



UCA Historical Society Newsletter

June 2016

Editorial: Stuck in the Past?

When out and about in the wider church I introduce myself as the secretary of the Uniting Church Historical Society. Sometimes this prompts a comment or observation inferring that I represent a group that is stuck in past, preoccupied with events, people and churches of the long gone days of old! Yes, we encourage members to write local and denominational histories, we collect items of interest and organise events to recall those who have served and ministered in SA but we do this to learn from the past not to replicate it.

In the past few weeks I have read draft copies of significant personal reflections by two South Australian UC ministers on their experience of ministry. They recall and document their past adventures but they also share with us what they learnt by their innovative work and experiences. In planning for the future, we stop and reflect on past experience. Taking the next steps along the way does not imply being closed to the past, ignoring what others have discovered from their mistakes and achievements along the way.

David Bosch in his monumental work, "Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission" claims that,

"We need the perspectives of the past in order to appreciate the scope of the present challenge and to be able really to understand the world today and the Christian response to its predicament. Like the Israelites of old-who needed to remind themselves, in every period of crisis, of their deliverance from Egypt, their wanderings in the desert, and their ancient covenant with God - we too need to be reminded of our roots, not only in order that we might have consolation but even more that we might find direction. We reflect on the past not just for the past's own sake; rather, we look upon it as a compass - and who would use a compass only to ascertain from where he or she comes from?" (1991:189)

A song, by Helen Wiltshire, "A Pilgrim People" verses 1 and 5 celebrates pilgrims of old and makes the link between honouring the past as new visions unfold.

*We follow the pathway of pilgrims of old
and honour their courage and vision so bold;*

*we seek to tread wisely, their footprints to trace,
aware of their presence, their passion and grace.*

*We honour the pathway of pilgrims of old
yet carve out a new course as visions unfold;
we seek truth and justice for all and for earth
and strive for a just world whose coming we birth.*

2010 Pilgrim songbook, "Here's a New Day." Tune Slane.

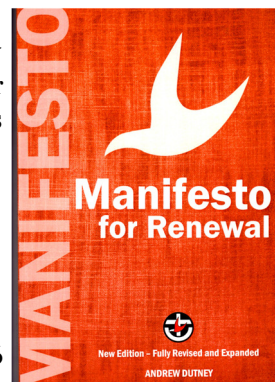
Rev Dr Dean Eland. Editor and Secretary

Invitation to the AGM Sunday 19 June 2:30pm Church of the Trinity (Goodwood Road, Clarence Park)

Dr Andrew Dutney, Principal of the Uniting College for Leadership & Theology will be the guest speaker at this year's annual meeting.

Following short reports on the year past members of the Society will elect the Society's officers for 2016-2017 and appoint members to the Council. Andrew has produced introductions and revised two significant documents that were standard texts about the vision of the UC. One "Manifesto for Renewal" was produced by Andrew in 1986 and the other, a 1971 commentary by Davis McCaughey on The Basis of Union. In June 2017 UC congregations across Australia will be celebrating forty years and Andrews reflections on these two foundational texts will invite us to reflect on the path taken and the road ahead.

Members of the Council meet four times a year...
Current members of Council are listed on Page 2



The UCA History Centre

Open Wednesdays 1 - 4pm

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Black Forest

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historicalsociety.unitingchurch.org.au

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COUNCIL MEMBERS

Val Canty (President)
Judith Raftery (Vice President)
Dean Eland (Secretary and Editor)
Gaye Brown (Treasurer)
Norah Norris
Barbara Hayes
Ken Hayes
Glenys Edwards
Doug Hosking
Brian Chalmers

You can receive this newsletter via email.

Send your email address to
ucsahist@chariot.net.au
and we will send you our up-to-date news
and other items of interest

Membership of the Society

Individual—1 year	\$20
Individual—5 years	\$80
Individual—Life	\$250
Congregational—Life	\$250

Contact the Centre for more
information

Who do we think we are? What is our place in God's world?

August was National Family History month, when people were encouraged to start delving into their family's past.

There is a program on TV where well-known people search for their past, looking for stories of their ancestors. They often find links with past family members. They find similarities of characteristics and interests. They always conclude that although they now live in different times and are different people, they are products of their past.

Throughout life, most of us try to discover our place in the universe. There often comes a point in our lives, no matter what our belief structure is, where somehow we have to try to fit ourselves in time, fit ourselves in space, and the only way to do that is to find our story and make sense of it.

When we search the stories of our ancestors, we may discover many things. We are not the same as our ancestors. We have genetic links. We share a common history. But over generations we have grown; we have become healthier; we are more educated; our community has widened to include not only our own village but our city, our country and indeed the whole world. Our family story, however, plays a large part in who we are today. It is the foundation from which we move forward, being true to the past, but continuing to grow, learn and expand our horizons.

During the months of researching and writing 'The Memorials' booklet for Scots Church, I became increasingly aware of the story of our past and of its significance: the story of our church family history. We have spoken often about our remembered past: the stories of the many ventures on which we have embarked – some successful and some not – and the lessons we have learned from these challenges. We have discussed the importance of some of our traditions and how these form our story.

However, we have a long history which reaches back long before our living memories. We can think back to those hundreds of people who believed so strongly in the importance of freedom of worship, particularly being free from control by the government of the day, that they left their homelands and headed for the freedom of South Australia, the free settlement of the great southern land.



Within a very short time, hundreds of these settlers planned and erected in 1851 a building on this site, in which they could worship God as they saw fit. The building was good, solid, built to last, handsome yet without ostentation. Importantly, it was built without government or other outside assistance.

These people, who became the first worshippers in this place, were impressive in the strength

(Continued on Page 3)

Wisdom from Diana Butler Bass...

Explaining the recent enthusiasm for documenting family histories, Diana Butler Bass in chapter four, "Roots" in her book "Grounded: Finding God in the World a Spiritual Revolution" writes, "if we do not know where we came from or where we are in the story, it is difficult to imagine that we can understand the meaning and purpose of our own lives. (p142).

(From Page 2)

of their faith and in their belief in their future with God. They valued education; they were hard working and many of them became wealthy. Often their wealth was used for the benefit of their community. A university was established, schools and a hospital were funded, and over generations, other churches have been supported.

When we read the stories of the people represented by the plaques, windows and other memorials in our church, we cannot help but be moved by the commitment, faith, dedication and active service of so many people to the upholding of God's word.

This is our story: not just the part we remember, but dating right back to those early dissenters whose beliefs were so strong that they left behind all that was familiar to make a new start in new territory.

This is our foundation; this is who we are; this forms our place in our community, our city, our world.

This is the platform from which, with confidence in God's continuing presence, we must continue to grow, learn and expand our horizons.

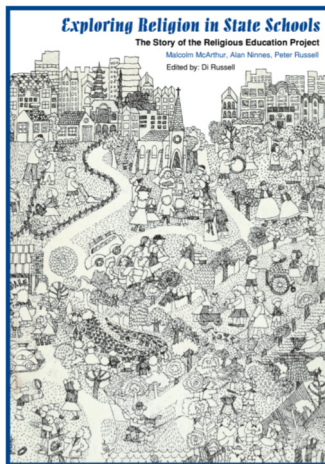
I believe that we have a responsibility – indeed an obligation – to honour the story of our past by renewing our commitment to God's work in this place.

Rosalie Smith

Note. This paper was first prepared by Rosalie Smith member of Scots Church Adelaide for a devotional time. It was then published for the September 2015 edition of Scots Church monthly magazine, TALK. The paper comments on the extensive research undertaken by that congregation to record and document their history. Scots Church opened in July 1851 is the second oldest building still being used for worship in Adelaide.

New UC Publications of Historical Interest

At the Society's History Month event, 2.00pm on 29 May, Dr Don Hopgood former SA Deputy Premier of SA and former UC Moderator launched, "Exploring Religion in State Schools. The Story of the Religious Education Project." The authors, three UC members, were the leaders of this innovative project; Malcolm McArthur, Alan Ninnes and Peter Russell and they recall some of their insights and experiences about negotiating the expectations of both church and state in this creative experiment. Copies at \$10 are available from the History Centre.



ordination of the first woman minister in Australia, Winifred Kiek on 13 June 1927 in the Colonel Light Congregational Church South Australia. Copies will be available through Medicom, phone 1800 811 311.

"Bible Christian Methodists in South Australia 1850-1900, A Biography of Chapels and their People" by Ted Curnow published by the UC Historical Society was launched in October last year and many interested in local, church and family histories have found it an invaluable reference book. This monumental 655 page publication is for sale at the centre for \$50. The NSW ACT UC Historical Journal "Church Heritage" in March 2016 recommends this book....

"This publication is very significant in our overall historical knowledge of South Australia. It is also a landmark in the history of evangelicalism in Australia, and of the impact which evangelicalism had upon this country. It is a very important contribution to the local history of many parts in South Australia. Its publication also coincided with the 200th Anniversary of the Bible Christian movement in Cornwall, celebrated there by the President of the British Methodist Conference, who launched this book in Cornwall a couple of days before the Adelaide launch." Robert Evans.

Another significant book for UC members is just out. "Out of the Ordinary. Twelve Australian Methodists Biographies" by editors, Patricia Curthoys and William W Emilsen. Medicom. The book includes the biography of Arthur Jackson from SA.

Julia Pitman is about to launch 'Our principle of Sexual Equality' the ordination of Women in the Congregational Church in Australia 1927-1977. This is the story of the origins and influences that led to the

News items

Long Weekend in June 2017

Following a decision by the Assembly Standing Committee a new UC National History Association is being formed. The interim committee has accepted the invitation from the SA Society to host a national conference on the June Long weekend 2017. The conference held at Pilgrim Church will be one of the many ways to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the UCA.

Popular History Writing Workshop

Forty people from the UC and Community History Groups attended this workshop on 10 April. Many appreciated the advice and an opportunity to meet with those experienced in writing and publishing. Staff members of History SA (office at the Torrens Parade ground), Alison and Amanda and two officers of the Society, Val Canty and Judith Raftery were able to assist budding authors and researchers address some of the critical issues. The society is thinking about organising another similar workshop in 2017.

Topics for discussion at the workshop included.. before you start think about your intended audience; good history includes...; principles of interpretation; choosing your format for writing history; what makes good history book? Many practical ideas were shared about formats, layout, editing and alternative ways of telling the story through display boards and on-line outlets.

News from the History Centre

Welcome to Leanne Davis, UC member and lay preacher who has been appointed Administrator for the Historical Society. Leanne will assist the ongoing work including the development and upgrading of our web site, publications and communication in general.

Volunteers continue to serve the church and the wider community by providing advice and assistance for those involved in researching church, local and family history. The centre welcomes volunteers to help manage the large and growing collection of documents, memorabilia, books and records of churches and agencies. A number of upgrade works are being undertaken to improve the on-site amenities. The Centre at 44a East Avenue, Black Forest, is open on Wednesday afternoons from 1:00pm to 4:00pm

(Other contact details can be found on page 2)

Upcoming Meetings for 2016

Sunday June 19, 2:30pm—AGM

See front page for details

Sunday September 25, 2:00pm—In the Beginning: The West Lakes Congregation

This congregation located at Bartley Terrace West Lakes Shore will be celebrating its 41st Anniversary on this day, and at 2:00pm founding minister, the Rev. John Watt will share some of the core convictions and inspiration that led to its formation.

Sunday October 23, 2:30pm—Early Revivalism in South Australia

Guest speakers, Rev. Brian Chalmers and Dr. Jenny Hein, will join in a conversation about their recent research work in early revival movements in South Australia. Jenny is a lecturer in history at the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology; Brian is completing his doctorate on early Methodism in South Australia. This meeting will be held at Church of The Trinity, 318 Goodwood Road, Clarence Park, beginning at 2:30pm.

Did you know?...

In the early days of colonial settlement in South Australia, the church was often called upon to assist in the settlement of civil disputes?

"In the absence of civil courts, the church was considered competent to settle disputes and differences..."

Bible Christian Methodists in South Australia
1850—1900 (page 134)
Edwin A. Curnow



Kent Town Church—1886
Decorated for the State's Jubilee
Photo: History Centre Archives

Kent Town Church—2016
Decorated for the Uniting Women Conference
Photo: Leanne Davis

