



Uniting History SA December 2021

Guest Editor: Brian Chalmers

Methodists and Pentecostals—1920s

In this edition, Jonathan Barker writes on the history of the Uniting Church's involvement with the reconciliation movement. Reconciliation for many in the Uniting Church is a belief and practising marker of lived Christianity.

In each generation, emphases of belief and practice identify the importance attached to what it means to be an exponent of the gospel. Such beliefs and practices have often been neither uniform nor uncontested.

In the 1920s, emerging Pentecostalism challenged aspects of Methodism as Pentecostals formulated their own distinctive markers of lived religion. This article explores some of the linkages between Methodism and emerging Pentecostalism in South Australia during the 1920s.

South Australian Methodism in the decade after the conclusion of the First World War continued to experience changing perceptions and attitudes to historic revivalism and evangelistic practices. Matters of concern included fewer conversions, lack of support for large revival-type meetings, a growing acceptance of gradual conversion as implied in the 'doctrine of evolution' and competing priorities.¹ The two contrasting priorities of property development and conversionary activity illustrate the challenging nature of 1920s Methodism.

During the 1920s, Methodism experienced significant growth in the acquisition and development of its property. Development included the building of new, or the upgrading of existing churches, halls, and manses. Arnold Hunt contends that they were 'the most striking evidence of intense Methodist activity'.² Hunt provides a summary assessment:

From 1920 to 1930, the total expenditure on church property came to £328,000, and 52 churches and 49 halls were erected. By 1929 it was estimated that the value of circuit property throughout the state was £939,000 and the debt on it was less than 11 per cent. In most years, every district was represented in the list of new buildings or in the amount spent on 'enlargements and improvements'. Not until the 1950s was there again to be such a building boom.³

By contrast, in the same period, there was no parallel

boom in conversion additions to the church's membership. This increased from 23,115 in 1920 to 26,056 in 1930 at an average increase of 294 members per year. At the same time, the number of conversions recorded amounted to 1,079, or an average of 108 per year. Conversions represented about one-third of the membership increase. To put it another way, almost two-thirds of new members accepted in the period 1920 to 1930 were likely for reasons other than the result of a conversionary experience. Clearly, new and upgraded buildings and consolidation were markers of progress and advancement, but the lack of numerical growth through conversion was cause for concern for those who believed that revivalist Methodism was South Australia's evangelicalism writ large.

For some Methodists, their commitment to revivalist practices and conversionary preaching found new avenues for expression in the emerging post-war era. The formation of the Methodist Local Preachers' and Laymen's Association in 1918 to conduct lay-led evangelistic meetings promoting a 'richer spiritual experience' appealed to those trending away from the form and conventionality of Methodist services. The ability of local preachers to lead meetings extemporaneously without a formalised agenda, in what later generations might call, 'led by the Spirit', was innovative, somewhat un-methodistical, but well received.

In some respects, the 1920s saw elements of religious experimentation in Adelaide. Invited to Australia by Janet Lancaster of the Pentecostal Good News Hall in

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The History Centre

The Centre at 44a East Avenue, Black Forest, is open on Wednesday afternoons, 1:00pm to 4:00pm.

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.

(Other contact details can be found on page 2.)

The UCA History Centre

Open Wednesdays 1 - 4pm

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Black Forest

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From the President...



At the end of our second COVID-affected year it is good to be able to record that the Historical Society is exhibiting a reassuring level of health and strength. Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, 2021 has been a year of achievements and activities of which we can feel proud.

- Our History Centre has remained open on Wednesdays throughout the year, and we acknowledge the work of our managers and volunteers who make this happen and provide valuable help and advice to enquirers who seek our services.
- Our staff members, Leanne and Rosemary, have continued their good work, enabling us to keep you informed via the newsletter and other forms of publicity and information-sharing, and by developing our collection and making it more accessible, and fostering our links with other church and historical organisations.
- With the very welcome and generous involvement of Genealogy SA the major project of digitising some of our resources has made considerable strides.
- We have held five public meetings, all of them well-attended and of genuine historical interest. This has relied on the energy and commitment of organisers from within the society, and of special guests, and we are grateful to them all.
- Some of our members have made significant contributions to the Uniting Church National History Society, and thus to the wider church, through board membership, conference participation and contributions to the national newsletter.
- Our oral history project, which aims to record the stories – which might otherwise be lost – of long-time members of the Uniting Church and its predecessor denominations, has, after some teething problems, got off the ground.

On present indications, we can expect 2022 to be another good year, and we hope that you will be part of it. We would love to welcome you to the History Centre, and at our public meetings, and to receive contributions from you for publication in our newsletter, or ideas about topics to be included in our program of meetings. In the meantime, I hope that you all have a very happy Christmas, and especially that those of you who are hoping to travel, or receive visitors, so that you can share this special time with your loved ones, are able to do so.

Shalom,
Judith Raftery

You can receive this newsletter via email. Send your email address to office@ucsahistory.org.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—1 year	\$30
Congregational—Life	\$250

Contact the Centre for more information.

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Melbourne, Smith Wigglesworth, the 'Yorkshire Evangelist' visited Adelaide in April 1922 to conduct revival meetings. Reports of his 'healing mission' included 'cripples who threw away their crutches',⁴ while another correspondent warned of the cultish practices of 'gifts of tongues' and 'faith healing'.⁵ It is likely that support for Wigglesworth came from the small but growing Pentecostal presence in Adelaide. This dates from around 1909 when Thomas James Ames (1858-1928) led the first assembly, which held meetings at his printing business in Pirie Street.⁶ The small group became known as Elim Assembly and Ames remained its leader until 1926. An early leader of Pentecostal meetings in Adelaide was the Methodist Fanny Collie. Australian Pentecostal historian Barry Chant claims that 'like many early Pentecostals, Collie had a Wesleyan Methodist background, a body in which her father was much respected'.⁷ Six months later the Pentecostal Aimee Semple McPherson conducted well attended evangelistic meetings in the Exhibition Building. Restrained Pentecostal 'ejaculatory responses' such as 'Praise God', 'Yes, Oh Lord', and 'Amen', often heard during hymn singing, provided moments of expressive spirituality for some, and occasions of inquisitive interest for others.⁸ Prayers for healing took place after the main meeting.

The early Pentecostals had some practices similar to the Methodists. These included tent (camp) meetings, open air evangelistic meetings (Botanic Gardens and Victoria Square), use of lay and female preachers, small group meetings for spiritual purposes (class and 'tarry' meetings)⁹, an experiential understanding of conversion and the work of the Holy Spirit, and the revivalist enthusiasm of ante-Nicene Montanism.¹⁰ There was much common ground but little enthusiasm to be publicly identified with each other.

Interest in meetings which included Pentecostal overtones developed in other than Methodist contexts. The superintendent of the Unley Park Baptist Church claimed that a mission held in November 1919 was a 'revival in the Holy Spirit's power'.¹¹ The visits of Wigglesworth and McPherson in 1922 had already aroused interest in spiritual healing. The Congregational Union of South Australia, at its half-yearly meeting in April 1923, heard two papers on the topic of divine healing, one from a biblical and the other from a medical viewpoint.¹²

Following on from the formalised acceptance of the healing ministry in the world-wide Anglican communion at the 1920 Lambeth Conference, the Anglican layman James Moore Hickson made prayers for healing the centrepiece of daily meetings at St Peter's Cathedral from 1-14 July 1923. Adelaide was part of an Australia-wide tour. Capacity crowds attended meetings. Reports of healings appeared in the daily papers.¹³ The *Adelaide Church Guardian* depicted Hickson's healing ministry as 'charismatic ministry', which, according to historian David Hilliard, 'was probably the first time the word 'charismatic' was used in Adelaide Anglican circles'.¹⁴ An

Anglican Archdeacon had earlier contended that Hickson possessed the 'gift of healing'.¹⁵ The Methodist Church promoted the mission to its members through its weekly newspaper. Such reflections demonstrated that 'charismatic spirituality' had begun to enter the mainstream of Christian thought. It was a time of 'spiritual experimentation'.¹⁶

The pioneering work of Pentecostalism in South Australia and early colonial Methodism carried between them similar genetic characteristics. Above all, both embraced popular religious revivals, religious enthusiasm, personal experience, and the quest for holiness as distinctive characteristics of evangelical piety. Both were movements from below and driven by an activist lay agency. The early Pentecostals also embraced religious revivalism as a way of transforming the individual rather than as a means of reconfiguring society and eschewed political engagement.

By the early 1920s, as Methodism benefited from greater social acceptance and respectability (but not greater membership), it increasingly questioned the place and relevance of the religious revival.¹⁷ As Methodism adapted to its host environment and moved toward the cultural centre, the early Pentecostals, despite their distinctive emphasis on speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the Baptism of the Spirit, appealed to Methodist sentiments favoured by the certainties of revivalism and the interior religion of pre-First World War Methodism.¹⁸ In his survey of world Pentecostalism, David Martin argues that Pentecostalism emerged out of the Methodist heritage, particularly its holiness tradition.¹⁹ Adelaide's early Pentecostals appropriated the revivalist dimension of that heritage as they experimented with revivalism in the early 1920s, while Methodism concentrated on expanding its physical presence throughout the state. According to Barry Chant, 'it is not clear' why Methodism ignored the early Pentecostals, who, in reality, were close cousins to Wesleyan Methodism:

Unhappily, Methodism for all its revivalist tradition, could not accommodate these new phenomena [speaking in tongues, healing]... Whether Methodism's failure to accept Pentecostal phenomena...was a conscious rejection or a general disinterest is not clear; but there seems more evidence for the latter view. It is apparent that for most Methodists, tongue-speaking and associated gifts were seen as neither necessary nor beneficial.²⁰

What is clear is that in South Australia in the early 1920s, Methodism still commanded the allegiance of one quarter of the state's population, and had the largest church membership of any denomination (23,020 in 1921). The Anglicans were next with 18,124 communicant members. The Methodists were only marginally fewer than the combined membership of the other Protestant denominations: Baptists, Churches of Christ, Congregationalists, Lutherans, and Presbyterians (25,943).²¹ Methodism's traditional mandate of revivalism and holiness had served it well.

The early Pentecostals introduced three elements of religious thought and practice which began to differentiate an emerging Pentecostal identity from evangelicalism, and Methodism in particular. They were: the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with an associated sign of speaking in tongues; the use of spiritual gifts; and the healing ministry. Collectively, they fragmented evangelical understandings, but they helped to define the development of Pentecostalism and the emergence of the charismatic movement in the 1960s and 1970s, as they became the devotional and practicing markers of Pentecostal 'lived religion'.²²

The independent scholar, Donald Dayton, asserts that 'Pentecostalism cannot be understood apart from its deep roots in the Methodist experience, and Methodism similarly cannot be understood entirely without acknowledgement of this paternity'; a relationship that he suggests 'has often been suppressed in official historiography'.²³ Barry Chant acknowledges the historical relationship when he states that Methodism (among other forms of evangelicalism) is an 'antecedent of Pentecostalism', and rightly claims that in Australia, 'it was the Methodists, especially the Wesleyans, who pioneered Christian revival'.²⁴ In the early 1920s, South Australian Methodism, once the 'Protestant light cavalry' in revival and gospel proclamation,²⁵ faltered in its commitment to revivalism, and was unimpressed by the emerging Pentecostal variant of revival activity. By default, it opened the way for the emergence and consolidation of an independent Pentecostal movement. Methodism was evolving, with continuing mixed views on the once held traditional shibboleth of revivalism.²⁶

Rev. Dr. Brian Chalmers

¹ Article, 'A Plea for Evangelism' by Rev. W. T. Shapley in the *Australian Christian Commonwealth*, 22 January 1922, 681.

² Arnold D. Hunt, *This Side of Heaven: A History of Methodism in South Australia* (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1985), 303.

³ Hunt, *This Side of Heaven*, 303.

⁴ *Bunyip* (Gawler), 31 March 1922, 2-3.

⁵ *Register*, 11 March 1922, 8.

⁶ Barry Chant, 'Waters to Swim in: Adelaide's First Three Pentecostal Churches, 1910-1935', 2. *Australasian Pentecostal Studies*, (2004). Retrieved from <https://aps-journal.com/index.php/APS/article/view/74>

⁷ For Chant's assessment of the Wesleyan Methodism's contribution to the origins of Australian Pentecostalism see Barry Chant, 'The Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Origins of the Australian Pentecostal Movement', in Mark Hutchinson, Edmund Campion, Stuart Piggin, eds., *Reviving Australia: Essays on the History and Experience of Revival and Revivalism in Australian Christianity* (Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1994), 97-105.

⁸ *Register*, 9 October 1922, 7.

⁹ 'Tarry' meetings focused on extended prayer time to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. In Pentecostal circles, emotionalism often characterised these meetings. See Chant, 'Waters to Swim in', 3.

¹⁰ Montanism was a fervent apocalypticist movement which emphasised the fulfilment of the prophecy concerning the pouring out of the Spirit in the last days (Joel 2:28-32). Its name is derived from Montanus, known for his revivalist and enthusiastic preaching in the second century. The common identification of South Australian Methodism and the early Pentecostal assemblies is over the matter of revivalist enthusiasm, which was a characteristic of both, rather than an over-realised eschatology based on the Joel prophecy, although individuals at various times probably shared this eschatological viewpoint. See 'Montanism', Alan Richardson, ed., *A Dictionary of Christian Theology* (London: SCM, 1976), 223.

¹¹ *Australian Christian Commonwealth*, 5 December 1919, 574. Mr. P. Barbour was the superintendent.

¹² Winifred Kiek presented the biblical viewpoint. Dr. F. S. Hone presented a medical viewpoint. See *Register*, 25 April 1923, 13.

¹³ *Register*, 5 July 1923, 8, 6 July 1923, 9, 16 July 1923, 12.

¹⁴ Cited in David Hilliard, 'South Australian Anglicans and Spiritual Healing: The Hickson Healing Mission of 1923', *Colloquium* 16, no. 2 (October 1986), 28.

¹⁵ The claim was made by Archdeacon Samwell in correspondence to the *Adelaide Church Guardian*. See *Register*, 9 January 1923, 8.

¹⁶ Mark Hutchison contends that the period 1880-1950, was a time of 'religious innovation', and that 'spiritual healing' was a sign of 'charismatic spirituality'. See Mark Hutchinson, 'Healers: James William Wood and the frontiers of religious innovation', 10. See http://www.academia.edu/1213196/Healers_James_William_Wood_and_colonial_religious_innovation

(accessed 12 October 21). It is doubtful whether his consideration of 'spiritual healing' found its way into South Australian Methodism before 1923. The 1923 Australasian General Conference of the Methodist Church established a commission to investigate divine healing.

¹⁷ Methodist membership, in the period 1920 to 1924, remained relatively static at around 23,500.

¹⁸ Smith Wigglesworth was known for his 'simple style and direct approach' to preaching. He often interspersed his delivery with speaking in tongues and interpretation, as in one of his Adelaide addresses. See Smith Wigglesworth, 'The Abiding Spirit', in Barry Chant, *Heart of Fire* (Unley Park, SA: House of Tabor, 1973) 291-296.

¹⁹ David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002). See also David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 2, 30-31.

²⁰ Chant, 'The Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Origins of the Australian Pentecostal Movement', 105.

²¹ Vamplew, *Australians: Historical Statistics*, 424, 429.

²² The theme of 'lived religion', a phrase well known within the French tradition of the sociology of religion, forms the guiding rationale for a series of essays on religion as practised by ordinary men and women in America. See David D. Hall, ed., *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

²³ Donald W. Dayton, 'Methodism and Pentecostalism', in William J. Abraham and James E. Kirby, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 171.

²⁴ Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939* (Lexington, KY: Emeth, 2011), 19, 28.

²⁵ Brian Dickey ed., *The Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography* (Sydney: Evangelical History Association, 1994), ix.

²⁶ The traditional Methodist emphasis on its revivalist ethos continued to survive throughout the remaining history of the denomination through to the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia in 1977. The formation of various unofficial Evangelical Fellowships throughout Australian Methodism in the 1960s and early 1970s, such as the Aldersgate Fellowship for Revival in South Australia which promoted renewal and revival within the church, indicated that many believed the revivalist heritage continued to be marginalised. See Peter J. Blackburn, 'The National Fellowship for Revival' at <http://peterjblackburn.net/revival/nffr.htm> (accessed 12 October 2021).

Membership Update

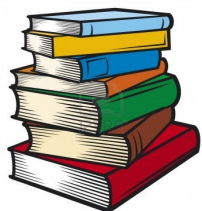
A membership year runs from January to December, and is open to individuals or congregations and organisations. For those with annual membership, renewal for 2022 is now due. Membership fees for 2022 are:

Individual:

- 1 year \$20.00
(new members joining after 30 June \$10.00)
- 5 years \$80.00
- Life Membership \$250.00

Congregation/Organisation:

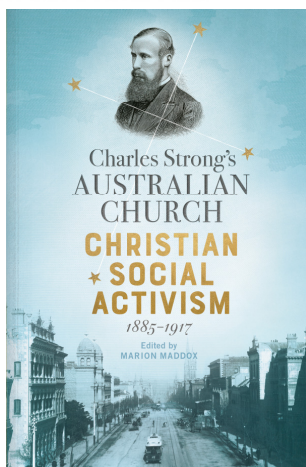
- 1 year \$30.00
- Life Membership \$250.00



New Publication

Charles Strong's Australian Church *Christian Social Activism, 1885-1917*

by Marion Maddox



The untold story of Reverend Dr Charles Strong and progressive Christian activism

In the optimistic years preceding Federation in 1901, the Melbourne-based Australian Church emerged as a progressing Christian movement to serve a brand-new nation. Galvanising many members of Melbourne's social and political elite, activist Reverend Dr Charles Strong imagined the Australian

Church becoming the national church, while addressing a broad social and political reform agenda, inspired by

both theological and social liberalism. Their approach was described as 'progressive', 'liberal', 'radical' and 'socialist'. Strong and his wife, Janet, founded or led organisations for causes ranging from peace to penal reform. They fought for urban slum improvements, rural village settlements, childcare and adult education, the minimum wage and women's suffrage. Some organisations endure today; others left lasting legacies in Australian methods of addressing social inequality. Bringing together leading scholars of history, politics and religion, *Charles Strong's Australian Church* celebrates the church's radicalism, while taking account of debates and obstacles on the path to social reform.

From: <https://www.mup.com.au/books/charles-strongs-australian-church-electronic-book-text>.

Publication and purchasing information is also available at this page.

An Ecumenical Christmas in Scotland

"What will you do for Christmas?" my friends and family asked. I was about to have four months in Britain and Europe and had given no thought to Christmas. "Probably go to church and have Christmas dinner at the hotel or wherever I would be staying at the time," I answered, as I had no hard fixed itinerary.

However, in late November I was in Edinburgh and made contact with the Iona Community there. As young Australian Presbyterians we heard all about the island of Iona from our students in Scotland and I had been on the Community mailing list for some years. They offered me a place at their International Christmas week at the Abbey that I was very happy to accept.

On Wednesday 21 December 1977 I was in cold, foggy London and set out on the 24-hour journey to Iona; overnight train to Glasgow, taxi from the mainline station to Queen Street Station for the train to Oban, steamer to the Island of Mull, bus across the island and finally a very small ferry to the Island of Iona. I had booked my train trip first class so that I could have a sleeper and on the train to Oban I found myself alone in a compartment where I was continually moving from side to side as we travelled through the West Highland hills and along the shores of Loch Lomond. A delightful trip! At Oban I met a number of others going to Iona who had travelled in second class on the train. (I travelled with them on the way home—company not scenery.)

In the five-hundred-year old Abbey we were a truly international gathering of people looking for somewhere to spend a Christian Christmas during the very brief holiday break. There were about forty adult guests and quite a number of children, and with the members of the Community and other staff there were more than sixty

people altogether. The majority were students, not just Scottish and English but some from Canada and the USA, from various European countries including Germany, France and Denmark, a couple of Asians and many Africans. Unlike our Australian churches whose missionary activity has been mainly in Asia and the Pacific, the Scottish church's overseas outreach is chiefly in Africa and we had missionaries and people from several African countries I shared a room with a delightful young woman from Malawi who was studying at a women's theological college in Edinburgh.

St Columba and some of his Irish followers founded a monastery on Iona in 563AD and spread their Celtic Christianity through that part of Scotland. His buildings became a Benedictine Abbey in 1203 and were rebuilt about 1500AD. The abbey fell into disrepair after the Reformation and a parish church was built in the village. However, in 1899 the landholder, the Duke of Argyll, presented it to the Church of Scotland and its great church was restored in the following years. In the 1930s the Rev. Dr George MacLeod brought together a group of Scottish ministers and lay people who were concerned for unity and social justice. They studied and worked together and in summer each year began to restore the abbey ruins, clergy and lay men labouring together "*not to get the roof on but to seat at meat with craftsmen brothers.*" Since then the Iona Community have made the rebuilt buildings a centre for worship, study and wider fellowship, producing experimental thinking and action and a wide variety of worship resources.

For guests staying at the Abbey the daily routine included regular times of worship and meditation in the great church, Bible studies and other optional historical or topical talks and free times for walks in the village or

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The Uniting Church and the Reconciliation Council



On 5 June 1991, the House of Representatives unanimously passed the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Bill. Reconciliation became a major theme of Australian political life in the ensuing decade. The term has become part of the Australian political lexicon and an accepted way of talking about relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The Council's aim was: *A united Australia which respects this land of ours; values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage; and provides justice and equity for all.*

The Council comprised 25 members drawn from both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and the wider non-Indigenous Australian community. Three prominent Uniting Church members were Sir Ronald Wilson, Gatjil Djerrkura and Djiniyini Gondarra. Pat Dodson was the founding Chairperson of the Council.

To implement the Council's program in each State and Territory two persons, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, were contracted to take on this task. In 1993 South Australian Congress at the initiative of Bernie Clarke and Murray Muirhead successfully obtained the contract for this purpose. Kingsley A'Hang (a Ngarrindjeri man) and Jonathan Barker were employed as the first two co-coordinators. Towards the end of 1994 Dean Whittaker joined the team ably assisted by Kaylene Hurrell and Shane Nayda. Co-coordinators met quarterly in Canberra to report and share ideas. Interestingly several other State coordinators had strong UCA connections.

In 1993 Congress was still establishing a base in South Australia. What drew Kingsley to Congress was his participation in the 1988 Bi-Centennial March organised by Charles Harris, Congress's founder. William Emilsen in his biography of Harris writes, "The coming together of so many people from widely disparate groups in unity demonstrated to the world the enduring strength of the Indigenous people of Australia against almost overwhelming adversity. The March was visible proof that black history had not been forgotten and that black culture was alive [it was] a demonstration of Aboriginal survival to the rest of the world. To many Aboriginal people it was an almost unbelievable experience to receive the support of so many non-Aboriginal people. The March propelled Charles Harris into the national and international spotlight and promoted the fledgling Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress as one of the leading Aboriginal and Islander organisations in the country. Harris had been the one most responsible for the success of the March. He had organised it so that it was peaceful, disciplined, and determined."¹



The Council identified eight issues which were seen to be



essential for forwarding the reconciliation process. These were: **UNDERSTANDING COUNTRY** - the importance of land and sea in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies; **IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS** - Indigenous Australians have long suffered from violence, dispossession, racism and the failure of Government policies; **VALUING CULTURES** - of the many cultures within Australia Indigenous cultures (note the plural) are not widely understood in the wider community; **SHARING HISTORY** -

much historical interaction has been brutal, unpleasant, denied and characterised by amazing ignorance; **ADDRESSING DISADVANTAGE** - Indigenous people are the poorest, unhealthiest, least employed and most imprisoned - there is a large gap to be closed! **CUSTODY LEVELS** - the levels of arrest and incarceration were so great that a Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody was set up in 1989; **DESTINY** - Greater opportunity for Indigenous peoples to control their own destinies; **FORMAL DOCUMENT** - Agreement on whether the process of reconciliation would be advanced by a document of reconciliation.

Despite limited resources the team actively pursued the Council's aims. Each week there was a stall on Rundle Mall where materials were distributed, a major source being a glossy promotional insert in an edition of the *Woman's Weekly*. Kingsley proved to be a great drawcard, many passers by charmed by his straightforward approach. There were invitations for speaking engagements, for example with a Union in Port Adelaide and the Marion Rotary Club. A successful strategy was organising and leading groups to use **RECONCILIATION STUDY CIRCLE** materials which were created by renowned Adult Educators around the country. On each occasion the issue which elicited most discussion was the somewhat confronting section on "sharing history". The studies did not avoid the core question of, "What does reconciliation really mean when one party has suffered at the hands of the other?" As Marcia Langton was quoted asking, "Who needs to be reconciled to whom?"

While the Aboriginal flag designed by Harold Thomas had been first flown for a day in Adelaide in 1971 it was at the instigation of an Adelaide City Council councillor that a strategy was devised to persuade the Council to fly the Aboriginal flag on an ongoing basis in Victoria Square (Tarntanyangga). Both Kingsley and Jonathan first met with two powerful players who had opposing political views to challenge them to promote the idea. Again, it was Kingsley's ability which elicited their support. They then helped to draft a letter to the Lord Mayor and after two months the good news came through that the City Council had agreed that the flag would fly on an ongoing

basis, perhaps a first in South Australia.



1997 at which Prime Minister John Howard controversially expressed views which were not in the spirit of the event. While expressing regret for the stolen generations, he resiled from making any apology on behalf of the nation. He went on to say: *In facing the realities of the past .. we must not join those who would portray Australia's history since 1788 as little more than a disgraceful record of imperialism ... such an approach will be repudiated by the overwhelming majority of Australians who are proud of what this country has achieved, although inevitably acknowledging the blemishes in its past history.* The use of the word “blemishes” evoked the response of most

Congress’s contract lasted for just over a year. For some strange reason the Reconciliation Council had decided that in each jurisdiction contracts would be offered to other applicants. However, Kingsley and I were invited as special guests to attend the Australian Reconciliation Convention, held in Melbourne in May

delegates publicly turning their backs on the Prime Minister.

The conclusion of the Council’s program was symbolised by the walk for reconciliation (*called Walking Together*) across the Sydney harbour bridge on 28th May 2000. The Bridge Walk was the biggest demonstration (approx 250,000) of public support for a cause that had ever taken place in Australia and regarded by many as public expression of support for meaningful reconciliation between Australia’s Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. On the previous day two documents were presented to all state and federal governments which expressed support for ongoing reconciliation. There was no explicit acceptance or espousal for a treaty or constitutional reform. It was clear that Australia was not yet ready for that. It would have to wait another seventeen years for the First Nations’ people to craft the request known as the “Uluru Statement From the Heart” which calls for all Australians to support a Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution, a treaty and the healing that only necessary truth-telling can provide. Hopefully the promised referendum will say a resounding “yes” to that request.

Jonathan Barker

¹ Emilsen, William W. *Charles Harris: A Struggle for Justice.* MediaCom, Unley 2019. p193

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across the island and socialising. On Friday evening we practised some hymns for our Christmas celebrations, not just from the Scottish Church Hymnal but from a variety of sources. The hymns from Africa, sung with their true rhythm and deep voices, were particularly stirring.

We had a happy party on Christmas Eve, with games and dancing. Some wondered because I seemed to be familiar with their Scottish folk dances and were surprised to hear that we learned them at school and at Presbyterian Church events. Then we went into the church to begin Christmas Day with a midnight celebration of Holy Communion.

For me this was a very special occasion because the Church of Scotland minister who was the designated celebrant for the communion at that service invited two other ordained ministers to co-celebrate with him—a young Danish Lutheran pastor and myself. Rules for who was allowed to celebrate the sacrament were strictly observed in Scotland, but in Europe the Reformed or Presbyterian Church and the Lutheran Church have total intercommunion (unlike Australia) and I had been

ordained in the Presbyterian Church of Australia so were both acceptable. A service I will long remember!

25 December was a Sunday that year. At 10:30am there was a Children’s Service. I had been part of the committee that planned that one. Then at noon a great Christmas Day Service was held in the Abbey. Members of the local village church joined with us and also stayed for the festive traditional Christmas Dinner that followed. (We shared domestic chores. I was on washing up duty that day and it was mammoth.) Small gifts were exchanged and we had a few quiet hours. Then in the evening we all went to the village church for the parish Carol Service. Supper, prayers and bed concluded a memorable Christmas Day. In some ways it had been a very familiar day, remembering the birth of the Christ Child in joyful worship and then gathering for a family meal, but in other ways it was a unique experience for me. I give thanks to God for the privilege of sharing in that Christmas celebration.

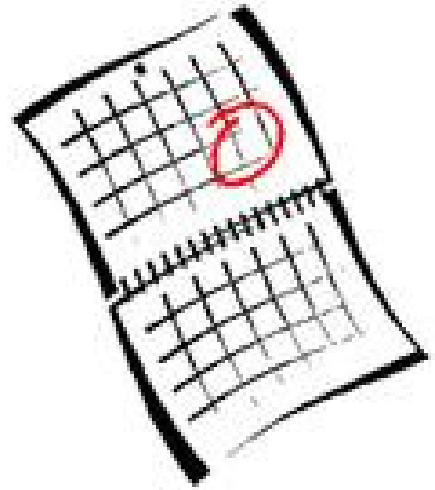
Rev. Norah Norris

This reflection was first published in *Talk*—the newsletter of Scots Church Adelaide in 2020.



2022 Calendar of Events

Not all the details of our 2022 program of public events are available yet, but please note the following dates and topics and look for confirmation and further information in the next newsletter, on our website, or on our Facebook page. And if you have ideas or suggestions about historical issues or developments that you think would be worth exploring we would be delighted to hear from you. Please note that at this stage we are planning all the events for Sunday afternoons, as recent experience suggests that this suits our members best.



Wednesday 2 February

The History Centre reopens at 1:00pm after our break for Christmas and New Year.

We will be open every Wednesday afternoon (1:00pm–4:00pm) until Wednesday 14 December.

Where: 44A East Avenue, Black Forest, SA

Sunday 20 March—Women in the church and in public life in colonial South Australia

Speakers will include Leanne Davis, who will share her research on the role of women in the Methodist Church in Colonial South Australia.

Sunday 08 May—North Terrace Historical Plaques walk

Tracing the contribution of prominent Christians to South Australian history. This guided walk will be our contribution to South Australia's 2022 History Festival.

Sunday 26 June —AGM and associated public meeting

Speaker: Dr David Hilliard—'A view from the pews: Protestant worship and preaching in 1890s Adelaide.'

Sunday 25 September—History of Youth Movements in the Uniting Church at its predecessor denominations

This is a topic about which many of our members have first-hand experience, and strong ideas. If you would like to be involved in planning and/or presentation please contact Judith Raftery (judith.raftery@gmail.com) or Bill Harris (deacbill@dodo.com.au).

Wednesday 14 December

The History Centre closes on this day for our break over Christmas and New Year.

We will reopen on Wednesday 1 February 2023.

The Committee and History Centre Volunteers and Staff would like to wish you a very blessed Christmas and a bright and prosperous New Year.