



Historical Society

of the Uniting Church
in South Australia

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NEWSLETTER
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"BABY BOOMER CHURCH"

Vermont Uniting (formerly Methodist) Church. Original building on right opened August 1950. Current church building on left opened April 1965.

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EDITORIAL

Amnesia=Loss of Memory

***Every hour we spend in a place we leave a part of ourselves there
and we take a part of it with us***

This edition of the Newsletter includes articles illustrating the interweaving of history as fact, interpretation and biography. The authors in several of our articles are not only writing and documenting the history of churches, movements and places but they locate themselves in the story.

In the ABC TV September 16th edition of Jennifer Byrne's 'First Tuesday Book Club', guest Peter Fitzsimons responds to a comment by Jane Clifton. (Jane is writing her memoir based on the 32 houses she lived in!) She struggles to explain the connection between the past and the present. She comments, "You could say, 'Ah, I think I felt that because of that' so there was that fantastic distance of three stages - the past, what happened then and then at a remove from it. So it's a constant reassessing of what your memory is and what your experience is."

Peter Fitzsimons replies, "Guy de Maupassant, the great French writer, had a wonderful line, "that every hour we spend in a place we leave a part of ourselves there and we take a part of it with us"; so I imagine what you're doing is going back and reawakening it".

We revisit the past not only as artefact collectors or to record facts. The places, the people and the churches we have been part of remain with us and are part of what we are. When leave and move on we take something of those places and experiences with us.

Our present story is about our present engagement, what we are doing now. That story however draws on memory, our past experience, the formative influences that have shaped our current values and outlook. A church that loses its corporate memory will drift, become lost and disorientated, pushed this way and that by the latest fad. A church that ignores its memory loses its identity and eventually forgets its founding vision.

The reading for Pentecost 18 and 19 in October this year from 1 Thessalonians chapters 1 and 2 records Paul's experience with that vulnerable community. He left something of himself with that new-born church and he carries that experience with him. "We thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers" (1:2)

Dean Eland

POST WAR SUBURBAN CHURCHES

is the subject of the next lecture and discussion
to be introduced by
Dr David Hilliard,
noted Australian Church Historian,
to be held at the History Centre
Friday, 11th November 2011 at 7.30 pm
Supper to conclude

Centenary: One Hundred Years

This year a number of congregations and UCA groups are celebrating their centenary. In 1911 the population of South Australia was 409,000 or a quarter of its estimated 1.654 million today. As reported in the March edition of our Newsletter, John Flynn set out for his first appointment at Beltana. Arnold Hunt in his history of South Australian Methodism, *This Side of Heaven*, captures the spirit of Methodism with the heading of chapter ten, "Marching Boldly Forward" and this optimistic spirit followed the union of various branches of Methodism in January 1900:

The years until the First World War saw steady growth. There was a 16% growth in members between the 1909 and 1913 Conferences due partly to the effect of special evangelistic crusades. In 1900 there were 131 Methodist ministers; ten years later the figure was 146, plus 22 home missionaries and 14 lay circuit assistants. In 10 years united Methodism built 80 churches, enlarged 21 existing buildings and erected 20 halls and 15 manses. The contributions to both home and foreign missions almost doubled . (page 240)

In this edition of the Newsletter we include articles to record three examples of this impetus, a suburban church at Rosefield and one rural at Streaky Bay. Other centenary churches noted include Driver River Verran, Yeelanna on March 20th and Penong in November. In addition we include an article on the centenary celebration of the World Mission Fellowship at Salisbury.

Rosefield

Centenary celebrations at Rosefield this year have included a centenary dinner and worship held on June 11-12th. The local history committee of experienced lay leaders have produced a 180 page record, "Rosefield Reflections A Church History 1911-2011." The title page includes a helpful summary statement of the congregation's ethos; "Seeing, celebrating and responding to the goodness of God, we are a Christian community encouraging opportunity for faith, growth and service in God's world."

As with many other suburban churches the story of this church begins when its first generation of families, moving into a new housing subdivision, began meeting in homes of members while being supported by existing congregations. In this case the Parkside congregation was just 2kms distant but representing another generation!

The book provides an overview of an enduring ministry ethos; a strong sense of being community ready to respond to change and a consistent mission outreach. Rosefield's outreach commitments have varied with the changing context and its reputation of being a generous church includes the distribution of grants from the sale of the former Highgate Congregational Church, Cross Road, with a \$100,000 grant to Aberfoyle Park, \$20,000 to Kimba and support also for new congregations Hackham West and Hallett Cove. The congregation continues to express its generous approach to mission through a range of outreach ministries that are both local and global. Long term local engagement includes support for Julia Farr congregation and Meals on Wheels. Other innovative ministries include work camps in PNG. A photo gallery at the end of book tells the story of property adaptation and change over the years and this reflects the changing nature and style of ministry.

[contd. next page]

This centenary publication sets a high standard and records the life of a strong suburban church responding to social change over four or five generations. The congregation has been home to innovative worship and the congregation and respective denominations has

drawn on its well resourced and gifted families. The book makes it clear that the current congregation and its tradition was due to its ministers and lay leaders. A number of former ministers became denominational leaders and lay members have been leaders in the business community and in professions. There is a clear commitment also to maintaining and developing the strengths of this ministry into the future.

While a number of congregations in this 12 square kilometre inner southern suburban area have closed and merged, it remains a high density UCA area. Four other UCA congregations in the neighbouring suburbs include Malvern, St Andrews on Unley Rd, Westbourne Park and Mitcham Village. Two other congregations on the western fringe are centrally located, Christ Church, Wayville and Church of the Trinity, on Goodwood Rd, Clarence Park.

The changing nature of the population reflects some of the common trends in other stable desirable inner suburbs south and east of the CBD. At the 2006 Census Highgate's population was 1,388 with UCA nominals at 11.1% or 152. Fullarton's population was 4,195 with UCA at 9.8% or 413 nominals. Both suburbs show a decline in the UCA percentage of population from the 2001 census and are similar to Anglican percentages. The UCA nominal percentage in the Unley local government area in 2006 was 8.9%.

These and other social trends imply major changes in the next hundred years and will continue to impact UCA congregations in the region as they plan their future.

Dean Eland

**METHODISM IN AUSTRALIA:
WORKSHOP**

**The South Australian contribution to
A nation-wide project**

**Saturday, 19 November 2011
10 am—4 pm**

**At
Adelaide College of Divinity (Room E3)
34 Lipsett Tce, Brooklyn Park 5032**

**Contact: Dr Julia Pitman
0411 094 185**

Streaky Bay Uniting Church Centenary

A crowd of sixty people gathered at the Streaky Bay Uniting Church to celebrate a centenary of worship in the Methodist/ Uniting Church tradition. Rev Sue Ellis and Mr Trevlyn Smith led the worship, with Rev Sue providing a brief history of the church. A Mr. J.H Salmon from Smoky Bay laid the foundation stone on July 18th 1911.

Mr Salmon was a Lay Preacher, who cared for the Methodist Christians at Streaky Bay for 10 years prior to a minister coming and a church being built. He was well educated and a great horseman, riding his horse to take church services at many local centres and breaking horses on local farms for income.



Pictured right: Laying the foundation stone of the Streaky Bay Methodist Church. (Photography courtesy of Mrs. D. Benson)



Dr Julia Pitman, a daughter of the Streaky Bay Manse, currently studying to be ordained as a Uniting Church Minister, was the preacher for the day. Julia presented the congregation with a copy of Bishop Desmond Tutu's new book "Children of God storybook Bible". She led a drama of the story of Jesus calming the storm, with Liam and Callun Buckley as disciples in the boat and Malcolm Brace as the sleeping Jesus.

Pictured above: Liam Buckley, Dr Julia Pitman and Malcolm Brace acting out the Bible Story at the Uniting Church centenary.

Following the service, the members of St Augustine Anglican Church served lunch to the congregation at the RSL clubrooms, where there were many displays of memorabilia and a board of wedding photos. Several Uniting Church 'brides & grooms' were present for the day. Mrs Valerie Fox, the most senior member of the church, cut the Centenary Cake, which was made and iced by Judy Alexander. Trevlyn Smith shared a recording of a sacred concert held in the early 1960's, and reminiscences from past ministers Rev Milton Hopgood, Rev Ted Curnow and Mrs Chris Morris, wife of the late Rev Duncan Morris, were read, before those present shared their memories. Rev John Maddern, former Moderator of the Uniting Church, and retired Anglican priest, Fr Ted Horne, who led the ecumenical congregation in the late 1990's- 2009, shared many good-humoured stories.



Rev John Maddern sharing

Right: Dr Julia Pitman with Rev Sue Ellis, Trevlyn & Carolyn Smith, Virginia Mitchell and Jeanette Dunne



INCORPORATION :
A USEFUL MISSION STRATEGY
by
Rev. Keith Smith LL.B., M. Div., S.T.M.

INTRODUCTION

South Australia led the nation in enacting an Associations Incorporation Act which enabled not-for-profit organisations to gain the benefits of becoming a ‘body corporate’ with the liability of the members of the Board being limited to the assets held by the organization.

Prior to that time the options available to charitable, religious and educational bodies were to obtain a private Act of Parliament (as was done in the case of Prince Alfred College), to create a limited company or to form a trust.

Incorporation was widely used in the welfare and educational work of the Methodist Church to establish major projects. By this means the “risk taking” involved did not place an impossible burden on Board Members.

ESTABLISHING AN INCORPORATED BODY

For many years the legal requirements for incorporation were not onerous. The basic requirements were to prepare Articles of Association and register them with the appropriate Government authority for the payment of a nominal fee.

The initiative in establishing an incorporated body could be taken by a group of interested individuals e.g. a sporting club. Alternatively, a “parent” body could take the necessary steps. This was done by bodies such as the Methodist Conference. By proceeding in this way the Conference was able to ensure some measure of control through the appointment of Board Members and by requiring regular Reports and financial statements. At the same time, the incorporated body enjoyed a high degree of autonomy and presented a distinctive image to the community.

Although the parent body’s power to effect major changes to a Board’s policies and programs was rarely used, it remained a powerful tool. On one occasion, the Methodist Conference became so dissatisfied with the working of the Memorial Hospital Board, that it decided to terminate the appointment of its Board members and replace them with a new Board.

Each body that was incorporated under the legislation was required to keep a separate bank account and have their accounts audited. Members of the Board were usually appointed for three year terms with one third retiring each year and being eligible for re-appointment.

The legislation has been amended several times, with significant changes taking place since 1985. Some provisions have been expanded for the purposes of clarity while others have added to the burden of accountability.

THE GROWTH OF INCORPORATED INSTITUTIONS

Some incorporated bodies have become major institutions and hold substantial assets.

The Adelaide Central Methodist Mission was one of the earlier organisations to take advantage of the legislation. As its work expanded and new ventures undertaken, the Board found it prudent to establish several additional ‘bodies corporate’. This occurred during the Depression with the establishment of Kuitpo Colony for the rehabilitation of alcoholics and homeless men.

Separate incorporation of the new entity allowed the body to establish an identity, separate from the Mission. In this way the assets of the “parent body” were quarantined, while it continued to influence the direction of the fledgling organisation through representatives of the parent body on its Board. Meanwhile, the Conference maintained its overall oversight through the submission of regular reports and continued to appoint the Board, without becoming legally responsible for its actions.

The creation of separate incorporated bodies with their own Boards gave opportunity for the involvement of people from the church and community with specialised skills and who were committed to the body’s specific objectives. The combination of a separate identity and the participation of prominent people on the Board greatly assisted the public image of these organisations and helped with fund raising and community support generally.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND DUTY OF CARE

For many years, membership of the Board of an incorporated body was not an onerous responsibility. Only when the National Safety Council of Australia became embroiled in a financial crisis, did it become obvious that the position of Chairman of a “not-for-profit” Board was no sinecure. In that case, litigation initiated by the Commonwealth Bank resulted in the Chairman being bankrupted because of his failure to exercise due care in carrying out his responsibilities. From that time, issues of corporate governance have sent shivers up the spine of board members.

The procedure for appointment and continuation of Board members always constituted a potential weakness in the long-term effectiveness of an organisation. The initiative for nominating board members usually rested with the board, with the actual appointment being made by the parent body or the annual meeting of the “members” of the association. On occasions this has resulted in the “self perpetuation” of particular policies or perspectives. The role of the Methodist Conference in appointing/re-appointing boards, provided a possibility to inject “new blood” by means of nominations from the floor. However, generally nominations were “rubber-stamped”. In later years steps have been taken to limit the total period of service and to introduce a compulsory retirement age which has corrected some of these problems.

Incorporated associations have been an important element in the voluntary sector. Their boards have been volunteers, regardless of their professional qualifications or business expertise. With the increased emphasis on corporate governance, board members have found themselves subject to complex and very demanding regulations for which they may have had little preparation. The Act does not prohibit the payment of sitting fees to board members but very few associations in South Australia make such payments.

Several of the Uniting Church incorporated bodies employ hundreds of staff and control annual budgets in excess of \$20,000,000. They are among the “top 50” not-for-profit organisations in Australia and are among the largest employers in this State. Legislative pressures may well push such associations towards the appointment of professionally trained boards whose members are compensated for their services. The same pressures have implications for the way board members are appointed and the kind of people who are nominated for appointment. Ensuring a balance between high standards of corporate governance and management practices while adhering to the values of the Uniting Church may well become the subject of worthwhile debate.

APPLICATION TO LOCAL CONGREGATIONS

Creating a body corporate under the Associations Incorporation's Act had particular value whenever a local congregation decided to become a “central mission”. In such cases, the local property which was a crucial asset for the emerging mission was controlled by trustees appointed for life under the “Methodist Model Deed”. Trustees at times lacked vision and their ideas were far removed from the plans conceived by the charismatic ministers who pioneered South Australia's central missions.

When Rev. Arthur Strange took up his appointment at the Archer Street Church in North Adelaide, the congregation had dwindled in size and the trustees were few in number and elderly. Nor was there much scope for injecting forward thinking people by way of new trustees. At that time the trustees held not just the Archer Street Church but also the former Wellington Square Church (now a TV Studio) with a small group of adjoining cottages together with the Archer Street manse on a double block, just off of Le Fevre Terrace.

While some new initiatives at North Adelaide occurred under the existing Trust system, incorporation opened up a new world of possibilities. When established, the board included new people from outside of the local congregation, such as Sir Shirley Jeffries and Mr. Gordon Brown, who were influential lay leaders in the Conference and prominent in the community.

The advantages of flexibility and autonomy made possible with incorporation are illustrated in the move towards the aged care program at North Adelaide. Strange asked for his Board's approval to purchase the property known as “Westering” as the first stage of the new venture. [contd. over page] At the time, he did not have the purchase price in hand. The Board asked “Will you be able to raise the money?” When he said “Yes”, approval to go ahead was given. And the money was raised!

LAUNCHING NEW INSTITUTIONS

Over the years the Conference found incorporation to be a useful tool whenever it became convinced that a new initiative was required. By this means the Memorial Hospital, Resthaven,

Epworth Building and the Book Depot, Lincoln College and Westminster School were all brought into being. In each case very little money was available to seed the new venture, and each involved considerable commercial risks. By means of incorporation, each entity became a legal body corporate, with its own specialised Board drawn from the wider church and community. Having their own legal status enabled these fledgling institutions to deal directly with banks and other commercial groups.

From time to time, incorporated bodies have embarked upon projects which required the borrowing of substantial sums of money. Where the lending body required additional security for a loan, the Standing Committee (or later the Council of Synod) took the step of providing a "letter of comfort". Those organizations which controlled substantial funds could do almost anything provided there was no major conflict with church values. They also enjoyed the advantage of not having to obtain Conference/Synod approval for building proposals.

The Presbyterian Church used incorporation in the establishment of St. Andrew's Hospital. Also a number of their local churches were incorporated, while others were vested in the Presbyterian Trusts Corporation, a body set up by Act of Parliament.

Some time prior to the inauguration of the Uniting Church, the Methodist Church had secured the passage of legislation setting up the Methodist Church Property Trust. In place of trustees appointed for life, property committees were appointed for a term and the "inbuilt conservatism" of the trust system was significantly modified.

However this improvement did not solve all the problems faced by emerging "missions" and welfare bodies. The personnel of the property committees was still drawn from local congregations and did not always provide the specialised skills needed to manage innovative projects. For this reason, incorporation continued to be the preferred option.

METHODIST 'MISSIONS' AND OTHER WELFARE AGENCIES

One of the last "missions" to be created involved the central church - Pirie Street. This "mother church" of SA Methodism was facing a changing and uncertain future. But decision-making powers regarding its mission were divided between the Quarterly Meeting and the Trust. Through incorporation, one body was charged with responsibility for the formulation of policy and the use of resources. Instead of infrequent meetings once a quarter the new board met monthly. With its new-found autonomy Pirie Street played a key role in the eventual amalgamation with Stow Church into what is today Pilgrim Church. The new structure also facilitated the negotiations and legal steps associated with the compulsory acquisition by the Adelaide City Council of the old church buildings.

It is interesting to note that more than two decades after its inauguration, the Uniting Church has created the possibility for local church government to be in the hands of one Church Council which is then charged with decision-making in pastoral care, finance and property and mission planning.

When the Rose Park Congregational Church was no longer able to maintain its extensive property, a decision was made to hand over the property to the newly created Alexandra Homes Trust Inc. for the purpose of erecting aged care accommodation on the site. In due course adjoining property was acquired and a seven-storey hostel and nursing home built. The Trust subsequently amalgamated with another Congregational aged care organisation to form Eldercare Inc. The Goodwood section of the Presbyterian Dunbar Homes Inc. also became part of the new umbrella body.

A further example of the use of incorporation to facilitate a missional project occurred at another of the historic Methodist churches at Kent Town. The local leadership became convinced that their near-city property was ideally located to establish a congregation-based aged care development. After lengthy debate at local and Conference level, finally Kingsborough Homes Inc was born.

Several ministers played key administrative roles in the early stages of this venture, combining an administrative role with their pastoral responsibilities. In this way, Kent Town Church was able to retain the services of a full-time minister. Later on, Kingsborough Homes became part of the Eldercare operation.

INCORPORATION OF A LOCAL CHURCH

The Congregational Church generally used the Associations Incorporation Act for a different purpose. Aware that the system of local trustees could create problems particularly if retiring or deceased members were not replaced, the Congregationalists expressed their independent spirit by

incorporating local congregations. Local deacons managed the property, while their liability was limited to the assets in their hands.

The legislation which brought into existence the Uniting Church Property Trust included a Schedule of Congregational church properties whose incorporation ceased at incorporation and whose property was automatically vested in the new Property Trust. A similar arrangement applied in the case of a handful of incorporated Presbyterian Churches which had opted to join the Uniting Church e.g. Scots Church.

GROWING RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD MEMBERS

It should be understood that church organisations are now subject to scores of State and Commonwealth Government legislation and regulation which are additional to the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act. Attempts to simplify governmental regulations have usually led to more red tape. Unfortunately, this situation is unlikely to change in the near future. Uniting Church regulations are additional to secular requirements and result in a high level of accountability.

Penalties for breaches of the legislation are now substantial. The penalty for making a record of or divulging information as an authorised person to others is up to \$10,000. Fraud and misuse of assets could lead to two years imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine. If that is not serious enough, then it should be borne in mind that Commonwealth Corporations Law now applies to incorporated bodies in this State except for those cases specifically excluded in the State legislation.

Church incorporated bodies were not required to pay award wages to staff until the 1970's although most did so as a matter of equity. Now only members of religious orders are exempt from industrial legislation. In recent times, some organisations have found it necessary to pay above award wages and conditions in order to recruit and keep professional staff.

REVITALISING BOARDS

The value of incorporation as a tool of mission is well illustrated by comparison with the situation which applied in New South Wales. Institutions in that State were held by the Methodist Trust Association, a body established by Act of Parliament. I understand that the substantial assets of Wesley Mission, Sydney, Wesley College, church departments and other mission properties were held centrally. Central control of assets can be a safeguard against injudicious local decisions, but can also be a cumbersome mechanism which acts as a brake on innovative projects.

Under the current structures of the SA Synod Community Services are overseen by a Commission, which receives annual reports and appoints members. The ability of incorporated bodies to nominate board members has an inbuilt tendency toward "in-breeding". This can result in impaired vision! In the absence of any provision for nominations "from the floor" of the Synod the recruitment of "new blood" rests largely, with each board.

The Community Services Commission needs to explore appropriate procedures which will ensure that the vision of our welfare and educational bodies is subject to radical periodic review. With such a safeguard the creation of incorporated bodies can continue to serve as a useful tool in the mission of the Uniting Church.

Keith Smith
4th July, 2005

I have been greatly assisted in the preparation of this paper by the comments and suggestions made by Rev. George Martin whose direct involvement in the Port Adelaide Methodist Mission has given him valuable insights which have relevance for others who decide to employ this useful tool of mission.

News and Notes

Planning is underway for the 2012 program and members are invited to make suggestions for events, walking tours or research work. During 2012 we would like to receive copies of reports of anniversaries and local history projects for inclusion the Newsletter.

Council Meetings of the Historical Society are held four times a year and in 2012 these will be held on February 6th, May 7th, August 6th and November 5th. The AGM will be held on

The Society will continue with its small grants program for 2012 and deadline for grant applications will be March 31st.

SALISBURY WORLD MISSION FELLOWSHIP CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

In July 1911 a special request was sent from the ladies of these churches ('Salisbury and Burton Methodist,') whose hearts were inspired with love for the Missionary causes, to the Central Committee, asking for help to start a Branch of the Auxiliary'.

Salisbury, a century ago, was a country town serving a mixed farming district and noted for the orange groves growing along the Little Para River. At that time a number of church families had left the district which caused a considerable falling off of income which was usually inadequate anyway.

However a group of women in the Salisbury and Burton (Paralowie area) churches looked beyond their local church. In response to their request to the Central Committee of the Ladies Foreign Mission Auxiliary, a - Rev. J.J. Nicholls, Mrs. Nicholls, Mrs Uren and Mrs. John Hill - journeyed to Salisbury on a beautiful, bright sun-shiny day and explained the rules of the organisation. They showed patterns of garments and told of the great need for women who worked in the home church to carry the Gospel message to the women and girls of our Island Districts.

A Branch of the Ladies Foreign Mission Auxiliary was formed with 18 members and a parcel was sent away for the Island Christmas Boxes. (Can we acknowledge this as the first of Salisbury's contributions to Packing Day?) They met once a month when they usually had a speaker on a foreign mission theme, most of whom had served at some time on the mission field.

CELEBRATIONS

Celebrations at Salisbury Church on Sunday 14th August 2011 brought together past and present members, representatives of associated groups, friends and members of the local congregation, all creating a friendly buzz prior to the commencement of the Thanksgiving Service at 10 am. The Rev. David Buxton, Associate National Director of Frontier Services Sydney preached and Christa Megaw, International Mission Officer in South Australia, shared information on areas of International Mission work.

A light luncheon was served during which time visitors from Ethiopia, Dr. Barry & Robin Hicks, brought a greeting. As former members at Salisbury church, they have served many years in Ethiopia with Sudan Interior Mission and the Ethiopian Government and were on a quick visit home (Barry a surgeon, was originally a One Tree Hill boy).

The history book 'Looking Forward Looking Back' was launched by Max Howland, President of the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship in South Australia. Preparation of the history had been a nostalgic experience for the author, Coralie Wright, who recalled her early days with the group after returning from Rabaul, where her late husband Len had been Methodist Mission Printer from 1951-1964. Members had supported and encouraged her as she adjusted to the very different way of life in the 'home church'.

Rev. Ken Wright welcomed all to the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon featuring greetings, apologies and reminiscences from the many friends unable to be present and by others who were in attendance. Musical items and the singing of songs by the congregation were appreciated by the gathering. Betty Sharp, longest continuous serving member (joined in 1970) cut the birthday cake. (Betty's brother-in-law Rev. Jack Sharp was the first Moderator of the New Britain area of the Methodist Mission for a number of years).

Coralie Wright

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SYNOD 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Historical Society serves the Synod by arranging the presentation and publishing of lectures of historical interest aimed at increasing the knowledge of church history in South Australia. In the main these lectures are available for purchase. The Society's Newsletter, published three times a year, contains historical information as well as articles on writing projects which are underway and news of the Society's activities.

Through its Council the Society administers the Uniting Church History Centre located at 44A East Ave. Black Forest. The Centre houses valuable records and memorabilia not required by the Synod to be placed in the State Library and has information for responding to enquiries on the history of local congregations of Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian background as well as Uniting Church history. A display of memorabilia is available to visitors during the opening hours 1 – 4 pm on Wednesday afternoons. Some information is also found on the History Centre website: <http://historicalsociety.unitingchurch.org.au>

INTRODUCTION

The scope of responsibility of the Historical Society is to:

- Assist the Synod in fulfilling its responsibilities to administer archival and historic records,
- Preserve Uniting Church, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian records and memorabilia,
- Provide lectures, publications and displays covering the history of the Uniting Church, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches,
- Assist in the planning of anniversaries of significant historical events.

Maintain and administer property held by the Society for the purpose of a Uniting Church History Centre.

Following the item reported last year on the death of the Rev George Potter, the Rev Dr Jonathan Barker has been appointed to the position of Secretary.

DISCUSSION /SUMMARY OF KEY ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED SINCE OCTOBER 2010

Activities of the Society in the last twelve months have included:

- In late March an early evening walk along North Terrace, Adelaide, more than 20 people learned something of the history of the men and women of faith whose names are recorded on the plaques in the footpath. It was interesting to note that, although a book had been published on the persons so named, no information had been given on their involvement in the Christian church.
- At our Annual Meeting in May, Rev Noel Bekker spoke on "The Strange Tale of the Smith of Dunesk Bequest". This lecture will be published shortly.
- On Sunday, 10 July, Rev Keith Smith introduced his forthcoming book with a lecture entitled "Pilgrims via Pirie Street", the legacy of Pirie Street Methodist in the union of two churches, which was ultimately named Pilgrim Church.
- Rev Peter Kelsall, organist at Pilgrim Church, spoke on the organs at Pilgrim and gave a short illustrative recital on both instruments. This occasion on Sunday, 21 August, was enjoyed by a very appreciative gathering.
- In November, the Rev Dr Dean Eland and others will present insights from the "baby boomer" era. This event will be held at the History Centre, Black Forest, on Friday, 11 November at 7.30 pm
- As part of a nation-wide project on "Methodism in Australia" there will be a workshop on Saturday, 19 November to assist in formulating a South Australian perspective on the subject. The workshop will be held at the Adelaide College of Divinity from 10 am to 4 pm.
- The Historical Society Council has provided speakers to local church groups to foster the growing interest in the history of the church. Groups are also welcome to visit the History Centre by appointment.

The Council sponsored six people to attend a recent Oral History Workshop at the State Library.

News and Notes

Planning is underway for the 2012 program and members are invited to make suggestions for events, walking tours or research work. During 2012 we would like to receive copies of reports of anniversaries and local history projects for inclusion the Newsletter.

Council Meetings of the Historical Society are held four times a year and in 2012 these will be held on February 6th, May 7th, August 6th and November 5th.

The Society will continue with its small grants program for 2012 and deadline for grant applications will be March 31st.

Anticipated publications for 2012 include three editions of this Newsletter, March, May and October.

We also will be producing a paper on change and the church on the Lefevre Peninsula by Keith Smith and continue research work on Home Mission policies and practices based on the workshop to be held on November 11th.

The history of the Adelaide College of Divinity has been written by Charles Biggs and will be available in coming weeks. We hope also to have a copy of the story of the Red Dove café as they celebrate their year. We will also note reports of the progress being made on the Australian Methodist history project.

There will be continuing work on the oral history program and we look forward to hearing from ministers and others who would like to be interviewed and recorded. Again we are encouraging those celebrating 50 years of ordination to send us an outline of their ministry and biographical information.

Consideration is being given to possible improvements and upgrading of our facilities and services at the History Centre in 2012. Work space is at a premium and recent maintenance work is keeping the property in good order.

As the 13th Assembly of the UCA will be held in Adelaide from 15th - 21st July 2012, it is of interest to note some of the ways its decisions have impacted the church in SA. An interesting history research project for a volunteer? The first Assembly was held in Sydney and the third, in 1982, was held in Adelaide. The incoming President of the UCA, the Rev Dr Andrew Dutney, principal of the Uniting College in SA, will be inducted and provide national leadership for the next three years.

A note from the recent meeting of the Synod Presbytery of SA will be of interest:

Renewing the Diaconate. Deacons provide a valuable ministry to the Church. In recognition of this contribution, the Presbytery and Synod decided to ask the 2012 Assembly to give attention to the 20th anniversary of the renewal of the diaconate in the Uniting Church in Australia and consider updating Profile and Placement procedures to give full consideration to Deacons and diaconal ministries. The Synod also resolved to ask the Ministerial Education Commission (MEC) to review its processes, to ensure the Ministry of Deacon is presented to Period of Discernment students accurately and fully.

Dean Eland

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FORWARD THINKING

The Council is giving consideration to the future requirements of the church in relation to storage of historical memorabilia and records which are not required to be sent to the State Library. In part, this has been prompted by the impact of closures of local congregations. Council is looking at the adequacy of the facilities at the History Centre.