — those who could not stay the time of singing might freely go out, and the Church would not be offended at them ... but a few drew some others, that at last a separation ensued; and thereupon another Church was founded on the same principles, singing only excepted." In 1691 Keach issued "Spiritual Melody", 300 hymns, the pioneer of English hymn-books.



Many hymns were written by the Seventh Day Baptist **Stennett** family, especially the baptismal and sacramental hymns of Joseph Stennett (1663-1713).

**William Kiffin** (1616-1701), a prominent Baptist pastor, suffered the loss of two grandsons, William 19, and Benjamin 22, who were hanged by order of the infamous Lord Chief Justice Jeffries. When Benjamin asked that he might sing a hymn, the sheriff told him that it must be with a rope around his neck — which offer was cheerfully accepted.

The Baptists were a long time before they developed any interest in Church praise — their attitude was that all novelties were dangerous. Both General and Particular Baptists held anxious debates about hymn-singing at their General Assemblies — it was not really until the 18th century that Baptist hymn-writers contributed to the hymnody of the Christian Church. The Methodist revival gave rise to many hymn-writers in the ranks of Dissent.

In the 18th century, **Ann Dutton**, widow of a Baptist pastor, published hymns in 1734. **Anne Steele** and **Alice Pullen** were also Baptist pioneers on hymns written by women. Anne Steele's devotional poems inspired the publishing of the 1769 "Baptist Hymn Book". Anne Steele

(1716-1778), was the daughter of a timber-merchant who was also lay-pastor of a Baptist chapel. She was delicate, threatened with tuberculosis all her life; a serious hip injury when 19, which left her almost an invalid. When 21, a few hours before the time of her wedding, her fiancée was tragically drowned, the shock from which her health never fully recovered. Her sorrow deepened her faith; she wrote in her spiritual biography,

Father, whate'er of earthly bliss Thy  
sovereign will denies,  
Accepted at Thy throne of grace, Let  
this petition rise;  
Give me a calm, a thankful heart,  
From every murmur free;  
The blessings of Thy grace impart,  
And let me live to Thee."

Another hymn, "Father of mercies, in Thy word, What endless glories shine" has been returned through two centuries, from Rippon's "Selection of Hymns" 1787, to the 1992 "Baptist Praise and Worship".



Another 18th Century hymn which has retained its popularity for over 200 years is **John Fawcett's** "Blest be the tie that binds Our hearts in Christian love" (sung at our reception into Church membership!). In 1772 Fawcett accepted a call to the pastorate of a prominent London Chapel. At his farewell service at Wainsgate (Yorkshire), with the wagons loaded with his furniture, the grief of his small congregation so moved him that he unloaded the wagons, and stayed on to minister to a poor but devoted congregation for the rest of his life — for the next 45 years. (He even declined an invitation to become Principal of Bristol Baptist College.)



Another great 18th Century hymn is **Robert Robinson's** "come, Thou fount of every blessing". Robinson, a Whitefield convert, a Calvinistic Methodist, Baptist, Congregational, Unitarian, was pastor in Cambridge — the undergraduates flocked to hear him. In 1788 Robinson published his sermon condemning the slave-trade. An historian states that Robinson drew up the first petition denouncing slavery presented to

the House of Commons. This was remarkable, when we note that the abolition of the Slave-trade was carried by Wilberforce in 1806; that slavery was prohibited in British Dominions in 1833; and that the slaves were completely free in 1838. The last verse of Robinson's great hymn may reflect his sermon on the slave-trade:

O to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be,  
Let that grace, Lord, *like a fetter*,  
Bind my wandering heart to Thee ...  
Take my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it from Thy courts above.

Unfortunately, this great hymn, included from Rippon's "Selection" through to the 1962 "Baptist Hymnal", is NOT included in the recent 1992 "Baptist Praise and Worship".

So, in the 18th Century, several Baptist collections of hymns were published:

- 1750 — Benjamin Wallin "Evangelical Hymns and Songs"
- 1768 — Jn Needham "Devotional and Moral Hymns"
- 1769 — Collection of Hymns adapted to public worship
- 1787 — John Rippon's "Selection". 588 hymns
- 1792 — Joseph Swain "The Walworth Hymns"



## In the 19th Century:

- 1828 — "A New Selection of Hymns"  
 1837 — "The Saints' Melody", over 1000 hymns  
 1858 — "Psalms and Hymns", 1000 hymns soon replaced Rippon's "Selection"

In 1866 **Spurgeon** issued "Our Own Hymn Book" (psalms and hymns) for use at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Spurgeon contributed 20 — only one "Sweetly the holy hymn" survived in the 1962 Baptist Hymn Book; and only one, for the Lord's Supper, in the recent 1992 book.

In our 20th Century, the 1900 "Baptist Church Hymnal" contained very many new Baptist contributors. A "Revised" edition was issued in 1933 — the Music book contained 786 hymns, over 1000 tunes, a Chant section of 10 metrical litanies, 82 psalms, 26 Scripture passages, the 10 commandments, 11 canticles, Sanctus, four baptismal sentences, 18 offertory sentences, 16 Benedictions, 10 Amens, and 96 anthems including the Magnificat, Cantate Domino, Jubilate Deo, Nunc Dimittis, Te Deum Laudamus, Deus Miseratur, over 1300 pages (music edition).

The 1962 "Baptist Hymn Book" is still dominated by Charles Wesley (36 hymns) and Isaac Watts (26 hymns) — and only 46 Baptist contributors, out of 777 hymns — less than 6 per cent.

The 1992 "Baptist Praise and Worship" is again dominated by Wesley — 23 hymns, and Watts 19. Dudley-Smith has 15.

In Scotland, three books of hymns were issued, including Gaelic hymns.

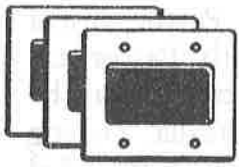
In Wales, the earliest hymns were issued in 1740, but the first official hymn-book appeared in 1915. An 1925 edition contained 942 Welsh hymns. In our 1962 "Baptist Hymn Book", the Dolgelly John Hughes has four descants, 11 arrangements, and three tunes. The Pontypridd John Hughes wrote "Cwm Rhondda" to William Williams' hymn, "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah". John Hughes (1873-1932), started work in the coal-mines when 12; he later became a clerk and an official of the Great Western Railway. He was a deacon and precentor of Salem Baptist Chapel, Pontypridd.



Well-known Baptist hymns include "How Firm a Foundation, ye saints of the Lord; "I cannot tell how He whom angels worship"; "Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son" (a translation); "Head of the Church, and Lord of all".

Hymns and Spiritual Songs may be profound — and may be shallow. A worshipful and

evangelistic Church is a singing Church. Singing has unlimitable possibilities in the field of Christian Education. BUT — as C.S. Lewis said, "A singing Church is the Church at its most repulsive" (he deplored the second-rate lyrics vociferated with evangelical fervour); and Erik Routley said, "Hymns are delightful and dangerous things".



## Slides of a Church Opening

From two Baptists in Western Australia comes an offer of slides taken at the opening ceremony of the Bel Air Church in Newcastle. Mr and Mrs E. Matthews, now of Geraldton, were foundation members of the Church at Bel Air and would like their slides to be preserved for posterity. This interest in the preservation of items of historic occasions is what is needed from all our constituency in order that we may have a clear picture of men and women who sought to take the Gospel into new and expanding areas.

## The History of the Bel Air Church.

A member of our Society and a member of the Bel Air Church, Mr Max Brown, forwarded for our Archives some time ago a history of the Church prepared for the 25th Anniversary in 1991. It is a nicely prepared account setting out chronologically the development of the work in that suburb of the expanding city of Newcastle and it lists those who have been vitally concerned in the various positions of responsibility.

A summary of the history thus revealed is given for the information of our members.

The Bel Air Estate in the southern suburbs of Newcastle between the Pacific Highway at Charlestown and Park Avenue, Kotara, was developed as a residential area in the early 1960s. Among the new residents were many young Baptists from the inner-city Churches who were gathered together for fellowship meetings by Mr Jim Cook of the Hamilton Church. These Baptist families set themselves the task of buying land and erecting a building. These objects were financed by private loans and a bank loan. The architect had to overcome several technical problems as

much of the Estate was located above disused coal mines and it was necessary to avoid difficulties associated with possible subsidence.

The building was completed in August 1966 and the building was officially opened by the then President of the Union, Rev G. Parish, the opening being followed by the formation of a Church fellowship with forty-six foundation members, 44 being drawn from nine different Churches and two received by baptism. An evening meeting welcomed to the Church Rev K. and Mrs Callan and family, Mr Callan having accepted the position of Honorary Interim Pastor, a service he was to continue until the end of 1968. These years saw improvements to the property, the purchase of an adjacent allotment and of a manse. Most important of all, these years saw membership grow through baptisms, visitation and transfers, resulting in a large increase in those undertaking service in a variety of Church programs, so that there was an increase in Church activities including a Men's Fellowship, a Church Choir, Christian Endeavour societies and Scripture in Schools.

The first full-time pastor was Rev D.H. Vaughan who commenced his ministry on 8 December 1968 and served until February 1973. A significant feature of his ministry was an ambitious building program to provide a new Christian Education Centre. The next pastor, Rev D. Barker, began his ministry in February 1973 and concluded it in February 1977. The Christian Education Centre was opened in July 1973 and allowed the expansion of the youth ministry. The Girls' Brigade, the Boys' Brigade, a Play Group and Bible Study Groups were commenced. A team of Scripture teachers for nearby schools was established.

Mr Barker was succeeded in March 1977 by Pastor J. Tuckerman, who was ordained in the Bel Air Church on 16 July 1977.

There followed a period of much growth in membership and a consequent extension of activities: a bus service for Sunday School scholars, a District Visitation Program, Homemakers, a Junior Church Group, Growth Groups. In 1981 Pastor Ross Britza was called as Youth Pastor resulting in an increased response from the young people.

A sudden and extensive illness suffered by Rev J. Tuckerman in September 1985 led to his resignation in November. For most of 1986 the services were carried on by Pastor Britza and others, an interim ministry by Rev G. Moore and a series of services on the Second Coming by Rev B. Thitchener.

The new pastor, Rev P. Skinner, was welcomed in September 1986. Pastor Britza continued to serve as Youth Pastor till 1990, when following his ordination he transferred to Western Australia. During the ministry of Mr Skinner, which included help from a number of part-time pastors and associates, there have been many and varied efforts at evangelism and Christian service. There have been alterations to and renovations of the property to meet the needs of its people and programs. Altogether the picture is of a vigorous Church with many members willing to be involved.

Interest in missionary work was naturally strong under ex-missionaries Doug and Rosemary Vaughan and was increased under Dudley and Lorraine Barker, also former missionaries. It has been continued to the present with several members going out to the mission fields. Four members have also entered our Theological College in training for ministry.

The story told in the booklet was a valuable addition to our Archives.

H. Watkin-Smith