



The Queensland Baptist Forum

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Vale—John Lane



We regret to record the passing of Rev Dr John Lane, DMin, DipDiv, LTh, who died on 17 January in his 76th year. The funeral service was held on 25 Jan 2019 at Bethshan Bible Church, Wyee, NSW.

John was a good friend of our work and a prolific contributor to Baptist history in Queensland. He researched a series of articles on Baptist witness in the South Burnett which were published in this journal, and then wrote a detailed history of Wondai church. He was a ready source of information about Baptist people and movements and could always be relied upon to come

up with helpful insights, based on his experience, contacts or documents. Perhaps his best and favourite publication was the biography of his father, Rev Sam Lane, of whom John was immensely proud.

John was a boiler-maker by trade and was deeply influenced by a sermon by Australia's great evangelist, John Ridley, before finding full assurance of faith personally at Easter time, 1968. This led to training at the Queensland Baptist College 1969-73, and ordination at the Assembly in 1974. He served at the Lawnton (now Rivers), Toowong, and Nambour/Yandina churches, before moving to NSW in 1980, where his churches were Ingleburn, Belmont, Dungog and Cardiff. Most at home in the country, he returned to Queensland in 2002 to take up the work at Wondai and was honoured with the presidency 2007-2008. He made a special feature of the fact he was a President from a country church – quite rare, but it was a sacrifice for him and his wife with the extra distances involved in travel to official functions. Upon retirement, John and his beloved Valerie moved to Glen Innes where they were again active in the church.

BHQ Meetings 2019: 15 June; 26 Oct (AGM) 2pm @The Baptist Archives (Prospect Rd gate)

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Stanthorpe—Thirty Years to Plant a Church! (Part 1)

This is a further episode in the BHQ project on the history of Baptist witness on the Darling Downs, sourced from church records, Archives material, with special thanks to David and Marilyn Dunn and Rev Mark Harvey.

The Granite Belt

Stanthorpe, on the Granite Belt about 220 kilometres south west of Brisbane by road, is the apple, pear, stone fruit and wine centre of Queensland, thanks to its 1000 metre elevation and the granite soil of the surrounding district.



The official formation of the church took place in 1955, about eighty years after the district was first opened up as a promising tin mining centre. Other mainline churches started up in the early days although they did not always flourish strongly.

Even though the Baptist church trailed the others by so long, there was a period of about thirty years before it was officially launched during which seeds were being planted. This process involved people from many different places with a wide variety of connections.

The Stanthorpe district, covering about 2700 sq kms, is located adjacent to the border with NSW and is about 50 kms from north to south. Explorer Alan Cunningham travelled through the area in the late 1820s, and by the 1840s, several large cattle runs had been established. The discovery of tin in 1872 gave the town its name (stannum = tin) and its initial burst of prosperity; other minerals were also found. When the 'tin rush' faded, Stanthorpe, unlike other mining towns, made a successful transition to another industry, in this case, deciduous fruit and vegetables. A railway line put through in the early 1880s, which became part of the main interstate Brisbane-Sydney link, ensured the ongoing economic success of the district. The population in 1920 was around 6800.

The invigorating climate also meant that it became known as 'the sanatorium of Queensland'. The climate also made it a resort town (where many wealthy Brisbane residents owned luxury villas) and an attractive holiday centre. In fact, it was this feature that first put the area on the Baptist map. Rev James Mursell, minister of the City Tabernacle Baptist Church in Brisbane, spent a vacation in Stanthorpe early in 1911, where he was impressed with the possibilities for Baptist witness in the district. A little later, the Baptist Union Home Mission Superintendent visited the Tabernacle promoting outreach to new centres in the state. Mr Mursell supported him by speaking strongly about Stanthorpe. Another early Baptist connection with Stanthorpe was the C H Buzacott, the well known newspaperman and politician, who retired to Stanthorpe; both he and his wife Louisa died there in 1918. A few years later, another City Tabernacle minister, Rev W G Pope, had family connections with the district.

Home Mission and Evangelism

In the pioneering days of the Stanthorpe district, the closest Baptist church was at Toowoomba. The enterprising pastor of that fellowship in the 1880s, Rev William Higlett, had a link with Warwick, about 60 kms north of Stanthorpe. He encouraged the Danish Baptist work at nearby Freestone where there was an organised fellowship and a pastor. When this work faltered, these devout people contributed strongly to the church in Warwick which was established in November 1911. This church was to be bound up with Stanthorpe in many ways during the following years.

As part of an energetic post-World War I evangelistic drive, the Queensland Baptist Home Mission listed Stanthorpe amongst the areas in which it intended to develop new work. The Home Mission Superintendent encouraged the Warwick church and its pastors to initiate this outreach.

As early as August and September 1920 there were reports of weeknight services being conducted in Ballandean, about twenty kilometres south of Stanthorpe by Rev Walter Jarvis. This effort resulted in four people from the district seeking membership in the Warwick church. Rev Arthur Barnard also conducted a mission about the same time.

Mr Jarvis was an energetic pastor, but his ministry was cut short by the tragic death of his wife. His successor, Rev Hedley Abbott (1922), continued the outreach with further good responses - especially with the Walter Hodgson family, also of Ballandean. Originally from Sydney, they had previously been associated with the Brisbane City Tabernacle where Mrs Hodgson had been baptised. Now with the Warwick church working in their area, they were keen to become active members and arranged for services to be held in the district and for visitation of interested people. The Hodgson family maintained their contact in various ways over many years and some of their descendants and their families became associated with Baptists and other denominations in the district and elsewhere.

Other scattered Baptists

Meanwhile, there were also developments at Cottonvale, sixteen kilometres north of Stanthorpe. In 1913, the daughter of one of the Danish families originally of Freestone, Mary Christina Petersen, was baptised and became a member of the Warwick church, and also married Joe Goodwin. In 1921, after a few years in Brisbane, the Goodwins took up residence on an orchard near Cottonvale. Soon a widow, Mrs Goodwin encouraged pastors from the Warwick church to visit families in the area and to conduct services in homes and the public hall.

About the same time, or perhaps even earlier, there was another family with strong Baptist connections in the area encouraging the ministry of pastors from Warwick - Mr and Mrs Stephen Stephens. Mr Stephens was the youngest son of Mr Thomas Blacket Stephens, the famous pioneer in the

South Brisbane area; his wife was the daughter of Samuel Grimes, a member of one of the founding Queensland Baptist families who arrived on the *Fortitude* in 1849.

These early Baptist settlers in the Granite Belt were typical of many who were to follow them; they witnessed faithfully in their area, and, linking up with the nearest church, encouraged outreach into their localities. But they also kept in touch with Baptist life as much as possible. They subscribed to the *Queensland Baptist*, the monthly magazine of the denomination, and they contributed to Australian Baptist Foreign Mission and other work. They were well supported by the Warwick Church over a long period of time.

Meanwhile there were also more families with Baptist connections moving into the area who formed other church associations without losing their Baptist interests completely. One of these was Mr Luke Hubbock Flood who began orcharding at Thulimbah, adjacent to Cottonvale, in 1910. Mr Flood's parents Thomas Alfred and Mary Ann Flood, arrived from England in 1865 where they had been associated with Spurgeon's famous Metropolitan Tabernacle Baptist Church after moving from King's Lynn, Norfolk. Luke Flood had served in the Boer War, and not long after establishing his orchard, joined up again for World War I. His family of five all became local residents and orchardists.

There were also other families in the area who had a strong Christian commitment. One of these was the Edward J Brett family whose niece, Bessie, was married to Luke Flood. There were other relatives of the local Brett family who were active in Baptist work at Petrie Terrace and Windsor Road churches in Brisbane; a later relative, Edward, became a Baptist pastor.

These families started services of their own in the district about 1912. The Presbyterian Church in Stanthorpe, which had reformed in 1906 after having faded away earlier, offered assistance to the fellowship. A church building was erected not far from the Thulimbah railway siding in 1916 on land donated for the purpose. So the new church became officially Presbyterian. However, one the (temporary) ministers who was most involved in this process, Arthur Barnard, was a Baptist, filling in for the Presbyterians. Later, in 1931, he served an interim pastorate at Warwick. Three of his sons became Baptist pastors, especially C Victor Barnard who served with the Australian Baptist Foreign Mission in India in the 1930s.

The 21st anniversary report of this church explained its special character when it said: 'the congregation has remained nominally Presbyterian, yet [it] is really a unique blending of many denominations, accounted for largely by the fact that at all times, the great majority of the congregation have been not merely church goers, but born-again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.' (*Stanthorpe Border Post* 25 Mar 1937)

Not surprisingly, therefore, it was often supportive of non-Presbyterian ministries. An early example of this kind of support occurred in 1920 when the Baptist Union of Queensland took active steps to work in the Stanthorpe District.

As part of the larger program known as a 'The King's Business Campaign' in the wake of World War I, attention was drawn to the Soldier Settlement being established north and west of Stanthorpe. Government initiatives opened up new land on which about 700 returned servicemen were offered the opportunity to establish orchards. A branch railway line was constructed in 1920 from Cottonvale to service the area, all the sidings of which were given names of battlefields from the Western Front (Fleurbaix, Pozieres, Bullecourt, Passchendaele, Bapaume, Messines and Amiens). While well intentioned, the scheme was fraught with difficulties from the start and proved problematic. However, the district eventually became prosperous and the line operated until 1974. Baptists, however, were more concerned with the spiritual welfare of the people involved, especially as it was understood there were no other churches active in the area.

As part of the 'King's Business Campaign', the Baptist Union partnered with itinerant evangelist Thomas McColl, who had served with the YMCA during the war, in evangelistic campaigns around the state. It was decided that the Soldier Settlement area would be an important centre for their work. McColl planned to conduct missions in the district, with the assistance of Pastor Rupert Frewin who was a singer and violinist as well as an effective personal worker.

When this initiative became known, the Thulimbah Presbyterians invited McColl and Frewin to base themselves at the church which would offer them personal and prayer support. A report to the Baptist Association stated that promising missions were conducted in the area in difficult conditions which resulted in some conversions and the establishment of monthly services. The report also stated that an acre of land was promised at Pozieres by a local butcher, Mr Butler, and that a building would be erected as soon as £100 was in hand.

This was an excellent start to Baptist ministry in the area, with other churches including the Anglicans and Methodists also being involved elsewhere in the district in due course. However, the Baptist work did not grow and soon disappeared. It is not certain whether the church building was ever erected, although there was such a building in the village at a later date.

The glimmers of hope elsewhere in the district continued to be fostered by the Warwick Church with weeknight services, visitation of homes, and religious instruction at schools wherever entry could be obtained. Sunday schools were established as well, often attracting more than a dozen children. During the 1920s, the Warwick church listed several different centres in the district as outstations or branches in the district, including Turner's Creek, Dalveen, Cottonvale, Eukey and Ballandean.

Some of these centres were regarded as promising, but there were also disappointments. At Ballandean in the mid-1920s, a message was received from the residents that it was not convenient to conduct services there any longer; a short time later it was learned that 'all other sects' had been excluded from the church building they had been hiring. Yet around the same time, a new opening occurred at Dalveen with conversions resulting from a mission in

the area a short time later. Even though there were also problems with hall rental at Cottonvale, hope for better days was kept alive.

However, the town of Stanthorpe itself was different; no services were conducted there after the initial effort until around mid-1928 when it was reported that some new contacts had been made. By this time, Cottonvale was sporadic, due to the varying



Ex-Salvation Army Citadel as Baptist Church

demands of the residents' workloads and the weather; however, it was also noted that 'other denominations have a fairly good hold round about this centre.' (*Minutes - Warwick Baptist Church, 1929*)

The Warwick pastors continued to show a great deal of dedication to outreach into the Granite Belt. Even though some were only at Warwick for short periods, they worked hard to care for their flock in the Stanthorpe area, which was always highly appreciative of the efforts made. The pastors were rewarded with occasional conversions and sometimes clear expressions of gratitude. The *Queensland Baptist* April 1926 reported on the farewells to Rev R Y McAllister and stated that the success of his two-year ministry had been 'most inspiring'. As a sign of gratitude, he was given a wallet of notes by the people of Dalveen, and at Cottonvale he received a gold-plated safety razor set and a silver shaving mug. His wife and son were given suede hand bags. Rev CJ Kajewski enjoyed a longer ministry at Warwick (1927-31) and gave himself strongly to the work of the outstations, including Stanthorpe, which flourished.

The interest and support of the Baptist Union Home Mission continued despite the disappointment of the unsuccessful work in the Soldier Settlement area. Even at that time, acquisition of land at Cottonvale was a strong consideration. In 1929 the Superintendent reported on his visits to the area. He told how one man, not long settled on an orchard after migrating from England, had been led to a personal experience of Christ amongst the apple trees of his property by the Warwick pastor. (*QB Oct 1929*)

Links with the Thulimbah Presbyterian church continued, sometimes to the potential advantage of the Warwick Church. One of the regular speakers for occasional weekly services and Easter conventions at

Thulimbah was Scottish evangelist, John Sloan. He had been recruited initially in 1901 by Andrew Stewart for the Presbyterian Church in a scheme supported by Lord Overtoun which involved bringing men to Queensland, mostly from the Glasgow Bible Training Institute. However, Sloan, a rugged individual, had soon become independent, and had visited Thulimbah many times since 1917. In 1927, he wrote to the Warwick church offering his services for a mission. However, it was not convenient and so the mission did not proceed, but his ministry in the Granite Belt, as elsewhere, was broadly based and was a means of supporting many committed Christians in the area, including those with Baptist connections - as reports at the anniversary of the church confirmed:

These Gospel Missions of Mr Sloan's have been of prime importance in maintaining a lively interest in Bible study and also in building up the congregation with those who, from time to time, have found Jesus Christ [as Saviour]... under Mr Sloan's able preaching of the Gospel. Straight out biblical believers have always been the salt in any congregation. The Thulimbah congregation will always be indebted to this Man of God for the high spiritual plane in which it has always stood.' (*Stanthorpe Border Post* 25 Mar 1937)

Decline and Promise

The Baptist activity in the Granite Belt undertaken by the Warwick church, which was most vigorous and encouraging during the 1920s, still continued into the early 1930s when it received a boost with the arrival of a new minister, Rev W Doull (1931-39). However, it then began to fall away, and the work at Dalveen ceased in 1933. The Warwick church's energies were turned to other parts of its large region, such as the Killarney district.

However, one activity that did remain buoyant all through this period was Christian Endeavour. This interdenominational youth movement held frequent conventions on the Granite Belt and the scattered Baptists were usually involved. Many of the speakers were prominent Baptists from Brisbane, who provided a channel for the denomination to be kept aware of developments in the area.

By the end of the decade it seemed that the prospects for Stanthorpe were dim, but there was one tangible development that would make a significant difference in the future. It was the gift of a block of land in an undeveloped area of the town of Stanthorpe, valued at £48. The donor was not a local person but a pharmacist from Nambour, Mr F C Zerk.

There is anecdotal evidence that he was involved in a mission to Stanthorpe (or alternatively, that he was holidaying in the district) and, catching a vision for the future, offered the block, half an acre in size, to the Baptist Union which gratefully accepted the gesture, although it had no immediate plans for its use.

An inspection by a Union officer at the time concluded that it would be ideal for a residence, but definitely unsuitable for a church building! As events turned out, this would prove to be an erroneous judgement. But that would not be known until after World War 2 when a major step forward in the establishment of Baptist work in the Granite

Belt took place - a step that was going to result in success at last!

New life

After World War II, the Baptist Union embarked upon another energetic evangelistic outreach campaign. This time it focused on the 'Gospel Waggon' - a modified Dodge van equipped with living quarters and facilities for mobile open air evangelistic work. Rev A J Maxwell Howard was the first missioner and he took up this ministry in September 1946. The plan was for him travel throughout Queensland visiting schools, homes, and isolated Baptists wherever he could, basing himself if possible at a convenient local church.

One of his first campaigns was in the southern Darling Downs focused on Warwick where the minister, Rev R G (Dick) Walker was an enthusiastic supporter of the scheme. A detailed diary of the ministry of the Gospel Waggon during Mr Howard's tenure tells the remarkable story of its work in the Granite Belt which led at last to the formation of a church in the district.

On Nov 14 1946, Mr Howard, together with Mr and Mrs Walker and Mr Geoff Rolls made their way to Stanthorpe. In his diary, Mr Howard said,

By a direct leading of God we turned off at Thulimbah and made contact with Mr and Mrs Flood, Snr, Fred and Steve [Flood], and Mr and Mrs [nee Flood] Goodwin, Junior, all of whom are believers and at least the four older ones baptised believers. Had a blessed time with them and found they are actually Baptists (in exile). They worship with the Presbyterians in Thulimbah. Had reading and prayer with them, and heard one of them say, 'Your coming is a godsend, the way we feel just now. Thank God you came today.'

So contact was re-established with the Flood family who had been in the district for more than thirty years, and with the son of Mrs Goodwin [nee Petersen] formerly of Freestone.

After this contact in Thulimbah, the Gospel Waggon team moved on to Stanthorpe where they met another person who had Baptist connections. He was Mr William White, a local barber, who had come from Gympie in 1930 where he was an active member of the Baptist church, and a friendly assistant to the pastor of the day, Rev J J Weller (1916-21). Bill White was also a cousin of Rev Horace Betts, a well-known Baptist pastor in NSW and he had wanted to study for the ministry but ill health prevented that. Upon moving to Stanthorpe in 1932, he too had taken up with the Presbyterian church. He remained with the Presbyterians and later engaged in Home Mission work at Hervey Bay; he was a long serving highly active elder, and died in 2009 at the age of 102.

Contacts were made with other people, including Lance Morrison, now worshipping with the Methodists, but until 1938 a member of Warwick Baptist church when he had moved to Stanthorpe.

The team spent the afternoon taking opportunities for personal witness, visiting the local Protestant ministers and hiring the Oddfellows Hall for an evening meeting. They conducted an open-air meeting in the main street but decided that 'the place seems hard and cold, spiritually.' As if to confirm that

judgement, a severe thunder storm broke over the town before the evening meeting could be held - in any case, no one attended. The next day they made an inspection of the block of land (at the corner of Hillcrest and Railway Streets) and decided that it was indeed located in a good area to take advantage of anticipated expansion of the town.

Mr Howard was back in the Stanthorpe district again in late March 1948, when he visited orchards sharing the gospel and Christian fellowship wherever he could. Although an attempt to conduct a religious instruction class at Dalveen was refused, earlier contacts were re-established at other places, including Thulimbah, Stanthorpe and Ballandean.

Bad weather prevented any evening meetings in the town, but a hall was booked for a date after Easter. Meanwhile, reflecting on progress, Mr Howard entered this telling observation in his diary:

Never have I had a day in which so much devilish opposition. Looking back, one thing after another seemed engineered from the Pit. God must have souls in Stanthorpe, according to that. May we have the joy of guiding them!

After participating in an Easter convention at the Warwick church, Mr Howard prepared again for a more extended campaign in the Granite Belt. His team included Rev and Mrs Walker and five young people who had been greatly blessed during the convention. Visits were made first to Pozieres where, after a break of Baptist witness in the area extending to more than twenty years, they were pleased to find a warm welcome, especially at the home of Mr and Mrs Davidson. They were 'overwhelmingly glad to see us, being fine Christians in the midst of a pretty ungodly community.'

Then it was on to Stanthorpe where about thirty local people showed up at the hall for the much anticipated evening meeting. It was interrupted by noisy truck outside bogged in the gutter, but Mr Howard was quickly on hand with his Waggon and practical skills to remedy the situation. The driver, in fact, was someone Mr Howard had been hoping to visit! The meeting was a success and as Mr Howard's diary records, 'Quite a few have indicated their prayerful hope that an evangelistic message such as the Baptist, may come to Stanthorpe.' As Mr Walker and Mr Howard reviewed the situation, they felt that 'this is the hour' and as result of 'all this prayer and visitation' there would be at least two monthly services - one in Stanthorpe itself, and one at Pozieres.

The Soldier Settlement area was so much a matter of concern that, after having returned to Warwick, the missionaries decided to make plans for a period of intensive visitation culminating in some evening meetings. So on Friday April 2 they drove to Pozieres again and consulted with Mr Davidson who was of exactly the same mind as them. In Stanthorpe they received the same warm reassurance and even some financial support. The message was that 'prayer was being answered if we came to Stanthorpe for a service even once a month.'

To be continued in next issue



'All the way'—E J 'Uncle Eddie' Free

This is further instalment in our occasional series featuring the life stories of Queensland Baptists in which we invite people to tell their personal, family and ministry lives, highlighting aspects of the spiritual growth, development and service for the interest of our readers

and to be stored in our Archives as a permanent record. This episode features Pastor Eddie Free who was well known for his evangelistic and children's missions and for pastoring some churches.

For more information and offers of contributions to this project, contact BHQ.

My Christian journey began on Sunday 13 April, 1957 at an evangelistic meeting in my home church, the Stafford Methodist Church. By some miracle of God, the Open Air Campaigners had been invited to the church, for which I will always give thanks to the Lord. The evangelist was Frank McInnis.

My journey into Christian ministry began at the Methodist National Christian Youth Convention (as it was then) probably in the late 1950's or early 1960's, which was held in the main pavilion at the Exhibition Grounds. I was not a full-time delegate but used to attend the sessions in the evenings after work. As a hand compositor I had been involved in the printing of the Convention literature. One of these jobs was the order of service for the communion service. I had actually created the cross on the front with brass rule which was the method of the day. It was no mystery to me!

At the Communion Service God called me into service for him. That cross on the front seemed to me to take on another dimension and seemed to glow! It certainly got my attention! As I watched this strange happening, I clearly heard the call, 'I want you to preach the cross!' Even though those years of ministry have not been easy, (burn out caused by personal pressures was part of that experience) I have never been able to forget or escape from that very clear and direct command of the Master.

After the Convention I spoke to my minister, and eventually studied part-time at the Methodist Training College at Kangaroo Point with the purpose of becoming a Local Preacher in the Methodist Church. There was a time that I really believed that I was the only person that believed the Bible was, in fact, the Word of God!

About that time I had become involved with Triumphant Life Fellowship, an evangelical Methodist group who believed as I did. I was not a little confused when the founder of the Fellowship, Rev. Ian Walker, was not too happy with me going to that College. He was a Methodist minister and that was a Methodist College! Surely it was okay?

He actually advised me, that if I went to the College, to practice the 'Street Light Guidance'. I was to pray that as I listened to the lectures that God would present me with either green, amber, or red light guidance. That meant that when something was correct I would get the green light. When it was doubtful I would get the amber light. When it wrong I would get the red light. I practiced this throughout my time there and it didn't fail once.

It didn't take me long to find out, through this method and using common sense, that all was not well with the theology of the College. This experience actually strengthened my very weak faith in the Bible as the Word of God.

My trial sermons relating to my application to become a Local Preacher were problematical as I preached strongly on the Bible as the Word of God. I had even suggested that if John Wesley had been alive he would have been excommunicated from the Methodist Church!

I was eventually selected as a Local Preacher, on 3 September, 1965. That in itself was a miracle. At the Local Preachers meeting at which my application was considered only three people turned up. When the vote was taken one man voted for me, a fellow evangelical. Another, a militant theological liberal, voted against me. The minister chairing the meeting had the casting vote. Now, what would he do? He was a universalist in theology and as such couldn't disagree with me, even though privately he did. I was accepted.

There followed a number of years preaching in the Methodist Churches of our Circuit and beyond, until the Lord allowed me, and many other evangelicals, to leave when the union of churches became a reality. Preachers were going to be asked to sign documents but we could not agree with their contents.

Around this time I began involvement in a beach Sunday School that operated at Shorncliffe and Sandgate. One place was on behalf of the Queensland Evangelisation Society and the other for the Child Evangelism Fellowship.

Evelyn (Green) and I were married on 8 May, 1971 at the Windsor Presbyterian Church in which Evelyn had been involved in fellowship and ministry following her becoming a believer. Later Evelyn and I joined the Clayfield Baptist Church under Rev. Bob Stewart who had been a blessing to us in many ways. He encouraged us to consider pastoral ministry, and took every opportunity to lead us in that direction. When our time at Pocket Testament League (PTL) seemed to be coming to an end, we also began to seek the will of God in that matter.

While involved in ministry in the Methodist Church, and having suffered all the difficulties of a liberal denomination, but unable to leave because I still had a preaching ministry there in which I could have some influence, I went along to Joyful News Mission in Fortitude Valley for fellowship.

It was here that the Lord challenged me about believer's baptism, I had long accepted its truth and necessity, but as a Methodist it was difficult to discuss. I was baptised by immersion at the Jireh Baptist Church, the Joyful News not having their own facilities, on Sunday 16 June, 1963 by Pastor Vic Ham. This proved to be a pivotal change in my Christian experience, and led to growth and spiritual progress. I blossomed at Joyful News under the ministry of Pastor Vic Ham and others. I was involved with Christian Endeavour and led the Open



Air team for a period. And it was there that my calling into full-time ministry came about.

One Sunday night one of the many missionaries supported by 'The News' who was on furlough at the time, gave me some PTL Gospels of John. He had no knowledge that the Lord was prompting me to be involved in scripture distribution. It was just a coincidence, was my thought, but on the Wednesday evening C.E. meeting he had given more PTL literature to someone to pass on to me. Another coincidence? Then on the next Sunday evening he gave me several copies of the PTL magazine. This was past coincidence! So I contacted the PTL in Sydney.

Later, when I was working at a printing establishment at Nundah, the front office told me that two men from Sydney, in a big black car, wanted to see me at lunch time! What was going on? They proved to be Mr Walter Mottram, the Secretary of PTL in Australia, and another friend of his. This contact resulted in them inviting me to a meeting with the intention of establishing a branch of PTL in Queensland. This was on 6 August, 1964. All the disparate pieces of my call were falling into place.

From that meeting we agreed to have another meeting to form a branch, at which only two of us turned up, and the place of the meeting was locked! We held our meeting in his vehicle. From that inauspicious beginning, the Queensland Branch was formed. I became the Honorary Secretary in 1966. I began to get meetings in churches of all denominations, and began to organise outreach meetings and scripture distribution campaigns. I was 'preaching the cross' on a regular basis.

Scripture distribution, with the Gospel of John, was the central to the work of the PTL, and we engaged in many forms of this ministry. The main distribution method was in door-to-door outreach, and we conducted such with open air meetings in the main street during busy shopping times, and in quite a number of towns in Queensland. We also were involved in national campaigns where the two states joined together in outreach. One such was to Rockhampton and another was to Bourke and beyond.

We sought also to get specially produced New Testaments into the hands of political leaders. On one occasion, we presented one to Hon. Joh Bjelke-Petersen, when he was the Premier of Queensland, and another to the Mayor of Rockhampton. Hon. Rex Pilbeam. There were also other recipients.

In time the work had grown so much that we began to consider launching out in full-time ministry. That I did on a 'faith' basis just before we were married. This allowed for the work to expand even further. We also opened our own office in the Brisbane Arcade, and later moved it to the Canberra Hotel, the day our first child, Ruth, was born, 1 August, 1972.

During these years I was also involved on the councils of the Mount Tamborine Convention, Triumphant Life Fellowship and the Bible Radio Productions. I was also on the National Council of PTL. We later believed the Lord for, and received the keys, for our Queensland Headquarters of PTL. This was at The Grange. We moved in, after waiting over one year for finalisation, on 27 August 1977. This consolidated the work, and further expansion took place. Before we moved in our second child, Andrew, had been born, on 26 January, 1976.

We ministered in many churches with deputation and 'Christ for the World' weekends, and conducted Days of Prayer and Bible Teaching days, as well as Soul Winners and Discipleship Camps. I also preached at two Keswick Conventions at Goomboorian and Atherton.

We conducted many Children's Crusades with 'Uncle Eddie' in the afternoons after school, and in vacation periods, which in the end became 'The King's Crusade' with 'Prince Edward the Free'. We had 11 years of Children's Camps at 'Kingswood' Warwick, and established 'Young Disciples' as a result to disciple those coming to Christ in our many outreaches. Keswick type ministry to children happened at many conventions under the banner of 'Kid's Keswick' or 'Children's Conventions'. Of course there were the inevitable Sunday School anniversaries and Kid's Club meetings and Camps. There was also the ministry of R.E. in schools.

Preaching formed a large part of the ministry but it was not enough for me. That call to 'preach the cross' loomed large in my thinking. Difficulties with authority in the League, and the prompting of Bob Stewart, amongst other things, brought about my application to be a pastor in the Baptist Union of Queensland.

After a period of time, on 29 January, 1981, I was accepted as an accredited pastor. It took nearly a year to settle on a church in which to minister. I was inducted into the pastorate at the Monto Baptist Church on Sunday 10 January, 1982. Preaching was never a problem, as that was the basis of my call.

However there was much more to the pastoral ministry about which I was ill-prepared. I had no training or experience in other aspects of pastoral ministry. Due to a serious collapse and burn-out due to pressures beyond my ability to handle, I finished my ministry at Monto on 21 November, 1983. It took three years to be able to recover from burn-out. We had moved from Monto to Toogoolawah in a 'rescue mission.'

After a short time we moved to Pomona with the thought of establishing a camping ministry at Lake Cootharaba. It was during our time of recovery that I became involved with Christian Camping International Australia (now Christian Venues Australia). I had been asked, when Judy Evans moved to Victoria to conduct the administration of CCIA, to be the Queensland representative, which also meant being a member of the National Board as well.

During this time of 'rescue' we were involved at both the Noosa and Yandina Baptist Churches. However, the most important thing during this time was to get well. But the call of the Lord was still on me. Although we were both seeking for an improvement in our health, I still received invitations to 'preach the cross' during our recuperation. One of these was monthly services at the Gympie Baptist Church, which led in turn to happy times at a small fellowship at Gunalda/Glenwood north of Gympie. During this time I also preached monthly at the

Caloundra Presbyterian Church. There were other 'one-off' services as well.

We began seeking involvement in a return to Christian outreach, and became members of the Gospel Service Mission (GSM; now Tahlee Ministries) on 1 July, 1985. This necessitated a move back to Brisbane which occurred on 17 January, 1987. We were members of the Evangelism Department of the Mission and in this capacity were involved in a lot of the same ministries in which we engaged when with PTL. On returning to Brisbane we became involved in the Bracken Ridge and Banyo Baptist Churches.

The GSM emphasis was on pastoral evangelism, and we made ourselves available to churches in interim ministries. It was thus we started a part-time ministry at Mansfield Baptist Church which was planned for 3 months, but lasted 5½ years.

I also had shorter interim ministries at Clifton, Allora and Yangan Presbyterian Churches; Maclean/Yamba Presbyterian Church; Stanthorpe Presbyterian Church; Margate Baptist Church and Springwood Baptist Church.

We eventually left the work of GSM. and launched out on an independent Gospel Ministry. We continued with much the same ministry in which we had been engaged, and the churches didn't worry about the change in any way. So we kept this up until retirement in about December 2006.

Even after retirement we continued ministry to churches in preaching, which continues until this day, with monthly services at the Mansfield and Cooroy Baptist Churches; the Logan Aboriginal and Islanders Fellowship (Church of Christ); Cooinda House Nursing Home and the Inala AIM Community Church. Most of these preceded our independent period, as did the Brisbane Evangelical Slavic Baptist Church. We also have had less regular ministry at the Clayfield Gospel Assembly.

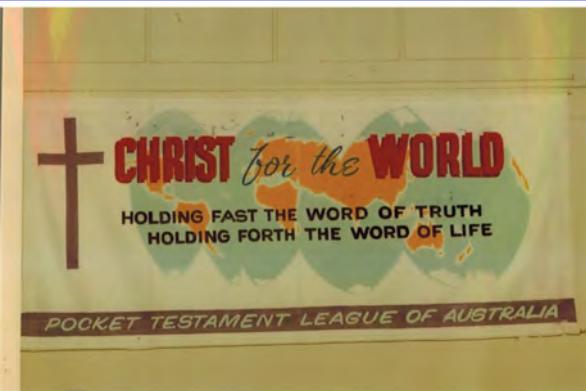
We had at least two trips to Melbourne. One for a Conference on Evangelism, and prior to that to speak at the Annual Meeting of the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches of Australia, and to preach at a number of their member churches in the Melbourne area. We have also taken some Children's, Family and Men's Camps, and been involved in R.E. in the local school.

When do we plan to stop ministry? When the Lord calls a halt to what we are doing in ministry for Him.

We haven't mentioned our trips overseas. In the year 2000, I was enabled by gifts from supporters to be a delegate at the Billy Graham Amsterdam Conference for Itinerant Evangelists. That was a real blessing, and an experience I won't forget. I met many interesting people, and out of that came an invitation to visit India in February 2001. In fact there were invitations to a number of countries, but some were suspect!

The first half of my time was conducted in the Punjab with a brother I met in Amsterdam, Stephen Masih. He took me to many small village churches in which we had a blessed ministry. Unknown to me or to Stephen, at one village they announced over their loud speaker system that 'a famous Evangelist from Australia' was preaching in their church. This was a dangerous thing to do in that area. We knew we were being watched by enemies of the gospel!

The second half of my time in India was with Emmanuel Ministries in Kota Junction in Rajasthan. Overseas this ministry is called Hopegivers International.



I had met their founder and leader, Dr. M.R. Thomas, in Amsterdam as well, with his helper at that time, Mrs Cris Rhyner from Maryland, U.S.A., whose team I joined for this outreach.

This was an outstanding time with a completely different work. The ministry was largely preaching to groups at their Convention at which over 200 pastors were commissioned to go preach the gospel in difficult places in India. They went out with a Bible, a number of other helpful books, and a pushbike. They had to trust the Lord for their upkeep, and did. Each took the 'Martyr's Oath' before they were commissioned. There was over 20,000 people at this Convention.

The third overseas trip (not to mention a private holiday in New Zealand) was to Thailand. A dear sister had written the History of P.T.L. in Australia, and I had assisted her with that on the Queensland part of the story. It became obvious to her that our part in commencing the work in Thailand had been somewhat overlooked.

As a result, and because the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the work in Thailand was at hand, she and her husband sent us to Thailand to spend some time in fellowship and ministry with Somchai and Saengthong Soonthornturasuk the evangelist and leader there, whom we had not seen for nearly 40 years. This trip was also a great blessing.

We visited, and I preached in a small church near the Cambodian border, and on the second Lord's Day one on the Myanmar border. One the way we saw much of southern Thailand, and also 'The Bridge over the River Kwai' and the Australian war cemetery there.

In our retirement we commenced, and still operate a ministry called 'Parents in Pain,' focused on prayer and encouragement to people who have suffered pain from the activities of their children.

I believe I have covered all the important parts of my ministry. What have I learned? Many things—some of them were difficult lessons. I pray that I have learned these lessons well, and have not inflicted too much pain on those we have ministered to during those times.

Mainly we hope that we have been a blessing to as many as possible. We are thrilled when people come to us to tell us of how the Lord blessed them through our ministry. How they were saved, or called into Christian Service etc. as a result of our ministry to them. These times make the pain a little less hurtful.

Lastly, the call to 'Preach the Cross' has not been withdrawn, and I intend to continue to obey that call in whatever reduced capacity my ageing body can take, as long as the Lord allows me!