



Editor:
Rev Ruth Threapleton
16 Butler Tce
Lameroo 5302
Ph: 8576 3045

NEWSLETTER
NO. 72
FEBRUARY, 2000

**Centenary of the Methodist Union
In South Australia**

Celebration Service of Worship

**Wesley Uniting Church
Fullarton Road, Kent Town**

**SUNDAY, 26TH MARCH, 2000
at 2.30 p.m.**

Speakers:

Dr Arnold Hunt:

'Methodism before Union'

Moderator, Rev'd Don Cafford:

'Methodism after Union'

ADELAIDE HARMONY CHOIR

**Afternoon Tea
following service**

Historical Society Lecture

**"DOING IT HARD:
Tom Willason and the
Port Adelaide Central Mission
During the Depression"**

Presented by Dr Brian Dickie

**FRIDAY, 7TH APRIL, 2000
at 8 p.m.**

**Port Adelaide Central Mission
entrance: 70 Dale Street
Port Adelaide
(Enter via Foyer - Hall on First Floor)**

Supper to Follow Lecture

ALL WELCOME

From the Editor:

We are pleased to include Rev Ian Tanner's recollections on great preachers and a variety of topics again this time. If anyone has Orders of Service that are of great historical significance, it would be appreciated if they could be sent into the Society. It is sad that, when people die, many of these documents are destroyed. In the next publication, we hope to have reports from Burra and Auburn over recent Heritage services as well as the 150th Salisbury celebrations.

GREAT PREACHERS I HAVE KNOWN

By Ian Tanner

This was an interesting assignment the Editor handed to me. I said, the living or the dead? She said, well, whatever, as long as **you** were living at the time. Write about the Presbyterian side of the family. But you'd better leave out the extant preachers in our Synod, or we'll both lose friends!

There are two problems about this assignment. One is that, sadly, preaching is now generally depreciated by both ministers and congregations. I don't know why. Maybe it's the quantity (and if you look for it, high quality) of social and analytical commentary about our world that pours out of the many channels of media services. Whilst congregations expect a sermon to be an exposition of the Biblical texts, they also expect it to impinge on the serious social and political questions confronting us in the world today, and which demand some Christian answers. I suspect few ministers feel they can give the time and the effort into work required to do justice to these two basic foundations of preaching.

There are other issues, of course, such as the growing appreciation that the liturgical content of a service of worship is much more than the sermon, although it ought not mean that the sermon can be relegated to a ten minute chat based on notes on the back of an envelope. There's a lot more to say about the declension of (great) preaching, but that will have to wait for another time. Just to say that good preaching can change lives, and build congregations.

The other problem, or rather factor, about this topic is that one's judgement about who are or were the great preachers is almost entirely subjective. It's rather similar to being asked what one thinks of a book, or some music, or a film. Those I think are great preachers are not those that others may appreciate. I feel therefore I ought to first set down the criteria by which, if I am asked, I know I am judging preaching.

I think preaching is great when the preacher engages the congregation – when all of us feel addressed and spoken to personally. I think preaching is great when the preacher uses the Bible well, and illumines the truths that are there in the text for our clear implementation. I appreciate obvious, but not vaunted scholarship. I am drawn to a preacher who is passionate about this message – this is not just a sermon prepared for Sunday but a message for us all from a fired-up belly! I warm to a preacher who has a sense of humour but makes it the embroidery and not the substance of the message. I value a preacher who I know lives what is being preached – it's called integrity. I think a preacher should be an exponent of the drama of the Word in voice and manner. I responded with approval for the preacher who was described as "half actor, half divine". A great preacher addresses the congregation as the Body of Christ and not just as individuals. And, of course, a great preacher will draw us ever closer into the presence of the living God, for which great liturgy has prepared us.

So then, who has passed these tests for me? Few fulfill all these canons but there are many who get an A plus from me (not that that will worry them, or anybody else!) You will not be surprised if most of the preachers I identify on my list of greats occupied the pulpit of Scots Church, Adelaide, where I myself was a preacher for eighteen years, and this was my auditing spot.

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Rev Dr J R Blanchard was Minister of Scots Church from 1939 until 1959 when he retired. He was a renowned preacher. I heard him several times. He was eloquent, informed, dramatic, maybe a trifle showy but never tiresome. His successor, Rev David Hodges, who was at Scots Church from 1960 until 1968 was also a great preacher with an imaginative but scholarly interpretation of the biblical text for the contemporary situation. I never heard him preach a dull sermon.

The Rev Gordon Powell was a great preacher. He was Minister of Port Adelaide Presbyterian Church from 1938 until the end of 1941. He was described as the possessor of unlimited energy and with a magnetic personality. He was the first preacher in South Australia to broadcast regular services by radio. He later moved to Melbourne, then to St Stephens, Sydney, and then back to Scots Church, Melbourne. I heard him several times. He was a master of storytelling and illustration, and of drawing a congregation, however large, into a mutual circle of intimacy and confidence. "I was speaking yesterday to the Governor-General.....", he might say, and the congregation felt drawn into that conversation.

Scots Church, Melbourne, had a foundation called the Turnbull trust, which enabled the Church to bring out a guest preacher from overseas for three months every three years. In later years we were able to have the Turnbull preachers at Scots Church, Adelaide. Three I remember well.

Rev Ian Pitt-Watson was a parish minister who became Professor of Pastoral Theology at Aberdeen University, and later Professor of Preaching at Fuller Seminary in California. He preached in Adelaide at both Scots Church and Maughan Church. He followed a style of Biblical exposition with captivating illustrations, and a clear sense of purpose. He was very challenging. He would say to the congregation, "Come on now, let us be honest....", and we all dropped our eyes and shuffled our feet.

Rev Dr Leonard Small was Minister of Cuthbert's Church, Edinburgh. In earlier years he was an international soccer player representing Scotland, and was widely known as the "Holy Goalie"! His biography is a book of that title. He was a great preacher who was invited back to Australia three times as a Turnbull preacher. He was a Queen's Chaplain and his crimson cassock and his shock of greying hair gave him a sort of towering authority in the pulpit. But the preaching was great and memorable.

Rev Stuart McWilliam was Minister of Wellington church, Glasgow, and later of Killearn Church. He had a very powerful voice and hardly needed a microphone. He had an infectious sense of humour together with a full-throated laugh that often had the congregation in stitches. He was a wonderful teller of stories. But he also plumbed the depths of deep Biblical exposition and challenging demand. All these preachers addressed the Church corporately as well as worshippers individually, which is always a sign of good theological praxis.

The first President of the Uniting Church in Australia, Rev Dr David McCaughey, is a great preacher whose Biblical expositions are always gems, and whose sheer spiritual intelligence leaves one longing for more. He was my professor of New Testament studies at Ormond College, and I have admired his scholarship and theological perceptiveness for many years.

.... Next page

The Rev Doug McKenzie of Darwin and later Brisbane is a preacher always worth listening to. In fact, it was difficult not to listen to him, such was the power of his creative vocabulary, and his wide use of Australian symbols, stories and parables. I think he invented his "gum-leaf theology" in one of the early attempts to place the gospel in an Australian context. He began a sermon once in St Stephens Church, Sydney, by auctioning a camel resident in Alice Springs. Proceeds to the Australian Inland Mission of which he was then a padre! The sermon was worth a high price too.

Rev Dr Wilfred Paton of the New Hebrides, later Vanuatu, was a greatly loved missionary who served that Pacific church for over twenty years. He was also a scholar, and had long experienced the meaning of sacrifice. I heard him preach only a few times in Australia, but he exemplified the saying that the medium is the message. The integrity and spirit of the preacher shone through everything he said.

At the end of the day, I suppose our personal estimate of great preaching is in direct relation to preachers whose words and caring have changed the direction of our lives. In that sense there will be many preachers whose names are not in such lists, but who are eternally valued by those whose lives they have blest.

Rev Ian Tanner, C.M.G., B.Sc., Dip.Ed., is a Minister of the Word in the Uniting Church in Australia. In his early life he was an industrial chemist. He became a Presbyterian minister in 1956 in Melbourne. He came to Adelaide to be a minister of Scots Church in 1963. In 1981 he was appointed Director of the Lay Education Centre and then served as Director of Uniting Vision from 1988-92. He moved to Canberra in 1992 to be minister of the Canberra Central Parish until 1996, when he retired and returned to Adelaide.

He was Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia from 1972-3 and the first Moderator of the Uniting Church in South Australia. From 1985-88 he served as the fourth President of the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Ian is married to Joan and they have five adult children and nine grandchildren. Ian enjoys occasional preaching, writing, gardening, woodturning and umpiring sporting events on the TV screen! He and Joan have recently returned to Canberra to live nearer their families.

Officers of the Historical Society, 2000

At the November Annual General meeting of the Society, the Constitution was changed in the terms outlined and advised to Members of the Society prior to the meeting. The officers of the Society are:

President :	Mrs Val Canty	Vice-President :	Rev Walter Stafford
Secretary :	Rev George Potter	Treasurer :	Rev George Wright

Editor : Rev Ruth Threapleton
16 Butler Terrace, Lameroo 5302
(note new address)

IN THE HILLS

Churches (or Chapels) in the Circuits

By Ron Hayward

1. Bible Christian

What began as "Stirling East Bible Christian" was originally part of the Adelaide Bible Christian Circuit. The first chapel was opened on 30th August 1857. The foundation stone of the Mount Lofty chapel in Swamp Road was laid on 28th September 1857 and that chapel was opened on 23rd January 1858. Church services were commenced in the "New Mill", Bridgewater, on 26th February 1860 and the foundation stone of what became the "Mt Olivet" chapel was laid in January 1861. The chapel at Forest Road, Carey's Gully, was opened on 12th June 1864. (There was also a Primitive Methodist chapel built in the early days at Carey Gully.) On 11th March 1868, the foundation stone was laid for a chapel at Tregarthen ("Sheepyards"). This chapel was opened on 7th June, 1868.

These five chapels, Stirling East, Mt Lofty, Bridgewater, Forest Road and Tregarthen, were separated from the Adelaide Circuit in 1867 and became the Mt Lofty Circuit. The "South Australian Directory" for 1868 lists four chapels and "one room". Subsequent Directories substitute "Tregarthen" for the "one room".

Almost immediately after the formation of the Circuit, Church services were commenced at Stanley Bridge. These services ceased during 1870 and 1871, and recommenced in 1872, when a copper mine was opened "at Grunthal, near Stanley Creek", the use of a barn being granted by the mine manager for services and a "Sabbath School".⁽¹⁾ Services ceased again in 1878, but were continuous again from 1880 when a new "stone chapel" was opened at Stanley Bridge. "Stanley" was included on the Preaching Plans for the period 1878-1880 even though services were not being held there.

For a brief period in 1873 services were held at what was known as "Hahndorf Diggings". A Primitive Methodist chapel was erected at Crafers about 1862 but services were discontinued there and the chapel was purchased by the Bible Christians. A re-opening service was held on 17th February 1878 and this chapel then became part of the Circuit.⁽²⁾ The chapel was on Cox Creek Road on the north side of the township. A photograph of this chapel is in the archives section of the Coventry Memorial Library, Stirling. The Church of England people rented it for a brief period before the Church of the Epiphany was built.⁽³⁾ It was closed in 1904. By 1927 the expansion of the Crafers School had "obliterated the former Bible Christian Church and cemetery."⁽⁴⁾

In November 1880 "Mission" was added to the Preaching Plan and these services continued during 1881.

In the next few years chapels were opened at "Mt Tabor", Summertown (often called "Summer Town"), on 20th June 1881, Basket Range in October 1881 and Piccadilly in 1882. The Mt Tabor chapel was built because the Tregarthen chapel was proving to be too small and the Summertown site, the present (1993) site of the Summerton Uniting Church, about half a mile south of Tregarthen, was considered a much better place for a chapel. Services were continued in both chapels until mid-1888 when they ceased at Tregarthen. The opening at PiccadillyNext page

churches or preaching places in the Circuit at union. When services were confirmed at Mount Bold in 1900-01 this made 19. After union the Summertown Wesleyan chapel was closed, merging with the Bible Christian church.

Additional sources and reference

1. Bible Christian

The Bible Christian Monthly Magazine, 1867 to 1899

Circuit Preaching Plans, Mt Lofty Circuit

"A Historical Survey of the Summertown Methodist Circuit"

Trustees' Minute Book, Mt Tabor Church, Summer Town

Minutes of the Bridgewater Trustees Meetings, 1860 to 1977.

Notes: (1) Bible Christian Magazine, February 1873

(2) "The Advertiser", 12th June 1872 and 23rd February 1878

Robert Martin: "Under Mount Lofty" (1987), p.72-3

(3) "A History of Crafers" (Crafers Centenary Committee, 1939)

(4) Robert Martin, *ibid.* p.167

2. Wesleyan Methodist

Minutes of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, 1874 to 1900

Minutes of the First Conference of the Methodist Church, February 1900

"The Christian Weekly and Methodist Journal", 1874 to 1900

Notes: (1) Haslam: "The History of Wesleyan Methodism", p.72 footnote

(2) South Australian Magazine, March 1842, p.302

(3) Centenary of the Laying of the Foundation Stone of the Upper Sturt Methodist Church – Short Historical Record

(4) Haslam, *ibid.* p.128

(5) Clarendon Circuit Plan, November 1862 – January 1863

(6) Conversations with Mr and Mrs Stan Evans, Stirling

Conversations with Mr and Mrs Hugh Nelson, Scott's Creek
Manning: "Places Names of South Australia"

(7) "A Historical Survey of the Summertown Methodist Circuit"

(8) Conversation with Mr Athol Morgan, Ironbank

(9) Conversation with Mr and Mrs Hugh Nelson

(10) "The Christian Weekly", 17th March, 1893

NEW PUBLICATIONS

The Never Ending Picnic. A brief six-page booklet with pictures tracing the history, traditions and experienced of the Salisbury Methodist Sunday School Picnic, written by Rev E.A. Curnow. For your copy send a stamped addressed envelope with \$2 to Salisbury Uniting Church, c/- Mrs Jackie Bourke, 1 Brown Terrace, Salisbury, 5108.

Burton Pioneer Cemetery. The Primitive Methodist Cemetery on Bolivar Road, Burton, has had a wonderful face-lift. Around two hundred people attended the unveiling of a memorial stone on 24th October 1999. For a free booklet and guide of the Cemetery Pioneers, send a stamped addressed envelope to Mr D.T. Wright, c/- 1 Brown Terrace, Salisbury 5108.

DUDLEY PARK CEMETERY WALK

By Les Knowling

It was indeed a beautiful day (Sunday, 12th September 1999) when some twenty people gathered to be led by Gaye Brown (from the Historical Society) and Rev Walter Stafford (past Chairperson of the Cemetery Trust) through the Cemetery. The development of the cemetery commenced in 1845 when a Primitive Methodist chapel was erected in a prepared development around Caroline Square. Later in 1882 a larger church was built about half a mile north-east of the site.

We first encountered a draped square column with a draped urn on the top, which is a memorial to the Hon. John Carr (sometime minister of the Crown) and his wife, Jane Carr; nearby along the fence-line there are small graves of children.

The Mary Potter Memorial Garden is a beautifully presented rose garden, with roses in profusion and Mary Potter roses surrounding a centre column. Provision has been made here for a depository for ashes following cremation with further provision for such in the Native Rock Garden just behind the rose garden, with the appropriate memorial plaques applied to rocks.

Dudley Park Cemetery is the burial place of quite a number of Methodist Ministers and their wives; west of the Native Rock Garden we found the Rev Arthur Erwin Vogt, OBE, LTh, 1907-1987, and Alma Clara Vogt; the Rev A.E.E. Bottrell, ED, LTh, DipRE, 1905-1987 and Dulcie.

Moving slightly north we came to the supposed site of the 1845 chapel and heard a short history of it given by Mr Norm Kernich, the present secretary of the Islington Uniting Church. He explained that the black marble tablet was positioned in October 1982 on the occasion of the Centenary of the present King Street Church and also how the Burden family had much input into the life of the church. A headstone around the heritage site indicates the resting place of Robert Burden, his wife Catherine and their children, George, Elizabeth and Ann. A further Commemoration Ceremony was held on 5th November 1995 on the 150th anniversary of the opening of the first chapel. A Flowering Bauhinia (Orchid Tree) was planted to highlight that occasion and to make a historical focal point.

We strolled further west and south passing some very ornate burial places, mostly depicting European art and Christian belief. We came to an interesting section, the Children's Memorial Garden, which was officially opened on 13th October 1998. This is dedicated to the memory of the babies and children throughout the world who have lived briefly and who have no memorial or epitaph anywhere, as if they had never lived. Many had their lives cut short by violence, inadequate support, neglect or lack of resources. A peaceful pool and waterfall and a bronze statue of a pelican feeding her young, inscribed "Me Too", is a fitting memorial. There are eight large granite tablets set in the ground, with the 1500 names of all the children buried in the Cemetery (unfortunately some records are incomplete).

We walked further east and saw the headstone of the Rev David J Wellington along with father sons ministerial team of the Revs. S.R. Rooney, Frederick L. Rooney and Leslie D. Rooney.

This enjoyable afternoon was made complete by Afternoon Tea at the Islington Uniting Church, where the local people had mounted an interesting historical display.

A letter from a Sunday School teacher To her Scholars (Part 2)

(Here we continue an interesting historical letter (Part 1 appeared in Newsletter No. 70, March 1999) which has been transcribed from a notebook from the estate of Mrs M B Purdie which has been in the possession of the Burnell family who emigrated on the "Florentia", arriving 20/6/1849. Ed.)

Some of you, I am aware, have been called, in the providence of God, to pass thro' painful and trying afflictions since I saw you and most sincerely do I sympathise with you, and pray that you may be comforted by the rich consolations of the gospel, which are neither few nor small.

○ yes, there we shall find balm for every wound. How beautifully we are told

"The Lord doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men, and tho' he cause grief yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies."

Is it not sweet to remember, though we be tried and suffer, that it is a father's hand that is afflicting! One who is too wise to err, too good to be unkind and who in all his dealings of providence towards us, is full of mercy and of love.

God has been speaking to us in his providential dispensations amongst us. Let us listen to his voice and learn some of the lessons which these events are calculated to teach us: first, are we not taught very solemnly that shortness of time and the uncertainty of life? "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh" And secondly, the necessity of a personal interest in Christ as our Saviour; you all know you must die.

It is appointed unto men once to die. ○ what will you do in the dwellings of Jordan without an interest in Christ, without a consciousness of pardoned sin thro' Christ! You have heard of the Saviour's dying love, and many times have you listened to the touching invitations addressed to you in the word of God, so that should you die in your sins (which God forbid), you are left without excuse. You cannot urge the plea, "No man careth for my soul."

My dear Girls, we are still on praying ground, still on pleading terms with God, still within mercy's reach. ○ let me once more beseech you to stop and think before you further go.

Ask yourselves the solemn question, wither am I tending up? Up to heaven, or down to hell! Am I, if called, prepared to die? If you cannot answer these questions in the affirmative, give not sleep to your eyes.. Nor slumber to your eyelids, until you have made your peace with God.

○ come to God thro' Christ, in the way which he has pointed out in his word, come just as you are with all your load of guilt and sin. All the fitness Christ requireth is to feel your need of him; pray that you may experience that change of heart without which you cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Come in the exercise of humble faith, and by earnest prayer. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. [to be continued]