



Historical Society

of the Uniting Church
in South Australia

Editor:
Rev. Kevin Secomb
4 Severn Street
GILBERTON S A 5081
Phone : (08) 8344 8840

NEWSLETTER
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EDITORIAL

The Psalm-writer emphasises the fact that our life-span is very short when compared with the eons of time in God's keeping. While this is irrefutable, to be able to see the events in perspective is also very instructive.

A paper prepared by the long-time Methodist Home Mission Director, Rev George Shapley MBE in the 1950s reminds us of united efforts by churches before Church Union in 1977.

Remembering the life and work of Rev Ken Leaver, who died earlier this year at the age of 93, also reminds us of much that took place in the same era.

Recalling the time when various sports were a major element in church youth work also reminds us how this was an important way to gain the attention of young men and women in the life of local congregations. As very little of this attraction remains today, it challenges us to rethink what we need to be doing in the present.

Even the perspectives of a lifetime of three score years and ten (or more) is very important in counteracting the view that the only thing of importance is what happens only in the present.

Kevin Secomb

Cover picture

An unnamed cricket team.

(The staff at the History Centre will be pleased to hear from anyone who knows something about this group.)

A REMINDER

WORKSHOP: HOW TO PRESENT THE HISTORY OF YOUR LOCAL CHURCH.

WHEN: Saturday morning September 15th, 10.00 – 12.30

WHERE: UNITING CHURCH HISTORY CENTRE
44a East Avenue, Black Forest.

LEADER: Rev Dr Dean Eland (an experienced local church historian)
And

TEAM He will be assisted by a panel of speakers who will share how they have gone about producing the history of their own congregations. Plenty of opportunity to ask questions and to discover the resources available through the History Centre.

PARTICIPANTS: People involved in planning special celebrations, eg Reunions
Anniversaries, Final Services.
People who have the task of producing books or booklets of local church histories.
People concerned about the need to conserve the history of the local churches within the context of the wider church.

ENROLMENT (and queries)

Dean Eland: email— elandhme@bigpond.net.au
phone 8172 2133
by 8th September if possible

THE REV KENNETH BATTEN LEAVER
17th September 1914 – 16th May 2007

Born in Adelaide, Ken Leaver was nurtured in the Christian faith through his family's participation in the life of the Clayton Church, Norwood.

His formal education began in the Norwood Infant School. Later, in 1924, he was a foundation student at King's College (now incorporated into Pembroke College).

Ken Leaver's ministerial training began at Parkin College when he was 18 years of age. After studying Arts and Theology he was ordained in 1939. His first pastoral charge was at Medindie and Gilberton (1939–43) when he also acted as Youth Director of the Congregational Union and taught at King's College. His second pastorate was at North Balwyn, Victoria (1943-45), followed by pastorates in Tasmania – Geeveston (1945-50) and Launceston (1950-55). In 1955 he and his family returned to South Australia to Brougham Place Church.

In 1958 Ken Leaver was appointed as the third principal of Parkin College, succeeding Rev E S Kiek. Instead of continuing to search for an international scholar, the Governors of the college chose one of their own graduates.

Ken was himself an excellent product of the Kiek era. He had gained a good liberal theological education, was prepared to preach in the classical free-church style and loved the independent traditions of Congregationalists.

Eventually, with Church Union on the horizon, Parkin College amalgamated with Wesley College to form Parkin-Wesley Theological College in 1968. Ken at first was appointed co-Principal with Rev Dr Arnold Hunt and then later, sole Principal until the end of 1976. Ken Leaver brought a whole fresh approach to theological education appropriate for servants of Christ in the second half of the 20th century. **In every sense he was the right man, in the right place at the right time.**

Ken Leaver was also the last President of the Congregational Union of Australia. In that role he was directly involved in the inauguration of the Uniting Church in 1977 and was, until his death, the sole survivor of the three leaders who had welcomed in the new Uniting Church in Australia on behalf of their respective traditions.

In retirement Kenneth Batten Leaver continued to serve Christ until the very end of his life. The final words of Psalm 23 have been amply fulfilled:

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

(Compiled from material supplied by Rev Dr Jonathan Barker.)

ADVANCE NOTICE

AN INVITATION TO

The Annual Lecture
to be given by

Rev. Frank Measday
on "Chaplaincy in Woomera"
on Friday, 23rd November, 2007
at 8 p.m.

The Uniting Church History Centre,
44A East Avenue, Black Forest, 5035,
following on the Annual General Meeting
of the Uniting Church Historical Society at 7.30 p.m.

AN EXPERIMENT IN CHURCH UNION
By (the late) Rev. Geo. W. Shapley

In 1870 Sir John Forrest (afterwards Lord Forrest) crossed one thousand miles of waterless country that isolated Western Australia from the Eastern states. In 1892 he began agitating for the construction of a railway to link the East with the West. Even at Federation such a project was held out as an inducement to Western Australia to join the Commonwealth. It was not until 1911 that Parliament authorised the construction of a line between Kalgoorlie and Port Augusta, a distance of 1051 miles. The track laying commenced in 1913.

This engineering feat was to take several years and to employ hundreds of men. Within the Church, men of vision, such as the Rev. John Flynn, saw the possibilities of a great field of missionary endeavour. Necessity is the law, and to meet the mood and spiritual needs of great gangs of surveyors, plate-layers, dam sinkers, water carters etc, would be beyond the scope of any one church. Necessity demanded concerted action.

In 1912 John Flynn visited the leaders of the Protestant Churches in South Australia and invited them to confer as to the feasibility of united action. Mr Flynn was representing the Bush Committee of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

The first combined meeting was held in the Pirie Street Methodist Hall on 9th January, 1913, the churches represented being, Baptist, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian. It was unanimously agreed that the said churches undertake a united mission on the East-West Transcontinental Railway line; that a suitable man be appointed as missionary; and that the said churches equally share the cost of the mission.

In the search for the right type of man, the Y.M.C.A. and interstate churches were consulted and eventually the Rev. T.T. Webb of Victoria was appointed.

The railway authorities were appreciative of the co-operative scheme of the churches and offered considerable facilities for the missionary. The camps were far apart, the monotony of the salt bush plains, roughness of the life and in many instances the

roughness of the characters about the camps, drew out from the missionary his qualities of endurance, patience, courage and good humour.

The boundaries of Mr. Webb's parish or circuit were very elastic, but in the main it was confined to that portion of the line stretching from Tarcoola to Cook. The main camp was that of the plate-layers and it was here the missionary pitched his tent. Eventually he secured a marquee for holding services, recreation and reading.

A combined ladies Auxiliary in Adelaide solicited literature, games etc. for the mission. Some of the suburban and country libraries as well as leading business firms made contributions of books and magazines.

It's an ill wind etc, for the dry years in the Northern part of the State drove many young farmers out on to the Railway line with their teams carting water, stores and provisions. Good money was made but the greater good was the influence and help of many of these Christian men.

We find in one of the early reports that the Rev. F.J.H. Steward B.A. who succeeded Mr. Webb, made application for leave to attend the Annual Conference of the Baptist Union, intimating that a team of laymen had undertaken to hold the fort while he was away.

The first passenger train from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie was run on 22nd October 1917. This marks a second phase in this united work. The numbers of men employed decreased, tents gave way to fletcher's cottages interspersed at intervals of every twelve miles.

The towns of Cook and Tarcoola became headquarters of maintenance men, guards, porters, drivers, cleaners etc., and so another type of life demanded a more settled type of ministry. The method now was to travel each three weeks on the "Tea and Sugar" train, as it was called, riding in the Pay van. This journey of over 1,000 miles took seven days, all but 4 ½ hours. The full complement from Port Augusta to Cook totalled 900 men, 100 women and 100 children.

One of the recurring

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appeals made by the Committee to their respective church bodies was for trained and experienced men. The four pioneer ministers: Revs. T.T. Webb (Meth.) F.J.H. Steward (Bap.) L.D.Keipert (Meth.) B.J. Weeding (Meth.) had kept the standard very high.

Early in 1921 land was purchased at Tarcoola Railway township and on the title deeds appears the official name of this United Church Mission viz., "The East-West Railway Mission". The old iron church belonging to the Methodists out on the Tarcoola Gold fields was purchased and erected on the new site, together with two living rooms for the Missioner.

Once again that great church statesman of Australia's open spaces, John Flynn, appeared with a further proposition, viz. that the Committee extend their missionary endeavours to the North-South railway line, from Oodnadatta to Port Augusta. The matter was deferred as the Committee had enough problems on hand.

In 1926 the Baptists withdrew from the mission.

With the post-war developments and the urgent claims of the respective churches for trained men, the Committee resorted to the engagement of lay agents. Generally speaking these men did yeoman service, some doing outstanding work, but unfortunately some failed to maintain the high standards, and the work of God suffered. This experience led the Committee to determine that it was far better to leave the field unstaffed rather than risk having untrained and inexperienced agents representing the Churches.

Another post-war factor came as a challenge to the United body viz rapid industrial developments, notably the opening of the Leigh Creek Coal Mines.

On October 5th 1945 the Committee having received the approval of their respective Church authorities unanimously agreed to form itself into an Incorporated body known as "The Inter Church Association Incorporated". The new name without reference to Railway or any specified area indicated its ability to operate on a united basis wherever the needs demanded its services.

In the articles of Association provision was made for the formation of local committees,

the keeping of separate church membership and Sunday school rolls, and the regulations and laws of the church of the one indicated to rule for occasions of discipline.

With the growth of Leigh Creek imminent, the Inter-Church Association obtained generous assistance from the authorities, land was leased and a Church Hall with living quarters attached was erected. And so another field of operations was opened. This work has been of a most satisfactory character.

Still another field offered for united action in the opening up of Radium Hill mines. The first appointment was made in 1953. Very early a local committee began raising funds for a church building. This is a reality today and a very fine building provides a place of worship for a growing congregation.

The Association has drawn up a constitution governing Church buildings owned by them on the same basis as that set down by the United Church of Australia at Alice Springs and Darwin.

In the meantime radical changes were taking place on the East-West Mission. Migrants of varying nationalities were replacing Australians. The fast Diesel engines outmoded the steam trains. Then too the Anglican Bush Missioners from their Flying Medical base at Ceduna were making good contacts at regular intervals to the main towns along the line and so in 1952 the Association withdrew its agent after thirty nine years of unique service to the people who gave us the great Transcontinental Railway.

In a general survey of the forty six years that the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches have been operating on a co-operative basis in South Australia it can be confidently stated that there has been true Christian accord, the meetings have been most harmonious, all churches have shared in the responsibilities: the work on the fields has commended itself to the people because as a united body overlapping, competition and disunity have been averted; and a catholic concept of the Church's Mission to the souls of men has been vigorously made known.

Rising above all other considerations

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emerging from this experiment in Church Union is the fact that only as a United Church can the Kingdoms of this world become the Kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ.

THE PARKIN MISSION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED

125TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

ACTIVITIES

2.00 pm Saturday 15th September 2007

Tour of West Terrace Cemetery

Emphasis on early Congregational, Presbyterian and Methodist Ministers and those associated with William Parkin. Meet at entrance to cemetery and park in cemetery grounds.

11.00 am Sunday 16th September 2007

Spring Festival and William Parkin Service at Pilgrim Uniting Church.

12.15 pm Sunday 16th September 2007

Lunch in Pilgrim Hall

1.30 pm Sunday 16th September 2007

Launch of book entitled:

PARKIN'S PASSION

A History of

**The Parkin Congregational Mission of South Australia Incorporated
1882 - 2007
(125 years)**

By Brian Lewis Jones O.A.M.

9.30 am Sunday 23rd September 2007

Service at St Andrews by the Sea, Jetty Road, Glenelg (formerly Glenelg Congregational Church), followed by morning tea. Parking available immediately adjacent to the church and in Cowper Street carpark.

PLAYING THE GAME OF CRICKET

In the April Newsletter (No 91 April 2007) reference was made to the fact that “Sports teams were a regular feature of local church life in the past but are much rarer today”.

Recently the Uniting Church Historical Society was pleased to receive a comprehensive volume covering the history of church cricket 1906 – 2006. Mr. Mervyn Maddern who has had more than fifty years association with church cricket introduces this book to our readers.

FOOTE, Maurice, (ed) *100 Up! Celebrating a century of church cricket in South Australia 1906-2006*. Adelaide, Churches and Community Cricket Association, 2006.

Further enquiries to President: Ian Amey, 27 Tarana Avenue, Ingle Farm, SA, 5098
{Telephone (08) 8262 6942}

100 YEARS OF CHURCH CRICKET

The earliest documentation concerning the activities of the Churches Cricket Association date back to a meeting held on 23rd August, 1909. However, after considerable research it was learned that eight teams took part in the first competitive season in 1906/07. These teams were: All Souls, Chapel Street, East Adelaide Methodist, Prospect Methodist, St. Lukes, St. Marks and Stanley Street Congregational. Many other church cricket teams were competing in various Associations in the Adelaide metropolitan area. In due course, most of these joined the U.C.C.A.

The founding president of the U.C.C.A. was Mr John Moyes, a popular school teacher and a prominent member of the Church of England. He loved sports, himself being a cricketer and to him falls in large measure the honour of founding both the United Church Cricket and Football Associations.

November 19th, 2006 saw the Centenary of Church Cricket in South Australia celebrated with a dinner in the Adelaide Oval Marquee and the launching of a book *100 UP*. Present on this occasion was Miss Monica Moyes, grand daughter of the founding president. To her was given the privilege of launching the book.

In the 100 years of the Church Cricket Association churches of all denominations, including Roman Catholic and Assemblies of God have numbered themselves among the 220 clubs who have fielded teams in the competition.

Until recent years the membership of participating Clubs was drawn from Church and Sunday School, indeed it was a requirement that there should be some regular attendance at either. The Association was seen as the opportunity for men and boys to enjoy friendly competition in this great game. Many lasting friendships have been made. In many instances the Minister of the church was a playing member of the team which bore the name of his congregation.

In the current membership of the Association, three teams, viz. Adelaide West Uniting (formerly Brooklyn Park Methodist and Uniting), Enfield Uniting and Morialta Uniting (formerly Magill Methodist and Uniting) have all been participants in the competition for more than 50 years. Two other Clubs, which have ceased to exist, had a long association with Church Cricket. Ovingham Methodist and Croydon Methodist both enjoyed more than 50 years in the competition.

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In the middle years of the last century a feature appearing on the Church Cricket calendar were inter-association matches in which the Church Association competed with limited success.

An Australian championship, held every two years between the State Church Cricket Associations began in 1954. The Eastern States and South Australia take regular turns at hosting these Championships over the Christmas/New Year period. South Australia has won this competition on only one occasion, 1968.

The United Cricket Association has been the breeding ground for many players who have been elevated to District, State or Test Cricket. Those who began their career in the Association and went on to represent their country include V Y Richardson who began with Manthorpe Memorial in 1910/11 and Charlie Walker who played with Coglin Street Mission/Hindmarsh Place Christian Church. In the 100 years of competition some very fine players have emerged, many of whom played in higher competition while others were content to enjoy a game in the Church Association.

Through the years the Association has been known by a number of names and in season 2005/06 it became known as Church and Community Cricket Association Inc, brought about by the amalgamation of the S.A. Churches Cricket Association Inc and the Independent Central Cricket Association. Season 2006/07 saw 33 teams representing 16 clubs participate in competitive matches.

Merv Maddern

PLAYING THE GAME

About winning: It isn't important; what really counts is how you play the game.
About losing: It isn't important; what really counts is how you play the game.
About playing the game: Play to win!
(reference: *100 Up*, p151)

UNDERSTANDING CRICKET

"Cricket is a game in which you have two sides, one out on the field and the other in.

"Each man in the side that's in goes out and when he's out comes in and the next man goes out until he is out and then he comes in.

"When the side that's in is all out, the side that has been out goes in and the side that is in goes out and tries to get out the side that goes in.

"Sometimes you get men still in and not out when the side that is in is finally out.

"When both sides have been in and out and those including those not out, yet no longer in, that is the end of the game."

(Anonymous)

A straightforward game if ever I saw one!

Note Cricket is not sexist, because women also play.
Ed.