

*ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF  
WITNESS*

*A History of the Hobart Baptist Church*

*1884 - 1984*

*Unabridged and unpublished copy*

*with Later Appendices*

*Laurence F. Rowston*

A hardback of the original paperback copy, which also contains photographs, can be obtained from the author, 3 Portsea Place, Howrah, 7018  
email [lrowston@tassie.net.au](mailto:lrowston@tassie.net.au)

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## FOREWORD

Years ago a people carried a box on their journeys. It was a rectangular receptacle made of wood. The whole was covered with gold and was carried on poles inserted in rings at the lower four corners. The box contained pieces of wood and stone and a pot of sticky stuff. The wood was Aaron's rod, the stone, the two tablets of the decalogue and the pot of sticky stuff, manna. Some would say that what was inside this box was not impressive and yet for that people these items were significant. The tablets of stone reminded them of the giving of the Law; the stick was Aaron's rod which reminded them of the struggle between Egypt's ruler and Moses - between Pharaoh's power and Yahweh's purpose; and the pot of manna reminded them of provision in the desert. These objects were a church remembering that here and here and here in the past the living God had touched this earth.

Over the last century the Hobart Baptist Church has, as it were, been carrying a box in which have been placed bits and pieces - photographs of people and buildings, sermons, journals, notes, profiles of men and women and accounts of events. Unknown to most church people is the work done fifty years ago by a Lesley Kerr of this church. At one time he was Sunday School Superintendent. He was also editor of the Baptist Church Chronicle, the forerunner to today's Advance. Vida Gluskie remembers him as a

quiet, tall, dark and friendly person. He was not one for pushing himself forward. Les was also devoted to this church to such an extent that he hand wrote profiles on over seventy of the families. This file, which included biographies of the ministers, he called the "Roll of Honour". These are of unique interest. He also put together a cut and paste history of the church but this was never edited nor published. He himself didn't even go through it a second time.

I drew from Les Kerr's work when I wrote this work for the century of the church in 1984. But a lot of material was never used, especially the work on the ordinary people who made up the congregation. My book highlighted our pastors. But Les's work shows that the "ordinary" folk worked so hard "behind the scenes". Their contributions helped to make this church one of the leading, if not the leading Baptist church, in this state up the late 1970s.

The appendices comprise section the Hobart Baptist Church web site which gives the pastorates up to the present time, and, importantly a number of articles titled "Lessons from the Hobart Baptist Church 120 years Ago", etc., written by me for a Church publication looking at the Church 120, 110, 100, 90, 85, 80, 70, and 60 years ago ending with the pastorate of the Rev Merlyn Holly in the 1950s.

## PREFACE

The first hundred years of the Hobart Baptist Church had nearly passed and it was thought fitting that the task of setting out the achievements of the past should be undertaken. It was therefore decided that as part of the centenary celebration in 1984 a short book should be published concerning our first century.

I volunteered in 1982 to assist in this project but soon discovered that I would have to work alone although two people had anticipated such an undertaking. The first, Leslie Kerr, Life Deacon and member of the church for almost sixty years, was noted for his quiet unobtrusive work. He was Minutes Secretary for the church and deacons' meetings and Roll Secretary for a number of years. Kerr prepared historical information which has proved invaluable. These writings were passed to Ronald G. Soundy on Kerr's death in 1961. Ron, whose roots lie deep in the foundation of this church, has been unofficial archivist, collecting and carefully storing papers and records for a project such as this. Without the work of these two men, the work would be considerably poorer in content.

I take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to those who have assisted me in this absorbing task. Especially to Elizabeth Clements who typed the draft of the history, to Leanne Stewart who typed the final work, to Ronald Soundy for the care he has taken over many years with the irreplaceable documents and records of the church, and to Graham Clements, Dr. Frank Rees and Dr. Philip Hughes who have advised and edited the various editions. My further thanks to Colin Pyefinch who proof-read the final copy. Dr. Frank Rees has assisted in addition by writing the challenge contained in the final chapter. To these and many other people, I express my sincere thanks.

Two institutions have given permission for use of photographs from their collections. The

photograph showing the Exhibition Building is by courtesy of the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts. The photographs of Rex Townley and the pipe organ from the Chalmers Presbyterian Church are by courtesy of The Mercury.

It is possible that many persons will search these pages for their own names and the story of their contribution to the Tabernacle history, and they will search in vain, for sadly many outstanding personalities have been passed over.

Because of its length the work has been limited virtually to profiles of church Pastors and Secretaries.

It is almost inevitable that mistakes will be discovered and perhaps some of the conclusions that have been drawn will not meet with the approval of all concerned, but even so, this volume has been sent forth as an honest attempt to preserve the story of what has been accomplished by the Hobart Baptists seeking to evangelise and serve this delightful city of Hobart in the first century of the church's existence.

I have written in the hope that this story of a hundred years may prove interesting to those who have worshipped and served in this fellowship; instructive to those outside the church and an inspiration and challenge to all.

What we have is a hundred years of history, of which we have no reason to be ashamed. It will be seen that the people who have joined the church have brought with them varieties of theological outlook and practice. Through the last century, as they have shared together in the work of God, they have discovered their oneness in Jesus Christ. I pray that this will continue and that each new member and adherent will find his or her way of serving their common Lord, through the fellowship of this church. LFR.

## Chapter One

### A New Initiative

Strange as it might sound, it took severe illness and its threat of death to bring about the birth and growth of the Hobart Baptist Church. The severe illness was TB-consumption, one of last century's scourges. Among the many who had pronounced upon them the fearful verdict was the son, Thomas, of the illustrious preacher, Charles Hadden Spurgeon. Thomas, because of consumption, had been advised to travel to a warm climate for his health and so, on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1877, he left England for Melbourne in the "Lady Jocelyne". "We will be grateful to any friends who will extend kindness to him," wrote his father who was troubled about how he would be received. "He will be willing to preach as opportunity may occur." The eminent preacher, in a letter, commended his son, Thomas, to the Rev. William Richard Wade, in Victoria.

Thomas had been a lay preacher in cottage meetings around London. With his twin brother, Charles, he began a ministry in a little mission in Northcote Road, Wandsworth Common and raised the Chatham Road Chapel, opening it free of debt. Young Thomas made up his mind on arrival in Melbourne, to stay in the ship for a week or so, to get time to look around but, as soon as the ship docked, he was met by Baptist leaders and pressed into speaking engagements. The visit of this humble preacher to the colonies became a celebrated event. In Stawell, Geelong, Melbourne, and other places, hundreds rushed to hear him. Over-flowing congregations became a common occurrence. He was listened to attentively and greatly appreciated for he brought back memories of England and his father. There was great interest in anything attaching to the name of Spurgeon.

Charles Hadden Spurgeon's influence lay in his sermons. They circulated in leaflet form as well as appearing as paid advertisements in newspapers. They were greatly valued. Miners stored them in their boxes and read them when it was raining hard and they could not get out and knew not what to do with the time. They were passed on at deathbeds because of their great personal value - they had changed lives. Small churches that were without pastors also found them a great blessing. Through the reading of a Spurgeon sermon morning and evening the churches kept their people together until God would send them a man. Preachers plagiarized

them. Sometimes they were caught out - it had been read the night before.

The hearty welcome extended to Thomas across the State was an opportunity for various churches and association of churches to put on record their deep sense of appreciation for the services rendered by his father to the cause of Christ throughout the world and, not least, to Victoria, through the influence of his printed sermons.

Tom's travels soon brought him to Tasmania early the following year which gave sense to his father's jokes before Tom set sail to the colonies. His father had been reluctant to have him come yet; he would kid him about it by saying, "Would you like to go to prison, Tommy?" Among the large number of Spurgeon followers on the island that had been a prison colony only twenty-five years earlier, were Mary Ann and William Gibson of Native Point, Perth. Thomas was invited to spend what time he could with them and he took full advantage of their hospitality and kindness.

Amid the beauties of Native Point - the garden all ablaze with flowers of richest hue, the orchard attractive with its abundance of fruit, the ample river flowing in front of the house, the magnificent ranges of blue mountains encircling the whole scene in the dim distance, friendship between Thomas and the Gibsons grew deep and lasting. William was his companion in horsemanship and they often spent many hours in the saddle. William and Mary Ann drove him from place to place to preach and they were his most attentive hearers.

#### MARY ANN AND WILLIAM GIBSON

Born in 1801 in England, Mary Ann (nee Blackler), niece of Rev. Henry Dowling, was connected with the Anglican Church. Later on she came under the influence of the Rev. Joseph Irons, Congregational minister. But after much prayer and study of the scriptures, she came to see that the Baptist position was more in accordance with New Testament truth. She wrote to her uncle, the Rev. Henry Dowling, who had played such an important role in Van Diemen's Land, asking his advice regarding her coming to the colony. He replied, "That the same God was here as in the Old Land, but he was not so much honoured."

In the colony she married William Gibson, the fourth son of the now respectful David Gibson who, in a period of less than thirty years, rose from being a convict to become a leading agriculturalist and pastoralist and personal friend of Governor Macquarie. In recognition of his hospitality and success, Macquarie named the township on the South Esk "Perth" after David's home town in Scotland. William was born at Pleasant Banks on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1820. Even before he had reached the age of twenty-one, it was said of him that he had such energy and ability in sheep breeding that his "success was easy to predict."

On 12<sup>th</sup> January 1843, William married Mary Ann and their first home was "Eskdale", an estate of 1500 acres, being a gift from his father. Here she persistently distributed Spurgeon's sermons to the residents; and rode around urging her neighbours and their employees to come and hear the Word of God when a preacher came to their home. There was a small chapel on the estate which served the needs of the district until its enforced removal when the railway was laid.

On the first Sunday in the month, 'Ordinance Sunday', she and her husband attended the York Street Baptist Chapel, Dowling's church in Launceston, in order that they might worship with her own people.

When they moved to Native Point, at Perth, they attended the ministry of the Rev. Alfred Stackhouse of the Anglican Church while still travelling to Launceston each month for 'Ordinance Sunday'.

On the departure of Stackhouse from Perth, William and Mary Ann felt more free to build a church in which they might worship God in greater accordance with their religious views and, on 8<sup>th</sup> May, 1862, "the foundation stone of a building was laid, "to be devoted to the purpose of education and religious worship, preference being given to the ministrations of the gospel, through the medium of the denomination of Calvinistic Baptists, who hold and practice the immersion of believers. The witness was the Rev. Henry Dowling.

Built at Gibson's entire cost, this undenominational place of worship was suddenly turned into what it had tended to be all along. Some of the young people desired to be united in wedlock and, in the negotiations which followed with the Government Registrar, it was found needful to register the church under some

denominational banner; it was therefore decided to register it as a Baptist church. The first person to be baptized in the new church was William himself, followed by his son, William Gibson Junior, and three other people. Mary Ann had been baptized by the Rev. Henry Dowling soon after her arrival in the colony. Pioneer work was carried out at Perth by two of Spurgeon's students, A.W. Grant, who arrived in 1870, and W. Clark, in 1874.

Thomas Spurgeon's friendship and preaching there in Northern Tasmania in 1878 seems to have greatly stirred the Gibsons to further consider the progress and health of the Baptist work in the colony for, following Thomas' return to London, the call came from the Gibsons in Tasmania to send two men from Spurgeon's Pastors' College to start new work on the island. William Gibson would pay the passage costs out.

### THE NEED OF THE HOUR

By 1878, the work which had begun in 1835 by the Rev. Henry Dowling was itself slowly dying. It had been a Strict and Particular work; "Strict" in that the churches were conducted on principles of strict communion - the Lord's Table was closed against any who had not been baptized as believers, "Particular" in that it was held that God is particular in whom he has chosen - God has elected some to everlasting life, predestined others to everlasting death. Man is born with his destiny fixed. Those for whom Christ died must be saved, those for whom he did not die must be lost. These were doctrines commonly known in derogatory terms as hyper-Calvinism.

In the south, after years of disorder, division and dissolution, the Harrington Street Baptist Chapel, Hobart Town, wrote into their Trust Deed the principles of strict communion and so it was to remain until the Church's final days in 1886. Their leading elder and lay preacher, Henry Hinsby, was hyper-Calvinist. Their life-long Trustee, Francis Smither Edgar, was an avowed strict communionist. By 1878, the church called the wrong man to the pulpit and, in doing so, had taken out loans which, in the years ahead, would be pressing upon them. Aged and incapable leadership had been theirs for over twenty years. It was not to change. The cause was dying a slow death.

In the north, the work of the Rev. Henry Dowling was only holding its own. Dowling was never a strong close communionist and, on his retirement in 1867, the York Street Church,

Launceston, became open communion. Two years later, Dowling was dead and the Strict and Particular work was bereft of real leadership. The other small Baptist causes at Constitution Hill, Deloraine and Westbury, all lapsed in time. It was at Perth under the Gibsons that there was reason for hope in a Baptist future on the island.

### **THOMAS SPURGEON RETURNS**

Steps were taken in London to fulfil Gibson's wishes and, unexpectedly, Thomas was to return with the successful candidates, departing from London on 27<sup>th</sup> September, 1879. In a letter of that year, he wrote to a Baptist in Geelong, Victoria, explaining the reason for his return;

“I am about starting for Melbourne. This is because I cannot possibly winter here; my lungs are weak and delicate. A cough has harassed me for a long time, even in the summer, such as it has been; I cannot bear a yearly sojourn on the Continent; so Jamaica or Madeira, or other outlandish places are suggested. I know the way to Australia and am acquainted with a few of the inhabitants. I can speak their language and I like their habits. So, if the painful separation must come, let it be made light ere long by the Austral sun. I am hoping to bring two of our students in the Sobraon for Tasmania. I shall go with them for the hot months. I need not attempt to describe the pain of parting, when it is likely to be for so long. Mother says I ought never to have been fetched home; not so say I. It has been a time of great joy, but this makes it harder to say good-bye. I trust I may yet have happy times with kind Victorian friends. Pray for all of us. Yours hurriedly, but heartily.”

What he didn't mention in this letter was that the man destined for Longford and Hobart also had TB-consumption. A forwarding letter also arrived from C.H. Spurgeon and was published in the Victorian Freeman of December that year. Wrote his father:

“Alas, I have another matter to mention. I hoped that my dear son Thomas would remain with me, to be my comfort and help. He is inexpressibly dear to me, and I am more grieved than I can tell to find that a cough and great delicacy of the lungs render his stay with us in England very inadvisable. I must, therefore, send him off to you again, and he now intends leaving London by the Sobraon, on the 26 September. Though this is almost death to me, I hope it may prove to be the life of many in the Colonies. If you will again receive him as you did before, I shall be

deeply grateful. He will probably remain for a considerable time, and possibly may settle in one of the Colonies. The Lord's will be done.

“Mrs. Spurgeon joins with me in thanking you for your goodness to our son and your thoughtfulness of me. She remains a great invalid, but it is almost joy enough that she lives at all.

“I commend to you the brethren, Harrison and McCullough, who will go with my son to Tasmania - two very superior men and full of grace and power.”

Thomas' purpose was to go direct as possible to Tasmania and so avoid the great heat and be out of the way of temptation to over-exertion. But his chief reason was to get to William Gibson's as soon as possible that he might introduce the two whom he had such a deal of anxious labour in securing. He also wished to help in their pastoral settlements.

In Melbourne large welcoming meetings were held at Kew and West Melbourne to welcome the young Spurgeon back. It was at the former on 29<sup>th</sup> December that Robert McCullough preached his first sermon on Australian soil.

### **ROBERT McCULLOUGH**

Robert McCullough was born in 1853 at the village of Randaltown, on the banks of the Maine River, County Antrim, Ireland. His father was a farmer on the Shanes Castle Estates and descended from the old yeomanry of Ulster. In his early days, Robert saw not a little of the faction fights between the Orangemen and the Ribbonmen.

After passing through the classes of the Anglican school in the neighbourhood, he entered the Old Bleach Irish Linen Company at an early age. Acting as time-keeper, he had at first to be at the office from 6 a.m. till 6 p.m., and he lived more than two miles away. From the beginning, he was next to the employers, two thorough gentlemen, the sons of Quakers. In addition to the books of the head office, he was in daily contact with all parts of 'the works' and his prospects were very bright. When, some years after, Robert left his employment to enter upon his theological studies, his employers presented him with a gold watch to mark their esteem.

Robert was brought up in the Anglican communion, and had the Bishop's hands laid upon his head in confirmation. The first time he heard of Baptists was when Grattan Guinness

and his wife visited the North of Ireland holding evangelistic services. The Baptists were then disrespectfully called "Dippers" and it was whispered among the lads of the neighbourhood, with many a mysterious and significant look and gesture, that these strange people, the Dippers, had in their churches a hole in the floor full of water, into which people went down and were dipped. Some time after this, there came a stranger, and asked if he could stay one night at McCullough's farm house. He was made welcome. It was soon discovered that he was one of those dreaded "Dippers".

A real live "Dipper" in the house! He was asked why they baptized people by immersing them, and he told them that they tried to follow Jesus, and that He was immersed in the Jordan. The answer may not be the best for a Baptist to give, but it made a deep and lasting impression upon the boy. When, at the age of nineteen, he was awakened at some revival meetings, he was led to look into the question of baptism anew. He found from the New Testament that the despised "Dippers" were right, and felt that it was his duty to cast in his lot with them. He joined the little Baptist Church gathering about five miles from his native town from which he had to walk each Sunday. The severing from the Anglican Church, the church of his fathers, to which he was much attached, did not come easily.

At the Baptist meeting he began "exhorting" as was the custom with the Irish Baptists. He was led on to conduct services and, notwithstanding his busy life, he preached almost every week in various districts. His spare time was given to study under the direction of his pastor, the Rev. W.S. Eccles. Friends for some time urged him to devote himself to the ministry. At last, feeling a call to the ministry, he gave up business after nine years and entered Spurgeon's College. It was his full intention to give his life to Ireland, but lung disease was threatening, and the call to minister in the Antipodes came as his studies at the college drew to a close.

### **McCULLOUGH AT LONGFORD**

In Tasmania McCullough's first sphere of work was at the small town of Longford, twenty-four kilometres from Launceston and five kilometres from Perth. It was an entirely new work. The first services were held in what were then known as the Assembly Rooms which belonged to a brewer. The use of the rooms was given free. For a good part of the first year of his work there, he lived with the Gibsons at Native Point. They

were as father and mother to him. The foundation stone of the church building was laid by Mary Ann Gibson on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1880. The church was constituted in March 1881 with thirty-eight members.

McCullough had many discouragements, for the other churches in the town saw him as an intruder but, in one year, twenty-six members were added to the roll. A manse was also built in his time, with William Gibson senior and junior bearing the expense. One of the first candidates for baptism under McCullough was Eva Richardson of Longford. Eva became the young minister's wife.

After a number of successful years in Longford, it was laid on McCullough's heart to attempt, without any promise of financial support, to start a new church in Hobart. William Gibson senior again came forward and gave him an assurance that if the contributions of the new congregation were not sufficient for his support, he would stand by him and make up the difference. Further, on taking up the work in the southern capital, he was not going to be alone. Among those who were willing to stand behind him when he arrived were Hobart homeopath, Dr. Harry Benjafield, Hobart businessman, Joshua Tovell Soundy, and Victorian pioneer Baptist, Samuel B. Pitt.

### **DR. HARRY BENJAFIELD**

Dr. Benjafield had arrived in the colony in April 1873 having studied at both London and Edinburgh Universities and had graduated Bachelor of Medicine and Master of Surgery from Edinburgh University in 1871. He often stated publicly that he had paid his own University fees maintaining himself during his University years on sixpence a day and working seventeen hours out of every twenty-four. At that time, he had difficulty in earning sufficient money to pay his class fees and lodgings and to buy his food. What money he did earn came by acting as an amanuensis to a blind professor and by putting up stock for chemists in the evenings. He classed himself as a self taught man.

After graduating he practiced homeopathy for two years in Manchester and he married Amelia Pywell, daughter of the Rev. J. Pywell, Baptist Minister of Zion Chapel, Stockport. As soon as he saved enough money, he bought passages to Australia, embarking on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 1873.

On arrival in Hobart Town, he opened the first homeopathic pharmacy in the city in a building

at the corner of Elizabeth and Bathurst Streets. The figure of the founder of homeopathy was in a niche over the door on the corner. Benjafield was called the cold water doctor in consequence of his cold water packs which he applied to the naked forms of his patients in some of his treatments. Again, he was the first one to practice this treatment in Tasmania. As a medical man, he did a roaring trade and the business proved a lucrative practice. He had landed in 1873 with £20 and by 1883 he had gathered £20,000.

In 1879, he built his residence, "The Willows", a handsome and substantial structure, upon an attractive site, midway between the city and New Town. Built at a cost of £5,000, it was a comfortable and ornate residence in the fullest sense of the words. (The Willows" is now the home of the Public Trust Office). He turned his ever active energies to land in the eighties for the establishment of a dairy farm and soon the Tasmanian Milk Company was delivering milk from Moonah to the public of Hobart twice daily.

His enterprising activities did not cease there. He introduced into the colony vaccination from calf lymph and subsequently supplied the health authorities of Queensland, N.S.W. and parts of Victoria, with hundreds of tubes being despatched by every steamer. He was one of the first to advocate the export of fruit to London, and was himself a large exporter of pears, which always fetched good prices.

For all his early success, he was a citizen, philanthropist and a convinced Baptist. During the depression of the nineties, he publicly announced that he would see anyone who could not afford it without a fee. Likewise, he would always see his poorer patients, no matter what their financial standing.

Benjafield professed that, on arrival, he wandered from one church to another seeking vainly for a congenial spiritual home, but without success. He preached for many years at the Berea Church in Liverpool Street, but longed for a Baptist Church in the south of the State. In 1883, he wrote as he journeyed home from the north, "We return to Hobart.....heartily wishing and praying that a Baptist church would soon assemble here and be a mighty power for good in the city."

He was a man who believed in the Bible; and it alone was the answer to the great need among

the young men of Tasmania, that need being character. He was against modern thought in the churches, "That grand old Book gives us teachings about everything, and I don't see why so much of it should be omitted from our pulpit teachings." He was one for standing by old truths and walking in old ways. It saddened him therefore that there was a looseness among some church-goers, in that they frequented theatres and race courses and played at cards and the like. In regard to his own baptism, he confessed that that was the means of him being able to do what little good he had done.

Benjafield was in correspondence with William Gibson over the venture of a new Baptist work in Hobart, having been told by Gibson of his desire to form an open communion work in the town. It was possibly through Gibson that it came about that Benjafield arranged, prior to McCullough's arrival, for another of Spurgeon's students, Harry Wood (who emigrated owing to bad health), to preach to a large number of prisoners in the Hobart Jail. Was there a possibility that he might have been sent south to start the new work, and not McCullough?

It was said of the energetic Benjafield that, in regard to the new work, he represented what the Yankees called "go." His motto was progress and he longed for Christian workers. "The first thing our churches need", he was to say, "is strong Christians who will work. We have only to take up history to see how strong men and women in all ages have marked out some great work - have set themselves to do it or die, and they have nobly conquered all difficulties. We see men in pursuit of gold doing this every day. Shall the Church of Christ lag behind the children of the world?"

Benjafield for his part made sure that this charge could not be made against the new Baptist venture in the south. The second of the trio, J.T. Soudy, had an equal commitment.

#### **JOSHUA TOVELL SOUNDY**

One of a family of eight, whose father came from a family of ten, Joshua Tovell Soudy was born in 1840 in Bicester, Oxfordshire, a town twenty kilometres north-east of Oxford, England.

As a young man, he did not demur when he was found a job as apprentice to a draper at a shop near his home. The hours were long in Victorian England of the mid-1800s and, like most lads entering the shopkeeping business, he was expected to sleep on the premises. His master

regarded young Soundy as privileged to be able to work in his establishment and the pay was his bed, food, clothes and what could be described only as plenty to keep him occupied. But he was a keen, loyal worker, and at the end of one year's labour, the firm opened its heart and gave him a "bonus" of £20 - a sum not to be sneezed at in those days.

The young draper's assistant seized his first big chance when the senior traveller fell sick. Joshua begged the boss to be allowed to fill the gap, doing the rounds of the country customers in the firm's horse-drawn wagonette. He took to the road and trebled the former incumbent's takings on his first expedition.

This bright, hard-working young man married Elizabeth Johnson on 12<sup>th</sup> November 1867. After their first child, Elizabeth, was born, four and one half years later, he fell ill. It proved to be TB and he received medical advice that a sea voyage to Australia could give him a few more years. One of his advisers was Dr. Harry Benjafield.

When the family embarked on the 'Essex', Joshua was hardly well - but he was to become desperately sick as the days at sea rolled and heaved on. The thirteen to fourteen week voyage from England was a nightmare trial of strength and patience. He could scarcely leave his bunk, and was mainly kept alive by beef tea patiently fed to him with a teaspoon. When the ship docked in January 1873, Elizabeth's praises were sung by the captain, who told friends that, not only had this remarkable woman constantly nursed a sick husband and cared for her little child, but had also found time to man the pumps when needed with the other able-bodied passengers.

Safe on land, J.T. began to recover his strength. An early job was supervising workmen road-making on Mt. Stuart - probably his first close look at the North Hobart area in which ten years later he was to settle and, in time, would become a major landholder. It is believed he obtained this job through his friend, Dr. Benjafield, who believed it would be best for his health if he worked in the open air. Another job was as an assistant in the leading colonial drapery establishment of Andrew Mather in Hobart - after all, he certainly had the qualifications. Tired of working for others, he started to look around for a place to establish a drapery business of his own, but the place was 'going to the dogs.'

He worked for a time for Andrew Mather but, hearing of a drapery business to let in the Midlands, he went there to find it was only a small cottage, and prospects were somewhat hopeless. In search of a centre that offered opportunities, Soundy also visited Parramatta (N.S.W.) and a centre near Ballarat (Vic.) but there strikers had smashed every pane of glass in the shop recommended to him, and he was not enamoured of the prospect. It was a stay of less than a year and, in that relatively short time, it is clear that J. T. Soundy found the Tasmanian climate able to effect something of a remarkable cure.

Apparently, he tackled the long voyage back to England with his little family without trepidation, and was soon back in the drapery business in his own shop at Dorchester, Dorsetshire, about thirty kilometres from Bicester. He and Elizabeth were strong members of the Baptist Church there. The shop obviously prospered - and still stands today - but the English climate slowly began its insidious attacks on Joshua's fragile constitution. In 1882 in London, he consulted a Dr. Kidd, who said he should leave before the English winter and try life again in Tasmania. Apparently, the doctor reinforced his advice with the doleful prediction that even so, he doubted if patient Soundy had more than twelve months to live. On that cheerful note, the family - by now boasting five children - boarded the Alexander Duthie for Australia. Clearly, this time they intended to stay for better or worse, and Hobart was the target. That Tasmania, second time round, was very much for the better, is now history.

On his arrival in Hobart on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 1883, and determined to settle, Soundy's first business move was to obtain a horse and trap, which cost him one guinea a year. He commenced hawking along the high roads and lanes of Hobart and the surrounding countryside, not only making a living but also steadily establishing his name and a reputation of fair and honest dealing. Within a year, he bought one of a pair of conjoined cottages in Elizabeth Street, North Hobart, beside where the Queen's Head Hotel now stands, establishing his first shop in the basement. He laid the foundation for his holdings with the purchase of a big paddock opposite his home for £200 - soon to build a solid, city style, three level stone edifice with shop and dwelling.

Following the use of the horse and trap, he later had a wagon built and fitted with specially

designed lock-up tin trunks so he could carry more drapery lines further afield and in greater security. His journeys took him as far as the Southern Midlands, and the Huon and Channel, and later when he established a home at Wedge Bay (Nubeena), he took his goods to the settlers on Tasman Peninsula, in the beginning, on foot.

On McCullough's arrival in 1883, his support for the preacher and the new work would be given unreservedly. His gifts which would be liberal and frequent, would be given unostentatiously. The Hobart Church and the Baptist Churches of the State would, in time, rejoice that God gave such a man to his work and service. There would not be any Baptist work or Baptist building in Tasmania in his time in which he would not have had some part financially.

He worked with a singleness of purpose, for he regarded himself as a servant of God in all that he did. Soon to make Soundy's acquaintance in 1883 was the experienced Baptist Church man and lay preacher from Victoria, Samuel B. Pitt.

#### **SAMUEL B. PITT**

Nineteen-year-old Samuel Pitt, destined to be the "Theological Column" of the new Hobart venture, arrived in the colony of Victoria in 1850, one year before the discovery of gold and eight weeks after landing in Adelaide, after ninety-nine days at sea. Born of godly parents - his mother was the daughter of a Baptist Minister who, for fifty years, was the pastor of the Baptist Church in Poole, Dorsetshire, England - on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1830, he had left England expecting that, in the new colony, he would have a better chance in life.

In Melbourne he attended the Collins Street Baptist Church. He was offered a grocery shop and a small cottage for the sum of £400 at the corner of Swanston and Collins Streets, on the site where the Manchester Unity Building now stands.

Years later, in Daylesford, he attended the Congregational Church. In this church, he first entered the pulpit through the sudden illness of the Minister. Soon after, a Baptist work was established in nearby Castlemaine and Pitt was urged to assist in the formation of a branch church in Daylesford. With the shortage of pulpit supplies, Pitt often preached.

In 1864, while living in Daylesford he married London-born Caroline Wilson, daughter of Joseph Wilson of South Yarra. Her parents were

two of the pioneers of the South Yarra Church. It was in their house in Chapel Street that the first service in connection with the church was held. Her father donated the land on which the building was erected and he became the first pastor for the six months preceding the Rev. D. Rees. Wilson was later ordained to the Christian ministry. Following their time in Daylesford, the Pitts moved on to Ballarat and attended the Dawson Street Church. The call to preach was soon given.

One Saturday afternoon the minister called: "Will you preach for me to-morrow?" Dear me! Never felt so small in all my experience. My incapacity to preach to an audience of five or six hundred people stood up before me like a great stone wall! My heart beat at a great rate. I felt as if, in some way, my spinal column was affected, and I stood before him almost unable to speak a word. What a trial this was! I asked that he would obtain the services of some good man who had a small congregation, and I would go and fill his place. His answer was, "I have thought of that, but no-one can come." My dear wife came to my aid. "Yes, you can do it," she said. Sometimes we are placed in circumstances of great difficulty, are we not? And this was a really difficult position, but what a grand thing a good wife is. "Yes, you can!" "Well then, dear, all I can say is, by the help of God, I will." And so it was brought about that in fear and trembling, and with the help of God, I preached my first sermon in Ballarat.

Pitt was soon to discover that that sermon was to be the first of many. He was soon asked to preach for the United Presbyterians, the Welsh Calvinists, the Congregationalists, and the Primitive Methodists. A new church building was erected in Ballarat at Camp Street in 1869, following a split with the Dawson Street congregation, and Pitt became Secretary of the new church. From 1871 to 1876, he attended to the ministry of the Word in that place. Throughout his days in Ballarat, he was employed as mining manager of one of the many gold mines. It was his task to attend to machinery measurements and supplies of steel, iron, oil and candles. And, on one day, the demands of the mine left little time to prepare for the Sunday School Anniversary speech that evening:

"I had been on a journey, and this old-fashioned tea meeting was to be held on the Tuesday evening and, by going eight miles out of my

way, on my way home, I should arrive there about tea time. My dear wife was to come with a great coach full from Ballarat. I had been very busy during the day, and a quantity of machinery had to be measured and correctly noted. Now it so happens that machinery measurements, steel, iron, oil and candles cannot by any possibility be made to mix well with studies for an after-tea speech on Sunday School matters, and so it came about that as my brain refused to admit the mixture, I arrived at Napoleon's looking, I suppose, something like an idiot. At any rate, I felt like one and, on my arrival, my dear wife met me and asked if I were prepared. I assured her I was ready for tea, and cream and fruit and any and every other blessing, but as regards anything I was prepared to utter, that was quite another matter, for my powers of utterance had left me and, in fact, I had nothing to utter. Oh, the misery of it all! I wonder if ever a poor wretch of a local preacher has had the same fearful experience? Here I was dry as a stick, and having to speak before a large audience in an hour's time and, in the meantime, to stuff with tea and cream and cakes and fruit, ad libitum. If you think that such troubles are bearable by any mortal man without his experiencing the misery of a spinal complaint or a front ache, all I can say is, you are mistaken, and so I had misery on misery. Tea over, somehow I went out into the paddock for fresh air, and - study.

"I came back just as ready as I went, but as fortune favors the brave, I saw an old lady sitting a few seats up from the door with a remarkably large bonnet. Yes, I hid behind it and, although I felt myself a little more comfortable, I felt far from confident. Presently, the chairman and speakers took the platform and, after prayer, the chairman said that all the speakers were on the platform excepting one, and if he were in the audience would he please come and take his seat. Some of the people turned around and smiled at me, and now the crisis had come, and I marched up to the platform with trembling limbs and fluttering heart. You may laugh - but I tell you it is a miserable condition of affairs when a man is expected to speak, and has nothing but misery in his soul, and in full view of a full debacle. I took my seat at the back of the platform, and tried to collect my thoughts, but they would not be collected, and so I could only wait and see what might turn up.

"The chairman then said there was on this occasion no need for him to make a speech, as he had five gentlemen at his back, all anxious to

exercise their gifts in that direction, but it was a singular thing, that their names all began with P. It is strange how grateful to one placed in my position, when relief comes, the whole outlook becomes brighter; fear and doubt suddenly gives way to faith and confidence. You have been praying on and on, and there is apparently no answer, but God works in His own way and in His own time. Now here I was made to feel that the answer had come, and I rejoiced and gave Him thanks. You will remember that this was a Sunday school anniversary, so these headings are peculiarly applicable, viz., punctuality, piety of teachers, prayer preparation, perspicuity, patience, perseverance, no pessimism, progress. My speech was rapturously received and I sat down amid great applause."

A time in Hamilton followed Ballarat, and then Hobart was their next place of residence from August, 1883:

"Hobart, in Tasmania, was my next place of residence, and here I have lived for nearly 35 years. Beautiful Hobart. It is full of rich memories, and full, too, of sympathetic friends. If you could suddenly plunge yourself from an up-to-date place like Melbourne, to a place one hundred years behind the times as Hobart was in 1883, you would then understand what a refreshing sensation is experienced. I really felt a delight in going back, say, to the old tinder-box and flint. It was like breathing God's fresh air after being in a close stuffy atmosphere."

Since they were to settle in Hobart with their five children, they set out to find a Baptist Church. Pitt and his son walked about the city but could not find one. On their walk, they found the Davey Street Congregational Church. Attending on the following Sunday morning, the family was shown into the pews marked for visitors. No one spoke to them and they returned home. That afternoon, a walk was taken in a different direction, with the result that the small chapel in Harrington Street was discovered and Pitt and his wife attended that evening. Only a few people were present and the service was conducted by Henry Hinsby.

In the following week, Pitt sought out Dr. Harry Benjafield, having a letter of introduction and Benjafield informed him of Soundy's recent arrival and of William Gibson's desire to commence an open communion cause in Hobart.

Prior to McCullough's arrival, the family worshipped in the Harrington Street chapel and

they informed the people there that they were open communion Baptists, that the Rev. Robert McCullough was expected and that they would be joining up with him when he arrived. Pitt's

eldest daughter, Clara, taught at the chapel Sunday school until the new church and Sunday school were formed.

**CHAPTER TWO  
LAYING FOUNDATIONS  
Robert McCullough (1883-1894)**

In the early eighties a very large fair, named "Ye Olde English Fayre", was held in the Exhibition Building. It occupied the whole of the structure, shops and stalls in the market being converted into the Old English shop styles. There were Maypole Dances, Punch and Judy Shows, and other side-show attractions of olden days, making it quite worthy of the name which was applied to it. The Fair was continued for a very long time, and was both lively and popular. On another occasion, there was an Industrial Exhibition held here, which was also a very marked success, exhibiting all the different branches of trades. The Exhibition Building also served for shelter to the inhabitants of Wapping when the creek in Collins Street overflowed its banks and flooded out their homes.

McCullough's work in Hobart began in this building from Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> October 1883. Dr. Benjafield, under the direction of William Gibson Senior, rented it from the Hobart Corporation at the weekly rental of fifty shillings. McCullough's preaching was thoroughly evangelical and his labours blessed and a gathering of Baptists who had been scattered about among other denominations began. Seats were constructed, made after the pattern of Dr. Benjafield's garden seats at 'The Willows'. Since they were not given permission to use the building during the working week, the mid-week services were held in the Berean School Room just off Upper Liverpool Street.

Late night shopping existed at that time on Saturday evenings and it was customary for the block formed by Liverpool, Murray, Collins and Elizabeth Streets to be the parade ground for all the people of Hobart. Around this block, McCullough proceeded with his handbills, introducing himself as a student of C.H. Spurgeon, reckoning that the public would be able to evaluate rightly from this statement the doctrine he preached. The handbills invited all to his services in the Exhibition Building the following day. On the Sunday afternoons, if there were any steamers in port, McCullough would hire a boat and take three or four members of the choir and hold a service on board. McCullough also exploited the opening made available by the Immigrants Service. When newcomers who planned to settle in Hobart arrived, they were taken from the ship to the Immigration Depot at the top of Argyle Street, to buildings erected on ground where the North Hobart Football Club now has its playing ground and stands. They

were accommodated there until they found suitable homes. McCullough would visit the Depot and invite them to the services.

On 25<sup>th</sup> January 1884, Richard T. Booth and his co-worker, T.W. Glover, commenced a Blue Ribbon Gospel Temperance Mission in the Exhibition Building. Such was the size of the mission that a 400 voice choir was sought. McCullough and his people were involved and the missionaries, Booth and Glover, were guests of Dr. & Mrs. Benjafield at 'The Willows'. Benjafield also presided over an influential committee meeting called for the purpose of arranging the preliminaries of the mission. Over the period of the mission 3,562 pledges and 5,497 ribbons were taken. One thousand attended a Farewell Tea arranged by Dr. Benjafield on 13<sup>th</sup> February, 1884. On the Sunday afternoon prior to the commencement of the mission, McCullough conducted usual services morning and evening while Benjafield in the afternoon lectured on "Our Faces."

#### **FORMATION OF THE CHURCH**

On Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1884, the formation of the church took place in the dining room of Dr. Benjafield's house. Those present were: Rev. Robert McCullough and his wife, Eva, Dr. Harry & Mrs. Amelia Benjafield, Joshua Tovell Soundy and his wife, Elizabeth, Jukes, William Leary and his wife, Alice, Miss Greenwood, Mrs. Reid, Seabrook and his wife, Samuel Bulgin Pitt and his wife, Caroline, Samuel B. Pitt junior, Quintin and his wife and Miss Potter. They all presented their credentials and, after seeking the divine direction and blessing, those present joined hands. The hymn "Blest be the tie that binds" was sung and the church was formed. Hodgman and his wife and Miss Clara Pitt had asked that, although unable to be present, they might be admitted as foundation members. This request was acceded to. McCullough was chosen to be the first Pastor of the church and Dr. Benjafield, J.T. Soundy and S.B. Pitt were appointed first deacons. S.B. Pitt was chosen to be the first Secretary and Dr. Benjafield the Treasurer.

Open communion was stressed in the Constitution and Rules of the Hobart Baptist Church: "We shall always welcome to the Lord's Table the members of other Christian Churches, and all persons of whose Christianity we are satisfied.

Shortly afterwards, in the Exhibition Building, the first baptismal service was held, the baptistry being a zinc-lined carriage case which had been sent or brought out from England by A.G. Humby, a carriage builder, who, with his wife, had recently arrived and had joined the church. His carriage works were at the lower end of Macquarie Street. A stepladder was used for the candidates to get in and out. The baptistry was later transferred and built in below the platform in the school room.

#### **PURCHASE OF LAND**

About this time, William Gibson senior wrote to say that it was quite time to secure a suitable site for a building and asked that the church make enquiries and send him a plan showing the location, and the price for which it could be purchased. This was done and the site on which the Tabernacle now stands was selected as suitable.

In the early years of the colony, the land was owned by none other than the first known Baptist in Van Diemen's Land, Jeremiah Ware. It was part of a large tract of land which he held at the time. In the 1850s, the site contained two houses and a timber yard and was owned by Samuel Crisp. He lived in one of the houses. William Benjamin Crisp lived in the other and ran the timber yard. Crisp's Mill was situated in Wapping. The present owner of the land at the top of Elizabeth Street was Thomas Mather and his price was £950.

After a short time, a characteristic answer was received from Gibson in reply to the church's letter. He had laid the matter before the Lord, and the answer was that the church was to give £900 for the land and buildings thereon. He enclosed a cheque for £950, the other £50 to be used for the foundations of the school room to be erected. Mather however declined to take less than £950 but would give the £50 for the purpose stated by Gibson. To this arrangement Gibson assented, and the land was purchased. In this instance and in many other ways, the generosity of Gibson was being seen. He had already erected, at his own cost, the Tabernacle in Launceston, had previously erected churches at Perth, Longford and Deloraine, had paid the passages of students from the Pastor's College, London, to fill the pulpits and, in numberless ways, had shown himself to be one who nobly devoted his wealth and energies to the spread of the gospel in the land he loved so well. This and the generosity then shown, was as was afterwards seen to be followed by other princely donations, both to the Hobart Tabernacle and to the Baptist Union of Tasmania, which was formed on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1884.

There stood one dwelling well back on the block on the land purchased in Elizabeth Street. It consisted of five rooms, pantry and flagged porch on the ground floor, with a verandah on two sides and complete with two good-sized attic rooms. Outbuildings comprised a washroom-bathroom, detached toilet, shed and fowl shed.

At first, McCullough occupied the house but later he rented out another house so that the front two rooms could be assigned to the Sunday school and the balance occupied by a caretaker.

#### **EVICION FROM THE EXHIBITION BUILDING**

Other bad feelings brought about the need to find some other place to conduct divine worship. It first surfaced some time after the Blue Ribbon Gospel Temperance Mission. At a meeting of the various denominations held to make arrangements for a mission to be undertaken by Mrs. Hampson of New Zealand, a proposition was made that the services should be held in the Exhibition Building. One gentleman stated that he could inform the meeting that the building was actually used as a Baptist Church!! And when the question of the accommodation of Mrs. Hampson was considered, opposition was raised to the acceptance of Dr. Benjafield's offer to provide such accommodation gratuitously on the ground that he was a Baptist! To such an extent was this unfriendly spirit manifested that two of the ministers to whom tickets for a tea meeting had been presented, personally returned them to the Secretary, with the remark that they were sure that a mistake had been made in supplying them.

Then the Town Clerk informed the Baptists that the quarterly rent of the Exhibition building, already £2, would be almost doubled in the next quarter.

Not long after, when the Mayor wanted the use of the building for a Juvenile Ball, the church seats were just bundled into the street. In anger, some (possibly the aldermen) had said, "This is none other than a Baptist Church!" The Sunday morning congregation arrived to find their pews piled up on the pavement and the doors locked. The seats had to be carted away and stored. St. John's Presbyterian Church in Macquarie Street at this time was closed, and an application to the trustees for the temporary use of the building was refused and so, for their first Sunday out of the Exhibition Building, they had nowhere to meet. A similar request made for the use of the Temperance Alliance rooms in Macquarie Street was at first refused, but was ultimately granted for a few Sundays.

#### **THE TEMPORARY TABERNACLE**

With many difficulties to be overcome, the immediate want of a building in which to meet

was a dire necessity. Dr. Benjafield thought that a temporary edifice could be erected at a small cost to meet requirements until a school room could be built. Accordingly, a structure was built of such a character that it was facetiously called a "shedifice" by one minister who spoke at one of their public meetings. The building was almost indescribable. It was a piece of patchwork from floor to roof. It had sawdust floors, duckboards laid down the aisle, walls of rough timber, ragged tarpaulins and old iron with, here and there, a wisp of straw to keep the wind out. There were several windows. The walls inside were unlined, merely decorated with texts made by different members and hung from the framing. A platform at the western end supported both preacher and choir. Benjafield lent the timber used for the platform, with the stipulation that no nails were to be used in it, as it had been acquired for another purpose. The preacher entered at the western end through a door covered by a curtain. Under the platform was Humby's baptistry.

When the wind was high, the iron and tin rattled so much that the preacher's voice was often drowned; and when the rain descended, the roof was so uncertain that ladies had been known to sit, during the service, with their sunshades and umbrellas up. At night, the building was illumined with candles stuck between nails on crossed pieces of timber hung from the roof in different parts of the building. The structure stood at the front of the property where the Tabernacle now stands.

The Church had sent a letter to the Council asking for permission to erect this temporary structure. As there had been no time to wait for the next Council meeting, the Town Clerk, Shields, who thought there would not be much difficulty with the matter, as the building would not be in the fire district, sought and obtained permission for the Baptists to proceed. But, because of some private complaints, the Council stepped in. Services were to begin in the temporary Tabernacle (as its adherents called it) on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1884 but, on the serving of notice on the preceding Friday at 8 p.m. that the Building Act had been infringed, work immediately ceased on the uncompleted building. £70 or £80 had been expended on the structure which had only so far taken six days to erect. On the Saturday, the following advertisement appeared in the Mercury:

Being TURNED OUT of the Exhibition Building, our things put in the street, and now being STOPPED with our new building, after obtaining permission to build, we have NO SERVICE on SUNDAY.

#### **R. McCULLOUGH**

Despite the threat of the Council, the temporary building was completed and occupied for five months. Wrote the approving northern church paper, The Pioneer:

Brother McCullough preaches in a building which is certainly a curiosity in this colony. We have been in bush chapels, but never one to equal this for cold, damp, or rough appearance. On a warm evening, there is a good congregation, but when it rains the people are huddled together in the centre to escape the wet. Under such circumstances great success could hardly be expected. Mr. Spurgeon says, "You cannot get souls saved where there is no fresh air," and we suppose the same might be said where there is too much air. But the Lord has been blessing, and a great interest is manifested in the meetings. As the weather improves, the rude building will be more suitable.

The Sunday school commenced during the occupancy of the Exhibition Building with four teachers and thirty pupils. Following eviction, the school met in the old Trinity Hill School until the temporary Tabernacle was ready. North Hobart in 1884 was rather thickly populated, mostly with a poorer class of people, and somewhat destitute of religious privileges. The children gathered were, for the most part, of mean and miserable appearance and proved an unruly lot at first. A.G. Humby was the first Superintendent of the School. By the end of its first year, the School had thirteen teachers and 142 pupils.

#### **FORMATION OF THE BAPTIST UNION OF TASMANIA**

Just days before eviction from the Exhibition Building, McCullough and Benjafield took part in the formation of the Baptist Union of Tasmania in Launceston on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1884. There had been such growth in the Baptist cause in Tasmania by this time that it was felt desirable to form the churches of the colony into an association. Those present in the vestry of the New Tabernacle in Cimitiere Street were: Pastors R. Williamson (Perth) R. McCullough and E. Tucker (Hobart), H. Wood (Longford), E. Vaughan (Deloraine), A. Bird and W. White (Launceston); also Messrs. W. Gibson, senior and junior, Dr. H. Benjafield, T.W. Hortle, A. Propsting, A.C.H. Hodgeman, W. Stokes, R. Marshall and Rev. Thomas Spurgeon of Auckland, New Zealand. Pastors Wood, Vaughan and Bird were men brought out by Gibson from Spurgeon's College. The Rev. E. Tucker had arrived in Hobart in January 1884 for the purpose of organizing the Blue Ribbon Temperance Mission and had associated himself with the Harrington Street chapel. The Rev. William White was Pastor of the York Street chapel, Dowling's church. Thomas Spurgeon, who was now Pastor of the Auckland

Baptist Tabernacle, was on another visit to Tasmania.

It is obvious from the report of the conference that much thought and preparation had been entered into before this meeting was held, for the representatives quickly decided to form such a Union consisting of the existing eight churches and their Pastors.

The affairs of the Union were to be administered by a President, a Vice-President, a Treasurer and a Secretary a Council of six, with the whole of the officers to be elected annually by the Assembly. At the election of officers, William Gibson of Native Point was elected the Baptist Union of Tasmania's first President.

As President, Gibson presided over its inaugural meeting in which its aims and objectives were formulated. The first aim was to promote the unity, edification and prosperity of the Baptist churches of Tasmania. Secondly, to spread the gospel throughout Tasmania by promoting evangelistic work, by establishing churches of baptized believers and by erecting suitable buildings. The third object of the association was the training of young men approved by the Council for the Christian ministry. Only by such training could the infant Union ensure that it would not face the situation that confronted the Rev. Henry Dowling at the end of his career when no worthy successor could be found. Experience had shown Gibson the absolute necessity of a trained clergy to ensure continuity of all that he had commenced.

### **THE SCHOOL ROOM**

On Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1884, the church inserted a notice in the Mercury:

The Baptist Tabernacle, Elizabeth Street. "Anyone who has any regard for the fitness of things will rejoice to learn that this unsightly "shedifice" is soon to be removed to give place to a better structure, the foundation stone of which will be laid on Tuesday afternoon next at four o'clock. The ceremony will be followed by a tea and public meeting. A special train is being arranged for to bring friends and ministers from the North, and a large and successful meeting is anticipated."

The foundation stone of the new school room was laid on 5<sup>th</sup> November, 1884, in the presence of 150 spectators. The building, to be fifty feet by forty feet with a height of fourteen feet, would accommodate about 400 persons and cost about £400. The Secretary, Samuel B Pitt, placed under the stone a document containing the names of the officers and the trustees of the church and a short history of the church. Mrs. Benjafield declared the stone well and truly laid and she was presented with a mallet and silver

trowel in recognition of the event. Addresses were given and a collection taken on the stone amounted to £105 inclusive of a cheque for £50 from Mary Ann Gibson, who had been asked to lay the foundation stone but who, being unable to attend, had sent the cheque instead.

Four months later, on 21<sup>st</sup> March, 1885, another notice appeared in the Mercury:

### **Hobart Tabernacle Schoolroom**

Those who complained of the temporary Tabernacle in Elizabeth St., as an eyesore, will be pleased with the neat edifice that is now almost completed on the ground. As the beginning of a large and costly building in contemplation the Baptists are so far to be congratulated. The present structure is only intended for a school room at a future date, but it is really very suitable for a place of worship for some time to come. The interior is beautifully furnished. The principals are stained a dark red beneath a white ceiling, the front of the platform and the dado are of varnished blackwood and the porch is made of framed work with panels of Huon pine. Mr. J. Maddison is the contractor for the masonry and Messrs. Butler and Gooding for the carpenters' work. The workmanship is highly creditable to them. The opening services will be held tomorrow and a tea-meeting on Monday, March 23. The stone for the building was obtained from the quarry on Dr. Benjafield's property on Mt. Stuart Road.

As announced, the inaugural tea and public meeting was held. 150 people turned up to tea in the new building and about 300 attended the meeting afterwards at which Dr. Benjafield presided. It was stated that the Gibsons, Senior and Junior, had each given donations of £450 and that, with the money in hand, there was £400 to pay off. William Gibson Senior of Native Point himself was present. The temporary Tabernacle had been demolished four weeks earlier and the services subsequently held for the intervening period in the old Harrington Street chapel. McCullough preached.

### **GERMAN BAPTISTS**

The demise of the Particular Baptist work in Harrington Street - in March 1886 the manse and school room were rented out and in the following September the chapel itself was rented out - coupled with the growth and vitality of the new work in Elizabeth Street, attracted the attention of the German Baptists who had purchased land in Glenorchy and had, for baptisms, previously combined with the Particulars. They made application to become a branch church and on 30<sup>th</sup> July, 1885, they were accepted as such on six conditions. By 1889, a number of their members had fallen into Seventh Day Adventism.

## THE TABERNACLE

Following the occupancy of the School Room, the membership increased steadily and it soon became overcrowded and uncomfortable. It was considered desirable by some to erect a building of worship on the land reserved for that purpose. Other members were of a different mind saying to one another, "When we move into the larger building will we be as much at home in it as we are in this? It will be too big and we won't be able to get to one another so easily." The number of members on the roll at this time was forty-nine, showing an increase of twenty-seven since the commencement of the church. The great question occupying the minds of the members was that of funds. Generally speaking, the congregation was not composed of persons of means.

Prayerfully considering the matter, the deacons advised the church that William Gibson of Native Point should be consulted with reference to it, especially as he had frequently expressed a wish that a building should be erected that should be capable of seating a large congregation, and be more in keeping with the requirements of the church and people. It was therefore decided that McCullough, Soundy and Pitt should call on him at his residence, and confer with him on this important matter. At this interview, no promise was made by Gibson as to the amount he would contribute towards the cost of erection, but he suggested that plans for a suitable building should be obtained and submitted to him. He asked that the church exercise implicit confidence in God and prayerfully commit the affairs of the church to Him.

Following this, Dr. Benjafield obtained from the Rev. Pynell, then Pastor of the Baptist Church, Stockport, England, the plans of that building. It was the newer class of Baptist Church building in England. It was determined, before proceeding further, to submit these plans to an architect, to ascertain if they could be adapted to the site. George Fagg was chosen and ultimately the plans of the building as it now stands were submitted to Gibson. After waiting some weeks, Gibson returned the plans, intimated his approval and enclosed a cheque for £1000 as his contribution to the building fund! This princely donation was accompanied by a letter in which Gibson quaintly remarked that "the money would not build a palace but it would build something better than a barn." This gift was shortly followed by one of the same amount from his son, William Gibson of Scone. This was in keeping with his son's earlier promise to match pound for pound the giving of his father.

The tenders were called on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 1886. For some reason, not accounted for in any records, fresh tenders for revised drawings were

called for by George Fagg, returnable by 12<sup>th</sup> July, 1887. Stabb Brothers, Builders, were awarded the contract, but the whole of the work was not included in his contract. The gallery, designed to seat 300, the seating, the baptistry, and other works were not provided for, but provision was made for the supports of the gallery piers to be built so that the gallery could be erected without great preparatory work at a given time. The foundation stone was laid on 5<sup>th</sup> October, 1887, in the presence of about 300 people. Pitt placed a bottle in position underneath the stone containing a copy of the "Day Star", "The Mercury" and "Tasmanian News", and a parchment scroll.

McCullough said it was his pleasing duty to present a silver trowel to Mary Ann Gibson of Native Point, who had been kind enough to undertake the duties of declaring the memorial stone duly laid. He referred in eulogistic terms to the great assistance the Gibsons had rendered to the Baptist denomination throughout Tasmania. He also presented her with an elegantly finished mallet, on behalf of the building contractors.

She then performed the usual ceremony and said, "I pronounce this memorial stone of the Hobart Tabernacle well and truly laid. We raise the building for the worship of our God, for the preaching of the everlasting Gospel, for the conversion of sinners, and the building up of the Lord's people. We may raise the edifice, but God alone can build the Church."

Among the many speakers was Pastor Harry Wood of Launceston, who exhorted the Hobart Baptists to encourage their pastor all they could, and not to do as many did, pray, "Oh Lord, keep our minister humble, and we'll keep him poor." A large amount was collected towards the building fund including a cheque from the cautious Mary Ann Gibson. The trip to Hobart had necessitated a long train journey for this seventy-eight year old lady. It was told that, as the train neared a long, dark tunnel, she drew from her bag a candle, which she lit. After emerging from the tunnel she blew out the candle and replaced it in her bag saying to her amused fellow passengers: "We never know with whom we may be travelling these days." A tea and public meeting followed the laying ceremony. "This ornament to the City," erected at considerable cost, was finally opened for public worship on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 1889. The guest preacher for the day was the Rev. Samuel Chapman of the Collins Street Baptist Church, Melbourne. Services at both morning and evening worship were filled to capacity.

The Mercury reported that all that had been anticipated of the perfect adaptability of its new building as a place of worship was amply fulfilled at the opening services. "Designed on perfect architectural lines, chastely decorated, lofty, well

lighted, comfortably seated and with specially good acoustic properties, the interior is all that a place of worship should be, the only defect being in the construction of the platform upon which the Minister is at present, 'cribbed, cabined, and confined.' Externally the edifice forms a striking addition to the public buildings of the city, and those who strove and worked so zealously for its erection may, alike with the architect and the builders find supreme satisfaction in the result achieved."

David Williams Junior, builder, constructed the seating. The organ was the gift of Mr. Henley, grocer of Hobart. The Secretary, S.B. Pitt, donated the pulpit Bible. The beautifully moulded capitals on the two pillars, one on each side of the pulpit, were the gift of the architect, George Fagg. J.T. Soundy paid for the iron railing, gates and gas pillars in the front of the church building. Years later, no less an authority than the Encyclopaedia Britannica said that the building was the finest classical facade in the southern hemisphere. It now became necessary to pay off the overdraft at the bank and for this purpose a sum of £1200 was borrowed from the stipend fund of the Union.

#### **T.A. DOSSETOR**

That year the church suffered great loss through the sudden and unexpected death of T.A. Dossetor on 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 1889, aged forty-five.

When McCullough came first to Hobart, Dossetor attended the services and, from that time to his death, continued a most earnest worker in the church. In the days when the Baptists were despised and laughed at, he was not ashamed to be among them. He and his dear wife were baptized in the temporary building so well remembered as the subject of ridicule. He often worked there till a very late hour on Saturday night to have the place fit for people to sit in on Sunday morning, and became so attached to the old place that he used to express in after days a regret at having left it. Connected with the Sunday school from the beginning he was, in course of time, appointed Superintendent, a position which he filled with such enthusiasm that the school prospered marvellously. He conducted a Band of Hope, was Secretary of the Tract Society, the choir chose him for their leader and, in fact, nothing seemed to go on unless Dossetor had a hand in it.

His summons came suddenly. Though feeling unwell, he attended school on Sunday morning 28<sup>th</sup> July. He became worse during the service in the Tabernacle, and had to go home. On the following Saturday, he was dead. From the first day of his illness, he had evidently made up his mind that the end was drawing near. On Friday night, he had his family and friends gathered

around him to say farewell. His whole talk was about glory. "It's rising" he almost shouted, "It's rising, the Sun of righteousness is rising with healing in his wings!" He exhorted his children and his mother to trust in Jesus that they might come after him. "I'm glad I'm going," he said, "but sorry for her," pointing to his wife who sat weeping by his side. Thus he continued for a long time pouring forth his heart. "Didn't the glory come over me tonight," he remarked, at a later hour, "It came upon me like a perspiration." He became delirious through the night and, without returning to consciousness, he passed away on Saturday afternoon.

There were few dry eyes in the Tabernacle the next day. The anniversary services in connection with the Sunday school were celebrated. It was considered that the Superintendent would not have wished them postponed. In the evening the platform was draped in black. The day was one of sorrow to all.

At the cemetery McCullough spoke with choking utterance of his own personal loss. The weeping of the assembly showed how many had the same feeling of loss. The service was closed by the singing of the hymn, "Oh, think of the home over there."

#### **VISITING MISSIONERS AND MISSIONARIES**

Over these years, meeting in the School Room and the Tabernacle, the church hosted various visiting missioners and missionaries. In June 1886, Dr. Guinness paid a second visit to Hobart in twelve months preaching in the Town Hall and the Baptist School Room. Such were the crowds that, had it not been for the kind assistance of Dr. Benjafield, hundreds, who afterwards were stowed in the various corners, would have been turned away.

Mateer and Parker held a week of special services in the School Room during the month of April 1887. Parker sang the Gospel while Mateer preached it plainly and pointedly.

George Muller, in January 1888, began a series of meetings of a deeply spiritual nature in Hobart commencing his mission in the School Room. Many Christians were ignorant of Muller's life and work and consequently were little interested in an old gentleman of eighty-three years preaching the Gospel. The German Baptists of Bismarck attended.

Henry Varley, the English evangelist, visited during March 1888 and the church booked the Town Hall for him. He showed some marks of age, but had lost none of his enthusiasm. He visited again in March 1891.

Miss Ellen Arnold, Australian Baptist's first overseas missionary, was on furlough from India

in 1885 and visited the church while it met in the temporary Tabernacle on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 1885. Miss Arnold sought to enlist greater interest in missionary work. The Tabernacle was full seven years later when she gave an address on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 1892.

On his return from a trip from England in February 1885, the Rev. Thomas Spurgeon gave various lectures on "John Ploughman," the well-known work of his father. It was noted that Spurgeon had improved in style. The proceeds from one evening at the Exhibition Building were devoted to the building fund of the Tabernacle. On arrival in Auckland he was to open his new Tabernacle.

### **JOHN CHAMBERLAIN**

Following the opening of the Tabernacle, the church said farewell to the first one who went from its membership into the ministry. On 13<sup>th</sup> April, 1890, John Chamberlain commenced his ministry at Latrobe.

Chamberlain had arrived in Hobart as a young man from the Midland Counties of England and first lectured in the School Room in July 1887. He proved a popular lecturer, well liked by the Mercury, and the subject of his lectures included, "The Defeat of the Spanish Armada and the Protestant Revolution in 1688," "The Old Flag and those who fought under it" and "John Bunyan." He was baptized on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 1888. He was a well-educated man and at times preached instead of McCullough. On 19<sup>th</sup> September, 1888, he commenced a mission at Sandy Bay under the Pastor and the church gave thought to the erection of a building there but the work lapsed after Chamberlain's removal to Latrobe. In June 1892, he looked after both the Latrobe and Devonport Churches. The same year he became Secretary of the Baptist Union of Tasmania and co-editor of the Tasmanian Baptist monthly, the "Day Star." He relinquished the work at Latrobe in 1894.

### **McCULLOUGH'S RESIGNATION AND RECALL**

At a special church meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> October, 1890, a letter was read from McCullough who was that year President of the Baptist Union of Tasmania:

"Dear Brethren,

I am sorry to have to inform you that I shall cease to be your Pastor in six weeks from this date. Your surprise at my taking this step cannot be greater than my own. It has been brought before me that I do not work hard enough, and that it is through me that there is not more success in the Church, and further, that my wife both by her dress and behaviour gives general dissatisfaction in the church and is looked upon as a hindrance

to the work. As I do not know to what extent these feelings may prevail, there is no other course open to me as an honourable man, than to tender my resignation.

"The Hobart Church is dear to my heart - the Lord only knows how dear. I have given a few of the best years of my life for it, and now I only separate myself because I am led to believe that it will be better without me.

"I have no other door open for me at present and do not know where I shall be going, so it cannot be said I am influenced by offers from other quarters.

"I pray that God may bless you abundantly and guide you as to your future. Kindly remember me in your prayers. All this has come so suddenly that it has been almost too much for me. I remain, Yours in Christian love."

In a speech of considerable length, one member defended McCullough and moved the following resolution: "That this meeting now assembled sincerely sympathizes with the pastor and urges him to reconsider his resignation." This motion was seconded and many members spoke specially in its favour. At that juncture, Dr. Benjafield stated that he was the writer of the letter to the Pastor containing the allegation referred to in the letter of resignation. After attempting to justify his position, the resolution was put to the meeting and carried by a majority of 27 to 2. Dr. Benjafield then handed in a letter resigning his position on the diaconate. This was accepted, and a vote of censure on him was carried for his action in making charges against the pastor and his wife in a letter received from him by the pastor.

At the next meeting McCullough, withdrew his resignation and said he trusted that the Holy Spirit would make Himself felt in such power that the Church would be quickened to fresh energy and the love of Christ.

### **DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY**

In the years following this serious misunderstanding, the church had many lows which finally resulted in McCullough's resignation.

In respect of Dr. Benjafield, he absented himself from the services and was finally removed from membership. A few years later, the church repented of this drastic action and restored him to membership but by now he had lost interest in the work and would have probably been among those members who were dismissed to form the Moonah Church had he not died on 13<sup>th</sup> June, 1917.

As early as 1890, the church was having difficulty meeting the interest on the debt of £1200. The following year expenditure exceeded income and

the church got into arrears during the epidemic and money panics. The decrease in income continued and the congregations were reducing in size. This decrease in numbers was attributed, in part, to the advent of new men in other churches and also by a very great depression in commercial circles.

1893 was the first year that the church had been without a net increase in membership. This was attributed partly to a more accurate revision of the roll. Eleven new members were received. This was not considered satisfactory.

1893 was the year of the disastrous bank failures. Businesses were in difficulty. The Church Secretary, S.B. Pitt, because of certain irregularities and inaccuracies in his business, resigned at the commencement of the year from positions of Secretary and deacon. At the following members meeting, he was suspended from membership for three months. S.T. Burleigh took his place as Secretary with J.T. Soundy continuing as Treasurer. Pitt was restored to membership in August, but it would be twelve years before he would resume his former position as Secretary.

The Pastor's report, given in January 1894, spoke of a very disappointing year as far as the work was concerned. The financial position was getting worse - the debt on the property was considerable. Only three new members had been added to the roll for the whole year.

Over these difficult years, the church on the whole was faithful to McCullough and, while some could not entirely approve of his management, the majority honoured him for his personal worth and for his fearless propagation of the Gospel truth.

#### **McCULLOUGH'S FINAL RESIGNATION**

The church meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 1894, received a letter from McCullough resigning his position as Pastor of the church, and stating how sorry he was to be obliged to leave the work here but, as the finances were getting lower and lower, there was nothing left for him but to release the church of his services.

After fully discussing the state of the finances, and not being able to devise any means whereby they could be improved, the following resolution was unanimously carried: - "That the church, having received the resignation of its Pastor, profoundly regrets the circumstances leading to it, accepts the same with the greatest sorrow, and trusts that the way may be opened up for him to enter on a career of usefulness and success in some other part of the Lord's vineyard."

This "Gentle Shepherd" (The Mercury) preached his farewell sermons on 11<sup>th</sup> March to the congregation he had cared for for over ten years. In his time, 180 names had been added to the roll. He had been elected twice as President of the Union of Baptist Churches. Throughout the whole nine years of the life of the monthly Baptist paper, "The Day Star", he had been so ably its editor that the question of replacing him had never risen - "he was to the manner born." This "Citizen of sterling worth" had been on the board of the Y.M.C.A., the committee of the City Mission and prominent in temperance work.

Days following the farewell sermons, a large number of people assembled on the wharf to bid farewell to McCullough, his wife and family. There was much hearty handshaking and many affecting farewells, not unmixed with tears, at the severance of a long continued bond of friendship. As the S.S. "Ophir" left the wharf, the company sang part of the hymn "God be with you till we meet again," and amid long continued waving of hats and handkerchiefs, the faithful Pastor and his Hobart flock were severed in body, though not in spirit, with many prayers that he may be abundantly blessed to the people to whom he has gone to minister.

A call had come from Parkside (South Australia) where he laboured for nine years, and then he was pastor in turn at Morphett Vale, Mitcham, Burnie (Tasmania) for three years, Grange (South Australia) for seven years and seven years at Mt. Barker where he spent his final days.

In all, he ministered for thirty-six years in South Australia. He could have been met on the rough country road, twelve kilometers out, pedalling away on his push-bike, to visit a member of his flock. His ministry was now of a quieter kind. He took his part in Union affairs, became editor of the South Australian Baptist and Truth and Progress, the former almost as soon as he arrived in the State and, with some intervals, editing or assisting. He was President of the Foreign Mission for eighteen months, President of the Baptist Union and Secretary of the Baptist Union for four years. His editorial notes from South Australia, published every week in the Australian Baptist, were read with much interest. Robert McCullough died on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1931. He had been knocked down by a motor car while engaged in pastoral visitation. His ministerial service, extending over half a century, was seen as "rich and fruitful to a high degree, and beyond human evaluation." In Hobart he had laid a solid and true foundation.

## CHAPTER THREE

### STRONG BEGINNINGS

#### James Blaikie (1897-1906)

Following McCullough's leaving for South Australia in March, 1894, the church Bill passed through a very trying season. The funds remained low - trade depressed - and for a considerable time the pulpit was supplied by local preachers. On giving its review on the church for 1894 year, The Mercury said, "The only event of any moment during the year for the Baptist Church has been the departure of the Rev. R. McCullough for S.A."

#### **REV. MORISON CUMMING**

In November of 1894, the church extended a call to the Rev. Morison Cumming who was in South Australia on a visit from England. After negotiations involving the stipend, he accepted the invitation - "I have felt greatly drawn to the work at Hobart, and trust there is set before me an open door which no man shall shut. May the Master help me to rise to the greatness of the opportunity". He immediately returned to England to fetch his family and was expected in Hobart in the New Year.

Cumming was born in South Australia in 1851, of Scottish parents. He received his early education at Glasgow under Dr. Morison, and was intended to follow in his father's footsteps as an architect but his early conversion in North Adelaide led to his taking a deep interest in preaching, and he eventually became student secretary to the Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon at Pastor's College.

His first pastorate was at the London Association Church at New Barnet, which he entered upon in 1877. Three years later, he became pastor at Bury St. Edmunds in Garland Street Church. In fourteen years vigorous ministry, Cumming raised the membership of his church to 550.

Cumming, a very fine and good looking man, received a tremendous welcome and commenced his ministry in Hobart on 25<sup>th</sup> February. A good preacher and one sound in doctrine - 'not one who belonged to the new school on doubting theology' - he was seen by The Mercury as 'a Pastor up to date.' His eloquent opening address received an enthusiastic applause. He assured the other ministers of churches present that he wished to be an earnest comrade in arms with them. He

was proud of being a colonial born, and rejoiced to be called to minister among a colonial people. It was a painful wrench to say "good-bye" to the old country after so many years in it but both he and his wife could make a home wherever he found loving hearts, or wherever was planted Christ's flag. He came as their pastor and not as a priest - all were priests who were believers. He trusted he should prove their friend as well as their pastor, being wishful to share in their sorrows as well as in their joys. The members of the Church and congregation, however, should remember that the pastor and deacons were not omniscient, or knew without being informed that sickness was in their houses. On the spiritual side, he hoped to be able to lead them. His main business was to preach and cling to the truth, and to what Rowland Hill called "the three R's." He did not believe in divorcing the secular from the sacred. He came to them also as a prophet and a teacher, believing in the Holy Ghost and the golden days to come. He was glad as a colonial to come to minister in this colony. It was somewhat depressed at present, commercially, but they must not be discouraged on that account and think that God had forgotten them. He pleaded with them to look at the bright side of things, for this was the right side.

And it was said that, not only did they have a good pastor, but also a good pastor's wife. In June, she formed The Women's Guild with a foundation membership of forty. Its special object was that of reaching women of all classes and conditions. Help was to be given to many mothers in the neighbourhood. Lectures included 'The Cost of Prayer,' 'Home' and 'Food,' the last delivered by Dr. Benjafield.

Cumming entered the work but did not seem to settle down. He resigned within seven months, on 14<sup>th</sup> October. He had decided to return to England - he was compelled to do so with deep regret. The present trying conditions in the colony made him feel that he must give place to a man of few responsibilities. The Guild regretted very much the loss of its President and founder and the church, for its part, wished Cumming and his devoted wife and family every good wish. Relations had been of a very hopeful character.

The real reasons for his leave are unknown. Although S.B. Pitt was soon to record: "We could almost wish that a veil could be drawn over this part of our history. Mr. Cummings' ministry only lasted about six months when he found it to be his duty to resign the pastorate, and left for England. Mention must however be made of this fact, viz., that the Church faithfully fulfilled all its obligations to the departing minister, and whatever were his reasons for his actions, no blame could be attached to the members of the Church." - one must consider his subsequent ministry on his return to England. There he accepted the charge of the Baptist church at Honor Oak, and took a prominent part in public life there. He became President of the Camberwell, Peckham and Dulwich Free Church Council, and after nearly ten years at Honor Oak he transferred his ministrations to Priory Street Church, York, for a stipulated term of one year.

He went to College Street, Northampton, as successor to the Rev. Philip H. Smith, in October 1909, and remained there for ten years. Then he accepted a call to the pastorate at Bushey, Walford, where he did good work until stricken with an illness. He partially recovered, and then went to live at Felixstowe where he died, aged seventy-two.

#### **REV. JAMES BALL**

During portion of the time that Cumming was bringing out his family to Hobart, the Rev. James Ball, an evangelist with the Evangelism Society of London, had arrived from England for the benefit of his health and preached acceptably for five weeks in the pulpit of the Hobart Tabernacle. Not long after, he returned to England to marry, and there received the church's invitation to be its pastor. He accepted the call in February 1896 and left in 'Oruba' in March and was expected in May. He married two or three weeks prior to their departure. On the way out, illness overtook him and he died on 6<sup>th</sup> June and was buried at sea in the waters of the Great Australian Bight. The church's anticipation of a bright future was dashed to pieces a second time. His wife arrived in Hobart, was baptized and for some time occupied the leadership of the men's Bible class. On her return to England, she remarried.

#### **ELIZABETH (LILY) SOUNDY**

In December 1895, the Tasmanian Missionary Society, which had been formed on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 1891, received an application for field service from Miss Lily Soundy, the elder daughter of J.T. Soundy. Lily had joined the church following baptism in 1891 during the ministry of McCullough. Present at her farewell to the Indian field on 5<sup>th</sup> September, 1896, were five New Zealand missionaries also bound for India. Lily's first work was in Darjeeling with Tasmanian,

Miss Lucie Keally. The South Australian Baptist Society was in charge of the work.

Lucie Keally returned on furlough, and visited Tasmania early in 1897. At the annual meetings of the Union held in Hobart in April of that year, it was planned to take up the district of Seraj-gunge, a subdivision of the Pubna District in Eastern Bengal, India, with an area of 957 square miles, and a population of 761,000. If the Tasmanian Society took up the work, their missionaries would be the only missionaries in the whole district. Lucie Keally (who was shortly to be married to E.T. Thompson) expressed the willingness of herself and Thompson to undertake the work and to trust God for the needed funds.

William Gibson of Native Point was in attendance and was opposed to the Tasmanian Society taking over the responsibility of Seraj-gunge, because he did not believe that the Tasmanian Baptists were strong enough to support it. Mary Ann Gibson was heartily in accord with the Tasmanians doing so. After the resolution had been proposed and seconded, Gibson rose to oppose it; his good wife said, "William, if you oppose this, God will visit you," and she took hold of the tails of his frock coat and pulled him down and literally held him to the seat until the motion was carried. Gibson lived to thank God that he had not opposed the resolution and, with his good wife, gave liberally to the support of the mission.

The Thompsons landed in Seraj-gunge in September 1897. Lily joined them. Up to that time the gospel of Jesus Christ was unknown to the people.

Later that year J.T. Soundy and his wife visited India and inspected the various Baptist mission stations. At the close of their travels, they arrived at Seraj-gunge and found that their daughter and the Thompsons had only a two-room bungalow, or hut of matting, thatched with grass, in which they had to live, and keep and entertain visitors, as well as strangers. One room had to be used as living-room, sleeping-room and school-room. J.T. subsequently purchased land for the erection of a mission station. Lily's task was that of teaching the young Bengalis. In 1899, the mission bungalow was built at a cost of about £200. Unfortunately, an earthquake soon struck the area where they were working. Lily was on her own at the time in charge of the girls attached to the mission. So devastating was the damage that she had to seek assistance for their relief. The shock undermined her health. After years spent in mastering the language and fitting herself for the work, she was compelled to return home in October 1900. After nine months of convalescing at home, she wrote to the Secretary of the Missionary Committee:

"Dear Friend, "My health is not improving as one could wish, so I paid the doctor a visit to consult what could be further done towards a more thorough recovery of strength. Amongst other information, he emphatically stated that there was no prospect of my being able to live in India again. So also did the doctor in Colombo, but I felt it was not necessary to decide the question till now, when after nine months' trial, I felt the uselessness of thinking of returning with the constitution I have, besides having to still go through the second year's course of study which would mean a further breakdown.

"I often felt troubled while in India that others could do more work than my strength would allow, and others had to take a larger share of "roughing it" to leave me with more comfort so that, unless the path was made very clear, I could not conscientiously burden the Society, when another worker could do more work at the same cost. I feel, under the present circumstances, that the time has come to send in my resignation, so that the Committee may be free to look out for another candidate to take my place.

"It is a cause of joy that I've had the privilege of working in India even for so short a time, and that now work can be done for India, if not in India, also that other faces may be turned towards that country through my influence. I need hardly say how gladly my services are offered to the Committee to further the interest here. The Northern Churches must allow me a few more months' quiet, however, before I could manage to visit them. Believing the Lord's blessing will rest on my resignation as it did on my acceptance, as I feel I am following in the path of His will".

Lily was quite weak for some time. Following her recovery, she formed the Hobart Missionary Depot in 1907 which functioned for many years as a missionary centre and book-selling business. The profits went to various missionary bodies. Others who were active in this work were Harry Sidwell, Miss Jessie M. Johnston, Miss C. Lampkin and Miss Olive Williams. Lily largely arranged the four day Livingstone centenary exhibition on David Livingstone at the Town Hall in March 1913. It was greatly publicized and well responded to. Some years later, she moved to the mainland and involved herself in the Y.W.C.A. Lily Soundy, the church's first missionary, lived to a good age and died on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 1964.

#### **REV. JAMES BLAIKIE**

Six months after the tragic death of the Rev. James Ball, the kind and tireless evangelist, the Rev. James Blaikie, conducted services at the Hobart Tabernacle. He had just concluded a Townsville engagement following his retirement

from the Auckland Baptist Tabernacle, Thomas Spurgeon's church in New Zealand.

Blaikie's three months with them brought 'a wave of blessing'. During this time, the church called him and he promised to consider the invitation and let the church know of his decision. He accepted in April 1897 and commenced his nine years at Hobart on 22<sup>nd</sup> August.

This 'true man of God, possessed of individuality, warmth of heart, together with intellectual power' had been brought to the colony of Port Philip in 1882 in the steamship "Potosi". It was on account of his ill-health that he had decided to emigrate. He had been for five years the Pastor of the Baptist Church at Irvine, in the West of Scotland. Blaikie, who had been a student of the Pastor's College, was commended by the Rev. C.H. Spurgeon:

"This is to commend Mr. James Blaikie to the loving consideration of all our brethren in Australia. He will be a great gain to any Church which may invite him to the pastorate. He is a brother of high character, good experience and excellent talent. I can commend him with unreserved confidence."

The Kew church, whose building was recently opened debt free, invited him to the pastorate. Commencing his ministry in October 1882, with the church of a membership of fifty-five, his personality, lovable nature and decided evangelical preaching drew around him a band of Christians, not just Baptists. Involved with the Victorian Baptist Association, the opening sentences of his paper to 1883 autumn session titled, 'Evangelistic Work', reveal the attractiveness of his message and the concern of his heart:

"I have sought the message I bring you from my Lord's own mouth. I have tried to write as if within hearing of Gethsemane's agonies and Golgotha's cry; as if within sight of the bloody sweat and the nail-pierced hands; as if standing by the empty tomb and in presence of the throne; as if listening to the songs of ineffable sweetness sung by glorified spirits, and hearing the wail of despair as it issues forth in ever deepening sadness from the abode of the damned."

He concluded his Kew ministry in 1891, the membership of the church having risen to 120. The New Zealand appointment followed, with missions in Parramatta, Sydney, Brisbane and Townsville, the latter four late in 1896. He had declined invitations to pastoral appointments from Townsville and Parramatta to accept the Tasmanian work. His was a hearty welcome

### THE VISIT OF THE REV. DR. JOHN CLIFFORD

In June 1897, with the imminent arrival of Blaikie expected, the church which had been so blessed by the eminent preacher, the Rev. C.H. Spurgeon through the presence of his son, the valued ministries of his college graduates and the gracious giving of those who revered him, snubbed this apparent opponent, the Rev. John Clifford, on his visit to Hobart. The officers of the Church refused to receive him or to take any part in his welcome. At the church meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 1897, the deacons explained the reasons for their action. The principal reasons given were that Dr. Clifford had been a prominent leader in the movement known in England as the "Downgrade movement" and also because of his unsoundness in parts of doctrine and his questioning of the inspiration of portions of the Scripture. The meeting was reported to have agreed unanimously with the action of the deacons. Later the Secretary communicated with a minister on the mainland to seek justification for the way they had acted over the matter. A letter was read from three Victorian ministers thanking the Church for its action during Dr. Clifford's visit to Hobart.

Dr. Clifford's stress on liberty explains his position in the "Downgrade" controversy. He revered and loved Spurgeon; he shared Spurgeon's deepest evangelical convictions, yet he firmly refused, even at Spurgeon's bidding, to subscribe to a creed or to restrict the right of Christian men to think freely in the light of the Eternal Word and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

It was well known that the Tasmanian Baptist Churches including Hobart, "when compared with their brethren in Victoria and South Australia, were conservative and were proud of the fact. They rejoiced in those who held to old truths. In 1901, the Tasmanian Baptist "Day Star" gave the following advice to their Victorian counterparts:

"Our Victorian brethren, ever ready with their money when something big can be done, are endeavouring to bring out the most brilliant men, and at any price. It would be well for them to remember that popular men may not always be safe. The Baptists of the Colonies have been so united in the old truths that it would be a great evil to even endanger the harmony that exists. There are among our English leaders, great, large hearted, enthusiastic Christian workers who deserve respect, and are sure to win favour anywhere. Yet if they teach a new theology, their very characters give them the more power for harm. And while their earnestness may save themselves from much injury by the views they have embraced, those views may ruin others of less piety. A man may have heart power

sufficient to lift him above the influence which his teaching has upon others who have no solidity of character. Preachers only should be invited to come who will confirm us in loyalty to Christ and His truth. And just as the Tasmanians were finding fault with the Victorians, the South Australians were not too pleased with the Tasmanians."

Complained the 'Day Dawn' in September 1901: "South Australian Baptists find grave fault with us Tasmanian Baptists. In the 'Southern Baptist' we are charged with being "illiberal," "unreasoning," "bigoted," and "narrow-minded!" We simply reply: that "speaking the truth in love" we continue to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints."

The next paragraph went on to say: "Pastor Blaikie, our esteemed Editor for Tasmania, deserves our prayers, and sympathy for his fearless evangelicism and maintenance of the old gospel in the 'Southern Baptist'."

The Tasmanian Baptists had sided immediately with Spurgeon when he resigned from the Baptist Union of Great Britain. Wrote the 'Day Star' in January and February 1888:

"A Crisis has come then. If the Baptist Union of Great Britain is willing to take steps for the expulsion of false teachers, there is yet great prosperity for it. But, if nothing is done, there will probably be a secession of several hundred members. We are hopeful that the right thing will be done, for the orthodox are far in the majority, and we wish ourselves that Mr. Spurgeon, having raised his protest, had waited to see the result. They may possibly have erred; but all will admit that he acted with the purest motives.

After all the secession from the Union is a small matter. The main thing is the bold attack that he has made on the false and dangerous teaching that so many are receiving as Christ's. The result will be distinct separation between true and false doctrine, and, perhaps, the restoration of many whose feet have been set in slippery places. The battle will be severe, many will be wounded, Mr. Spurgeon himself suffering most of all; but the end will be victory for Christ and more honour and love than ever for His faithful and much honoured servant. And, we have expressed our wish that Mr. Spurgeon should not have resigned till he had brought a test case before the Union. They would then have had no loop-hole by which they could escape. As the matter stands now nothing is decided; for we decline, as others will, to accept the assurance of the Council that all is well. They may keep on repeating, "We are as loyal to evangelical truth as ever;" but when they are asked what they mean by "evangelical" they refuse to give a definition. There is among them a large majority of good, and great, and wise

men, but they are too soft toward the few who are on the "Down Grade." They think to preserve the Union intact by accepting the charitable view that old truths are only being brought forward in new forms. But they might as well take sides at once, for things cannot remain as they are now. Even one of Mr. Spurgeon's own students writes that in his Association, there are preachers of a "larger hope," but no false teachers! Surely men are blind who maintain that there is no change of any importance in the doctrines of any Baptist minister? Further action will certainly have to be taken."

The welcome to Hobart was given to the Rev. Dr. Clifford at the Temperance Hall, but not at the Hobart Tabernacle. The only Baptist on the welcoming platform was Dr. Benjafield. In response to the welcome, Dr. Clifford said that, if the Baptists understood him as he ought to be understood, they would voice their welcome with that of the other denominations represented. But they had acted upon reports which reached them, and which they had not sifted. However, the Baptists were perfectly within their own rights in with-holding their organic welcome on the occasion, though there were individuals of them present. The reports which had influenced the body were in the main absolutely false; their judgment was formed on insufficient data. He referred to this matter only for the purpose of excusing the Baptists to their fellow Christians in this city, and he appealed to his audience not to think any more harshly of the denomination because they were not organically present.

Dr. Clifford preached at the New Town Congregational Church on the Sunday following. Hobart was the only Australian city in which he met with this response. In South Australia, Baptists took him to their heart of hearts. His welcome meeting was a triumph of warmth and sincerity. He gave numerous addresses on various themes, and it was considered a vast privilege to sit at his feet while he poured forth the rich treasures of his heart and mind. His oratory was of the torrential type. Those who heard him were thrilled. He fairly took Adelaide by storm.

#### **REV. GEORGE J. MACKAY**

During the decided evangelical ministry of Blaikie five members entered into full time Christian work. Two would have profound effect, one in Victoria and the other in New South Wales.

George Mackay came to the Hobart Tabernacle from the Primitive Methodists on the amalgamation of the Methodists and Wesleyans. Converted when a youth under the preaching of the Rev. J.T. Piercay, Victorian Baptist Director of Missions, his soul winning zeal, his unmistakable fitness for the work of the ministry, his

evangelical preaching, impressed the Baptists of Tasmania. He became a member of the church in February 1897 and, in the same month, he transferred to the Devonport Baptist Church to work under the supervision of Rev. Harry Wood.

His gifts were many - an acceptable preacher; possessing qualities which made him a welcome guest in every farmer's house; an organist musical to his finger tips; capable of training a choir or, in Alexandrian fashion, compelling a congregation to sing. These valued abilities filled many with high hopes of a fruitful career.

These hopes were strengthened by more than a year's most successful work in Devonport, where in that short time he completely resuscitated the cause, which had for a considerable time been dead. Through William Gibson Junior's generosity, he enjoyed a course of training in the Baptist College of Victoria. On returning to Devonport, his work was so effective that a splendid building for worship was soon erected and, after giving six happy years of service there, he accepted an earnest call to the George Street Church at Fitzroy, then in a decimated condition. In four and a half years, he had led George Street to something of its former prosperity. His work there was that of aggressive evangelism. Eighty new members joined the church, doubling the membership. Under denominational pressure he assumed charge of the new and promising Home Mission church at Northcote. In two years, he more than doubled the membership, added to the building and firmly established the cause.

In August 1912, Mackay was appointed as Director of Victorian Home Missions. He came with a reputation for versatile and virile evangelism. Added to this, he was also a minister with a high degree of competence in the business world. But this new leadership was not to last. After three years in the task, the leadership, together with many other hopes and plans, was shattered by the onset of War in 1914 and Mackay enlisted. He served as a chaplain to the A.I.F. The leadership passed to another.

In 1913 he had commenced services as Home Mission Director in the rear of the Town Hall in Sandringham. Following his seven months as chaplain, he pastored the church until 1920. He then took on the task as honorary evangelist with the Home Mission as he had entered into secular employment.

#### **REV. GEORGE A. CRAIKE**

Among the many scholars in the Sunday school in Blaikie's time was one who was destined to become one of the outstanding ministers of the Baptist denomination in Australia in his day and the Pastor of the influential church at Petersham.

George Craike was converted under the kind Blaikie and became a teacher in the Sunday school and active in other church work. In May 1903, he was called to minister as co-pastor of the Reed Memorial Baptist Church, Launceston, as assistant to the Rev. J.T. Piercey. He entered Spurgeon's College in London in 1905 where Revs. C.J. Tinsley, W.C. Black, A.H. Potter and W.M. Cartwright were fellow students. On graduating, he made his way back to Tasmania to marry Ruby Morgan, a member of the Tabernacle, one of those baptized early in Blaikie's time. Twenty years of ministry followed and, on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 1929, he died tragically, having been overtaken by a sudden illness, which was believed to be the result of a nervous breakdown. Unfortunately there were complications. His death affected his wife and she died after long and severe suffering in May 1930. Fellow student, the Rev. W. Cleugh Black, in a personal tribute, said of him:

"We occupied the same room in the college house, studied in the same library, walked together to our lessons, and listened to those evangelical giants of London, Campbell Morgan, Jowett, Sylvester Home, and Dr. Meyer. We spent our holidays at springtime in Surrey, and when the snows covered the old Cromwellian battlefields of Hampshire, and at last left England together with the college farewell hymn "Hallelujah for the Cross" ringing in our ears. Together we rambled over the ruins of ancient Pompeii, sailed through the tropics, strolled through the spicy Cinnamon Gardens of Ceylon, and came at last to our desired haven, to the land of the Southern Cross; and, throughout all these journeyings, I was in the presence of one of God's gentlemen.

He was ever a devout soul, a true evangelical mystic. Whatever his faults (and that he had them, is but to say that he was human, like us all, for the heavenly treasure in always contained in earthen vessels). He loved his Lord, and on a memorable day in college, made his consecration vow, and framed it in familiar triangular fashion. "I will be," said he, "a man of vision, a man of passion and a man with a mission," and for twenty years, in his pastorates at Bracknell (Berkshire), at Chesham and Devonport (Tasmania) at Clifton Hill (Victoria) and at Petersham (N.S.W.) he kept his sacred vow, for he was a visionary, and of times, like Enoch, walked with God. He had, like Paul, a passion for souls...."

Craike today is still remembered by his little book "People at Wit's End Corner". He began writing the stories at Petersham: They are the declination of peoples met in other lands who have experienced in days of sunshine the presence and pleasure of the great Joy-bringer -

He was there: it is the testimony of many who have proved, even though they have descended to sorrow's greatest depth - He was there, the great Friend and Comforter. There are chapters on, "Worse Off People", "People Who Fall Out of Love", "People Not Understood", "People at Life's Breaking Point", the latter recalling to us the story of Elijah, Jacob, Job, men who in their extremity took the extra step and were met by the angel of God.

Craike's life was a life richly endowed. His was a unique personality and a distinguished ministry.

#### **OTHERS FOR FULL TIME SERVICE**

In September 1904, Alexander Ray tendered his resignation from the Church as he had decided to enter the Presbyterian Ministry. He received on leave a letter of commendation.

The church farewelled Miss J. Livingstone in February 1898; she went to Dr. Wanen's training home in Melbourne, prior to her departure for India, where she intended to take up work in connection with the Poonah Village Mission.

#### **OUTREACH IN HOBART AND BEYOND**

In August 1900, Blaikie made arrangements for meetings to be held at Lansdowne Crescent, West Hobart, but the response was not sufficient to warrant its continuance.

An outstation, which had been operating for a number of years, existed in Claremont. It was being carried on in the State School by the young men of the church but without any Baptist emphasis. The bulk of the people attending were Congregationalists. The church decided to correct this situation in May 1901 but to little effect. Fred Pitt was one who was greatly involved. Church members lent traps for the conveyance of preachers. In 1906 the Rev. Teece, Congregational Minister of New Town, informed the church that the decision had been made to erect a Congregational Church there and it was his wish that the young men from the Tabernacle continue but in the new building when it was completed. The result was that the Baptists handed the work over to the Congregationalists, since it really belonged to them. There was no desire to be in opposition.

Blaikie's decided evangelical preaching was in demand further afield from Hobart. At the request of the Union, Pastor Blaikie was released for a month in order to test out the possibilities of a permanent work being established at Zeehan on the West Coast. The Pastor reported on the course he had commenced on behalf of the Union at the next meeting. The Union expressed thanks to the church for allowing Pastor Blaikie to undertake the work. The attempt was not successful. In October 1903, Blaikie conducted,

at Pastor Harry Wood's request, a mission at Longford. The following month he missioned at Bracknell. Another was soon to follow at Deloraine. He was twice President of the Baptist Union of Tasmania.

### **E. DUTHOIT**

In July 1903, E. Duthoit was compelled to resign as Church Secretary, an office he had filled since March 1900. Between pastorates, he frequently conducted services and was the only layman to conduct a baptismal service in the first fifty years of the church. He was keenly interested in prophecy and, in 1906 his addresses on "Dispensational Truth" were well attended. As leader of the senior men's Bible Class, he spoke his views freely. Sadly he would not tolerate any doubt being expressed or any different viewpoint being advanced. He would declaim against any who sought to 'try the spirit' of teaching. Eventually, after bad feeling arose, he and his wife and family absented themselves entirely following twelve years of membership.

### **JAMES HAWKINS**

Duthoit's place as Secretary was taken by James Hawkins, Milkman. He married Minnie Holland, church organist. In charge of the catering for Union and Tea Meetings, they successfully carried out the task under crude conditions of the early days - without a kitchen, copper, stove or cooking utensils. Duthoit taught in the Sunday school where he used almost to frighten the scholars by his insistence on Christ's imminent second coming. Minnie officiated at the organ for fifty years for the week night meetings. She was secretary of the Sunday school and junior choir leader. They both had become members in McCullough's time.

### **J.T. SOUNDY AND THE LINING IN OF THE DOME**

The open massive dome that covered the octagonal Perth Tabernacle made it extremely difficult for preachers to be heard. The solution lay in taut metal wires being stretched across the open space at ceiling level. The same problem existed in the Hobart Tabernacle and solution for some was the lining in of the dome. For J.T. Soundy, although generous, he abhorred anything in the nature of extravagance - on one occasion, when presented by the Tasmanian Union with an illuminated address, he electrified the Assembly by administering a sharp rebuke, telling them in no uncertain terms that he considered they might have used the money to better purpose. The expenditure of church funds on such a project was poor stewardship. Further, he had his own views of things and sometimes this led to variance but, generally, so long as he felt that the other was as sincere as he was and as zealous for the Kingdom of God, he went on

loving that person and opposing that one at the same time. His clear view of things was obviously at variance with others on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> February, 1892, some of the leading women of the church, having heard of the death of the Rev. C.H. Spurgeon on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 1892, had begun to drape the pulpit with black and purple material as an expression of the world-wide sorrow at the demise of so great a preacher and one to whom the church indirectly owed so much. Soundy happened to be about while the work was in progress and ordered it to be removed at once. The ladies' idea that purple was indicative of the brighter side of death was just not acceptable. And, when an attempt was made in those days to form a boys' club, Soundy would have none of it. The same applied for a cricket club.

A special meeting held in March 1905 to receive the report of an Acoustics Committee was told that, following professional advice, the Committee had come unanimously to the conclusion that the dome should be timbered in and faced with metal sheets. The church decided then and there that the work should be done. This was totally unacceptable to J.T. Following the completion of the work by David Williams, there was now in the sanctuary a disagreeable echo which made it difficult for speaker and hearers. J.T. had been justified in his stand but personal relationships were at a low. As late as October, he was still harping on about the apparent waste, exclaiming that "The money spent on the ceiling was a curse to the church." What extent this whole matter played in Blaikie's decision of July 1905 is not known.

### **BLAIKIE'S RESIGNATION**

A special meeting was held on 17<sup>th</sup> July, 1905, to consider the resignation letter of Pastor Blaikie. As the senior deacon, J.T. Soundy had himself that day resigned from the Diaconate. James Hawkins, Church Secretary, read the letter from the pastor.

When asked the reasons for his resignation, Blaikie replied that his reasons for resignation were that he had not had the hearty co-operation of the Deacons.

J.T. Soundy himself replied. It was moved that notwithstanding the explanation given, Pastor Blaikie be asked to reconsider his resignation. This motion was strongly supported by many members. The motion that Pastor Blaikie reconsider was carried unanimously amid prolonged applause.

In the following days, the resignation of all the deacons followed. At the next meeting of the church, the resignation of J.T. Soundy was read. The addresses given were listened to with marked attention. The career of J.T. as deacon of the church since its foundation and as

Treasurer for about twenty years was set forth. The call to reconsider his action was declined by him. A complete election of officers in the church took place in August.

Blaikie reconsidered but in September notice was given that he would resign in February the following year.

His characteristic preaching at the Tabernacle ended in February as said. It had been nine strenuous and difficult years. The aged Blaikie's next appointment was Castlemaine, Victoria. He

entered into the work in May. In the midst of the Christmas and New Year festivities at the end of that year, he became seriously ill and died on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 1907.

Blaikie's evangelical preaching and unquestioning reliance on the Word of God fitted in with his time and circumstances in Hobart as did the particular emphasis of the unknown preacher who immediately followed him at the Tabernacle. His ten year ministry is one of the Church's most treasured memories.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### A PRINCE OF PREACHERS

#### F. W. BOREHAM (1906-1916)

The anticipation of an event is often better than the realization of it. But as regards the new preacher at the Hobart Tabernacle, after a period of expectancy, the pleasure and satisfaction felt by members and adherents was very great indeed. Early in 1906, a communication was received from the Rev. C. Boyall of Caversham, New Zealand, strongly urging the church to open up negotiations with the Rev. Frank William Boreham, a man who was almost unknown and minister of a small village in New Zealand called Mosgiel. This was done and, finally, with much faith and not a little fear, he was called for twelve months. At the church meeting in April preceding Boreham's arrival, it was announced, amid applause, that J.T. Soundy had forwarded £20 to assist towards removal costs of the new minister.

Boreham was born of Anglican parents at Tunbridge Wells, in Kent in 1871. He was only in his teens when London drew him away to find employment. He early acquired facility in public speaking. In 1888 he underwent a spiritual experience in London which transformed his life, redirecting it into new channels. He preached his first sermon at seventeen at an open air meeting in Clapham, London. He was for a time associated, as a lay-helper, with the London City Mission; and he first preached in a pulpit at very short notice, taking the place of a Congregational minister in South London who was suddenly taken ill. In this same pulpit, Boreham ministered for several months.

In 1892 - the year in which C.H. Spurgeon died - Boreham was received into the Pastor's College. He cherished the conviction that he was the last student whose admission to the College was decided upon by the revered founder himself. In 1894, when Thomas Spurgeon left New Zealand to take charge of the work at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, he was commissioned by the church at Mosgiel to send them a pastor. His choice fell upon this six-foot man of twenty-four, slim of build, with a drooping moustache and a kindly glint in his "very unusual eyes". His ordination took place at Mosgiel on 15<sup>th</sup> March, 1895. Settled there for ten years, he exercised a ministry marked by a high standard of preaching and unique pastoral insight into the simple lives of the weavers and farmers of the country neighbourhood. As a result of his labours, the church grew in numbers and influence. During

that time, he also commenced journalistic work that gave him entry to the inner circle of leading writers. Weekly contributions to local newspapers and monthly leaders for the New Zealand Baptist, of which he soon became editor, gave the practice necessary to develop a distinctive style of self-expression. With the passing of the years came the thrill of seeing his contributions being regularly reprinted in a religious journal in Australia. In 1903, he became President of the Baptist Union of New Zealand.

During his last year there, he offered himself for election to the Licensing Bench. The Bench was elected on a popular basis, every person over the age of twenty-one enjoyed a vote. Boreham announced frankly that, if elected, he would exercise the power vested in him in such a way as to cancel as many licenses as possible. The election was hotly contested but Boreham and his supporters found themselves at the top of the poll; and, during the very last week of his long residence in the Dominion, he had the satisfaction of closing several public houses, and refusing a number of special licenses.

Boreham's advent to the ministry in Hobart coincided with an improvement in the economic condition of the State, and therefore the giving to the church, and the word that had come from Boyall proved good advice. From the outset, Boreham's preaching captivated the congregations. Before the end of the year, the deacons gave appreciative remarks of the ministry and the offer of a permanent situation was made and accepted.

Boreham was a laborious worker and a great reader. He had a great acquaintance with literature - whether history, biography, poetry or science. What he read he remembered and he had the faculty for using his wide knowledge in explanation and application of the truth. His children's talks were entrancing to the youngsters, and no adult was too old to enjoy his stories and observe the morals attached to them. His "Once Upon a Time in the Land That Never Was," or "Once Upon a Time in the Land That Really was," captivated the children's attention, while such stories as come "Robinson Crusoe" and "White Fang" (to mention two) furnished quite a number of stories for "Boys and Girls, Girls and Boys," as he was wont to address them.

Since he possessed in no ordinary degree the gift of fluent speech, it was not surprising that the Hobart crowds soon began to throng his services. The ministers of the other denominations were no match. They were either rather old in their pastorates or of mediocre calibre and it was the habit of many to go in for sermon tasting. After his commencement, one could hear the sermon-tasters telling others of the wonderful sermons they heard at the Tabernacle on Sunday nights. Not surprising, there was nothing slipshod, everything was well done by Boreham. He never appeared in the pulpit or on the platform without a well prepared message which he delivered in well-chosen words with great freedom and often with the power of eloquence. His wizardry with words entranced his audiences.

The winter evening addresses became a special feature of his work and the church building was repeatedly packed to its utmost capacity. The series titled, "Texts That Have Made History" was exceedingly attractive. They included Luther's, Bunyan's, Hugh Latimer's, Francis Xavier's, Livingstone's, Spurgeon's texts, and others. The resources of the officers were severely taxed to provide accommodation. Prior to the outbreak of war, there was a large attendance of young men. In connection with the war, it was Boreham's deep regret that, having used his eloquence to persuade them to serve King and country, he had the unpleasant task of calling at homes to tell of sons who would not return.

Boreham was probably the first minister in Hobart to make use of a notice board to advertise his sermon titles. The titles revealed Boreham's genius:

The Leaves that Litter the World:  
*The Question of Inspiration.*

The Haunted House of Every Man:  
*The Marvel of Myself.*

The Riddle of the Universe:  
*The Puzzle of Evolution.*

Blood Stains and Teardrops:  
*The Perplexity of Pain.*

The Trail of the Serpent:  
*The Mystery of Temptation.*

The Cry from the Abyss:  
*The Horror of Hell.*

The Soul's Awakening:  
*The Phenomenon of Conversion.*

As early as April 1907, Boreham conducted meetings in the Town Hall following the evening service. In one such gathering Boreham

illustrated by lantern a lecture on "The Land of the Moa and the Maori." The building was crowded and the proceeds of £11 were added to the Jubilee fund for the purchase of a manse. Besides preparing for his Sunday morning and evening services, he gave on Wednesday evenings a series which he called "Half Hours in Good Company." These were lectures on saints of all ages, including statesmen, philanthropists, preachers, missionaries, to whatever church they belonged.

Boreham felt that the church and its ministry should be primarily spiritual, and should concern itself with the things that no accidents of time or events of the moment could possibly change. The church had but to mind her own business and her victory was assured. A good minister of Jesus Christ must be loyal to those sublime stupendities that constitute his message. The church must cling to the immutable and the immortal:

"The things that were spiritual, and therefore deathless, must always be the distinguishing feature of her ministry. Her heart was in the ever-ever country. She worked for eternity. And, whenever she struck that majestic note with clearness and simplicity, all sorts and conditions of men paused to listen to the matchless music."

For himself that meant preaching and writing were to be his main concerns and he made the former the concern of a number of young men in the church by conducting a Preachers' Class for them.

Although Boreham had had published "The Whisper of God", a book of sermons, in 1902, it was in Hobart in 1911 that Boreham seriously took up the task which was to make him famous through the English speaking world. Encouraged by Harry Sidwell, and strengthened in the matter by F.W. Heritage and John Soundy, Boreham began his writings in book form. R. Morris of O.B.M's aided him with the publication. So began a unique ministry which was to influence a multitude of Christian homes all over the world. Few religious writers have been so widely accepted, and few so avidly read. This notable ministry of the pen continued with unabated energy and brilliance almost to the end of his days on earth.

He wrote a total of forty-seven volumes. In 1912, on the death of H.R. Nicholls, editor of "The Mercury", Boreham was asked by C.E. Davies, then managing director of Davies Brothers Limited, to write an occasional editorial. He agreed, and eventually it was arranged that he should contribute an article each week. This arrangement continued until his death. Week by week and year by year, the Saturday editorial

column bore the stamp of Boreham's delightful literary qualities - 2,500 editorials in all!

Boreham was also the largest and most regular contributor to the Australian Baptist. From the very start, his articles struck a responsive chord in the hearts of the readers. At first, he contributed an article to every third issue, then one to every second issue and, finally, to the immense satisfaction of every reader, one every week. Wrote the Australian Baptist in June 1914: "Long may the Manse study at Hobart retain the philosopher's chair, the prophet's mantle, and the artist's pen of this new but true voice. And may his now many-thousand congregation be every year multiplied."

But his phenomenal literary output was but a sideline to his real life's work, that of Christian ministry. For Boreham, after thirty year's ministry, the verdict was that "The minister might not make money - but he made men. The potter moulded men out of clay, the sculptor carved them out of marble, but the preacher was working in quivering flesh and human heart-blood all the time."

His sporting interests lay in cricket, for he was one of the keenest observers of district matches, and a most regular attendant at the association ground. "One cannot," wrote the Mercury writer, "for many years past, remember visiting a match of any importance, without noticing the reverend gentleman amongst the spectators."

#### **DAVID WILLIAMS JUNIOR**

Boreham's entry into Hobart saw an end to short terms in the office of Church Secretary. S.B. Pitt had been returned to that position in 1905 and 1906 but the death of his wife, Caroline, in 1906 brought about his leave from Hobart, to stay with his daughter in Victoria. The incoming Secretary, David Williams Junior, would serve for the full extent of Boreham's stay. The quiet and unassuming Williams was not new to the position. He had been a member of the Harrington Street Particular Baptist Church and became their Secretary in 1882. The devotion which he had given to that tiny body was to be given again. But again his temperament meant that others would decide the direction in which the church moved.

Born in Swansea, South Wales, David had arrived in the colony in 1855 with his parents on the 'Conway'. He was educated at Pike's School, Macquarie Street, and was afterwards apprenticed to his father in the building trade. About the year 1886 he took over the business. The firm did a large amount of work in and about Hobart. Among the contracts were the seating and pulpit in the Memorial Church, corner of Brisbane and Elizabeth Streets, and the seating of the Tabernacle.

There must have been mixed feelings in his heart over the sale of the old Harrington Street chapel in 1907.

#### **THE SALE OF HARRINGTON STREET**

That the Harrington Street chapel should seek entry and be admitted into the Baptist Union of Tasmania on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1884, would prove a windfall for the Baptists of Elizabeth Street twenty-three years after the event.

In 1886, the church services of that pastorless chapel were conducted by members until September when the chapel was rented out to Chalmers Scots Church for about one year. The chapel subsequently became the Harrington Street School.

With the successful erection of the Elizabeth Street School Room in March 1885, the need for books and suitable furniture arose. In Christian love, McCullough and his deacons wrote to the Trustees of the chapel in November 1886, making application for the use of the books and bookcase from their now defunct Sunday school:

"We should feel much obliged if you could either give them to us altogether, which we think you have power to do, or grant us the use of them until a properly organized church at Harrington Street shall again require them."

Early attempts to gain hold of the property comprising chapel, school room, and adjoining manse were initiated by McCullough himself in November 1890. He wrote:

"I would again approach you on the subject of the property you hold in trust. I am hopeful that you will see with me that you will be better carrying out the spirit of the deed, and the intention of those who framed it, by letting the Baptists of the Colony have possession than by permitting it to be used as at present.

"You are aware that the Act of Incorporation gives you full power to hand the property over to us. Should there be any question about the balance of the debt, we are willing to hand you the amount so that it may be free of debt. But a debt does not hinder you from giving up possession if you choose to do so.

"There is no Church in possession, but I believe you will find that those who last met there as a Church will not now raise any objection to the transfer.

"I think you must see that there can be nothing gained by your continuing in possession and I would appeal to you to give the matter your earnest consideration.

"Although writing in my own name, I wish, of course, for the transfer to be made to the Baptist Union. If you think it necessary, a request can be

forwarded from the Council sealed with the Common Seal of the Union.”

The property was subsequently handed over to the Baptist Union of Tasmania. Finally in September 1907, it was sold for £1,200. The new owner, J.A. Cuthbertson, turned the chapel into a boot factory. The wits of the day remarked that the establishment which was once devoted to the saving of souls is now manufacturing them.

The cedar-framed book case and its books from the school room were finally acquired. £400 from the sale was used to discharge the debt remaining on the Tabernacle. The balance would make possible a new venture in the growing northern suburbs

### **NEW BRANCH CHURCH AT MOONAH**

In December 1906, the proposed extension of work to the Moonah district, about four miles north of the city, was considered and a committee comprising Dr. Harry Benjafield, J.T. Soundy, F.W. Heritage (Church Treasurer) and David Williams (Church Secretary) was formed to explore the matter.

The church soon purchased a block of land for £40 and a neat brick building, having a seating capacity for 200 persons and costing in excess of £600, was erected in 1908 by David Williams' company. J.T. Soundy laid the foundation stone. "Following the opening of the church building in June 1908, Raymond Farrer became student pastor until Boreham had secured a graduate from the Spurgeon College to be his assistant and pastor the church.

A.L. Leeder was chosen and he was ordained in Hobart by Boreham on his arrival in December. Harry Sidwell became Secretary of the young fellowship. Leeder exercised a short ministry and was followed in October 1910 by the Rev. H.E. Saunders. Shortly J.S.A. Worboys, son of the Rev. J. Worboys, became assistant minister for a year until his acceptance as a student at the Pastor's College, London. In September 1916, the Rev. A. Butler accepted the call of the fellowship. Nine years of fruitful ministry followed.

The church was finally formed on 30<sup>th</sup> August, 1917, with the transfer of thirty-seven members. They were formally and happily dismissed from the Hobart Tabernacle on 20<sup>th</sup> August.

### **RAYMOND FARRER**

Raymond Farrer, elder son of Thomas and Eva Farrer passed through the Sunday school and, in 1892, was baptized and joined the church. He was engaged in local preaching during Blaikie and Boreham's ministries. While a deacon, he decided to study at the Victorian Baptist College. Obligated by ill-health to take a year's leave, he worked at Moonah in 1908.

After graduation, Farrer was ordained in the Footscray church where he had been Assistant to the Rev. J.H. Goble. Since leaving college, he held pastorates at Kingston (Victoria), Maryborough (Queensland), Albert Park (Victoria), Perth (Tasmania) and Moonah, the latter from 1925 to 1929, and Box Hill (Victoria) from 1929 to 1942.

While in Tasmania, Farrer was Secretary of the Foreign Mission Committee, and a member of the Federal Foreign Mission Board. In 1926, he was President of the Baptist Union of Tasmania and, at the inaugural meeting of the Baptist Union of Australia, signed the Constitution on behalf of the Tasmanian Union. In 1928, he was President of the Tasmanian Council of Churches.

On returning to Victoria, Farrer acted as Secretary of the Young People's Board for some years, and became Secretary of the Baptist College of Victoria for a number of years. He was also a member of the Federal Education Board. He became President of the Baptist Union of Victoria in 1936 and was the first Tasmanian to have been President of two State Baptist Unions, and the first Tasmanian to become Victorian President. For fourteen years, he was President of the Victorian Baptist College.

### **RENOVATIONS AND EXTENSIONS TO PROPERTY**

It was decided in 1897 to substitute incandescent gas lighting in the church for the old brass burners, of which quite sixty were used to light the building, and must have consumed a great quantity of gas besides being a very inferior type of illumination. Six lights were suspended on arms attached to a gas pipe from the ceiling at a level of about fifteen feet from the floor, for centre lights, and two lights on each side wall, one on each pillar, and two in the back of the choir gallery, one in the porch and one in each of the front lamps. Later two lights were placed on the inside of the porch to give light to the benighted sitters in the back seats. Thus nineteen lights greatly improved the amount of illumination given by the previous sixty or more gas devourers. The vestry and school-room were similarly re-lighted, which must have meant a large saving on the gas bill. An early balance sheet showed the gas account to be £25.

Complaints had arisen as early as 1907 from the staff of the Sunday school over the accommodation of the school in the School Room. Classes could not be conducted in a proper manner due to over-crowding. Enquiries were made to the deacons about the possibility of erecting new classrooms. Thus began the move to build another storey on the School Room. Five years later work began on the extension. The additional class-rooms greatly assisted in the

work of decentralisation. The opening of the extension coincided with the establishment of the Kindergarten Department which soon had an attendance of sixty toddlers.

The new level to the School Room and the erection of a new minister's vestry cost £620. The name of the lower school-room was altered to that of 'Lecture Hall'.

Other works over these years included the alteration of the porch to provide side doors for entry after services had begun, and timber central doors replacing the glazed ones which reflected the movements in the porch of people waiting to be admitted.

### APPRECIATIONS

In 1913, the church membership rose from 284 to 294 - twenty-six additions had been made. The net increase of only ten was due to a strict roll revision. The steady increase continued. Despite another strict revision of the roll in 1915, the membership had risen to 320. In response, very appreciative references to Boreham's ministry were made almost yearly by the officers of the church.

In 1912, Boreham had received a unanimous call from one of the largest churches in Christchurch, New Zealand. The response of the Hobart deacons was immediate. It "was our bounden duty to do all that we possibly could to keep Mr. Boreham with us, not only for this church, but for Hobart, Tasmania, and the Commonwealth." His stipend was also raised.

Boreham's rise to fame had been rapid, and he was beginning to hold a large place in the world of letters as a religious essayist. He had lifted the church into the front rank of Baptist churches in Australia, and won for it a leading place amongst the churches in Tasmania. No wonder the officers were anxious to retain him.

### BOREHAM'S RESIGNATION

In April 1916, Boreham tendered his resignation. In response the Church recorded:

"That the Church, having heard Mr. Boreham, accepts his resignation with the deepest regret, and desires to express its heartiest appreciation of the ten years' service Mr. Boreham has rendered, not only to the Church, but to every department of Christian work in the city. During his ministry the membership has increased from 180 to 320, a branch church has been built at Moonah at a cost of about £700, the Sunday school room has been remodelled and added to at a cost of over £600, and a piece of land has been acquired as a site for a Manse. The Church wishes to record how highly it values the unstinted and ungrudging devotion of Mr. Boreham to every phase of the Church work. He

has been unequalled as a preacher, and unexcelled as a pastor. He has never hesitated to serve even beyond the limit of his strength. The Church sincerely hopes that his abilities will find the highest scope in his new sphere of work, and prays that the highest success may always be the result of his labours."

Boreham's personality, as well as his preaching, had also made a marked impact on the other churches in Hobart. It woke up the other denominations to the fact that Hobart was in need of a better type of preacher and so, by the time of his resignation, more capable men were beginning to fill the pulpits. With the termination of his ministry, the 'floating part' of the congregation, which had been attracted by him and his type of preaching, disappeared, probably to resume sermon tasting elsewhere.

### ARMADALE AND BEYOND

Boreham's wide acquaintance with literature, his versatility of Scripture exposition, his love of everything beautiful, his facility of speech, his winsomeness and charming manner led to constantly increased congregations and many additions to the membership of the Armadale Church.

In 1927, Boreham went to America for an extensive preaching and lecturing tour, and while there the McMaster Baptist University of Toronto conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity, in recognition of his outstanding qualities as preacher and author. The Armadale Church rejoiced that their minister was so deservedly honoured, but their joy was lessened by the fact that Dr. Boreham would not resume his pastorate on his return. A notable ministry of twelve years thus ended. It would prove his final pastorate, thus fulfilling an early wish. When he had left the Pastor's College back in 1894, he expressed the hope that he would not have more than three pastorates.

In 1936, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, Dr. Daniel Lamont, welcomed him to the platform of its General Assembly as "the man whose name is on all our lips, whose books are on all our shelves and whose illustrations are in all our sermons."

In 1954, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, conferred upon him the order of Officer of the British Empire.

But such honours never turned the head of the man whose books were bought by more than a million people. In all these things, he remained a humble servant of Christ and a beloved friend of those who came to know him.

Although always unflinchingly loyal to his Baptist convictions, Dr. Boreham was ecumenical in his

outlook. Writing of his ministry since he resigned from the pastorate of the Armadale Church in 1928, he could say, "During these years I have preached an almost exactly equal number of times in the pulpits of the various denominations and have felt equally at home in each. Indeed, I have liked to think of myself as a kind of shuttle, moving to and fro between the Churches and, perhaps, binding them a little closer together," and added that he had preached the same sermons everywhere with equal acceptance.

In 1936, the Minister and Session of Scots Church, Melbourne, invited Dr. Boreham to conduct a midday service for business people

each Wednesday, and for eighteen years except for a brief break at Christmas, those services became one of Melbourne's best known institutions.

Earth said farewell to this great preacher, author and lecturer on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1959. Dr. Boreham had given his talents primarily to his Master that the Kingdom might come and the Will of God be done on earth as in heaven. Hobart read with regret of his death, but that regret was mingled with thankfulness, thankfulness for what he had achieved among them in those earlier years, and what he had achieved in the ensuing years.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### A CARING COMMUNITY

#### E. HERBERT HOBDAY (1916-1921)

The Rev. Archibald Geikie Brown, a gifted preacher of seventy-two years, occupied the pulpit of the Hobart Tabernacle for six months in 1916. He was on his second visit to Hobart to see his son who owned a farm at Old Beach, just north of the city. He worshipped at the Tabernacle and was invited to preach immediately following the leaving of Boreham. The offer was first accepted for a three month term.

Brown ably served the Hobart Church at both Sunday and Wednesday services. His Bible studies attracted large attendances at the week night meeting and his exposition of scripture was greatly enjoyed. "You ought to go and 'ear Brown." said one worthy citizen. "You'll miss somethin' if you don't."

His interim pastorate was extended to six months. It had been his wish, after three months in Hobart, to return to England, but the war made sea travel unadvisable. Humorously he remarked that, though he expected to go to heaven, he had no desire to go there on a torpedo.

Humour was the one thing Brown could not suppress and it surfaced in his well told stories. One of his favourite yarns was about the man who was visited by a representative of his East London Mission. "Ah," said the man, "before Archibald Brown came, I feared neither God nor the devil. But now, under his blessed teaching, I've learned to love 'em both." In Hobart, on illustrating the point that to trust feelings was foolishness, he drew a picture of a darkie. Her mistress was much troubled. "Sally," she said, "how is it that you are always so happy?" "Why, Ma'am," said Sally, "I'se happy because I'se saved. "But Sally, supposing you forget all about Him; supposing you let go; supposing you're not strong enough to keep on." "Oh, dear! Ma'am," Sally answered. "I never takes no count ob dem supposes. I jes' lies flat on de word ob God!" And that is just what the Rev. Archibald G. Brown, one-time pastor of the East London Tabernacle, did at Hobart.

#### REV. E. HERBERT HOBDAY

It was during the Interim Pastorate of the Rev. Archibald G. Brown that the church decided to call the Rev. E. Herbert Hobday. In all the names that had come forward, his name was the only

one which had been considered seriously by the church officers.

Boreham, who was present at Hobday's induction on 5<sup>th</sup> November, 1916, confessed that he had a tear in one eye and a twinkle in the other. In handing the ministry over to Hobday, he felt that he was handing over the most precious gift that God had ever given him. In response, Hobday said that from the description of the church which had been given him, he could see that it had a great reputation to live up to. As a church, they had a part to play in the purposes of God. While believing that the paramount should be spiritual teaching, and that the evangelistic note should be the dominant one, he also believed that they had a certain responsibility as far as the national, social and civic life of the city was concerned. These questions should be faced courageously and bravely, not dealt with in the political fashion as a politician but as a prophet, in order to dignify them, instead of lowering them. He held that the dominant note in preaching the Gospel should be the note of triumphant certainty. Trumpet notes were needed in the pulpit. He was an optimist, and as a Christian optimist believed that God was in heaven and all was right and well. His pulpit would always sound the major and not the minor note. If God was for them who could be against them?

Born in London in 1878, Hobday began studies at Spurgeon's College in 1899. He pastored at Grays Baptist Tabernacle, Essex, from 1904 to 1906, prior to his departure for Mosgiel, New Zealand, where he succeeded Boreham. Another pastorate followed in New Zealand at Roslyn, Dunedin, before he commenced at the Bendigo Baptist Church, Victoria, in October 1915. At Bendigo, he was a member of the Literary and Debating Society and was a keen lawns-bowler.

Hobday's ministry was as distinct and different from Boreham's as romance is from drama. Quite early in his ministry, he turned his attention on the younger portion of the congregation and told them straightly that his object was to win them for Christ. To that end he commenced a literary and debating society.

#### LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY AND LEAGUE OF ESPRIT DE CORPS

Ever since Church had existed, a very urgent and vital need of occupation and profitable pleasure

for the young people had been felt - a need of something through which the church could offer a greater, cleaner, and better form of entertainment than that presented by the world. The need had never been met because of the conservative leadership in the earlier days which forbade girls' and boys' clubs and cricket clubs. There was nothing to retain the interest of many of the young people when leaving the Sunday school. Now with the arrival of Hobday, the deacons and parents stopped worrying because the Tuesday evening allocated for this Society became the very happiest and most profitable night for so many of the young. The Society had a phenomenal success and it appeared that soon there would be the need to hold the meetings in a larger hall than the Lecture Hall because of the increasing membership.

Although it flourished under the name of a Literary and Debating Society, its aim and object was not for the development and improvement of the intellects alone, but also for the cultivation and strengthening of character, so that the young might be better fitted to overcome the difficulties and accomplish the tasks of every day life.

"The very best that I can be is the service asked of me."

A pledge, required by all who joined, read: "By the help of Almighty God I do solemnly pledge myself as a member of this Society to promote its welfare by regular attendance and cheerful participation in its meetings, and do undertake to be chivalrous and courteous to all my fellow members, considerate and careful of their interests, promoting their happiness as well as my own by speaking no evil of another nor listening to any, and scorning all uncharity in thought and speech.

"And I do promise to be kindly and cordial in my welcome to new members, tender and sympathetic towards those who may be in distress or difficulty, or who may be sick and suffering, doing whatever may be in my power to help them in their trouble.

"And I do also promise that, by faithful observance of its rules and a diligent practice of its principles, to promote this Society's prosperity by making it a means of pleasure and profit to myself and fellow members."

The syllabus was so varied that it embraced a wide field of study and knowledge and, whether in debate or competitive effort, the members were always treated to a wise and helpful adjudication of the contributions and many were grateful for the assistance Hobday gave, enabling them to forget their inferiority complexes and realize that they had abilities possible of development. Hobday once informed the members that what he was giving them in the

way of elocution teaching could only be gained by seeking private tuition at two or three guineas a lesson. He said this, so that they might comprehend the value of what they were receiving. He wanted them to gain from his generosity. A great number of its members developed wonderfully, and surpassed the highest expectations.

Every alternate evening was devoted to the study of Shakespeare's well-known plays. The play, Julius Caesar, was selected for the second session of 1918. The printed syllabus read:

#### JULY - NOVEMBER

July 2 - Evening with the President

July 9 - "Julius Caesar."

July 16 - "Birthday" Social

July 23 - Impromptu Speech Competition

July 30 - Selections from Favourite Authors

Aug. 6 - "Julius Caesar"

Aug. 13 - Senior Debate, "Is the World Growing Better?"

Affir.: Miss Johnstone, Mr. Luckhurst, Mrs. Henderson, Mr. Tutt.

Neg.: Miss Heritage, Mr. Kerr, Miss Cuthbertson, Mr. Whitney.

Aug. 20 - "Julius Caesar"

Aug. 27 - Junior Debate, "Is Civilisation Conductive to Happiness?"

Affir.: Mr. J. Parish, Miss Begent, Miss Gwen Ikin, Miss Driscoll.

Neg.: Miss Townley, Mr. V. Richards, Miss L. Crisp, Miss Edith Glass.

Sept. 3 - Glimpses of the Australian Aborigines by Horace Watson, Esq.

Sept. 10 - "Julius Caesar"

Sept. 17 - "Joan of Arc" Recital. Lecture by President. Tickets 1/-.

Sept. 24 - Debate with Y.M.C.A. Society.

Oct. 8 - "Julius Caesar"

Oct. 15 - Senior Debate, "That the Monarchical Form of Government is Preferable to Republicanism".

Reports were released monthly in the church's publication, The Baptist Church Chronicle: "The last two evenings of our Session were very, very happy ones. The first was the eventful night on which the "Bardell V. Pickwick Mock Court" was held. This was a great success, and being an open night, a large number of friends gathered in

the Lecture-hall. The performance exceeded all expectations, and the audience were loud in their praises. Miss Lampkin and Mr. E.T. Crisp were realistic, both in dress and manner, as Mrs. Bardell and Mr. Pickwick respectively. Our President (Mr. Hobday) had the important but unenviable position of judge to a rather tempestuous and unruly court, and proved a capable and wise adjudicator. Special praise is due to Mr. Luckhurst, who, in the difficult role of Mr. Snodgrass, gave one of the best interpretations of the evening. His costume and acting were typically those of the staunch Pickwickian, and provoked much merriment and admiration from the onlookers. Misses Saunders and Heritage admirably filled the roles of Mrs. Sanders and Mrs. Cluppins, and remained throughout the sincere and sympathetic friends of poor Mrs. Bardell. The atmosphere was moist with their tears and scented with their much-used smelling salts. Miss Heritage was very true in her interpretation of weepy, hysterical Mrs. Cluppins. Miss Saunders, who was cleverly disguised under a grotesque costume, was equally good as Mrs. Susannah Sanders. Mr. Farrer was excellent in the part of Sergeant Buzfuz, and was a most impressive figure, both in his pleading for Mrs. Bardell and his scornful, sarcastic treatment of the opposing counsel. Messrs. Tutt, Cuthbertson, Kerr, Richards and Parish were all splendid, and contributed largely to the success of the evening. Our friend Mr. Roberts called forth much praise for his true characterisation of Mr. N. Winkle, and Master Clifford Tutt was excellent as Master Bardell. The jury (which consisted of ladies) decided in favour of Mrs. Bardell and assessed damages at £750. As the decision was voiced, Mr. Pickwick collapsed. Mrs. Bardell and supporters danced for joy, and Sergeant Buzfuz's manner became more bombastic than ever. Then the court was filled with murmurings of sorrow and cries of joy, and both parties gathered themselves together and departed. Last Tuesday evening was our closing social. As usual, we spent a delightful evening, one of the most enjoyable items being the Choir Competition."

For a month or so following the evening church service, meetings were held in the Palace Picture Theatre where Hobday gave elocutionary items of a nature likely to give warning and cause for serious thought. Large crowds attended but no definite result was apparent, and since the object was not just to entertain, the gatherings were discontinued.

Hobday's love of drama probably explains his attendance at the Hobart Theatre for another purpose - to view a film of some particular note. The Venerable Archdeacon Whittington, Anglican cleric, a man of a rare wit and very fond of a joke, first noticed Hobday's presence at interval. Like

many other deaf people, he spoke loudly, and called out across the aisle, "What, you here, Hobday? What will your deacons say to you?" It was a case of laughing through one's embarrassment when many eyes fell on Hobday. Strange as it might seem now, in Hobday's time the theatre was still much of a forbidden place - consider Dr. Benjafield's outbursts of only a few years earlier.

### JOHN SOUNDY

At the close of Boreham's ministry and after nine years in the office, David Williams resigned as Church Secretary. He had come to the opinion that the position should now be occupied by a younger man. The younger man was J.T. Soundy's son, John Soundy.

John Soundy, born in Dorset, England, in 1879 had seen the drapery trade first hand, living with his brothers and sisters above his father's burgeoning J.T. Soundy store in North Hobart. Educated at the Friends' School, John took up farming at Sassafras, on the North-west coast. About 1905, he went to South Africa and later became a health inspector with the Bloemfontein Council.

While in South Africa, he married Edith Wainwright of England, whom he met in Hobart. She returned to England and then joined John in South Africa, where they married in 1907. Edith was the daughter of the Rev. George Wainwright, Baptist Minister.

Returning to Tasmania in 1907, the thirtyish, ambitious and enterprising man quickly found he would have to make his own moves if he wanted to make his mark in his home state. For a start, his elder brothers Ernest and Arthur already had left home to seek fresh pastures - Ernest settling in New Zealand and Arthur moving to England and later to the United States. Father J.T. had planned for the two eldest boys to join him in the business but, when it became clear they had other plans, he made a former English business associate, H.S. Kirby, his partner.

John found the Soundy-Kirby partnership well settled when he returned home, so he looked for a place of his own and chose Queenstown, one of Australia's biggest mining towns, on the West Coast. The only access from Hobart was by train through Launceston to the North-west coast and thence by the little train to Zeehan.

The business thrived, but it was a very hard and lonely life for a wife. Queenstown was ugly, treeless and primitive. Their daughter, Maida, born in Queenstown, was taken to Hobart when she was two. She was quite intrigued by the sight of green grass - she thought it was green carpet. She had never seen anything like it. While there

John was appointed a justice of the peace and a coroner.

He returned to Hobart in 1911 at the request of his father to take charge of the North Hobart business of J.T. Soundy Pty. Ltd. Later the firm moved into the city.

In 1917, like his father in 1893, John decided to run for the Hobart City Council. While his father had been unsuccessful, John was elected alderman at his first attempt, and was to go through the rest of his public career undefeated at the ballot box.

A man of strong views, who was always fearless in expressing them, John Soundy became a pillar of the church, holding the position of Secretary faithfully for thirty-three years. He was an undoubted leader. He never counted popularity at the expense of doing what he regarded as the correct thing.

#### **THE BAPTIST CHURCH CHRONICLE**

Hobday was instrumental in commencing a monthly, eight page type-set church paper titled 'The Baptist Church Chronicle' in March 1918. Hobday was editor and the publication continued for thirty-five years. It was adopted as the official organ of the Baptist Union of Tasmania in 1921. The original cost was one shilling per copy. In 1944, Miss Jessie M. Johnston retired as business manageress of the paper. She had managed the "Chronicle" since its beginning and for many years wrote the Children's Page. Johnston also held the position of Sunday School Superintendent at the church for over two decades. Almost one hundred children were in her care and she provided for many of them clothes and shoes to enable them to attend. On Sunday mornings, she was at the morning service surrounded by children who had attended her morning school. In the Sunday afternoon, she could be seen bringing her charges to the afternoon Kindergarten. She had marked histrionic gifts and a keen appreciation of literature. At the Literary and Debating Society, she could hold the floor with some vivid character impersonation, or an impromptu or prepared speech, or some literary contribution. She died in August 1966, having been a greatly loved member of the church for sixty-eight years.

#### **HOBDAY'S SOCIAL CONSCIENCE**

Hobday's ministry was in no way confined to the Tabernacle. In keeping with his Induction address in November 1916, the poor and destitute of the city - and there were many such - knew Hobday. The man who was "down and out" found in him a friend - not of the easy chair type - but one who was ready to appear for them at the Police Court, and use his influence in tempering "mercy with justice." And many had the chance

and used it, of making a fresh start, as the result of his work. In fact, one of the boys of the Tabernacle said when he heard of Mr. Hobday's resignation in 1925: "They will have to build another gaol now." In social and moral reforms he always spoke fearlessly and well.

Hobday gained much publicity by his attack on certain members of Parliament who were fighting against a licensing bill in the House of Assembly. He wrote an article entitled "The Three Fiddlers" pointing out the wrong the three members were doing. He was threatened with litigation for the publication of the pamphlet, but apparently the threat could not be carried into effect, so at least one vented his displeasure in the House. Hobday led a protest meeting in the Town Hall before a crowded audience sympathetic to him and with that his abusers were silenced.

For a time, someone continually sent him anonymous letters written to upset him. At the same time, a man attended the services and by his actions and grimaces, he sought to annoy Hobday. He frequently sat in the front centre seat. Moreover, the footpaths adjacent to the church were often chalked with abusive writing, directed at Hobday. The perpetrator was never discovered. However, the deacons dealt with the annoyance in church by insisting that the man sit in a back seat between two of the deacons and, since he found this restricting, he absented himself. He was considered responsible for the chalking of the footpaths.

#### **OPENING OF THE MANSE**

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the church was celebrated in September 1909. The target for the celebration was the provision of a new manse. This target was not achieved until ten years later.

In July 1910, £400 was paid for a site at the corner of High (now Tasma) Street and Church Street, North Hobart, commanding a view of the river Derwent, the Domain and Mount Wellington. An old dwelling stood on the block. Boreham's lectures at the Town Hall had raised funds. Finally on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 1919, the newly erected brick dwelling of six rooms was officially opened. The total cost was £1600 and Thomas Bennett, who had acted free of charge as Architect and Supervisor at the Baptist Church at Moonah and who had also supervised the recent additions to the Sunday school room, had been a valuable help.

#### **DEACONESS LIVINGSTONE AND THE WARE STREET MISSION**

During the year, representatives of the church visited the North Hobart area as part of an inter-church inquiry into the needs of the district brought about by the influenza epidemic. As an outcome, the church appointed Ruby Livingstone

as "Sister", to engage in the work of caring for the needy and assisting necessitous cases. Sister Livingstone proved her fitness for the position and did a magnificent work, assisted materially by a number of ladies in the church. One of these was Hawkes, the wife of Life Deacon Joseph Hawkes. With such devoted workers, it became one of the brightest and most useful branches of the church life and service at the time.

Soon a mission was begun in Ware Street, North Hobart. The church gave financial support and the young men of the church conducted the Sunday services of worship. The mission continued until 1949 when the hall was sold and converted into a residence.

Hawkes had stood by the work for twenty-eight years. She conducted a Sunday school class and attended the evening service and week night meetings, apart from helping in the distribution of food and clothing and other comforts, especially during the epidemic of influenza which followed the first world war and the depression in 1929-1930.

Many spiritually and physically in need had found help at a time when they were somewhat hesitant about approaching and attending a church. As a training ground for the young people of the church, this cause has also been of inestimable value.

### **SANDY BAY OUTREACH**

In May 1921, the church secured in Queenborough the old and dilapidated building known as St. Matthias' Hall, for the purpose of establishing a new church in the populous district. Of the £850 purchase money, £250 had already been subscribed, and the rest loaned.

Thirty years earlier, when John Chamberlain was working in the area under McCullough, J.T. Soundy offered a site for the Sandy Bay Church, but the offer was declined "from fear lest the central church be weakened." That fear no longer existed.

Many alterations were carried out on the building which was to become the Sandy Bay Church, including drainage and replacement of the front windows of the hall. T.S. Clements, David Williams and Thomas Bennett constituted the Committee of Management to assist the first Pastor of the church, the Rev. George Wainwright. Wainwright, retired from active ministry, had come from England to live permanently in Hobart. Work officially began on 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1921

Wainwright had first visited Hobart in early August 1917 on reasons of his health. He was accompanied by his daughter Edith, and had

sought out the Rev. James Blaikie but ended up staying with J.T. Soundy and his wife. Wainwright was then advised not to return to England for some considerable time so he accepted a pastorate at the Perth Baptist Church. He and his daughter stayed with the Gibsons of Scone. His family arrived in Tasmania in January 1898 and, after short pastorates in Launceston, Geelong and Dunedin, they all returned to England.

Wainwright carried on the work at Sandy Bay in a temporary capacity but, following the death of his wife, he returned to England, having relinquished the work. Soon he returned with a new wife and took up the work again. His wife became the Church Secretary. Wainwright's tragic death occurred in 1925. He died through a car accident. His wife continued as Church Secretary. In March 1928, the church was constituted under the Rev. A.E. Holloway with the transfer of thirty-six members from the Hobart Tabernacle.

### **HOBDAY'S RESIGNATION AND FAREWELL**

Hobday's surprise resignation came in June 1921. Expressions of regret were heard on every side. The explanation Hobday offered was family reasons. His wife had not arrived in Hobart with him when he came, but later her health was indifferent. After remaining for a while, she returned to England.

Hobday concluded his five years at Hobart on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 1921. Civic receptions were held two days later in the Town Hall, morning and evening. Speakers for the evening meeting included the Premier (Sir Walter Lee), the Mayor, Police Magistrate, Members of Parliament, and various ministers of the Hobart Churches. They expressed themselves in the highest and most sincere terms regarding Hobday's work and ability, both as a minister and as a citizen.

During the years covered by the pastorate of Hobday, the membership had been maintained, notwithstanding many removals and stringent revisions. His approach had been dramatic and won a large following. There had been many conversions and baptisms, the congregations had been large, and more money was contributed, both to the general expenses and the missionary cause, than ever before in the history of the church.

Hobday's ministry had been unique. He had always been a fearless and conscientious expositor of God's Word. His sermons had always been of a very high order of merit, both as literary productions and as faithful declarations of "The whole counsel of God."

Hobday touched many phases of life in the city, as President (for three years in succession) and

Secretary of the Council of Churches. His fearless utterances and his vigorous work, together with his great organizing skill, were of the utmost value to the Council and carried it through a period of usefulness unexcelled at any time in its previous history. He was also President of the Baptist Union of Tasmania in 1919. His debating society continued for several years after he left.

On his return journey to England, he ministered for ten Sundays in Adelaide. In June the following year, he accepted the call to become Pastor of the Baptist church at Denmark Place, Camberwell, South England. Hobday remained to 1934 when he transferred to the Sandown

Baptist Church on the Isle of Wight for two years. On his way to a preaching engagement in New Zealand in 1938, he visited Hobart in October and preached. Back in London in 1940, he pastored at The Downs Baptist Church, Clapton, a position he retained until his retirement in 1945.

In 1949, while holidaying in Hobart, he undertook an interim ministry for three months. The highlight of this period was his service of dedication to foreign missions of one of the young ladies of the church. At a Christmas party in the School Room, he rendered Dickens' "The Christmas Carol" and other selections. Edward Herbert Hobday, the Tabernacle's fifth Pastor, died on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1966.

## CHAPTER SIX

### A MAN OF EXCELLENCE

#### DONOVAN MITCHELL (1923-1927)

During a pastorless period of nearly eighteen months, following the leaving of the Rev. E. Herbert Hobday, the church was ministered to by city ministers of other denominations and by mainland men who had accepted the invitation to spend their holidays in Hobart and preach. The faithfulness of the choir, the sustained interest in the Literary and Debating Society, and the work in the Sunday school, all enthusiastically led by G.J. (Jimmy) McLeod, kept the church in good heart. Finally the name of the Rev. Donovan F. Mitchell came before the church.

#### **REV. DONOVAN F. MITCHELL**

Mitchell, of the Bankstown Baptist Church, N.S.W., was hailed as one of the outstanding young men of the denomination. This good reputation was confirmed on the visit of a number of deacons to the mainland where they heard him present a paper to the Third Australian Baptist Congress in Melbourne in August 1922. The assigned topic was 'Baptists and their belief about the Spiritual condition of the young child.

As a young man Donovan Mitchell had come to Australia from New Zealand, his sister being the wife of Dr. E.M. Blaiklock, the classical and New Testament scholar. Mitchell was a carpenter by trade. At this time, the Rev. C.J. Tinsley was exercising a most effective ministry at Stanmore Baptist Church and Donovan became one of his young men. Fired with a zeal for evangelism, he soon began to feel a call to prepare for Christian service with a particular leaning towards the mission field.

In July 1914, he enrolled as a student for the Baptist ministry in N.S.W. Already in June he had been appointed by the Home Mission as pastor at Mortdale. His arrival marked the commencement of a period of successful evangelistic effort and church build-up. During his brief pastorate of twenty months, there were many conversions, the baptistry was frequently in use and church membership rose from thirty-one to fifty-eight. Open air meetings were started, the local hall taken for Sunday evening services. Work was re-commenced in Penshurst and the possibility of expansion into Como was investigated. Yet, despite this intense activity, he did a full course of study privately or on some tutorial basis under the Education Committee for there was as yet no Baptist Theological College in N.S.W.

When, in March 1916, the N.S.W. Baptist Theological College began, Mitchell was in the first intake of students. The thought of service with the Foreign Mission was still with him but the idea was given up at some point during his course. His interest in mission work, however, did not abate as witnessed by the memoir of Ellen Arnold which he subsequently wrote. During his three college years (1916-18), he not only excelled in his studies but effectively pastored the growing church at Hornsby and added the responsibility of a new work at Pymble.

With his College work entering its final phase in July 1918, he enlisted for service with the A.I.F. and was granted leave of absence by the Union. The 1918 Assembly of the N.S.W. Union granted him full ministerial status. Much to the displeasure of the Union Executive, though Mitchell failed to attend his ordination in September as arranged - he was at Wentworth Falls on honeymoon and, so far as he knew, about to embark on the field of battle. Apparently, however, the denominational fathers had some appreciation of the young pastor's dilemma, for it was decided to hold the ordination service at Hornsby in November. Before that day came, the war was over and, with the signing of the Armistice, Mitchell resumed his pastorate at Hornsby with a young bride at his side.

As from the beginning of 1919, the Home Mission moved him to Lismore in northern N.S.W. The following year, he was appointed to the church at Bankstown, a western suburb of Sydney. Before the year was out, Bankstown Church had agreed to initiate work at the neighbouring suburb of Punchbowl.

#### **MITCHELL AT HOBART**

Mitchell accepted the call from Hobart and was welcomed with his wife and two children by the congregation on 8<sup>th</sup> May, 1923. In his reply to the welcome, he said that he believed in preaching, and yet only in the pulpit. In the homes of the people would he endeavour to give the highest service.

For Mitchell there was no new Gospel and he would preach what would comfort men, help them in life's difficulties, and bring them nearer to Christ. He hoped to emulate the example of the men who preceded him but, while he could not be either Boreham or Hobday, he would assuredly be himself, and in all earnestness and

sincerity endeavour to fulfil his obligations. His preaching proved to be studied, logical and appealing in its simplicity. Attendances at the morning and evenings soon showed a marked increase.

Work among the young people was of a priority to him. He endeavoured to train them, through the Young People's Guild (which was really the Literary and Debating Society with the introduction of study circles) to understand the true value of things spiritual. They were also encouraged to work out and present to the open meeting some particular phrase of the study. One evening the discussion was on the subject, "Is success or failure the greater strain on character?" The following week a speaker gave as his topic, "Art and Literature." Another evening was devoted to a debate, the subject, "Is it ever right to tell a lie?" At yet another meeting, the Guild received a great treat when Madame Helen George "opened the door and took them into the hall of musical appreciation, explaining and demonstrating a few of the wonders understood only by those whose intense application to study enables them to read the minds and interpret the moods and passions of musical composers." Social evenings formed part of the syllabi Mitchell who joined the young at tennis, was a leader at their picnic outings.

In his attempt to relate the principles of Jesus Christ to the thought of the day, his sermons were "brimful of helpfulness". Subjects included, "What is the Christian attitude to competition?" In his earnest desire for the deepening of the spiritual life of the church and congregation, his sermon in "Silent Worship" concluded with these words:

Let us, then, labour for an inward stillness - An inward stillness and an inward healing; That perfect silence where the lips and heart

Are still, and we no longer entertain

Our own imperfect thoughts and vain opinions,

But God alone "speaks in us, and we wait

In singleness of heart, that we may know

His will, and in the silence of our spirits,

That we may do His will, and do that only.

In making a special application of Gospel truth to modern civic needs (two of the deacons were contesting political elections) and demonstrating how Hobart and every other city may be brought nearer to the ideals of the Creator, Mitchell delivered a two part series. The first part was entitled "The Elusive City" and the latter "The Eternal City". Good congregations were attracted. Mitchell noted that the Hobart church was having an ever-widening social influence. He

warned that, if the congregation was to maintain the church in the community, it would be by discharging its obligations, and one of them was to support its public men, not simply criticize, and get behind those who were, in all matters of righteousness, seeking justice and honour.

Mitchell was working on the completion of his Bachelor of Arts Degree at Sydney University when he entered the work of the Tabernacle and it was the request of the deacons that his pastoral work should not be allowed to interfere. The degree was conferred in absentia in May 1924. Mitchell graduated with first-class honours in philosophy. He had headed the list in philosophy each year, in the first year qualifying for the Lithgow scholarship and, in both second and third years, was awarded the Professor's prize. He was the first minister of the church to gain a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Further addresses such as "The Expulsive Power of a Secular Education", and "Group Loyalty and the Kingdom of God", published in the Australian Baptist, exhibited mature thought and philosophical endowment.

#### THE MEMORIAL TABLET

On Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> November, 1923, the evening service was of a special nature, and a large congregation assembled to witness the unveiling of the Memorial Tablet erected to the memory of the men from the church who fell in the war. Special invitations had been extended to the Mothers' and Wives' Association, Returned Soldiers' Association, and the Fathers' Association, and members of these bodies attended in large numbers. The Inter-State delegates to the Returned Soldiers' Association Conference, who had just met in Hobart, were also present.

A stirring address was given by Rev. R.W. Dobbinson, of N.S.W. who was an original Anzac having been at the landing at Gallipoli. The tablet was unveiled by Salisbury, who lost his only son at the front, and who then volunteered as a munitions worker in England. The tablet (still in place today) is of marble, simple in design, but it effectively keeps hallowed the memory of the following men whose names are inscribed thereon:- S. Burge, C. Hannigan, S. Lake, H. Rossendell, C.N. Salisbury, W.J. Turner, and E.C.M. Woolley.

Cecil N. Salisbury was Secretary of the Sunday school before he departed for the war; he was also the first man from the University of Tasmania to lay down his life at the front.

It so happened that he was on observation duty at dead of night. He looked over the parapet and reported "Everything quiet!" A minute or two later

he looked again, and fell back into the trench with a bullet through his temple.

At his old home far away everything was quiet too! In his room there lay his Bible; he took a smaller one to the Front. He did not believe in Bible-marking; but before leaving for the Front, he marked three texts - one for him-self, one for his parents, and one for the world:

#### THIS FOR HIMSELF ^

"He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." 1 John 3:16

#### THIS FOR HIS FATHER AND MOTHER

"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces." Isa. 25:8

#### THIS FOR ALL THE WORLD

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

#### THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

The desire was in the heart of Mitchell that the church should possess a pipe organ and he suggested that a fund be commenced and the organ purchased on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary. Between £300 and £400 was raised but the collection of funds for this purpose was called off for that time because of the outstanding debt on the manse. The money so raised was loaned to the church to reduce the mortgage.

A very special effort was then made to clear the debts by seeking to raise £1000 extra over five years. This was so successful that the target was reached in three years. With the manse debt cleared, the organ fund loan was released as a separate fund. This paved the way for a commencement of a Diamond Jubilee Fund for alterations to the interior of the sanctuary.

The fortieth anniversary services were celebrated on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> March, 1924, with every mark of enthusiasm. Unusually large congregations gathered on the Sunday, Mitchell preached at both services. In the morning the sermon was entitled "Forty Silver Sockets", the burden of the message being that, in the divine order, the forty years which had passed were but a foundation of silver on which the present generation were to erect a temple of gold. The tone of the whole service was "The best is yet to be."

On the following day, the Lecture Hall presented a pleasing and pretty sight, when more folk gathered for tea than could be seated. The table of honour was reserved for members of the church who had worshipped in the "shedifice." Among these pioneers able to be present were

Joshua T. Soundy and his wife, Elizabeth, C.M. Soule and his wife, Amelia Benjafield, wife of the late Dr. Harry Benjafield and Lizzy Dossetor, wife of the late T.A. Dossetor. Greetings were read from Samuel B. Pitt, his daughter, Clara Haywood, and Minnie Hawkins, the wife of the late J. Hawkins.

#### JOHN SOUNDY - THE MAYOR OF HOBART, MHA

John Soundy, the draper's son from England and Church Secretary, had climbed through hard work, perseverance and unshakable personal integrity to the top of the civic tree in Australia's second oldest capital City.

Soundy was elected mayor in 1924, for his first term of several as first citizen. He was elected mayor again in 1929, during Depression years, serving two terms until 1932 when he again stepped down from the top job.

In 1938 Soundy returned to the hustings, and no one was surprised when he was again installed as Hobart's popularly chosen Lord Mayor. An author of a pen-portrait published at that time declared Hobart's motto "Sic Fortis Hobartia Crevit" ("Thus Hobart Grows Strong") stood as the "inevitable caption to any picture of the Lord Mayor..." Said the writer, "There are few better known in Hobart than the tall, spare, slightly stooped figure of the Lord Mayor, whose ever-present smile and ever-readiness to laugh have won him so many friends."

Due to World War Two, Soundy remained first citizen for the next eight years, and finally retired as an alderman in 1950. At the time of his retirement from the Legislative Council in April 1952, he was Deputy President and Chairman of Committees of this upper house of Parliament. A Depression years break of four years from the Council meant he had served the city for twenty-seven years over thirty-three years.

Soundy was given great credit for innovative thinking on a notoriously conservative city council. The first five year works expenditure plan was implemented under his leadership. He was keen to see better housing, and his background as a qualified sanitation and hygiene inspector in South Africa meant he had a keen interest in seeing Hobart had effective health administration. It was on his motion that the council agreed to convert St. David's run-down old cemetery into the fine St. David's park of today.

But perhaps his greatest service came through his strongly-held humanitarian beliefs, given very practical application in the tough times of the Great Depression and World War Two. One observer said of him: "He headed many war-time patriotic organizations, and helped in raising

thousands of pounds. During the depression in the early 1930s, he was behind many schemes for the alleviation of distress, unemployment relief, and the distribution of blankets. During those dark days, Soundy dug deeply into his own pocket and, when later elected to the House of Assembly, he gave portion of his parliamentary salary for the relief of unemployment. Soundy was greatly influenced by Walter Rauschenbush, the leading exponent and theologian of the social gospel in America until his death in 1918.

John Soundy made an equally impressive contribution to the Parliamentary life of the State. He had recently stepped down from his first term as mayor when, in 1925, he ran for the Nationalist Party - later Liberal Party - in Denison. He was returned at successive House of Assembly elections, and in 1946 resigned and successfully contested the Hobart seat in the Legislative Council. When he retired from the Legislative Council in 1952, he was completing twenty-seven years continuous service as a parliamentarian.

#### **ERIC CHARLES BURLEIGH**

In August 1924, Eric Charles Burleigh, only son of the church's greatly respected Deacon, Samuel Theophilus Burleigh, departed for England to study at Bristol College for ministerial training, Eric was a leader among the youth of the church, held a lucrative position in the business world and had commenced preaching in 1921, taking occasional services at the Hobart City Mission and the Sandy Bay Church. Boreham, Hobday and Mitchell all contributed to his preparation.

Born in Hobart on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1901, Eric became head prefect in his final year at the Hobart High School. At the University of Tasmania, he was first to secure Certificate of Commerce, and became qualified as Associate of Federal Institute of Accountants, and Associate of Australasian Institute of Secretaries. He was admitted as foundation member of Australasian Institute of Cost Accountants and, later, a member of the Institute of Commerce in England. Eric gained the B.A. degree and the Anderson-Pratten prize for Hebrew at Bristol College. On return, he married Doris Joyce, daughter of E.A. Joyce and his wife.

From December 1928 to November 1934, Burleigh pastored the Aberdeen Street Church, Geelong. During his ministry, a new work was opened at Norland. Burleigh then accepted a call to the Camberwell Baptist Church commencing in December 1934 and concluding in May 1944. The new church was opened in 1940, the Sunday school enlarged and fully graded. Church membership increased annually.

Burleigh became a member of Foreign Mission Board in 1934, and Chairman of Victorian Foreign Mission Committee in 1935, acted as Chairman of Foreign Mission Board to assist Rev. Hedley Sutton and, in 1943, was appointed Chairman. He began lecturing in the Victorian Baptist College in 1938, having been an examiner in Old Testament since 1930. He accepted increasing responsibility for lecturing, until in June 1944, having resigned from Camberwell, he became Professor of Old Testament Studies and Church History in the Baptist College of Victoria.

In 1940, Burleigh had graduated B.D. in the Melbourne College of Divinity and, in 1945, Professor Burleigh gained the B.D. of the University of London. He then became M.A. of the University of Bristol in 1950, and (ad eundum gradum) M.A. in the University of Adelaide in 1956. He undertook a series of Semitic studies in the University of Melbourne - Hebrew III, Aramaic and Syriac - in 1950-52. Professor Burleigh became the first member in Australia of the British Society of Old Testament studies, and was Secretary of the Australian Baptist Educational Board for seven years.

In 1952 the South Australian Theological College was established and Burleigh resigned his position at the Victorian Baptist College to become the Principal of the new College, the position he retained until his retirement in 1969. An interim pastorate at Westbourne Park then occupied his time. Principal-Emeritus Eric Charles Burleigh, M.A, B.D., a man of many gifts and capabilities, one of Hobart's honoured sons, died on 20<sup>th</sup> June, 1974.

#### **F.W. HERITAGE**

In November 1924, F.W. Heritage resigned from the position of Church Treasurer after twenty-one years of service. He had been "proud to be the Treasurer of such a liberal people". Heritage had succeeded J.T. Soundy in the position.

When Heritage had arrived from England in 1890 he was employed by Burgess Bros., wholesalers. He later transferred to the firm of Dehle Bennison, and, after the outbreak of the First World War, assumed control of the business in his own name, F.W. Heritage and Co. Heritage purchased large premises at the corner of Collins and Victoria Streets. He was elected to the Chamber of Commerce and was President for a term. He was also a Warden of the Marine Board.

Heritage, a member of the church's Literary and Debating Society, was instrumental in the purchase of the manse site. He always had a soft spot for his employees, and was understanding towards those who looked to him for direction, whether in business or in the church. In 1925, he contested the Hobart seat in the Legislative

Council, but was not successful, even though he was well supported. In 1928, he resigned from the Diaconate after twenty-four years as a deacon through some of the darkest days of the church's history. By cheerful optimism, wise counsel and careful finance, he helped to restore confidence and ensure success." He died in 1944.

### **JACK KIPPAX**

In August 1926 Jack Kippax crossed to Melbourne to complete his studies at the Melbourne College of Pharmacy and also to prepare himself for foreign missionary work. Kippax, who had passed through the Sunday school, joined the church, successfully completed his examinations in connection with the Pharmacy Board of Tasmania in 1928. Rex and Athol Townley graduated about the same time. In the same year, he became engaged to Nell Cox of Lindsfarn and they were both accepted by the Sudan United Mission for work in the Sudan - Nell as a missionary nurse and Jack as a missionary pharmacist. The mission is interdenominational in character and had for its object the placing of a chain of mission stations from East to West - right across the Sudan to stem the onward march of Islam. At that time, the 40,000,000 people of the Central Sudan were virtually untouched by any missionary effort. To this area the Kippaxes were called and it was not long before the medical work, under the supervision of Dr. Ron Trudinger (well known to many in Hobart), was breaking down the prejudices among the dark people and opened up the way for evangelistic and educational work to be undertaken.

In a letter from Kippax in 1930, he told of a very interesting journey he made as he travelled day and night in a small open boat and native dug-out for nearly 300 miles down the Nile to meet his fiancée at the Red Sea coast. He described this trip as one of the most thrilling experiences of his life - hippopotami surfacing to look at the little craft trespassing in their territory; crocodiles basking in the tropical sun on the mudflats; elephants thumping their way through the bushland. In spite of the tropical storms, he reached his destination in good time for the wedding at Christ Church, Port Sudan.

For eleven years, the Kippaxes worked among the very primitive Dinka tribe. S.U.M. missionaries were working in other parts of the Sudan and, by the time expatriates were forced to leave the country, they were able to see churches established as well as hospitals and schools.

On their return from work on the field, the Kippaxes worked unreservedly in the life of the church, Jack became General Superintendent of

the Sunday school for eleven years and Nell was active in the Baptist Women's Association. Following his wife's death in 1971, Jack married New Zealander, Isa Loudon, who had also served in the Sudan with her husband, the Rev. Adam Loudon. They too had been stationed at Rom, during the Kippax's time. In his latter years, Jack Kippax, now Life Deacon, extends a warm welcome to all who attend the worship services at the Tabernacle.

### **SALE OF THE BAPTIST BURIAL GROUND**

The first interments took place in the Cornelian Bay Cemetery in 1872, a new large cemetery situated on a promontory formed by New Town and Cornelian bays. Prior to 1872, an Act of the Legislature closed all graveyards within the town boundaries. Soon to be closed was the Baptist burial ground at the corner of Clare and Fraser Streets, New Town, which had been granted to the Baptists of Harrington Street Chapel in their earliest times.

In 1915, Boreham and Harry Sidwell visited the ground and found that many of the graves were much out of order and the fencing in need of repair. The earliest inscription, a record of the Edgar's loss of their first born, read:

"To the memory of F.S. & H.E. Edgar. Interred in the church cemetery, Hobart, 21 January, 1837. 3 months."

The last person buried there was Mary Williams, the mother of David Williams, who had died on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1902, in her eighty-ninth year - "Asleep until the day dawns, and the shadows pass away". A Baptist allotment had been allowed in the new Cornelian Bay Cemetery.

In 1924, the Baptist Union agreed to the sale of the old cemetery. The conditions were that the money from the sale be devoted to defraying the debt on the Sandy Bay church building, and for a deposit on the purchase of the manse there.

On the transfer of the remains to a common grave at the Cornelian Bay Cemetery, the names of the people buried at the old cemetery were recorded. Sixteen other early cemeteries suffered the same fate.

### **MEN'S SOCIETY**

In February 1927 a Baptist Men's Association was formed by Athol Townley on his return from Sydney where he had experienced the vitality of such a movement. For some time, it was felt that there might be great advance in having all the men of the church united into a composite body for the transacting of church business and the helping forward of all church functions. The Association was conducted on lines similar to those of Toc H, but with little formality and the

free and easy spirit of good comradeship and the helpful elements of brotherhood.

#### **MITCHELL'S RESIGNATION AND FAREWELL**

In December 1926, Mitchell notified the church he had accepted a call to the Flinders Street Church, Adelaide. The announcement was received with regret. At farewell meetings in March, Mitchell said that he had considered it best not only in his own interests, but in those of the church that he should accept the call made to him to take charge of one of the Baptist congregations of Adelaide. Mitchell felt that he would be enabled to wield more influence in the larger sphere. Only four years had passed (it had been Mitchell's original intention to stay ten years) and now they were losing a man whom they had all learned to regard with the very highest respect. The unfortunate part of it all was that Tasmania was losing the best of her men, who were being "grabbed" for positions on the mainland.

His ministry had been of a scholarly nature, entirely distinct from any previous ministry at the church.

Not only had Mitchell gained the respect and admiration of the lay members of the community, but he had endeared himself to the clergymen of every denomination. The Anglican Bishop, in paying a tribute to the work done by Mitchell in Hobart, expressed appreciation of the happy relations that existed between him and the Anglican clergy. There were five clergymen from city churches present, which was evidence of the genuine feeling of goodwill toward him. It was a matter of regret that they were losing his companionship and fellowship from the Council of Churches. In reply, Mitchell said that he could not let the occasion pass without expressing his very deep consciousness of the Christian unity in the community, and not least in that influence was the attitude of the Bishop. Bishop Hay had given him a new conception of the Anglican Church. Tasmania seemed to have gone far toward the ideal of Christian co-operation, and he hoped the State would set an example to the world in the direction of Christian unity. He had learned to appreciate the difficulties against which the people of Tasmania were struggling and, when in Adelaide, would act as an ambassador for the State.

In Tasmania, Mitchell had had a wide sphere of influence. For near three years he had been editor of the Tasmanian Baptist Church Chronicle. He was the State representative on the Federal Board of Education, closely associated with Toc H, and in the Australian Christian Student Movement.

#### **MITCHELL'S LATER YEARS**

This big man, with a big heart and a wide outlook, served the Adelaide Church for nearly six years, during which time he abundantly evidenced an earnest desire for the deepening of the spiritual life of the church. His conspicuous ability as a preacher was well recognized in the city, suburbs, and country, and his departure to Victoria in 1933 was a definite loss to the community. The call had come from Armadale.

Soon after he arrived in Victoria, he was invited to lecture at the Baptist College of Victoria in Theology. He brought a keen insight and enthusiasm to the task, so that his work was an inspiration to the students. He was aware of current theological trends and sympathetic with the aims and methods of scientific Biblical criticism. Soon it became evident that, when the need arose, here was a man who might share more fully in the task of theological education. Mitchell prepared himself for this eventuality, and secured the B.D. degree in 1937.

By this time, the Principal, the Rev. W.H. Holdsworth, M.A., and the Professor, Dr. Wilkin, were seeking relief from their duties. Dr. Wilkin, now aged 82 years, resigned at the end of the 1937 College session. Ill-health made the early retirement of the Principal imperative. The College set about the task of nominating a successor. While the position was widely advertised, many believed that selection would fall upon one of two men, Mitchell or J.E. Newnham, M.A., the president of the College. Even though the choice of the Committee all but unanimously fell upon Mitchell, the Executive Council of the College was divided on the issue. No decision was forthcoming. There was some suspicion of Mitchell's attitude to Biblical criticism, but none could question the effectiveness of his ministry at Armadale under very difficult circumstances. The position was aggravated by an editorial entitled "Baptists at the Cross-Roads", in the Edifier. This was an undenominational newspaper widely read in Baptist homes. The article called for the "appointment of a man who is loyal to the entire Word of God". The editorial gave a false perspective to the issues involved, and reflected upon the integrity of men concerned in the matter. In essence, there was a division of opinion in the Union between those who favoured the leadership of a great man who could be trusted to maintain what had been best in the denomination's past history, and others, including a majority of the younger graduates of the College, who believed that, after the decline of recent years, there should not be a new approach to theological education.

A second special Council was soon summoned when the College Committee asked for an expression of opinion about their nominee,

Mitchell. His cause was ably championed by the aged Wilkin, whom all respected. When the matter was put to the vote, the nomination was declined by a slender majority, seventy-seven voting for Mitchell compared with the eighty-five against. In the following month, Assembly had no alternative but to confirm Holdsworth in the principalship until a successor was appointed.

Not long afterwards, Mitchell resigned from the Baptist ministry. Only three years earlier he had written: "I love the Baptist Church. It is the one branch of the Church I have known. I love its style, its liberty, its simplicity, its passion, its devotion and foundations. I owe the Baptist Fellowship a debt of love and service which can

never be repaid." There were some who questioned his integrity. This was totally unwarranted. When Mitchell resigned from the Baptist ministry, three others did likewise. A small number followed in subsequent years in protest.

Donovan F. Mitchell, B.A., B.D., entered the Presbyterian Church with pastorates at Surrey Hills and the College Church, University, Carlton. His death in May 1954 was unreported in Baptist publications.

It was only after two and one half years following Mitchell's leave that a man responded to the call to be the Pastor of the church. That man was The Rev. H.G. Hackworthy.

**CHAPTER SEVEN**  
**BUILDING UP THE BODY**  
**HAROLD G. HACKWORTHY (1930-1940)**

It was only after two and one half years following Mitchell's leave that a man responded to the call to be the Pastor of the church. That man was The Rev. H.G. Hackworthy.

**THE REV. H.G. HACKWORTHY**

During the previous pastorless period, between the leaving of the Rev. H.E. Hobday and the arrival of the Rev. Donovan F. Mitchell, Harold George Hackworthy of N.S.W as young graduate preached for four Sundays. Unbeknown to the church, it was his wish someday to enter into ministry there. His wish was fulfilled in 1930. In Hobart he would exercise a fruitful ministry for ten years.

Hackworthy was born at Newcastle, New South Wales, in 1891. He was educated at Newcastle College. He served for a period as a carpenter and joiner, then had thoughts about the medical profession, but the call to the ministry intervened.

He entered the New South Wales Baptist Home Mission in 1911 and was appointed to Manildra, where he spent two years. He served for a short time at Barmedman and Leeton and, in 1914, entered the Baptist College of Victoria as a New South Wales candidate for the ministry.

The outbreak of World War 1 interrupted his plans. In 1915 he enlisted in the A.I.F. The experience through which Hackworthy passed was of priceless value to him. The machine-gun section to which he belonged endured its share of hardness as good soldiers. It saw service in such places as Polygon Wood, Ypres, along the Somme and in other places for many years long familiar to the Australian mind. Hackworthy had a stirring tale to tell of the final stages of the Great War. The last overwhelming German push in the dark days of 1918 was finally stemmed, the Australian division proving a bulwark to the other forces. It alone rescued an American force from complete annihilation. He was awarded the Military Cross for conspicuous bravery under enemy fire.

He was wounded and spent some time in hospital in England where he met and subsequently married the gracious lady who was to share his future life and ministry.

Hackworthy has never lost sight of his calling. He took advantage of his residence in London to begin his Arts course in King's College, prior to returning to Australia to resume his theological studies. His ordination took place on 17<sup>th</sup>

February. He was then appointed to Ingleburn, New South Wales, and while there attended the Sydney University and the New South Wales Baptist College.

In 1921 he was called to the South Yarra Baptist Church, Victoria. By this time the once flourishing church at South Yarra had suffered from the removal of many of its stalwart families and was feeling the encroachments of the inner suburban problem. Hackworthy applied himself to the problem and his ministry of less than five years had consolidated the work to a remarkable degree. During his ministry at South Yarra he completed his Master of Arts degree.

Pastor Blaikie was elected editor of the "Southern Baptist," with Mr. J. T. Soundy as business manager.

In 1925, he returned to England and, for four years, was minister of Ebenezer Baptist Church at Burnley, Lancashire. In 1929, he returned to Australia and, after a brief pastorate at Lloyd Street Baptist Church, East Malvern, Hobart welcomed him in October 1930.

In the pastorate, he achieved a friendliness and understanding that won for him the friendship of men and women in every walk of life. For him, deep fellowship with his people was essential, not only to his ministry but to life itself. He could be jolly, with a boyish joyfulness, and yet he could be dignified and serious. For youth he had a magnetic attraction. While to them he was "Hack", he never lost dignity by this, but was always highly respected.

He was an omnivorous reader and a skilled debater. His capacity for work was enormous. He was a creative thinker who often did not stop to work out the 'ideas' that flowed lavishly from his well furnished mind. He was scholarly, but his scholarship was never of the bookish type - it was related to practical issues. To talk with him was to be stimulated intellectually.

He would at times shock people by the sheer audacity of his utterances, and he loved to shock them because he believed that people needed at times to be shocked out of complacency. Yet when, his statements were examined, it was found that they were never airy, fairy theories, but sound common sense. He had the true gift of a leader, the capacity to inspire other people to action.

He had a strong, forthright, forceful personality but, above all, he was a man of strong principles

and high ethical sense. Whatever hurt his fellow men weighed heavily upon his heart. He never rested until wrongs were righted. In all his dealings with those he opposed there was no malice, but a strong sense of justice and righteousness.

He could be devastatingly forthright. One day, he attended a public function where citizens from all sections of Hobart were present. He singled out one guest at the function, a publican, and addressed him in that imperious way he sometimes had: "It has come to my ears that there is out-of-hours trading at your hotel. That must cease. If it does not, I shall take steps to see that it does". Another time, he got into hot water through a sermon he preached on social righteousness. He took a certain town as an illustration. It was quite obvious that the sermon went home.

His sermons were simplicity itself. He evidenced a simple faith that many people never guessed that he travelled through doubts and difficulties. Hackworthy was conscientious in the sense of having a great dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of his work. Frequently Sunday night was a time of depression. In those times his wife, Allison, was his great comfort. He once said of her, "I have never known such faith, and such courage. I never thought that such faith and courage could exist."

His contact with affairs was wide. Soon after the Rev. R.W. Dobbinson became Pastor of Cimitiere Street Baptist Church, Launceston, in 1938 he and his wife were invited to spend a few days as guests in the manse at Hobart. On the morning following their arrival, Hackworthy asked, "Would you like to go around and see the Governor?" Hiding his amazement, Dobbinson assented. In Sydney, Baptist ministers did not just drop in on the Governor. Within a few minutes, they were in His Excellency's study taking morning tea. As they talked, the Governor said, "I'm glad you called, Mr. Hackworthy; I was going to ask you to do so, as there is something I wish you would do for me." Then followed the information. His Excellency desired a delicate and important affair to be handled without himself appearing in it. He turned not to the Anglican Bishop, but to Hackworthy, pastor of the Baptist Church, at which church the Governor often worshipped. His work in Hobart brought him into contact with men in public life, several of whom were members of his own church. One of these was Sir Ernest Clark, the Governor.

#### **THE CALL TO FULL TIME MINISTRY**

Almost yearly during Hackworthy's time, young men and women were farewelled as they departed to take up Biblical, theological and

missionary studies. They testified to the call of God.

There were some fine reports sent home and notable ministries resulted.

Tasmanian Trevor Morris and English born (Tasmanian educated) Fred Levett began studies at the Melbourne Bible Institute in the early thirties. Levett also studied singing in Melbourne. Levett followed this with a radio ministry with 3LO and Inter-Church Evangelism. In 1935, they joined the Mildmay Movement for World Evangelism, and began twenty-seven years of globe-trotting, taking the Gospel message to ninety-three countries. During those years, the two evangelists travelled through three revolutions, camped with pygmies, lived with Indians in the Andes and were feted with jungle rat in Borneo. The work was briefly interrupted when Levett joined the RAAF during the Second World War.

Levett joined the Bible Society in 1964 as Public Relations Officer and was appointed Victorian State Secretary four years later. He gave inspired leadership in Victoria and had been deeply involved with its national and international commitments, retiring in 1978.

In August 1932, Miss Ida Cockayne left for China to work in the office of the China Inland Mission. In 1933, another Kippax set her sights on foreign mission work. Following her marriage to Gordon Rogers, Jessie proceeded with her husband to New Guinea to take up mission work with the Unevangelised Field Mission in an inland district on the Fly River. Both were compelled to return consequent upon heavy attacks of malaria. They settled on the mainland, Gordon following his vocation as an Engineer.

#### **REV. E. MCINTYRE KIPPAX**

Another son of Edward and Janet Kippax responded to the call to Christian Ministry. In 1935, E. McIntyre graduated from the Victorian Baptist College; he had been an assistant to the Rev. J.H. Goble at the Gordon Street Baptist Church, Footscray. Kippax pastored the Auburn Church in 1935 and later the Colac work. He was one of those who resigned from the Baptist ministry over the leadership crisis surrounding Mitchell in 1934. Kippax joined Mitchell in the Presbyterian ministry.

After a course of further study at Ormond College, Kippax spent five years at Smeaton Presbyterian Church. In 1947, he was called to the Strathaven Presbyterian Church where he served as pastor for nearly twenty years. During his time, the membership of the church increased from 100 to over 300 members. This necessitated the erection of a new church building.

### **ALBERT FREDERICK ROBERTS**

Another to take up studies for the ministry in Hackworthy's time was Albert Frederick Roberts, the older son of Albert Edward and Isobel Roberts.

The family had arrived in Hobart from Ballarat during Hobday's ministry. In Ballarat, they had attended a Methodist Church but immediately involved themselves in the life of the Baptist Tabernacle. Following the love of his parents, Albert studied music pianoforte and pipe organ, and possessed, like his father, a fine bass voice. Although a member of the Tabernacle, Albert became organist and choirmaster of the Swan Street Methodist Church, prior to his leaving for Melbourne. It was on his twenty-first birthday that he announced his intention of applying for acceptance as a trainee for foreign mission work. He began studies in 1934 at the Melbourne Bible Institute and, in the same year, qualified as a pharmacist. Albert completed studies at M.B.I. the following year and began further studies at the Baptist College of Victoria under the Australian Baptist Foreign Mission and the Baptist Union of Tasmania. Albert was ordained by Hackworthy in January 1939 in the Hobart Tabernacle.

Roberts was not able to proceed to the foreign field and so entered the home ministry at Longford from 1939 to 1941. In 1940, it was decided that Longford and Perth would work under a joint pastorate. Four years followed for Roberts at Ulverstone and Penguin on the Tasmanian North-west Coast. Roberts then accepted a call from the Brighton Church in South Australia where he served for nine years. His love for foreign mission work had not abated. He was Foreign Mission Secretary for six years and served on a number of Councils and committees in the work of the Baptist Union of South Australia. Roberts was President of the Union in 1952 and again in 1972.

A move to Victoria followed in 1954 where Roberts pastored the Brunswick Church from 1954 to 1958. Once again he served on various Union departments and was chairman of the Australian Baptist Foreign Mission Board for two years, following which he accepted an appointment as Secretary of the Asia Regional Committee of the A.B.M.S., which was located in Adelaide. After six years in this office, he returned to pastoral work, serving for eleven years at Hillcrest, which he left in 1975 for special Home Mission work in Renmark, where he served for two years prior to retirement in 1977. Since retirement, he has served in a number of Interim Pastorates, including Canberra, and Eastern Shore in Hobart. Following open heart surgery in 1981, he retired from all executive

activities although still engaging in interim supply and occasional preaching

### **JOHN DAVID WILLIAMS**

John David Williams is another Hobartian to play an important part in the Baptist work on the mainland.

Williams, baptized on 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 1933, is the third generation of his family to come into membership at the Tabernacle. His grandfather, David, was the Secretary of the Particular Baptist Church in Harrington Street in 1882, and was later Secretary of the Tabernacle from 1906 to 1916. His father, Les, also joined the church in 1902.

Williams, educated at the Hobart High School, went into his father's joinery business and completed his apprenticeship as a carpenter. He was the fourth generation in the business which had commenced in 1853 in North Hobart.

After he left school he became involved with a number of the members of the church in the Ware Street Mission in North Hobart and this encouraged him, with the guidance and help of Hackworthy, to train for the ministry. Before going to the Victorian Baptist College he spent time as Assistant to Rev. Robert Steel in the Deloraine district.

After completing his course in the college, under the guidance of the Tasmanian Baptist Home Mission

Department, he gained his B.A. with honours and B.D. from Melbourne and also London; he was ordained in Hobart Tabernacle on 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1942. He then went to South Hobart and helped to establish a church in a hall where the Hobart members had conducted a mission for some years. Later he was persuaded to become Interim Minister of the Tabernacle while Rev. E. Roberts-Thomson was away on chaplaincy work with the R.A.A.F. Devonport Baptist Church followed from 1942 to 1948.

With all the force of his scholarly preaching, with his broadcasts, with his study classes among the young, with the strength of his own personality, he was doing his utmost to see that the Devonport church delivered the goods - "If a church does not justify itself, it will cease to be. It is like a house of business in one respect -it must deliver the goods it is intended to distribute." Williams warmed lukewarm people and pointed the great truth that no life, be it church, social, sporting, home, or political can be divorced from Christianity and yet succeed. He made his listeners realize that in Christianity lies the world's hope. In Tasmania he was Secretary of the Overseas Missionary Committee.

In 1949 he accepted a call to North Adelaide where he stayed until 1958. Williams was President of the Baptist Union of South Australia in 1956. In South Australia he was chairman of both the Overseas and Home Mission Committees.

In 1958 Williams then took over from Rev. Frank Marsh as General Secretary of the Australian Baptist Foreign Mission, a position he held until 1982. In 1959 the mission became the Australian Baptist Missionary Society, thus removing from the title the now odious word "foreign". During this ministry the work expanded tremendously and whereas the work was confined mainly to Bengal, India and New Guinea when he took over as Secretary it now involves work in India, Bangladesh, Thailand, New Guinea, Timor, Indonesia, Zambia, Hong Kong and also among Muslims in Australia, as well as aborigines in Central Australia. In 1882 the A.B.M.S. had one missionary in Bengal.

### **HOBART'S MORAL VICTORY**

The election of Ald. John Soundy, M.H.A., by the electors, as Mayor of Hobart in May 1930 was a moral as well as a municipal victory. The fact that Ald. Soundy had been chosen for this high position for the third year in succession was evidence of the high esteem in which he was held. Since the mid 1880's the post had been filled by the aldermen electing one of their own number. But this year Parliament changed the Hobart Corporation Act to provide that the Lord Mayor be elected by the ratepayers. 1 So he was placed in the chair by the direct votes of the citizens of Hobart who were "tailed upon to say who their mayor should be.

There was another aspect of the election which enhanced its importance for those who stood for Baptist principles, and for all who cherish the privileges of the Lord's Day. The Hobart mayoral election was largely contested on the question of allowing the picture theatres to open on Sunday. The issue had agitated the public mind in Hobart for a long time and reached its climax during the election.

The picture shows were, for a time, open on Sundays in Hobart, but Mayor Soundy refused to allow them to continue. He met with stout opposition from vested interests and those people who had no regard for the Day of Rest; but he bravely and resolutely stood to his guns and was prepared to stake his chances of being re-elected mayor on that issue. With a total of 5560 votes he headed the poll, receiving nearly a thousand votes more than the next candidate on the list.

"The question which fair-minded citizens have to decide," said Ald. Soundy, "is this: Is it fair that one of the biggest commercial influences in

Australia should be allowed to do business seven days a week? Is it right to ask the staffs of the picture theatres to work seven days, for Sunday is the only day on which they are free at present?"

The answer of the Hobart citizens to this pertinent question was a decisive "No!"

To celebrate his win the Baptist Men's Association gave a dinner in his honour.

### **THE FINANCIAL DEPRESSION**

By early 1930, the acute downturn in the commercial world began to affect an increasing number of the inhabitants of Hobart. Businesses were folding up and the unemployment lines were lengthening. At the suggestion of one of their number, the members of the diaconate of the church formed themselves into a band to pray particularly for the Christian business men in the present time of financial and trade depression. Through their prayerful concern, these men had perforce to listen to tale after tale of blighted business hopes, losses and ruin narrated by small men who own small businesses which had been overwhelmed in the disastrous consequences of Australia's situation at the time, to say nothing of those whose business ineptitude has landed them in insolvency, in many cases at the expense of the bigger business man who had given them a start.

About seventy, mostly single, unemployed men enjoyed a substantial meal in the Lecture Hall on the Sunday preceding Christmas 1930. Under Hackworthy's guidance, this was provided by the Young Men's and Young Women's Fellowships with assistance from friends. As well, these people were enabled to take away with them good parcels of food. Remarkd one of the recipients, "Your priest is a good bloke."

At that time, a little piece of Christian work was offered to and accepted by the Hobart Churches. Through the City Mission, dinner was being provided daily for a number of single unemployed men who were in a state of destitution. The ladies gladly took up their share of this work and provided for three days, which was their allotment.

Earlier, in July 1930, the Young People's Guild and the choir, assisted by helpers, arranged a concert in aid of the unemployed of the church membership. The proceeds were used for work on the property, so some found temporary employment.

In 1933, the church choir conductor, Fred W. Fone, instigated Carols by Candlelight in Hobart. Fone had had a distinguished role as choirmaster in England. In Hobart, he had become renowned for his introduction of Welsh music and Descants.

Fone enlisted the support of the Lord Mayor, John Soundy, and Franklin Square, opposite the Town Hall, was made available. Receipts from the Carols by Candlelight were added to the fund for the unemployed. The singing was lead predominantly by Fone's choir, popularly known as the Freddie Fone Choristers. Such was the success that it was repeated for several years, when it was arranged by the Hobart broadcasting station, 7HO, and the venue altered to St. David's Park, where it has continued annually.

Even so, the Freddie Fone Choristers continued to be used extensively by the A.B.C. in radio performances.

### **CONSTITUTION HILL BAPTIST CHAPEL**

Although Baptist work was growing in the north and south of the State, throughout the whole of the Midlands area there existed no Baptist witness whatever in the way of a Baptist Church. A new work was inaugurated in 1931 by the Hobart Open-Air Mission. As a result the Mission's work, the concern of the Moonah Baptist Church and the supervision evangelist N.C. Lumsden of Melbourne, a congregation and Sunday school were gathered at the Constitution Hill Baptist chapel but the work ultimately lapsed. There was never really any room for expansion in the district. The building was passed to the Kempton Council for use as a community hall. Nowadays, only the apex of the gable is visible from the south bound lane of the recently reconstructed highway. Speak's old weatherboard house was demolished to make way for the realignment. The house had been on the eastern side of the old highway, and the chapel on the western side.

### **JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS**

The Jubilee celebrations of the church were held in April 1934. Dr. Boreham occupied the pulpit during the month. The Revs. Raymond Farrer and Eric Burleigh also took part in the "back to the church" effort. The most striking thing of the celebrations was the fact that there were present three of the original members of the church in J.T. Soundy and his wife, Elizabeth, and Clara Haywood (nee Pitt). Alongside of these were also present two officers, Joseph George Greenland and Samuel Theophilus Burleigh, who had served under every minister of the church. At the great Sunday school demonstration, in attendance were one of the first teachers and actually the first scholar enrolled in the school. They were sisters Clara Haywood and Emmily Joyce, both of Burnie.

The church honoured itself by appointing two elders - Soundy and Greenland. The latter was a trusty and well-loved quiet man, who was always counted on when things were to be done. The festival opened with a garden party of a purely

social character given by F.W. Heritage and his wife in their usual generous fashion.

The children had a part to play in the Jubilee. For the first time in the history of Hobart, the children of all the Baptist schools were gathered together. Moonah hired a special tram, Sandy Bay walked and carred. South Hobart had a fleet of cars, and of course Hobart and Ware Street were on the spot. Four hundred and twenty-five children were in the church besides teachers and parents.

Special meetings were held culminating in the Jubilee tea and public meeting. Greetings were received from every former minister of the church still living and from friends scattered over Australia and overseas.

### **THE DEATH OF J.T. SOUNDY**

Soundy's death occurred at his home in North Hobart on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1935. Even in his last years, he was vigorous in mind and in spiritual fervour, and, as the "grand old man" of the Baptist cause in Tasmania, continued to take an active interest in all Baptist activities through the State.

At the time of his death, the firm, "Soundys", was a business institution, and the family was an integral part of Hobart civic and community life. J.T. had handed over control of the business to his son John in 1913. He had been in retirement from 1915 - by then he was aged seventy-five. His business had been conducted with strict attention to Christian standards of honesty and duty and everybody knew it. From one end of Tasmania to the other, his name was held in highest honour. Everybody spoke of him as a man whose word was his bond, a man who could be implicitly trusted, a man whose religion rang true. So wide was his reputation in this respect, and so trusted, that an Indian hawker, living in Hobart, on his return to India, stored his personal effects with Soundy in preference to leaving them with his own countrymen.

Soundy had been with Dr. Benjafield, the father of the Hobart Baptist Church. For years, he had guided its destiny and gave it of his best service. He had held practically every office in the church, but perhaps his greatest service was given as Superintendent of the Sunday school. Under him, the school grew to over three hundred scholars. He was regular in his attendance until about 1933. His last appearance at church was on the occasion of the Jubilee. He had been indeed the right hand of the minister, a father in God not only to the church but to the Baptist Union of Tasmania. He rendered valuable service to the whole denomination. His name first appears in the affairs of the Baptist Union of Tasmania at the April sessions in Launceston in 1886. Subsequently, he was elected to the Council of

the Baptist Union and rarely missed a meeting. For many years, he was treasurer of the Union, and financed it through its most difficult times. In 1897, Soundy was made Treasurer of the Sustentation Fund, of which he was one of the trustees. It was largely to his oversight that this Fund, inaugurated by generous bequests from William and Mary Ann Gibson, had increased.

As Treasurer of the Fund, he bought many properties which provided accommodation and served to raise funds & support the Baptist churches around Tasmania - particularly those finding it a struggle to retain a minister. Often Soundy advanced money on the mortgages.

He always took his offices and work in the church and denomination seriously; they had no secondary place with him. He occupied the position of President of the Baptist Union of Tasmania in ??? . It was largely due to his generosity, and his unceasing labours, that the cottage for retired Baptist ministers at Perth was secured. On more than one occasion, when Union Funds were in debit, he had to come to the assistance of the Treasurer with gifts or loans. The opening of a new church or the building of a new manse had been an occasion for receipt of a substantial cheque from Soundy.

Further, he was a great Foreign Mission enthusiast. The Baptist mission in India had found him a great supporter and he was also interested in the China Inland Mission, the Sudan United Mission, and many other smaller missions. No one knew what he gave to anything and the story will never be fully known. It was his custom, if possible, to conceal such assistance. He had an intense dislike for personal publicity.

By those who were not acquainted with him, he was thought to have too much of the business spirit, but Soundy was an enterprising, successful business man, and he believed that this spirit ought to prevail in the higher service of God. Hence, he had no time for slackers, shirkers, or drones in the church. He would give no encouragement to men of the ne'er-do'well type to enter the ministry. His idea was that the church should be a hive of workers, as well as devout worshippers.

From his puritanical spirit of his early days, there developed in his later years a saintly spirit which presented him as a patriarch whose prayer was a benediction, particularly to younger men. The inscription on his tombstone "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly before Thy God" aptly summarized his upright life.

#### **HARRY SIDWELL**

In 1938, one of the church's devoted members retired from the position of Treasurer.

He had accepted the task in 1924 following the retirement of F.W. Heritage. Sidwell came from England when a young man and attended the Hobart Church some time before he became a member, and was a very active member of the Debating Society. Like so many other men of short stature, Sidwell amazed people with his wide knowledge and very ready humour and these characteristics more than compensated for any possible physical disadvantage. Well read as he was, his simplicity of spirit made him a man greatly loved by everyone he met.

After becoming a member and one of the leading members of the preacher's class conducted by Boreham, he occupied a seat on the diaconate. At business meetings his love of peace and harmony and his gracious disposition soothed less discreet debates and soothed many a difference of opinion. The successful formation of the Moonah Church in Boreham and Hobday's time could be attributed in no small way to Sidwell's generous and faithful efforts.

He had a real love for children and many a child's affection was won by the kindly word and endless supply of chocolates from his pockets.

Sidwell was twice President of the Tasmanian Baptist Union - in 1918 and 1932, and acted on the Council for many years. His love for the denomination was fervent and enthusiastic. He revisited England, with his wife, Rebecca, and Dr. and Mrs. Boreham, with whom he was a close friend, and was a representative of Australian Baptists at the Atlanta Conference of the Baptist World Alliance.

He was a man generous in judgment, generous in allocations of praise, generous in advice and assistance, generous in hospitality, generous of purse, but withal unostentatious. With all these virtues, he was a man greatly beloved. He was appointed a life deacon in 1949. Three years later he died on 21<sup>st</sup> August, 1952. He had been a member of the church for forty-six years - a stalwart of the faith.

#### **HACKWORTHY'S RESIGNATION AND FAREWELL**

In November 1939, the church received the resignation of Hackworthy after ten years of ministry in Hobart in which he exercised a powerful and successful ministry. He had been extremely popular in church, Union and public circles.

For nine years he had been Editor of the Baptist Church Chronicle with Miss Jessie Johnston as business manager. The paper had shown an increase in circulation and a credit balance through all the years.

In 1932, Hackworthy added to his work load the task of Sunday School Superintendent. From 1934 until he left the State, he was a member of the Council of the University of Tasmania. During his time, he did much to assist the work of the Tasmanian Baptist Union. He was elected President of the Union in 1937 and brought before the churches the Forward Movement.

The departure of Hackworthy and his family in February 1940 was preceded by a number of gatherings and presentations, some from outside institutions.

#### **AFTER HOBART**

In 1939, Hackworthy accepted a call to the North Adelaide Baptist Church, South Australia. Immediately he took a leading place in the affairs of the South Australian Baptist Union and, in 1946, was elected President of the Union. For a year he was Warden of the South Australian Baptist College.

He was always interested in matters of social reform and, in 1941, was made President of the United Churches Social Reform Board of South Australia.

In 1948, he was called to the Baptist church in Canberra, a church which had become an important centre of influence in the Federal Capital at Canberra. Canberra gave him full scope for his influence upon men in public life - a ministry which he fruitfully fulfilled. His ministry was interrupted by ill-health, the result of a war injury and, after four years, he was obliged to relinquish his pastorate and retire to Wentworth Falls, in the Blue Mountains.

Out of the distress and pain, through which he fought the last course of his fight of faith, he looked toward the crown of righteousness laid up for him. To a close friend he confided: "It would be wonderful if the good Lord would say, 'Come on, Harold, come on home'."

Hobart was saddened by the news of his death on 13<sup>th</sup> August, 1953. The church counted it a great joy to have known him and to have been ministered to by him. Few men have left the impress of their personality upon the Baptist life of Australia as Harold G. Hackworthy.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THROUGH THE WAR YEARS

#### EDWARD ROBERTS-THOMSON (1940-1949)

Following the six month interim pastorate of the Victorian Baptist, the Rev. Samuel Potter, in May 1940, the Church called to the pastorate the Rev. Edward Roberts-Thomson who was completing his B.A. in Theology at the Bristol Baptist College and was turning his sights toward home.

He had also been invited to a Baptist Church in Bath and another in Bristol and, as it was extremely difficult to get passages to Australia, with so many ships on war service, he and his wife decided that, if a passage home could not be arranged, they would decide between the latter two calls. At last, the offer of four berths on the Duchess of Athol arose because it was the first of the child evacuee ships to Canada, and as they had two children, they met the criteria.

During their last few weeks in England the bombing began. They missed the Bristol raid, the Bournemouth raid came down at Southampton near them and the Liverpool raid came when they were out in the harbour. They had experienced, of course, the blackouts and the rationing of food and clothes.

The trip to Canada was rough and, in convoy, on a reused troop ship with absolute blackout. It was a relief to enter the waters of the St. Lawrence and so on to Montreal. Owing to war restrictions, only £25 was allowed but the fares to Melbourne had been paid. In Canada they heard that the ship to take them to Australia had been sunk off the New Zealand coast, making a further five weeks wait inevitable. They were heartened when a letter arrived telling him that he had passed his B.A. with honours.

They arrived in Sydney via Honolulu, Fiji and Auckland on the 1<sup>st</sup> September. Traveling by night train to Melbourne and by ship to Tasmania, they finally arrived home in the North-west of Tasmania. There a further call came to him from the Moonee Ponds Baptist Church but, prior to that, John Soundy went to Burnie to greet him, and conveyed a further call to the Hobart Baptist Tabernacle. He accepted the call to Hobart, commencing in November 1940.

When they moved into the manse, after three months in a Hobart guest house (the manse had been let), the first fire they lit on the Sunday evening set the chimney on fire!

Roberts-Thomson was born in April 1909 in Worthing, England. His parents had returned there from service in the British Army in India to seek help for their third son who had poliomyelitis. The final medical advice was to move to a warmer climate, so Tasmania was chosen, and Ted was raised on the rich farmlands of Table Cape just out of Wynyard, North-west Tasmania. The difficulty of the times forced him to leave school prior to the Intermediate, and to commence work in the local branch of the Primary Producers Bank of Australia.

The family had been Anglican, but his father changed to the local Open Brethren Assembly because they offered to allow him to preach and teach, a thing which he had always wished to do. Edward was therefore brought up in the Open Brethren Assemblies and, in time, became associated with the Baptist Church at Burnie. There he met his future wife, Gwendolin May Joyce.

In 1932, after five years in the Bank, he entered the Baptist College in Melbourne as an independent student. This was preceded by a three months period with the Tasmanian Baptist Home Mission in Smithton. After three years in the College, he completed his L.Th. and then, in May 1935, he was asked to take the vacant pastorate in Hamilton, Victoria. He immediately married and commenced in July.

He was determined to be the best he could in every way so, when the opportunity arose two years later to further his studies, he resigned and left for England on the ship carrying many Baptists to the Coronation of King George VI. His sights were set on the Bristol Baptist College, and he applied there in person in August 1937. Again he was an independent student and Dr. Dakin, the Principal, was kind enough to let him share in preaching engagements, giving him experience as well as financial help. During 1939, World War II broke out.

#### **ROBERTS-THOMSON IN HOBART**

Roberts-Thomson constantly gave a cultured presentation of the Word that was satisfying and full of blessing. His stirring evangelical addresses proved him a teacher and expositor of the Gospel. For a short time, he acted as Sunday School Superintendent and interested himself in

the Scout and Guide Movements within the church.

In 1941, Roberts-Thomson and others, in conjunction with the representatives of the Church of Christ, worked diligently to draw up a basis of union between the Baptist Churches and the Church of Christ in Tasmania. The goal was to have the Church in Collins Street and the Baptist Church as one body.

Historically, in Hobart, they had come from the same body back in 1871 with the arrival of the Rev. O.A. Carr from Melbourne. Carr involved himself in the life of the Baptist Chapel in Harrington Street, but was voted out by the members, but only after some difference of opinion among the Baptists themselves. Eighteen Baptists withdrew with Carr and commenced a Church of Christ work in the city.

In 1941, two combined Communion Services were held on Sunday mornings at distant intervals in the Baptist Tabernacle and the formula, as drawn up by the representatives, was submitted to the respective unions. Agreement was almost reached. The closing words at the end of the Gospel of Mark were one of the problems. The words read, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved".

#### **SOUTH HOBART BAPTIST CHURCH**

In 1942, the South Hobart Baptist Church was constituted. Many years earlier, Miss Louise Overell had become keenly interested in the South Hobart area, starting a Sunday school at what was called the "Ragged School" in Macquarie Street, South Hobart, rented from the Education Department. Then a boys' and girls' club and, still later, a club for women were commenced.

Miss Overell, a woman of vision and faith, had a deep interest in people especially the under-privileged. Baptized at the age of thirteen in the Cimitiere Street Baptist Church in Launceston, she moved shortly to Hobart, serving for some years as Bible Class leader in the Hobart Church and, later as foundation member and first Sunday School Superintendent at Sandy Bay.

With a number of members actively engaged in the work, the Hobart Baptist Church made itself responsible and, in 1932, formed a committee comprising Athol Townley, Louise Overell, Miss Meech, Arthur Sidebottom, Bob Stephenson, Laurie Gluskie and Harry Bennett. Athol Townley was placed in charge.

The meetings gradually built up and the property was bought so that the Home Mission agreed to accept it as a Home Mission Church and placed Rev. J.D. Williams in charge. As its first minister for the two years, he was expected to serve the

Home Mission after his college career and ordination. The fact that he had grown up in Hobart helped the work greatly. The successive Pastors were L.J. Austin, K.E. Tuck, A.H. Hollowell and L.A. Lincoln.

By 1959, owing to the very poor congregations in the previous months, it was decided to close down the morning services. Evening services had always been better attended. Just a year earlier, the Hobart Church had joined in a plan to help South Hobart and Lenah Valley. Some Sunday school teachers had already been provided from the Hobart Church. A Pastoral Committee representing all three and the Home Mission was set up. The Rev. Tom A.L. Green, who had been the minister of the Wynyard Church since 1952, became the first Pastor of this Hobart Regional Area.

Owen Lloyd, son of the Rev. F.W. Lloyd, was appointed to the oversight in 1961 in an honorary capacity. He served the church for four years.

By 1966, the struggling church sought the co-operation of the Moonah church for the maintenance of its services.

Southern Tasmania suffered severely on Black Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> February, 1967, with the huge fires raging around Hobart and nearby areas. It was a national disaster and folk associated with the Hobart Church lost homes and possessions in value totalling \$100,000 (1967 figures). South Hobart Baptist Church (including the Post Office in the front of the building) was completely burnt out.

Though hesitant to acquiesce, the Home Mission was of the opinion that it could do no other than assent to rebuilding, which was sought by the members of the Fellowship. The fellowship had no need to incur any debt. The amount received by insurance and Governor's Fire Relief payment covered all first costs for the replacement of the building, rebuilt and equipped as a place of worship. The fellowship was confident of a future build up in Sunday school and Church.

The property was finally sold in 1972. It had been a perpetual struggle. The work had shown little prospect of development into a healthy Baptist Church. There had been for many years a small response to the work. The amazing thing was that there had always been some who had been willing to bear the load and the Church services and keep the Sunday school open.

#### **THE WAR YEARS**

Service attendances suffered severely through the loss of many of the young men who enlisted in the services. By the end of 1941, thirty already had left for overseas service and many others had been called up for Home Defence Work. At

the peak, the church had over one hundred people at the war in one capacity or another. This naturally made the work of the Sunday school difficult, with so many teachers away.

In order that people would not forget those away, a large board was erected and on it were displayed the photographs of those absent. This was developed at the Jubilee Services in 1944 into the Cobber's Corner - a colourful display of photographs of the men and women in the forces. Set up in the Sunday School Hall, it was draped with the flags of the Allied Nations.

A circular letter was sent containing Church and Local news. Numerous parcels were also sent. The war increased the many duties of the ladies by their willing service for patriotic funds. They took considerable interest in the work of the A.C.F. (Australian Comforts Fund), by holding an American Tea, selling badges and knitting many articles for those on service.

Since blackout regulations applied during certain periods of the war, Life Deacon Joseph Hawkes, cabinet maker and bricklayer, who had constructed the communion table in Hackworthy's time (David Saunders had carved the panels), made plywood shutters in frames for the church and Sunday school windows which had to be in place if lights were to be used.

W.O. John Trevor Soundy, who had been for some time on bomber-pilot work in the New Guinea area, went missing in air operations on 7<sup>th</sup> January, 1943. On Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April, 1946, an Anzac memorial service was held at which a tablet was unveiled to his memory. Roberts-Thomson preached on the text: "He saved others; himself he could not save."

In 1944, Roberts-Thomson felt an urge to join those away and share their conditions and hardships. He resigned from the Tabernacle, but the resignation was not accepted, and so his wife and four children remained in the manse while he joined the Air Force in March as a chaplain. He asked to be sent overseas, and so, after a brief initial period, he went to the Markham Valley with the 4 Tac/R, (an Army Reconnaissance Unit) and then to the Halmaheras in preparation for the landing in Borneo.

In New Guinea he had a rough chapel, and his New Guinea batman used to decorate it with flowers, while for the altar some of the men made vases and a cross out of twenty pounder shells. He flew up and down the North Coast from Lae to Hollandia visiting Air Force Units, (there met Rex Townley who was in charge of Medical Supplies for the Pacific Area). The landing in Borneo was successful, with the American and Australian forces occupying the main areas. From there, he was sent to the Phillipines where the R.A.A.F. was operating with the Americans in pinpointing

resistance areas. He was there when the atom bomb was dropped. After cessation of hostilities, Manila became a reception centre for prisoners of war for examination and preparation for sending to hospital or home or discharge. He was at the Reception Centre frequently, and returned home at the end of 1945.

On his return the church assured him of their goodwill and passed a vote of confidence in him and requested that he continue.

During the period that Roberts-Thomson was away, February to December, 1944, the Rev. John D. Williams served the church as Interim Pastor. Williams' work was rendered more difficult owing to his having grown up in the church, but he won admiration and esteem. His unique way of presenting the Gospel, combined with his sense of humour, kept the congregation awake. Under his leadership, the Young People's Fellowship class grew in leaps and bounds.

After his return from the war, Roberts-Thomson received permission from the Bristol University to present a thesis for his Masters Degree. (Earlier in Hobart he had studied for and gained his B.D. degree) The thesis was called "Baptists and The Disciples of Christ" - a comparison of the two churches and their possible relationship. This was so favourably received by the University that it urged that it should be printed.

#### **ST. ANN'S REST HOME**

Just after the war, a number of aged folk feared the consequences to them if the nursing home in which they resided closed down following the death of Sister Barbara Barnett.

She had, as far back as 1922, with £10 and a stout heart, established her first "Rest Home" at Bellerive. Always busy and generous to her old folk, she moved the home several times as it became too small for the work. In 1933, in order to overcome sanitation and transport problems, she moved to 116 Melville Street, Hobart, and it was these premises she called "St. Ann's". In 1939, a further move was made to 10 Tower Road, New Town. On her death in 1946, St. Ann's was left with out leadership.

The property would have been sold had not Miss Ida Mather, who was concerned about the plight of the elderly and invalid residents, obtained an option on the property and later guaranteed a bank overdraft on it. She then approached several religious and other bodies to take over the home, but without success.

Roberts-Thomson was the only one to show enthusiasm for the idea. Together they persisted with dogged determination against opposition and lukewarmness, until eventually the home was taken over by the church, initially as a

"Christian Social Service Project". The Baptist Union recognized the need for such a home and gave support to the venture as did the Sandy Bay and Moonah churches.

After much hard work with a local committee, it was arranged to take over the home. Matron Boley was appointed to take charge and it was named St. Ann's, and a Committee of Management set up to control the affairs of the place. From the first, the Home Committee had consisted of ladies from the Hobart Baptist Church.

The Committee, later the Board of Management, realized that the task was too great for Baptists alone and widened its membership to include all persons moved by the same compassionate idea.

Because applications for entry were being received in great numbers, the Board determined to look for larger premises. So it was that the impressive house known as "Hawthornden" in Davey Street was purchased in 1949 for half the asking price due to the generosity of the owner, Mrs. M. Garrett.

Due to the ever-increasing number of people wanting to reside at St. Ann's, extensions were added in 1958 and again in 1963. In 1965, an adjacent property at 25 Fitzroy Place was purchased to provide a fifteen-bed geriatric hospital. A second floor was added to this in 1980.

The Home and Hospital now accommodates 126 residents and patients, all of whom are in need of compassionate and Christian care. There is a staff of 105. St. Ann's Home will always remain a monument to Roberts-Thomson's energy and foresight.

#### **HELEN (PEG) SOUNDY**

In March 1946, Helen Margaret Soundy, the youngest daughter of John Soundy and his wife, Edith, departed for Melbourne to train for one year at Rolland House, the Presbyterian College for missionaries and deaconesses and then for one year at the newly-established Baptist Training Institute.

In Hobart, Helen had been apprenticed to Athol Townley, and then to Laurie Gluskie at the Sidwell and Townley pharmacy. Although she had qualified as a pharmacist during World War II, and desired to undertake missionary work with the A.B.M.S, she waited until the end of the War before applying.

During her time at the Baptist Training Institute, India gained her independence and was partitioned into Pakistan and India. Rampant inflation resulted and missionary candidates were prevented from arriving. It was not until 20<sup>th</sup>

November, 1949, that Helen was finally commissioned in her home church, the charge being given by the visiting former Pastor, the Rev. E.H. Hobday.

In her first year in India and East Pakistan, she moved from station to station. At the end of 1950, she met the Rev. Rex Glasby who had just arrived from Mymensingh. Their relationship led to marriage in January 1952.

#### **REX CLIFFORD**

Rex Clifford, the eldest son of the long-standing members of the church, Arthur E. Clifford and his wife, Elsie, responded to the call to the ministry by entering Sydney Bible College in 1945 and, from there, he was accepted as a student at the N.S.W. Baptist College.

On completion of studies, Clifford began his life work of pastoring the smaller Baptist Churches in the North-west of Tasmania, beginning in the Bracknell Home Mission district in 1948. Other churches under his charge were Ulverstone, from 1958, Montello, from 1966, and Latrobe-Sassafras, from 1970. During his pastorate at Ulverstone, a new church was built. He died in 1978. Rex Clifford, modest and saintly, had loved his people and his people loved him. In his early days in Hobart, he had proved an excellent goalie in the Baptist Soccer Team.

#### **KENNETH E TUCK**

In February 1948, Kenneth E Tuck, son of Professor H.P. Tuck and his wife, May, was farewelled to commence ministerial training at the Baptist College of N.S.W.

Tuck had lived his early life in Hobart, where he was associated with the Baptist Tabernacle, and was educated at Hobart High School and the University of Tasmania. He received his B.Sc. in 1946 and his M.Sc. (in chemistry of sugar) both from the University of Tasmania. He was an excellent cricketer.

In 1945, he was in charge of the preaching at the Ware Street Mission and, in March 1946, he commenced pre-college pastoral training at the Home Mission Church at South Hobart. In 1951, Tuck gained his B.D. from the University of Melbourne. An M.A. and also a London B.D. followed.

Baptist Churches which Tuck served as pastor following ordination were Gosford (N.S.W.), Bracknell, Ulverstone, Elphin Road and Taroon (Tasmania), Manifold Heights (Geelong) and Wonthaggi (Victoria). For a period he was Director of the Australian Institute of Evangelism.

Tuck followed the old tried and proved paths. He believed that straight preaching is the means God has ordained for saving those who believe.

He never preached better than when he was preaching on prayer. Tuck died on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1977, in Wonthaggi, at the age of 50 years.

A gifted Bible teacher and faithful minister, Tuck had been courageously undergoing treatment for cancer over a period of months. His health gradually deteriorated, but he endeavoured to preach and participate in church activities as long as he could.

### **BAPTIST HOCKEY CLUB**

In 1946, the Baptist Hockey Club remained the leading team in the Southern Hockey Association. They had proved their superiority by winning the premiership that year as they had done so since 1935, with the exception of 1938, when they were runners up to Derwent.

The Southern Tasmanian Men's Hockey Association, as it was then known, was formed in June 1935, following an advertisement in "The Mercury" calling for people interested in the game to consider entering teams in a competition. Four-teams entered in the first year - Baptists, Derwent, Army Signals, and Sandy Bay Harriers.

The strength of the Baptist team in its first years, under the captaincy of Max Daghish, was illustrated by the fact that five members were chosen in the State squad to compete in the Australian championship in Sydney in 1937. They were Colin Maycock, Frank Angel, Jack Morgan, Geoff Crawford and Ray Kerr. The following year Maycock, Angel and Crawford were selected in the squad to compete in the championships in Adelaide. Frank Angel was elected captain of the State team.

In 1947, Baptists were so superior that it was decided to divide the team so as to provide stiffer opposition and thus make the competition keener. Ironically, a new team which was formed - North-West - defeated Baptists that year in the grand final.

It was not until 1952 that Baptists missed the final four for the first time since they entered the competition 17 years earlier. Between 1947 and 1956, they were runners-up six times and premiers once. The club had written its name in the record book more times than any other club.

In 1947, in addition to the Men's Hockey Group, the church fielded a girls' hockey team in the Southern Tasmanian Women's Hockey Association, a men's cricket team in the Hobart Cricket Association and a junior tennis club.

### **ROBERTS-THOMSON'S RESIGNATION AND FAREWELL**

In 1949, Roberts-Thomson accepted a call to the Brunswick Baptist Church. It was his ninth call in

eighteen months. Late in October, the church said farewell.

He had consistently been the friend and helper of his people and he had given himself unstintingly to their service. His tireless work and friendliness in the Hobart church endeared him to the hearts of the people. Youth always had his kindly attention and the various related organizations, including sport, had his interest and support. He had been called to the Presidency of the Baptist Union of Tasmania and had to serve in that capacity for a second term by reason of the inability of the Vice-President, John Soundy, to leave his parliamentary position to do visitation.

He had pastored the church at a time when new Tasmanians were flocking to the Island and new industries were seizing the opportunity for peaceful progress which Tasmania afforded at that time. In consequence, new suburbs were forming around Hobart. His years of service were happy ones. He enjoyed the tasks before him. His joy was due to the loyalty and friendship and confidence which the Church had in him and his wife Gwen.

He had recognized the need for trained instruction for the young, and successfully inaugurated and achieved Teacher Training classes for Sunday school work. On all public occasions in which Roberts-Thomson took part, the church had been proud to acknowledge him as their minister as his scholarship, devotion and culture added honour and prestige to the institution. His home had always been open and the unselfish service of both the Pastor and his wife to all and sundry, especially to New Australians, was an outstanding example of Christian hospitality. In his time, the church had been cleared of all debt on the property.

### **AFTER HOBART**

In his third year at Brunswick, Roberts-Thomson applied for the position of Principal of the New Zealand Baptist Theological College in Auckland. The Board of the College met him and accepted his application, giving him twelve months for lecture preparation. Owing to unforeseen circumstances, they were left without a Principal and the Board urgently requested that he take up the position at the beginning of 1953. The Brunswick Baptist Church reluctantly released him, and he commenced in March 1953 on Mt. Hobson, the site of the old College. The students numbered about twenty.

The first task given to him was to go with the Members of the Board and find suitable premises in Auckland for a larger college. At the end of their first year, they moved to the new premises. A large student wing was built, and later, a two-storey wing for women's quarters, all on extensive grounds. Roberts-Thomson was forced

to work long hours owing to lack of preparation time prior to arrival.

He added further to his study programme by receiving consent to present an original thesis for the highly coveted Doctorate of Divinity. Work on this alone entailed about six years of extra study and research approved of by the Melbourne College of Divinity, after preliminary examination in Australia and world-wide consent by examiners in England by Dr. E.A. Payne from Oxford University and Vice-President of the World Council of Churches and by the Dixie Professor of Church History of Cambridge University. This Thesis was on the relationship of Baptists to the Ecumenical Movement throughout its history. An abbreviated portion of some of this was published under the title "With Hands Outstretched."

In 1960, he was invited to apply for the Principalship of the Baptist Theological College of New South Wales. He agreed to commence in May 1961 after a world trip visiting mission stations, theological colleges and universities in England and America to observe new trends in student training. During his first year in New South Wales, a new Campus was obtained and built in Herring Road, Eastwood, and all the students, just over 100, were moved to the new premises. This time at the college in New South Wales was in happy rapport with the students and most of the College Council and Union Executive. It became, however, increasingly

impossible to function as he wished, owing to strong opposition from certain influential members of the denomination. His Principalship was made most difficult and the difficulties continued until his resignation from an impossible situation three years later.

He offered his services to the Presbyterians and they received him without condition and licensed him. A vacancy occurred at Scots College in Sydney, and he served there for nine months. This was followed by an interval as Interim Minister at Guilford. He was then invited to the newly-formed parish at Turramurra South. There he helped to build a large A-line church and was happily engaged in parish work and buildings until his retirement in 1973. As a last act, he handed over the keys for a new Manse to his successor, leaving a vigorous and happy congregation.

His extra parish activities included Chairmanship of the Deaconess College, Moderator of the Kuringai Presbytery, Member of the Theological Hall, Social Services Committee, and Presbyterian Representative on the Australian Council of Churches of New South Wales and a Member of Assemblies which voted for the Uniting Church in Australia.

His retirement pastorates were at Gosford, Woy Woy, Auckland, Broken Hill, Deniliquin, Singleton, Bellingen and Uranga.

## CHAPTER NINE

### GROWTH IN EVERY WAY

#### S.J. MERLYN HOLLY (1950-1962)

When the church was seeking a man in 1950, many church leaders, including the Rev. H.G. Hackworthy, recommended Merlyn Holly who was then in South Australia, as "the man for Hobart". Hackworthy had predicted this call ten years earlier on Holly's arrival in Adelaide. Hackworthy had been heard to say, "Holly's for Hobart".

#### **MERLYN HOLLY**

Samuel J. Merlyn Holly, son of a coal miner, was born on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1906, in Blaena, Monmouthshire, Wales. His father was quiet and unassuming while, on the other hand, his mother was a typical Welsh woman - full of zest and fire.

In the days of Merlyn's childhood, Blaena was a little village which clung to the side of one of the hills. It was a typical mining town where long drab terraces told the real price of coal in human sweat and pain. No beauty spot, it was dominated by the ugly machinery of the coal mine and surrounded by the black seas of refuse tips.

His childhood was not a happy one. He knew more of hell than heaven and his sensitive little soul shrank from bullying methods. He left school at fourteen in a time of severe depression and worked intermittently in coal mines for the next six years. In that devastated area where mines closed, some never to open again, he grew familiar with the lock outs and strikes. This brought to the youth a sickening of heart and a feeling of hopelessness.

The centre of the social life in Blaena was the Salem Baptist Church. It was here that Merlyn learned of God's grace under the aged and blind preacher, the Rev. D.E. Williams, who had no use for a sentimental religion; for him grace was as strong as steel and love was courage. He kept in touch with the world of Christian thought through the devotion of his housekeeper who would spend hours reading to him from the most recent theological works.

There came a change of heart to the young man, followed by conversion and baptism. His parents' anxiety was finally relieved. He became a member of the church.

Another person in Blaena made a deep impression on Merlyn at this time. It was Nye Bevan:

"Nye Bevan, I remember him as a fiery young orator in my late teens in Blaena. In fact it would have been Nye's oratory that started me asking the question, "What shall I do with my life?"

He chose politics and I the church. "Nye Bevan's torrent of words gave me a choice: Speak for God to men – pulpit or speak for men alone – politics. Nye Bevan's path and mine went in different directions. He never purged the bitterness of those grimy days from his soul. I never forgot - nor ever will forget the days, but Christ enabled me to purge the bitterness, never dimming my vision of better days for all as summed up in the theme of the kingdom of God."

A great decision now confronted Merlyn in his twenty-first year as he felt the call to the Christian ministry and had the opportunity to start a new life in a new land. In Western Australia, he had relatives and Australia was beckoning. He sold his piano and was accompanied by his father to London. Never had he travelled so far from home.

"Barren" was his first impression of Western Australia. He worked at odd jobs in town and country - lumping wheat, attending an oil stove, flour mill or a timber yard, but "always the ministry came up wherever I went and worked".

When the letter arrived from home which told of the death of his young brother, Merlyn finally decided to enter the Christian ministry. What followed was to relieve his father's other disappointment about his older son. Merlyn began to study, to slave at it. He was to get what his father had never received - a good education.

1929 saw acceptance into ministerial training and appointment as ministerial assistant to Dr. Henry Gordon at the Mosman Park Church. An anonymous donor provided £160 for his first year there.

On completion of that year, he asked the Union what work they had for him. They suggested he try another denomination as they had nothing available or suitable. On assuring them he was a Baptist by conviction, he was placed at Leederville for a trial period of three months. From 1930 to 1933, he worked as a student pastor in this split and broken church and studied part-time at the West Australian University.

He was now on demand for his gifts of music and song. The Presidents of the Union, whenever possible, would urge him to accompany them on their tour of Churches. He would play and sing in the dark while the lantern slides were shown.

In 1933, he was ordained and inducted into the Leederville pastorate. Prospects did not look promising, "When I came to the pastorate, there were some (outside the fellowship) who were predicting that the church at Leederville was doomed to close its doors and die". But the church did not die. Under Holly's ministry the congregation grew from eleven to a full capacity of one hundred. In 1939, he graduated from the University of Western Australia, Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy. His achievement "meant more to Dad than myself. His regrets have evaporated".

One of the members of the church, Dulcie Flora Clark, became his bride: "Nye had a wife Jennie who shared his bitterness and continually fanned it into flame. I have a wife whose generosity of spirit led me in a better direction. Without her, my ministry would never have been effective.

Two weeks after their marriage, they moved to Knightsbridge in South Australia. He had been nine years at Leederville and would serve for ten years in his new church. In his final years, the church was teeming with young people and had become an outstanding work in the South Australian Baptist Union.

By now Holly was a great debater: "If eloquence is inherited, it is from my mother that I was endowed with such oratory I displayed in the various pulpits from which I preached. I believe the Welsh strain in me was strong, and though it did not manifest itself in speech (for I understand little of my native tongue), it was demonstrated in sentiment and feeling." At Assembly time in South Australia, the house would fill up if he was to speak. In later years, following his leaving, it was said by some that "It has never been the same".

His time in South Australia was interrupted by Holly's wartime chaplaincy in the Army, including service in New Guinea from 1942 to 1945. The chaplaincy work had schooled him for the particular task of civic rehabilitation. On his return, he became chaplain at King's College and, with Hackworthy, gathered together a small group of possible - if unpromising - aspirants for the ministry in the vestry at the North Adelaide Baptist Church. They offered them preaching opportunities in small suburban home mission churches, consultation on Saturday mornings to discuss preaching problems, study and reading programmes, and to encourage and pray. Some who came out of that group were Peter Mellor, Trevor Bensch, Colin Asser, Rodney Brown and John Diprose.

Holly was inducted into the pulpit of the Hobart Baptist Church on 1950. This short and always well-dressed man soon became a familiar sight in his clerical collar. He admitted that he liked to get out of it. "It's not that it makes me hot or uncomfortable; it is just that I hate being a stuffy shirt". His once red hair was turning grey.

### **RON SOUNDY**

Coinciding with the departure of E. Roberts-Thomson in October 1949, the church had a new secretary and assistant secretary. They were younger men showing great promise. The new secretary was Ron Soundy and the new assistant, Charlie Needham.

Ron, a former State hockey player, who had worked for ten years among the needy in a mission hall at Ware Street, North Hobart, would serve as church secretary for the next twenty years.

Young Ron went to school at now -defunct but once distinguished Clemes College, and later the Friends' School.

Joining the family business as an ordinary junior in 1930, his main instructor into the business was the manchester buyer, Alf Kennedy, who used to take Ron to Melbourne on occasion, to see how it was all done. "I used to shrink in my shoes a bit because he used to negotiate with a chap named Barney Hawkins who had a manchester business in Flinders Lane. Alf used to quibble until well after normal closing time over sums like one-eighth of a penny on calico quoted at tuppence a yard," Soundy recalls.

Soundy spent a couple of years broadening his experience on the staff of a big Melbourne store, Manton's, but was playing a major role in the family business again by the time it was decided it was time to form Soundy's into a company.

J.T. Soundy Pty. Ltd. - still the same name today - was formed on 6<sup>th</sup> February, 1939, with Sir John Soundy as managing director. Ron Soundy was company secretary. A qualified accountant, Ron Soundy, in 1960, assumed the role of managing director.

A major project closely involving Ron Soundy was the opening of a central Hobart store - in rented premises and then, in an enlarged new building, at 61 Elizabeth Street. And, in the early 1960's, the establishment of menswear and lingerie departments at 63 Elizabeth Street across Soundy's lane.

### **CHARLES BICKFORD NEEDHAM**

Charles Bickford Needham, a direct descendant of the large Bickford family which played such a vital part in the life of the church, graduated through the Sunday school and took on the task

of Sunday School Treasurer for some years. His outstanding contribution was made as Assistant Secretary of the church - which position he held for over seventeen years.

He was a man of action with the capacity for getting things done quickly, efficiently and without fuss. He did not often speak at meetings, but when he did, his humour and down-to-earth comments were always to the point and often acted like a tonic. Needham, because of a serious operation when quite young, was never 100% in health - but only those near to him would have known it. He worked conscientiously and ably at anything he undertook. As a keen worker in the Men's Society, he was a tower of strength and his ability and humour and hard work made the MEN'S NIGHT Concerts the most talked of and well-supported event of the Church Calendar, an event which did more, perhaps, than anything else to bring persons on the fringe of the Church into contact with the Pastor and members. Perhaps Needham's greatest contribution was made in carrying his Christian principles into the spheres of sport and business. Many a person will be ever grateful for the advice, guidance and help given - whether it was to young sportsmen in training, or to people in need. The encouragement and help he gave - supporting Christian men in politics and public life - will long be remembered.

Needham was a rowing enthusiast, a senior oarsman in his youth, and he maintained a life-long interest in official capacities. Charles officiated at three King's Cup races held in Tasmania. In his business life, he was first as an employee of the Hobart Municipal Tramways and Town Hall and later with Hooker Edney Moore where, as a director, he was held in high regard by management, staff and the general public.

Needham had been a member for almost forty years when he died on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 1973.

#### **REX TOWNLEY**

In 1950 a member of the church, (Rex) Reginald Colin Townley, twice elected President of the Baptist Union of Tasmania, accepted the leadership of the State Liberal Party. Recognized by all who knew him as a true Christian, who combined courtesy and tolerance with intelligent and strong convictions, Townley had a record of forty years of service as a youth worker and Sunday school teacher in the Hobart Baptist Church of which he was a life deacon. He had served for many years as a lay preacher, and had acted as Moderator of his own Church on a number of occasions. He served as honorary pastor of the Sandy Bay Baptist Church from 1936-1939. He was a foundation member of the Board of St. Ann's Rest Home.

Rex was born in Hobart in 1904 and, because of his father's early death, he, with his mother and sister, Alma, and brother, Athol, went to live with his uncle and aunt, Harry and Rebecca Sidwell, above the chemist shop at 102 Elizabeth Street.

In 1930, with his brother, Athol (a former federal member and cabinet minister), Townley founded the chemist business of Sidwell and Townley, which grew to become the largest in Tasmania. He was well known as the original "Radio Chemist", in which capacity he gave help by radio to thousands of sick persons.

In political life, Townley built up a distinguished record of conscientious service. He was elected to the Tasmanian House of Assembly in 1946 with a record number of primary votes and, after four years as an Independent, he became the leader of the Liberal Party from 1950-56. After eighteen and one-half years of parliamentary service, he resigned for health reasons in 1965.

Cricket, football and amateur boxing were included in active sporting pursuits in earlier life. As a spin bowler, he played for Tasmania against every Australian state except Queensland, and against teams representing Australia, the M.C.C. and South Africa. On one occasion, when the cricket team was about to leave for Adelaide to play against South Australia, Rex was embarrassed when he saw that Sunday practices were included in the programme. He contacted the manager of the team and suggested that it would be better if he did not go because he could not conscientiously practice on a Sunday. The manager called the committee together and Sunday practices were cancelled! It was during this match that he caught and bowled Sir Donald Bradman. The newspaper headlines read: "Bradman caught and bowled Townley! (How's zat?)". He was for seven years a member of the North Hobart football team, generally playing as full back. On the administrative side, he was for ten years president of the Tasmanian Cricket Association, and for twenty years president of the Tasmanian Soccer Association.

Five and a half years active service with the 2nd A.I.F. in the Middle East and the South-west Pacific, and service as Assistant Director-General of Medical Services in charge of medical equipment, comprised Townley's war record, in which he rose to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

Townley's many community interests included twenty-five years as trustee of the Hobart City Mission, twenty years as trustee of the Hobart Y.M.C.A., six years as patron of the Elizabeth High School Parents & Friends Association, fifteen years patron of A.M.C. United Association, and eight years R.S.L. Sub-Branch patron.

In February 1968, he received well deserved recognition in the New Year honour list becoming

a Companion of St. Michael and St. George. Rex Townley, (affectionately known as Tubby), died at St. Ann's in Hobart on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 1982.

### **THE ENTRY PORCH**

Holly had arrived at a time when the church was in a more prosperous stage of its life and gradually the dreams of improving and beautifying the buildings came to fruition. Moves which had been halted for years for lack of finance, one by one, became possible of achievement.

The first of these projects was the sound-proofing the entrance and re-arranging the layout of the seating and aisles, and carpeting of aisles. This was carried out in 1951 by David Williams, the son of the earlier Church Secretary, without interfering with the use of the church for services. Cathedral carpet was obtained and laid in newly-designed aisles. The price was down to bedrock.

### **THE CHALMER'S CHURCH PIPE ORGAN**

The following year the hopes of many years were realized, and the pipe organ for which so many had worked became a reality. The rededication service was held on the morning of Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> March, 1952, amid great emotion and rejoicing. For over sixty years, the Hobart Baptist Church conducted its public worship without the aid of a pipe organ.

Norman W. Farrer, choir master for eleven years, was the leading force in procuring the two manual organ in 1911. The £200 organ was paid for by subscription except for a small balance which came from church funds. In 1939, an electric blower replaced the pedal attachment. The young men of the church who had so faithfully pumped the organ by hand were relieved of their arduous task.

The need for a pipe organ was strongly realized as far back as the days of the ministry of Mitchell when the fund was first inaugurated. As the result of much effort, something between £400 and £500 was raised. But the depression period upset the plans, and the fund was temporarily closed and the money was loaned to the church to reduce the overdraft on the manse. When the manse was finally paid for, the money was returned to the organ fund, and was added to from time to time, until the renewed drive. In 1950, a sum of about £700 was in the organ fund.

At one time, consideration was given to the purchase of half a pipe organ from the organ loft of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne, but the cost of transport and installation would have offset the relatively low cost of what was a magnificent instrument.

Chalmer's Presbyterian Church contained a small pipe organ, possessing a beautiful tone. It had been used in Chalmer's Church from 1896 to 1949 and thereafter spasmodically until 1952. In the closing down of this church, the organ was for sale. The first approach for purchase of the organ was made by Roberts-Thomson.

It was felt that the structural alterations to the house of worship had achieved a combination of the severity of the nonconformist architecture which Baptists hold dear and scripturally important, with a new beauty which was considered appropriate to the glory of God and the administration of the ordinances.

### **THE JACK SOUNDY MEMORIAL BUILDING**

Scarcely had the mess been cleared away and the expense of the interior alterations of the sanctuary been paid for than the Jack Soundy Memorial Committee, which was holding funds totalling about £1,100, urged that the church consider seriously the erection of buildings at the back of the property for which a plan was drawn up.

Jack Soundy, the elder son of Sir John and Lady Soundy, had lost his life in the Second World War while serving as a pilot with the R.A.A.F. in the defence of Australia. He was one of the "Hackworthy boys" who had been involved with others such as Laurie Gluskie, Charles Needham and Reg Blundstone in rowing, cricket and football. His friends had met after the war and decided to perpetuate his memory in some tangible way, and a fund was opened. The increasing need for extra buildings, brought about by expanding church activities and youth work, compelled the church to consider the matter again. Discussions began with the Education Department for the purchase of the Eyre School to establish the Jack Soundy Memorial building on Elizabeth Street. In Sir John Soundy's view, such a location would assist greatly in attracting young people off the street.

When negotiations failed, the church developed the rear of the property and, in time, a red brick building arose and the church gained a hall (capable of being extended) behind the caretaker's cottage, a committee room, a new kitchen and an outside stairway to the kindergarten hall over the old school room.

The proposed second stage included the demolition of the old cottage, the extension of the hall to provide a stage, amenities and an entrance from the Elizabeth Street laneway.

### **LENAH VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH**

Baptist work in the Lenah Valley district dates back to August 1948, when a Sunday school was commenced by Miss Thelma Kippax in that area.

Some years later, the responsibility for the work was shared by other members of the Hobart Baptist Church under the leadership of Les Reardon.

Church services were held for the first time in February 1952, and a manse to accommodate the first minister (in a joint pastoral arrangement with South Hobart) was acquired in July 1954. The site of the present church was purchased in June 1956. In April 1958, the Tabernacle joined in a plan to help both South Hobart and Lenah Valley. A pastoral committee representing all three (and the Home Mission) was set up. The Rev. Tom A. Green, who had been the minister of the Wynyard Church since 1952, became the first Pastor of this Hobart Regional Area. The work steadily gained strength under his pastoral oversight. In July 1960 the foundation stone was laid for a new church hall and a brick building, of a rather unique design, was opened in November 1960. The Lenah Valley Church, with twenty-one foundation members, was constituted on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1961. Sixteen people transferred from the Hobart Tabernacle to the Lenah Valley roll on the occasion. The Rev. Martin Kerley became the church's first full time minister in May 1961. Today the church membership nears one hundred under the leadership of the Rev. Hans J. Bohm.

#### **50,000 TASMANIANS HEAR BILLY GRAHAM**

An outstanding event in 1959 in the life of the churches across Tasmania was the visit of the American evangelist, Dr. Billy Graham. Baptist churches as a whole received great encouragement in response to their enthusiastic participation, Hobart included.

Careful estimates indicated that an aggregate of more than 50,000 people heard evangelist, Billy Graham, at his two meetings on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> March at the North Hobart Football Ground. On each occasion, the closely packed crowds included many non-churchgoers.

At both Hobart and Launceston, the response was phenomenal - firstly a few from here and there, and then a steady stream moving forward to the speaker's platform, until the area allotted was crowded to the point of embarrassment for the large team of counselors, who were hard pressed to deal adequately with all who came forward. Something like 2,500 went forward at the two meetings, ranging from children of eleven or twelve years to people well advanced in life. Included were a number of people from business, professional and political life. Many of these were making the first committal of their life to Christ.

Not all understood the term counselor. An elderly lady at one of the Tasmanian meetings, when asked if she would mind moving to a seat a little further back because the front row was reserved

for counselors, replied, "I hope they are a lot better than the councilors out our way. We pay our rates year after year and we don't get a thing done."

In a sincere speech of welcome to the evangelist, a civic dignitary expressed the hope "that the good Lord will be with him as he continues his journeys throughout the universe." There were those who pictured Dr. Graham journeying into outer space, looking for fresh worlds to conquer!

One of the most impressive features of the-Graham crusades was the thorough-going organization for following the contacts made. Both at Launceston and Hobart, teams of helpers, including many young people, worked into the early hours of the morning following the meetings, and for some nights afterwards, sending letters and helpful literature to those who registered decisions. This was followed by reports posted to ministers, supplying all the relevant information, visitation and instruction classes. The clearly defined purpose was to link all those who responded to the message with the fellowship of a church. Without doubt, the evangelist's visit stirred many people with a new sense of mission. It had also placed in the hands of churches a great new opportunity. Impact on Hobart through new members was considerable.

#### **VERN DRISCOLL**

Vern Driscoll and his wife, Flo, were baptized and joined the Church in 1936. It was not long before Driscoll was elected to the Diaconate and, in 1938, he was entrusted with the position of Treasurer on the retirement of Harry Sidwell from that office. Driscoll brought to this work the knowledge and skill which his training as an auditor had developed in him and he handled the financial side of the church's activities with great wisdom. His organizing capacity brought the finances of the Church from a heavy indebtedness in the form of a mortgage to a credit balance, so that many of the forward movements in the alterations and additions to the property could proceed.

A fine work which he commenced was the jubilee fund for debt removal. Five years was the period set for the realization of this £1000 above ordinary offerings. So well did Driscoll organize the work that his team of collectors was able, in three years, to accomplish the task set. The church was free of all indebtedness, and the organ fund, which had been borrowed to reduce the mortgage on the manse, was repaid in cash to its rightful account.

In the social life of the church, particularly of the young people, Driscoll was probably the best master of ceremonies. His repertoire of games and items seemed inexhaustible, and the social evenings were always heartily enjoyed. Over

many years Driscoll organized church fairs which were the major source of missionary funding for the A.B.M.S. in its pre-budget days.

He played cricket for many years, holding high executive positions in club and State bodies. In later years, bowls occupied his leisure time and, in that sport also, he played a leading part in executive positions. He was made a Life Member of the Tasmanian Cricket Association.

He was in the public service for fifty-one years, forty of which were with the Commonwealth Audit Office, occupying the position of Senior Audit Inspector at the time of his retirement. He was awarded the honour of M.B.E. by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth 11, and invested with the insignia by the Governor of Tasmania. Driscoll served on the board of St. Ann's Rest Home from the beginning and occupied the position of Chairman of the Committee for fifteen years. When, in 1957, he resigned the trusteeship of the church, he was made a presentation and was appointed as a life deacon.

#### **DEATH OF JOHN SOUNDY**

Sir John Soundy, a devout churchman, patriot, and sportsman died in Hobart on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1960, after an illness of several months. He was eighty-one.

Imperial honours recognized his dedication to State, civic and community affairs. He was awarded the C.B.E. in 1943 and, in 1954, was created a Knight Bachelor in the Queen's birthday honours. He was a president of the Bush Nursing Association, a president of St. John Ambulance Association and a serving brother of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, a member of the executive of the Hobart Savings Bank, and a member of the Hobart Rotary Club which awarded him a certificate of service after his retirement - an honour rarely given.

Sir John was a keen trout fisherman, and a good shot, but he excelled at bowls. He skippered a rink which was runner-up in the Australian Championships in Hobart in 1948, and he was also a former State pairs champion. He was a president of the Derwent Club, and club patron and patron of the Southern Men's Hockey Association.

A pillar of the church, being a member for sixty-four years and serving it faithfully as Secretary for thirty-three years, he was made a life deacon in 1957. He had been on the executive of the Sudan United Mission and did a good work on the Sustentation Fund of the Baptist Union of Tasmania.

#### **A NEW ORGAN**

The church's new pipe organ, built at a cost of approximately £15,000 (including new choir

seating and certain necessary structural alterations), was formally opened and dedicated to the glory of God at the morning service on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November, 1960. A large audience listened with appreciation to a recital by the city organist, J.W. Nichols, F.R.C.O., F.R.C.M., on the afternoon of the same day.

The new instrument replaced the old organ, built in 1896, which was acquired by the Hobart Church in 1952 and installed in the church without any repairs being effected. By 1959, it was due for extensive and costly repairs since the mechanical action was obsolete and unreliable. It was recommended that the organ be completely rebuilt and enlarged to suit the sanctuary. This was approved by the Church.

All the pipes from the old organ were reconditioned and incorporated in the new one, which has a total of 1,728 pipes. The new organ, which is a blend of the past and present, is one of the most modern and largest pipe organs in the City of Hobart.

#### **HOLLY'S RESIGNATION**

In December 1961, a surprise call came to Holly from the Collins Street Baptist Church, Melbourne, which was in a ferment. Confessed Holly, "It was the challenge of my life. I accepted the call but like one of my predecessors at Hobart, Dr. F.W. Boreham, I was reluctant to leave a flourishing cause for a church sadly divided."

Holly's final services in Hobart were some of the finest in the life of the church. Apart from the packed attendances, there were baptisms, infant dedications, and receptions into membership right to the last, and a record number attended the final Communion Service. All this was a tribute to the effectiveness of his challenging ministry, probably the most strenuous and exciting of his four ministries.

He had been the denominational leader of the Tasmanian Baptists, a President of that Union in 1955, member of Union Council and a member of the Overseas Mission Board for the Baptist Union of Australia. In the wider sphere of church life, Holly had been executive member of the Tasmanian Council of Churches; Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Director of Education in Tasmania for the religious education in State schools; a consultant of the Hobart City Council on matters religious and moral; a leader of public questions and a convenor of deputations to Parliament for the Tasmanian Churches and Chairman of the Hobart Branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society. He had conducted classes in schools and at the University.

As a military padre, Holly was called to be Chaplain to the National Service Trainee Camp

at Brighton, and became senior military Chaplain of Tasmania Command in 1955. He ministered on Fridays and Saturdays each week to boys of all religions who had been called up for military service.

Another popular contribution Holly made was through radio. He gave the epilogue on 7HO for years. When broadcast hours were extended, by public request, the time slot was retained. He also conducted the first T.V. service in Hobart.

His Welsh ancestry was again reflected in his spoken word and forthright expression of the things in which he believed. Throughout the ministry, Merlyn was known for his uncompromising stand on issues which he felt struck at the heart of the gospel of reconciliation man to God, man to man. Unafraid to make his views known, either in public or in Union meetings, he brought the colour and challenge of the Old Testament prophet, Amos, to our twentieth Century. Near the end of his life he wrote:

"I don't regret having reason to contend for the faith; meeting fire with fire in wordy battles on the floors of various assemblies where I have been situated.

"Contend for what I considered social justice which is absent from an affluent society and stirring the complacency of my fellow Christians in regard to such issues as Hyper-Calvinism, Vietnam and the Council of Churches. Both Pharisaism and injustice are found in the modern church."

His short build attracted comment and he could accept the humour of his situation. In the Church News, the editor, Don Tuck, wrote:

"It may not be common knowledge to all that our minister Rev. Holly was nominated for the Australian contingent to go to England for the Coronation. As far as ability and suitability was concerned, Rev. Holly received top marks, but eventually was written off because of his short stature. He was under the minimum height required by the mere inch.

"Your secretaries did all they could one night, to stretch him hoping to gain that extra inch. They have done this sort of thing often with fish, in order to beat the regulations, but with Rev. Holly it was different, and they eventually were forced to "throw him back". One thing they are certain of - Mr. Holly is what he is and nothing will shift him...

"This being the case the doctors are now trying the experiment of stretching his wife. She will deserve her trip to the Coronation after this.

His distinct personality and helpful ministry attracted men to the church. His services at times

were brilliant. He excelled himself at times in what he said. After eight90years of exacting work, the church, in appreciation of his service, gave him leave of absence for four months during which he travelled to England and returned as Chaplain on a migrant ship.

As far as the ministry of the church was concerned, the first couple of years had seemed disappointing to Holly but, at the conclusion of his ministry, the church looked back and realized how his ministry had undoubtedly been one of the greatest periods in the history of the church. Spiritual growth and more sacrificial giving accompanied the church's visible growth and development.

Church records showed the progress made since 1950. Membership had increased from 266 to 322 (239 new members) while 130 baptisms were recorded, the latter including a large number of adults, some of whom gave remarkable testimonies of their conversion. Giving, including missionary donations, had increased from £5,900 to a maximum of 14,150 in 1960.

#### **COLLINS STREET AND BEYOND**

Holly was inducted in the Collins Street Baptist Church as minister on 17<sup>th</sup> March, 1962. Holly had qualities of leadership of which the church was in great need in that period of its history and, during his ministry, he fully vindicated the faith of the members when they called him to the pastorate.

In 1972, Holly 'retired' to Western Australia where he soon accepted a call to Leederville Church.

It was here at his "first church" that Holly served until February 1979.

"Now that the strivings, the yearning for souls, the stern disciplines of the ministry are almost behind me, the time of reflection has come. My disappointments with others and with myself are left, but I still have a counteracting comfort that during the period of my work for Christ and the church many have been led to Christ and still serve Him in His church.

"I would, if the clock could be put back, follow the same path along which God has led me. I would not have it otherwise than it was, when I was ordained to the ministry and the sacraments. To that I was called and that was the work I was destined to exercise. To be a preacher of the word in its entirety was and still is my destined way until voice and strength fails me."

Hobart remembers him as the one who left a record unequalled in the history of the church. He died on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 1979.

## CHAPTER TEN

### LEARNING TOGETHER

#### E. RONALD ROGERS (1963-1965)

The work was well maintained in the months the church was without a settled pastor, following the farewell services to Holly in 1962. Rex Townley, M.H.A., its Moderator, and so many other people, both ministers and lay men, gave that little extra to keep things together. It was indeed fortunate that Rev. Rex Glasby was home on furlough. Seven people were baptized during the time he acted as Interim Pastor.

On 15<sup>th</sup> July, 1962, the announcement was made that the Rev. E.R. Rogers of the Epping Baptist Church, N.S.W., had accepted a call. The news was enthusiastically received. Rogers, who possessed a distinguished academic record but in no way was a remote academic, began his ministry in Hobart on 17<sup>th</sup> February, 1963.

At the induction, Rogers informed those gathered that he proposed to conduct an expository ministry. His ministry would have its roots in the Word of God and his aim was to bring it to bear on the contemporary scene.

#### RONALD ROGERS

E. Ronald Rogers was born in Adelaide, South Australia, on 16<sup>th</sup> June, 1922. On both sides of the family there were Baptist connections. One great-grandfather on his father's side, .Rev. J.M. Howie, M.A., was for a short period a South Australian Baptist minister and the Rogers family was closely identified with Baptist work in the Eden Valley area of South Australia. On his mother's side, the connection went back only to her father, J.H. Johnson who, in mid-life, was converted through the Adelaide City Mission. Johnson later went to live at Prospect where he became a Life Elder of the local Baptist church.

Ron's mother died when he was five and the family broke up. After some years in a boy's home in South Australia, Ron moved with a brother to Melbourne where his father had established a home. After two years, there was a further move to Sydney. He was then twelve. All church connection had now been lost but, after leaving high school, he was brought into touch with Waverley Baptist Church and, a few months before his eighteenth birthday, had an experience of conversion and was soon baptized.

By this time, World War II had broken out and he was called up for military service. Rogers had become aware of a call to pastoral ministry and

was resolved that, if he survived, he would, on discharge, apply for ministerial training.

Because of clerical experience, he found himself looking after the pay of the company. Prompted by several people, he applied to fill the position of pay sergeant of a unit proceeding to New Guinea. He was marched out of his unit but, instead of going north, he was transferred into Command Pay Office of the Second Army just recalled from the Middle East. This was the more puzzling because the Second Army Headquarters was soon to break up! However, he discerned God's hand in it when a regulation came through to the effect that men were to be released to train for the ministry.

Accepted by the Baptist Union of N.S.W., Rogers was sent, according to the practice of the time, to spend a period as pastor of a church before entering College. The church was Nowra. In 1944, the four year residential College course was begun. Student pastorates were at Port Kembla, North Auburn and Strathfield-Homebush. During the first two years, the Licentiate of Theology of the Melbourne College of Divinity was completed.

With the encouragement of a scholarship and the granting of a War Service Matriculation, an Arts course was begun at the University of Sydney concurrently with the fourth year of the College course. In December 1947, he married Nancy McLeod.

Following ordination in February 1948, they went to the pastorate of the church at Matraville under the direction of the Home Mission Society. The work of the church was full of encouragement but the Home Mission, which had allowed him to stay in Sydney to continue University studies, indicated that it wanted to place a student pastor at Matraville so Rogers accepted a call to the Burwood Baptist Church. It was here that the Sydney Arts degree and the Bachelor of Divinity degree of the Melbourne College of Divinity were completed. After almost four years there, a call was accepted to the Epping Church.

The Epping district was still developing and the church shared in the growth. A larger building became necessary and two new churches, Carlingford and North Epping, were started. By now, Rogers was lecturing part-time at the Baptist Theological College and work on A.B.C. radio and television made him well-known in

N.S.W. A most satisfying ministry of almost ten years came to a close by the acceptance of a call to the Hobart Church.

### **ALL-AGE SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Under Rogers' ministry, ninety-seven adults went to Sunday school at the Hobart Baptist Church on 5<sup>th</sup> July, 1964. It was the official opening day of the carefully planned and eagerly awaited All-Age Sunday School. Total attendance for the day was 363 - an increase of 112 over the previous week's figures.

This concept in Sunday school work was first introduced in America about thirty-five years earlier and had since spread to other countries, including Hong Kong, Japan, Spain and Portugal. In the early sixties, it was proving popular in Tasmania. About four northern churches successfully began the new system and Hobart's Holy Trinity Church of England introduced the All-Age Sunday School in 1963, and its success had been described as "nothing short of amazing."

The purpose of the all-age Sunday school was to provide the opportunity for people of every age, both Christian and non-Christian, to meet for Bible study on Sunday morning before the morning worship service. It was an integral part of the church, and was virtually part of the morning service. Parents no longer sent their children off to Sunday school, but they went with them!

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the General Superintendent, Ivan Bewsher, made appreciative reference to the contribution of five men in the development of Sunday school work in the Hobart Church in recent years. He referred to Rex Townley's work amongst teen-agers, the important work of Jack Kippax, who was Superintendent of the School for ten years to 1960, the keen Christian educational outlook of Philip W. Hughes, the intensely active interest of Geoff Davis, who was the first chairman of the Steering Committee, and the spiritual zeal exhibited by the minister of the church, who had at Epping supported the concept and led the implementation of the programme.

The successful launching of the All-Age Sunday School represented the culmination of much detailed planning in careful stages over a period of seven years, during which time the total enrolment had doubled. The event coincided with the eightieth anniversary of the commencement of the church's first Sunday school.

The All-Age Sunday School continued to grow, reaching a peak enrolment in October 1965 with 408 scholars and staff. 143 were church members.

### **OUTREACH ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE DERWENT**

As early as October 1961, a number of Baptists resident on the east side of the Derwent were considering a Baptist work among the 22,000 people living in that area where there had been a rapid expansion of population. In March 1962, the deacons of the Southern Tasmanian Baptist churches agreed in principle to the establishment of a Baptist work on the eastern shore.

A year later, the Hobart Baptist church, which was at the time the strongest Baptist church in Tasmania, and yet was not deliberately engaged in any other extension work on its own account, decided that it would become directly involved in the venture. A recommendation was accepted that the church should proceed as soon as possible to investigate the availability of a suitable site and the magnitude of likely support for a work in the rapidly developing area to the south of Bellerive.

By December 1963, some twelve families had indicated their readiness to link up with a new work when started.

A year later the young people of the Tabernacle pledged themselves to raise £1000 towards the purchase of a site and the erection of a hall and began church services in May in the Howrah Progress Association Hall in Tranmere Road. Sunday by Sunday, carloads of young people from the Hobart Baptist Youth Fellowship would arrive early to arrange chairs, provide a lectern for the preacher, position the organ, hang up the hymn board, and do the many other small jobs which transform a hall into a centre of worship. Sometimes the young people themselves conducted the service.

Soon a number of adults began to attend the services. With the main problem being the need for a new church building, many fund-raising schemes were organized, such as working bees, concerts, and even penny drives.

By November 1965, £600 had been raised and it was hoped to buy land shortly on a site soon to be subdivided above Rokeby Road near the Howrah Road turnoff. Early the following year, a large residence was rented and part of it re-let and a Sunday school commenced. The enthusiastic and dedicated people lifted their eyes to a brightening future.

### **ATHOL G. TOWNLEY**

The nation's leaders gathered at the Hobart Baptist Church on December, 1962, for the State funeral of the former Minister for Defence, Athol G. Townley. It was the biggest funeral the State had ever seen. In Australia and at Australian diplomatic embassies throughout the

world, flags were at half mast in memory of the active, gifted and popular Cabinet Minister. The funeral service was conducted by Rogers.

Thousands more lined the route of the funeral to the Cornelian Bay crematorium and about 400 people stood outside the crematorium chapel during the final observances.

Townley was born in Hobart on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1907. He was only a boy when his father died, but he had been blessed with a remarkable mother, to whose force of character and sanctified commonsense he owed a great deal. Life had not been easy, but he was a born battler who could never refuse a challenge.

Educated at Hobart High School, Hobart Technical School and the University of Tasmania, he became a partner with his brother Rex, as a pharmaceutical and analytical chemist.

During World War II, Townley served with the Royal Australian Navy from 1939 to 1945 in England, Singapore and the South-west Pacific. He held the rank of Lieutenant-Commander in the Royal Australian Naval Reserve.

Townley entered politics in 1949, when he was returned as Liberal member for the Denison seat in Tasmania, in the House of Representatives. He held the seat in the 1951 general elections and was appointed Minister for Social Services and Minister in charge of War Service Homes on 11<sup>th</sup> May, 1951.

He was re-elected in the 1954 elections and appointed Minister for Air and Civil Aviation. He was re-appointed following the 1955 elections. For two years, Townley was a member of the Tasmanian State Repatriation Board and the Patriotic Fund Board, also the Canteens Trust Fund Regional Committee.

He was a keen sportsman and had represented Tasmania in cricket. Townley, who had also played league football, was prominently associated with Tasmanian Cricket and Football clubs and the Aero Club of Southern Tasmania.

Under the influence of a godly mother, he came early to identify himself with Christ and his church. Even when his duties were heaviest, he would be at the church services.

In earlier years, he served variously as teacher, deacon and occasional preacher. To the end, he

was a valued committeeman and made a real contribution to the life of the church.

His sudden death on Christmas Eve, prior to his laying down his portfolio as Minister of Defence to take a post of High Commissioner to the U.S., was a great blow to the nation. The funeral service was a fine tribute to one who had risen so high and yet had not lost the common touch.

#### **ROGERS' RESIGNATION AND FAREWELL**

Perhaps no decision for Rogers was more difficult than that to leave Hobart after three years to take up a teaching position at the N.S.W. Baptist Theological College as Lecturer in New Testament. The church had come to mean much to him. For almost twelve months, persistent pressure was resisted but, at last, there came a conviction that God was in it. So on 12<sup>th</sup> February, 1966, farewell services were conducted.

For some of the young people of Hobart, his vocabulary at times had lost them but of his humility, compassion and faithfulness as a teacher, there was no one in doubt.

His sermons, with his profound theological background, had been enriching and helpful to so many. His preaching was of the highest order. A wonderful visitor, he had made so many contacts in and outside the church.

Rogers did not consider that his ministry had achieved much so far as the church was concerned - he believed it was an all too brief pastorate. He confessed that it had contributed greatly to his own life, but believed that he left it at a point where it stood poised for advance and development. He prayed that the ministry would prove a preparation for the abler and ampler ministry which the church needed and deserved at that time. Rogers was guest preacher for the Baptist Union of Tasmania's Annual Assembly in 1968.

His task at the N.S.W. College has been unchanged through all subsequent years. But with it have gone other responsibilities - Superintendent of the Bible College (1966-1973), Vice-Principal (1971-1974), Principal (1974 on). At the time of appointment as Principal, he was at the Ruschlikon Baptist Theological Seminary pursuing studies that led to a Master of Theology degree. Recently he was elected for a fourth three year term as Principal.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### MINISTRY IN THE CITY

#### PETER STOCKMAN (1966-1972)

The Hobart Baptist Church acted quickly on Roger's announcement of his acceptance of the call to a position at the N.S.W. Baptist College. A call was soon issued to the Rev. Peter Stockman, B.A. L.Th., Pastor of the Ashburton Baptist Church, Victoria, seen as one eminently fitted for the special needs of the church and city.

It was announced on 26<sup>th</sup> December that he had accepted the call and he was inducted to the pastorate of the Hobart Church on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 1966.

#### **REV. PETER STOCKMAN**

Born in Brixham, South Devon, in 1930, he had arrived in Australia in 1933 with his family. Early Baptist association was with the Moonee Ponds Baptist Church, where he attended Sunday school and Christian Endeavour. When his father started a mission hall in Moonee Ponds, he naturally went along, and participated in Open Air meetings, even though still a small boy.

His initial training was as an industrial chemist, and it was while in pursuit of this vocation that he felt constrained to apply to the Victorian Baptist Home Missionary Society for service and training. He was appointed to assist in the Inner Suburban Plan of Melbourne, and stationed at Richmond. The following year, 1951, he entered the Baptist College of Victoria as an accepted candidate for the ministry. Graduating in 1954 he was appointed to the pastoral care of Wodonga, and was ordained on the 30<sup>th</sup> November of the same year. During this period, he commenced University study by correspondence.

Early in 1958, he moved to Ashburton where he won appreciation for Church services, preaching and pastoral ministry. Ashburton provided the opportunity to complete his studies at Melbourne University and, during this time, the new Ashburton church was built.

Stockman applied himself enthusiastically to the work of the Hobart Church. Thoughtful preparation and clear and forthright presentations of his sermons appealed to young and old alike. He soon proved a worthy inheritor of the great preaching tradition of the Tabernacle. He brought to the task at Hobart dedicated scholarship, youth and an abundance of energy and enthusiasm. His fresh and vigorous ministry soon earned him wide recognition.

Not long after Stockman's induction, a new manse was purchased at 47 Toorak Ave., New Town, which is still the home of the minister of the church today.

#### **HOWRAH ADVANCE AND DEFERRAL**

In June 1966, a site of three blocks of land had been chosen and an option of purchase secured in Howrah on the eastern side of the Derwent.

By August 1967, with plans for a substantial church hall with several classrooms to be built at Rokeby Road, and a proposition for a loan and its repayment already submitted, the building was soon expected to begin and the hall opened by the end of 1968. Before the year was out, two baptisms from the Howrah Fellowship had taken place in the Tabernacle.

By the middle of 1968, the fellowship was forced to transfer to the Beach Side Pre-School. There were soon setbacks and disappointments - things were not well. By the end of 1968, even though the site for the proposed building was paid for, the work was scaled down.

Although the morning service had ceased, regular week day activities continued and opportunity was given for church folk living in the area to participate on Sundays in the larger fellowship at the Tabernacle which was operating the All Age School with all its special facilities. Finally, after a short period of independent existence, the work lapsed. It would be nearly six years before there would be a rebirth of Baptist work on the eastern Side of the Derwent, brought about by a tragic event which affected the whole city.

#### **STUDENT HOSTEL IN HOBART**

For a number of years, Tasmanian Baptists had recognized the need to provide accommodation for young people who each year came to Hobart to further their studies. Each year, the problem became more acute as the student population grew.

Throughout 1967, a group of members from the Hobart Church began to explore in earnest the possibility of establishing a hostel that could receive students for the 1968 academic year. Early investigations were not promising, as finance was not available for the purchase of a suitable property and rental seemed out of the question. But the group was determined not to

give in until it had explored every possible avenue, for it believed its vision was of God.

Late in 1967, a house at 35 Princes Street, Sandy Bay was offered for sale. The property was within easy walking distance of the University. Although for sale, if it was not sold by the end of the year, it was to be leased until the end of 1968. The committee took out a lease, seeing this as the first answer to their prayers and efforts. The church took heart from the warm support that came from other churches endorsing their action, which had been taken in faith. Soon twelve full-time students were in residence.

Much of the success of the Hostel was attributable to the devoted and talented services of Jans Meyers, the matron or "mother" of the home. Molly Light was assistant matron. The property was finally purchased early in 1969. Two years later, the Rev. F.H. Kingsbury accepted the position of Chaplain to the residents. The venture ceased in December 1972 with the sale of the property.

#### **REV. DOUG O. GRIFFITHS**

Griffiths commenced in Hobart on February, 1968. Born in 1937 in Sydney, N.S.W., he grew up in a single parent family with no religious background at all. In 1956, while serving as an apprentice, he became quite ill with hepatitis and went to live with his cousin at Avalon where he was challenged with the Christian message. A wide reader, searching for life's meaning, Griffiths was converted under the ministry of the Rev. Bruce Addison, pastor of the Gladesville Baptist Church, where Griffiths' cousin worshipped. It was this 'barn' of a church, built in the Depression, that Griffiths was baptized. Addison made a great impression on him as did his future father-in-law, Tom Caswell, Sunday School Superintendent. The church moved to Ryde soon after and Griffiths became youth leader and, at the age of twenty, deacon.

Following ninth grade, he was apprenticed with Unilever, working in a wharf factory in Sydney. In the factory, he commenced, among many closet Christians, a Bible Study group. The Billy Graham Crusade brought about a number of conversions in that factory. A new position and marriage followed in 1960. The next year saw the step into training for the Baptist ministry at the old Ashfield College in Sydney. In his second year, the Rev. Dr. E. Roberts-Thomson became Principal. After a brief student-pastorate at Regent's Park Baptist Church in 1961, he was inducted by Addison into the Concorde West Baptist Church in 1962. There he developed a strong interest in counseling, working as chaplain to the nearby Repatriation Hospital.

In 1964, he completed studies at the Baptist College and began work on a B.A. degree.

During his next three years, in the small pastorate of the Glen Innes Baptist Church, he worked closely with two doctors in a hospital ministry. He met encouraging response, especially among men.

Griffiths' friendly personality and his ease of approach met a ready acceptance among young people of the Hobart Tabernacle following his induction. Griffiths worked among them and his home was constantly open, not only to them but to any who wanted help. Seventy to one hundred young people would gather in the Den following the Sunday evening services. Griffiths and his wife, Grace, were both involved in the Sunday school and Griffiths took his share in preaching and visitation. In spite of this, he completed his course at the University of Tasmania, achieving his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1969.

The Associate Ministry continued throughout 1969 and it was quite evident there were enough people seeking help with their problems and needing friendship and guidance to warrant the continuation of the joint ministry; however, in the interests of unity within, the church accepted the resignation of Griffiths as from the end of the year.

#### **FROM MINISTRY TO MINISTRY**

Griffiths, with his wife, Grace, and some people from various denominations, had a growing concern that there was need in Hobart of a half-way house for youth in trouble. By May 1970, they had purchased a property at Sorell. After three days, their first customer arrived, an alcoholic. The work grew rapidly. In a short period of time, it had grown into a community with Griffiths as Director. The community, named the Beth Shalom, meaning House of Peace, lived by faith. In 1973, it purchased a 200 acre-property near the town.

After six years of working closely with people and being a referral person to most of the Government agencies in Hobart, a change was called for. In 1976, Griffiths completed a Diploma of Education. Following four years at the Woodbridge District High School Griffiths, in 1981, became Head of the English Department at St. Mary's Roman Catholic School in Hobart, teaching English and Religion. Three years earlier, he had become a practicing Roman Catholic. Today, he is active in the parish of his own denomination.

#### **DR. LINDA ROCKLIFF**

Today's new missionaries tend to be younger and better educated than they were twenty years ago, and many of them stay abroad for only four years or fewer. They are responsive to the needs of the overseas churches who request doctors, nurses, teachers and engineers rather than preachers.

Such a person is Dr. Linda Rockliff. Commissioned at the Hobart Baptist Church on 4<sup>th</sup> January, 1970, for missionary work in Pakistan, she would find herself in the middle of a civil war. Initially, Linda studied medicine with the view of being a missionary but, as she progressed further, she doubted if she would be happy in that role. But, when she heard, in 1969, that a doctor was required for eighteen months at the Australian Baptist Missionary Society mission hospital at Joyramkura, East Pakistan, just two miles from the Assam border, she agreed to go.

After arriving in East Pakistan in February 1970, she went to Barisal for a three month crash language course before travelling to the hospital. After a full year at the mission hospital, civil war broke out.

Life generally was not at that time happy in the province of East Pakistan. There was widespread resentment that most of the power in the country was in the hands of West Pakistanis. It was argued that, although East Pakistan was bigger and far more heavily populated than the Western province, very little of the economic benefits were being spent in the East. The army was overwhelmingly from the west, and it was an army that despised the Bengalis (East Pakistanis).

Resentments built up and, as the 1970 elections drew near, political agitation for a better deal intensified. The country went to the polls and there was a landslide victory for the East Pakistan Awami League which gained 167 out of the 169 seats in parliament.

The Awami leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman, prepared to take over the government of the country, but the stunned opponents in the west refused to countenance such an incredible situation.

After stalling for a few weeks, the Army began a merciless crackdown on the Bengali population, concentrating especially on all potential leaders. Mujibur Rahaman was arrested and imprisoned for treason and, for nine long months, the country was ravaged by famine and occupation by a foreign army. Even though India officially was neutral in the early stages of the war, the occupants of the hospital could hear the extra traffic at night, as Indian vehicles came across the border to help the Bengalis. Hordes of the refugees trained as freedom fighters, harassed the Pakistani troops.

When news came that the West Pakistanis had taken over Mymensingh, the locals around Joyramkura decided to cross the border into Assam. Panic was rife. Linda and the other staff went too. About ten days later, some of the missionaries in Mymensingh caught up with them

and assured them that it was safe to return to Mymensingh.

India and Pakistan were soon openly at war. The Pakistani troops retreated to Dacca and, with the surrender of that city on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 1970, Bangladesh was born.

A month before returning home to Australia in August 1970, Linda arranged a holiday in Nepal. She so enjoyed the country that she offered her services part-time to the United Mission Hospital in Katmandu. After three months work part-time, she returned to Hobart to resume general medical practice.

### **RON SOUNDY - LORD MAYOR**

Challenge has been something never avoided by Ronald George Soundy. It seemed that being Managing Director of a large departmental store in the capital of Tasmania and Church Secretary of the first Baptist church in the capital of Tasmania were not enough, so he sought election in 1966 in the Hobart City Council elections and topped the poll. In doing so, he succeeded his honoured father, the Sir John Soundy who was also elected as Lord Mayor, by the popular vote of the rate-payers, on a number of occasions.

The next six years had their share of fights, victories and disappointments - but Ron Soundy was never again opposed for the position of Lord Mayor.

Soundy's election to the office of Lord Mayor of Hobart in 1970 understandably involved some curtailment of activities in the Hobart Church. He resigned from the Secretaryship after twenty-one years in office but continued as deacon. It was in a sense the end of an era. His period of service bridged four ministries and he had been the chief executive officer of the church in a period of great change. No church could have been set a finer example in efficient, self-effacing service and also in the real meaning of loyalty than that given by Soundy. In 1974, after thirty-three years serving continuously as a deacon, he was elected a life deacon.

He was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1977, a year after stepping down from the top council job. The same year, he accepted the Presidency of the Tasmanian Baptist Union.

In 1982 he retired as an alderman, ending a sixteen year career with the council.

Outside the council duties, Soundy has had a long-standing interest in the live stage, and has served as President of the Tasmania Youth Theatre and the Australian Rosny Children's Choir. Soundy was wished a happy and useful retirement in July 1983, but remained Chairman of the Board of the Soundy Company.

## **W. ANGUS WATSON**

W. Angus Watson was appointed Secretary of the Hobart Church following Soundy's resignation.

Born in 1908 at Gateshead-on-Tyne, England, he passed through Grammar School and was articled to the Borough Engineer of Richmond. As a chartered engineer, he worked firstly in the Manchester area, then in Chester. Early in 1951, he and his wife, Mavis, and family left England for Brisbane where he was Engineer-in-charge of subdivisions for the whole of the City. Whilst in Brisbane, they attended the City Congregational Church where Watson was elected a deacon and church secretary. At the end of 1954, they moved to Hobart where he had obtained an appointment with the Public Works Department and soon became District Engineer for the S.E. of the State.

Through their young son's association with the Hobart Baptist Sunday School - his enthusiasm for Sunday school brought requests from his sister and brothers to be allowed to go, too - by mid-1955, the whole family attended. On 11<sup>th</sup> March, 1956, Angus and two of his children were baptized and, together with his wife, who was previously a member of the Broadmead Baptist Church in Bristol, they became church members in Hobart.

Watson served as Church Treasurer from 1958 to 1963. In 1970, he gained the position of Church Secretary, a position he held to 1976. In 1978, he was appointed Life Deacon. Watson was also involved in Union affairs, as a Council member for 10 years, a member of the Sustentation Trust for 10 years, and as a member of the Pastoral Committee for three years. He was a member of the Board of St. Ann's Rest Home from 1965 to 1977.

A keen photographer who has had photographs exhibited in international exhibitions, his interest and activity in church affairs have not ceased. Spending each winter with his wife on Magnetic Island, Watson is Secretary/Treasurer of the Magnetic Island Baptist Fellowship.

## **THE EYRE SCHOOL - AN EXCHANGE OF PROPERTIES**

Negotiations which began in 1964 led to the meeting of two different needs. The Education Department, which held land titles on three sides of the church property, now wanted to extend its holdings behind the rear of the church hall and was willing to release the Eyre School site upon which stood a weather-board class room complex. The church itself was at that time suffering acutely from lack of accommodation for its All Age Sunday School and saw great benefit in the exchange. Agreement was finally reached

and the Education Department gained the kitchen, the Jack Soundy Memorial Hall and land, while the church gained the Eyre School land and buildings which is more than twice the area to that which it lost and has a frontage onto Elizabeth Street. The exchange cost the church £6,100 (1965 figures). Stage two of the previous planned development was scrapped.

The Eyre School building, renamed the Jack Soundy Memorial Building, was dedicated on 13<sup>th</sup> April, 1969, and a painting of Jack Soundy was rehung over the mantelpiece. The old foundation stone was repositioned inside the front doors.

Bill Watt, chairman of the Property Committee, was one who worked extremely hard to ensure that the old school building would be ready in time. Watt came from the mainland in 1949 and played a most important part in the Property Committee over many years. A most practical man, he used his practical skills to save the church considerable necessary maintenance expenses. During the construction of the original Jack Soundy Memorial Hall in 1957, heavy rains overloaded the Council drains and water eventually entered the new hall, much to the alarm of the church officers and members of the property committee who had been very pleased with the new floor placed one week previously. A call was put out to the City Council and to the Fire Brigade for pumping assistance, without success. Finally, Watt and his brother, Jim, manufactured an electrical pump with an elaborate "snorkel" device which slowly pumped the hall free of water. Watt worked very late on several nights pumping water and then blowing hot air under the floor to dry it and his devotion and ingenuity saved the church up to £350.

In the demolitions which followed (at the rear of the property), the Caretaker's Cottage was finally demolished. In connection with the cottage, not all the caretakers provided satisfactory service. One was dismissed for unsatisfactory service and left the place in a filthy state with damage done to the church. The Sunday school books were stuffed in the flues of the kitchen stove, ashes strewn over the kitchen floor and a cat was locked in the house. The School room clock was relieved of all its works and the School money boxes smashed.

## **STOCKMAN'S RESIGNATION AND FAREWELL**

In November 1972, the church received with regret the resignation of its Pastor. At the meeting called to hear this announcement, many members testified to Stockman's immense abilities, and his courage and integrity in making his decision.

A Public Farewell was held on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1972, under the chairmanship of the Lord Mayor

of Hobart, Alderman R.G. Soundy. The President and the General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Tasmania, Archdeacon H. Jerrim, on behalf of the Tasmanian Council of Churches, of which Stockman was Vice-President, Rev. E. Michael Webber for Christian Television Association of Tasmania, and the Overton Committee and Head of Churches Standing Committee on Religious Education, as well as the Church Secretary, all testified to the immense work and influence by Stockman in his seven years in Hobart.

Stockman had been Secretary of the Christian Television Association and rightly so. Stockman could handle the media with real confidence. His organizing ability in Hobart was outstanding. A number of television church services were filmed at the Tabernacle and were shown on television for years up the east coast of Australia because they were done so well. "He had a sense of liturgy, unusual in Baptists." His concern for worship grew out of a prior passion, that of Theology.

As President of the Baptist Union of Tasmania in 1967, he did not spare himself in giving a strong leadership to the denomination, emphasizing the importance of Christian stewardship.

Stockman's dynamic personality made him a most acceptable and influential member of many of Hobart's Civic, Church, Education and Social organizations.

His greatest contribution outside the church was given as leader of the spearhead attack in 1969 on the proposed legislation to permit a casino in Tasmania. Although a referendum supporting the casino was won by a small majority, resulting in the Wrest Point Casino ultimately being built, Stockman was commended for the part he played. The Churches of Hobart had worked

together and had, at cost to themselves, prepared the Anti-Casino case.

He had assisted in the work of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and was Chairman of the first Bible Week in Hobart. Concerned about religious education in State Schools, he became a foundation member of the Heads of Churches Commission on Religious Education. Further, he was Chairman of the first Advent Pilgrimage in Hobart, as well as Chairman of the Hobart Branch of the Tasmanian Council of Churches.

Stockman's involvement in the ecumenical-civic affairs of the city continued the pattern set by earlier ministries. Such ministries help to explain why the church has had such an impact on the city - an impact which is uncommon for Baptist city churches around Australia.

But, for all his ecumenical involvement, the pastoral ministry of the church had not been neglected. Counseling, for Stockman the essence of ministry, was a large part of his work - sitting with families in their times of crisis, weeping with them, and laughing with them in their times of joy. He had discovered in Hobart a large number of lonely people, young and old. Further, the manse had resounded with the joyous throb of young people for after all, he had had them for five of the seven years without an Associate Pastor.

Early in December 1972, Stockman received an appointment as Senior Chaplain of Carey Baptist Grammar School, Melbourne. It is a position he still retains. During this period, he has managed to conduct several interim ministries in Victorian Baptist Churches and has maintained a strong link with the Baptist Union as a member of the Executive Council.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### NEW DIRECTIONS

#### REX GLASBY AND PETER McLEAN (1974-1981)

At the commencement of 1973, the Church had high hopes that before the year expired there would be a pastoral settlement. However, this hope did not eventuate. During the year, the church was well served by two of its members - the Rev. Rex Glasby and the Rev. John A. Johnston. It was not until 17<sup>th</sup> July the following year that the church heard of the acceptance of call to pastoral oversight by one who was already well-known and loved by them - Rev. Rex Glasby.

#### THE REV. REX GLASBY

The previous incumbent, the Rev. Peter Stockman, on hearing the news of Glasby's appointment wrote, "There are few men who combine so many qualities and such a rich background of experience that complement ministerial responsibilities than he can bring to this task." Hobartian, the Rev. J.D. Williams, who had supervised the Glasby's work on the mission field, also responded, "He will make you all realize that you have to do the job if the church is really going to succeed. The Hobart Church is in for a new lease of life." And the Rev. Mervyn Himbury, Principal of Whitley College, Melbourne agreed, "I could not have found anywhere a man more devoted to the ministry of our Lord or with a greater insight into contemporary problems on the modern church and the world than the one whom you found on your own doorstep."

Rex Glasby, born in Queensland, in 1928, has good memories of his childhood years. His policeman father taught him the skills that he had acquired in his vocation - how to handle oneself in a fight, how to ride and care for horses, how to swim and surf and how to use firearms. From his mother, he learnt how to love and care for people.

On removal to Newcastle in N.S.W., the Glasbys came into the Christian family through Methodists, Dr. Frank Rayward and his wife. After nine or ten years there, the family moved to Bathurst where he attended the local High School. The family attended the Baptist Church.

Glasby joined the Royal Australian Navy and saw service from 1944 to 1946. While serving in the Navy, he visited Hobart and attended the Hobart Baptist Church, lodging with the Soundys.

In 1948, he then entered the N.S.W. Baptist Theological College from the Stanmore Baptist Church, N.S.W., as a candidate for the Foreign Mission Board. He was not one who kept up with the academics "who leap from peak to peak idealizing and agonizing in the rare air" although he respected their efforts. By now the Glasby family was very missionary minded. His two older sisters were already in missionary service with the Sudan United Mission and in the United Provinces of India. As a student Pastor, he served at the Randwick and Cronulla Baptist Churches and, at the conclusion of his training, served with the Australian Baptist Missionary Society in Assam in the north-eastern corner of India from 1950 to 1966.

In East Bengal, Glasby met and married Peg Soundy who had been accepted by the Foreign Mission Board and had left for the field in October 1949. In her correspondence to the Church in 1952 were a few prophetic lines from Rex, lines which read, "Thanks for your gift - thanks ever so much. I'm glad to know some of the Tabernacle people and look forward to meeting them all one day. May the strong arm of God be upon you all."

In September 1957, they went to live in a little place called Debitola just 200 miles from the Chinese border. It was one of the twenty-eight villages of the Rabbas - a very isolated and heathen race which the government did not know existed. The Glasby home was a thatched house three-quarters of the way up a hill.

The most significant step in the right direction in the work among the Rabbas came in the small tent which they called their dispensary. Peg, the mother of two mobile boys and a brand new baby, was also a pharmacist. With Peg's know-how and Rex's enthusiasm to contact people, they treated sore eyes, scabies, asthma, rheumatism, tinea, malaria, dysentery, aches and pains, cuts and bruises, tropical ulcers and so on. In the meanwhile, they had been moving around the villages with an old-fashioned lantern which had old-fashioned slides about life-size of the life of Christ.

Their first church services were held in the valley on the plinth of what was to be a small guest room. At that stage, it was a number of posts in the ground with a tiled roof. There were no pews, just pieces of timber on the ground on which to

sit. After eighteen months, they met regularly for worship in the house of a schoolmaster. The Glasbys learned Rabba and, through the help of the school master, printed a book in Rabba, the first in the people's dialect.

When the Glasbys left Debitola in 1967, there were three small congregations and no one took their places. Today there are twenty-three churches with 1,400 baptized members and a Christian community of 2,500 people. In place of Peg and Rex's dispensary tent, there is a large and convenient out-patient department where 1,200 patients were seen and treated every month. Nearby is a maternity room with two beds in constant use. In addition is the in-patient block with four separate rooms crowded in times of epidemics. Truly a remarkable change - "God had taken a simple sailor boy and helped him transform a whole race."

During Glasby's furlough in 1962, he acted as Interim Pastor to the Hobart Baptist Church and, for the first time, the congregation really got to know him.

Probably the main characteristic we will remember about the close personal time with Rex will be that he has exploded the century old symbol of the church "parson" (the meek little apology for a man with the back to front collar) and, in its place, we have seen a strong virile red-blooded modern disciple of God....the sick and aged folk who first fell for his good looks and obtained great comfort from his quiet and sincere prayers with them.....the young people who have written to the deacons messages of thanks for Rex and his guidance.....those of us who have listened to his sermons, or "fire-side talks" which have gone home deeper than any inspirational sermon from learned speakers.....he has given us a deeper appreciation of a 1962 Saviour... It was a task he had always claimed he was not "cut out for".

On returning to live in Tasmania in 1967, Glasby served for five years with the Savage River Mines as Industrial Relations Officer and Township Supervisor. He acted as honorary chaplain among the employees of the complex and a community church was initiated - his interest had been, and remains, in the whole Christian community. In 1972, he was appointed Tasmanian Director of Austcare/Freedom from Hunger and the United Nations Association/UNICEF maintaining a strong link with many schools. In October 1973, Glasby was elected the President of the Baptist Union of Tasmania.

#### **EASTERN SHORE BAPTIST CHURCH**

On Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> January, 1975, the services at the Hobart Tabernacle had been held as usual with a good number of visitors attending; it was the

holiday season and many regulars were away. No-one would have guessed what impact the events of the next few hours would have. Around 9.00 p.m. that night, a ship hit the Tasman Bridge and divided the City into East and West.

Up to this point in time, few people realized the importance of bridges, especially the Tasman Bridge and, in particular, its influence on the lives of people and upon the church.

Generally speaking, Hobart and Clarence Municipality form one large city divided by the River Derwent, but the latter is mainly a dormitory town and approximately one-third of the church's active members lived on the eastern side of the river.

By the following Sunday, ferries were running between Bellerive and the city waterfront, and arrangements had been made for Eastern Shore people to be collected at the ferry terminal in town and delivered to the Tabernacle. Some took advantage of this; others drove right round through Bridgewater; but many were missing; other city congregations had the same experience. By the next Sunday, Glasby and church secretary, Angus Watson, had made arrangements for those living on the Eastern Shore to worship at the Rosny Matriculation College. Glasby took the service at Rosny at 9.00 a.m. and then travelled to town to take the 11.00 a.m. service there, with Sunday school being held while he travelled.

By setting up a worship service on the Eastern Shore, the Tabernacle lost many of its Sunday school teachers and other key workers, as well as a good number of scholars.

Members of the Eastern Shore group met originally in an area of the College which had few chairs and no piano, so each week a team prepared the area for worship and afterwards put all the chairs back in other areas. Later they were able to move into the new College Auditorium which holds 450 people and is set up for large performances.

Within one year, between 100 and 140 people were worshipping at Rosny each Sunday. Contact was also made with new people who found themselves isolated from their churches on the western shore. The more senior members living on the western shore missed the younger ones of the church family - and the converse equally applied. However, they came together for several services and social gatherings on both sides of the river and, generally speaking, the essential contact with each other was maintained until the constitution of the Eastern Shore Baptist Church on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 1977. Forty members transferred their membership to the new church to form a substantial part of the fifty initial membership.

In 1979, Eastern Shore members, Tony Gower and John Morse, joined the Elders of the Church to form a Team Ministry. Gower specialized in evangelism and Morse in teaching. In February 1980, the Church invited Gower to provide full-time leadership in evangelism for the year. He was later inducted into the pastorate, with John Morse joining him in a team ministry in early 1984, when the church membership stood at 120. Again, an enthusiastic and dedicated people on the Eastern Shore have lifted their eyes to a brightening future.

#### **TAROONA HIGH SCHOOL SERVICES**

1975 saw the first of the continuing annual Tarooma High School Church services, in which large numbers of students participated as readers, prayer leaders, door stewards or musicians. The school concert band filled the choir stalls and several nearby pews, while parents, teachers and friends swelled the usual Sunday evening congregation to (sometimes beyond) the capacity of the building. The combination of the large band and the pipe organ, enthusiastically played by Godfrey Swanton, was something to experience. The sight of the sanctuary filled with people, many of whom would never otherwise bother coming to church, was a heartwarming challenge.

#### **MAX. G. LEVETT AND ROD COOK**

Max G. Levett retired as Treasurer in March 1976 after six years at the task. He also retired from the diaconate after ten years.

Born in Launceston, Levett attended the Newstead and Central Baptist Churches. Employment brought him to Hobart in 1958 and he played both cricket and hockey with the Hobart Baptist Church teams. Having joined the church in 1960, he was appointed Assistant Treasurer in 1965, a position he held for four years. In 1968 he held the position of Assistant Secretary.

When the Tasman Bridge collapsed in 1975, he served as Chairman of the Eastern Shore Steering Committee in relation to Baptist work. When the Eastern Shore Baptist Church was finally formed in 1977, Levett was appointed inaugural Secretary and served in this capacity for four and one half years. In the midst of all this, he has served on Council of the Baptist Union of Tasmania for two years. The Hobart

Church appreciated the fine and dedicated contribution of a busy man. He had followed Rod Cook as Treasurer.

Rod Cook had been Assistant Treasurer for two years before he held the Treasurer's office in 1966. In his early years, he had had connections with the Baptist Church in Devonport and the

Church of Christ at Invermay. In 1954 he began attending the Hobart Baptist Church. As Church Treasurer, he was backed up by the Finance Board comprising Geoff Davis, Angus Watson and Ronald Soundy.

#### **WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP**

At the Annual Assembly of the Baptist Union of Tasmania in 1970, Lady Deacon of the Church, Phyl Knight, became the first woman to be elected to Council of the Baptist Union of Tasmania. Knight, a fourth generation of the church, served as deacon from 1958 to 1976.

May Tuck, wife of Professor H.P. Tuck, was the first Lady Deacon of the church, having been appointed to that position in 1949. Tuck became a member of the church in 1924, having transferred from Adelaide. In 1965 she was elected a Life Deacon. She passed to higher service on 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1982.

Other Lady Deacons have been Edna Iles, Dr. Linda Rockliff and Diana Swanton.

#### **VISIT OF THE U.S.S. ENTERPRISE TO HOBART**

The Huon Pine cross which is erected over the baptistry in the Tabernacle was a gift from members of the ship's company of U.S.S. Enterprise which visited Hobart in 1976. Seven men from the aircraft carrier were baptized at the church on 6<sup>th</sup> October of that year.

Twelve men from the ship had made arrangements with their chaplain to be baptized at the Hobart Baptist Church while their ship was in port. But only seven of the intending twelve made it to the baptismal pool to end a wait of three months. The popularity of visits to the ship and the congestion of crewmen coming ashore for liberty prevented the five men getting to the church on time. Forty men had converted to the faith, since leaving America in late July, which was evidence of a large and active Christian community on board. The other five men were to be baptized at the ship's next port of call.

#### **DENIS W. ROGERS**

The truism "if you want something done well, give it to a busy man" certainly applied to Denis Rogers, who became church secretary in 1976.

Rogers was born in Hobart in 1940. After leaving New Town High School, he entered the Commonwealth Public Service working in several departments before becoming Manager of the Commonwealth Computer Centre. Rogers came to the church during Holly's ministry and, following baptism and church membership, became a Sunday school teacher - his sporting ability and enthusiasm enabled him to relate to young people. After election to the Diaconate, he

liaised between the youth groups and the Deacons. For a number of years, Rogers served as a committee Chairman on the Board of St. Ann's and continues as one of the church's representatives on the Council of the Baptist Union of Tasmania.

Rogers met with flair and competence the extra demands laid upon him as church secretary, a position he held for five years.

#### **JAN VERTIGAN**

On 19<sup>th</sup> December, 1976, Sister Jan Vertigan was farewelled in a special commissioning service held at the Tabernacle. Her field of service would be at the Kwai River Christian Hospital, Sangklaburi, Thailand.

It was at a children's after-school mission at the church for students of Elizabeth Street School that Jan made a definite commitment to Jesus Christ. During matriculation studies, Jan began regularly attending the church and was baptized in 1965.

After training in general nursing at the Royal Hobart Hospital, Midwifery in Western Australia and Child Health in Hobart again, she worked in Queenstown for one year where one fellow worker, Jan Stretton, was later to become her fellow missionary nurse. Three years at the Bible College of South Australia followed. By this time she had a distinct sense of God's leading to work overseas combined with a deep desire to work through this intimately with her home church while she gained further general experience in Hobart. The later was in keeping with the words of Michael Griffiths "As we look to the future we shall always want to go as representatives of a congregation with others standing behind us who will pray for us and be intimately involved with us, albeit geographically remote." (Give up Your Small Ambitions). Soon application to the Australian Baptist Missionary Society led to nursing in Thailand.

The first two years, with language ability only minimal and no full-time doctor, brought to Vertigan many responsibilities and a thankfulness for a home church standing behind her in support. Then the appointment of a permanent doctor enabled her to begin language study so opening the door to the verbal sharing of her faith with those she was attending. Even so, language barriers persist for there are seven distinct dialects in the region!

Christian ministries in the Sangklaburi district have brought a slow response but the developments in recent years have been encouraging. There has been a gradual increase in Christian believers, the ordination of the first pastor and the establishment of a national church association. Twenty-four years of Christian work

at Sangklaburi sees 1984 as the year of relocation to two new areas within the district, brought about through the building of a hydro-electric dam on the Kwai River, causing the eventual flooding of the original hospital complex.

1982 - the centenary of ABMS, and 1984 - the centenary of the home church, sees Jan continuing the work to which she has been called in Sangklaburi.

#### **DENNIS BRENNAN**

19<sup>th</sup> December, 1976, was also the occasion of the commissioning of Dennis Brennan and his wife, Gay, who were both to enter the Baptist Theological College in N.S.W., Dennis for ministerial training.

Brennan, a quiet and sensitive young man, had contributed significantly to the work of the church. Having completed his Bachelor of Science in Queensland, he came to Tasmania in 1973 to complete his Diploma of Education and then teach in secondary schools. In his first year in Hobart, Brennan became greatly involved in the work amongst young people. While continuing to teach at Cosgrove High School, he was appointed as a Youth Leader and later as a Deacon of the church.

In 1976 Brennan made application for ministerial training and was soon accepted.

In subsequent studies, Brennan completed a Bachelor of Theology and a Diploma in Ministry. While in Sydney, he was involved in pastoral ministry at the Tarramurra and Epping Churches. Returning during the major vacation periods, he fulfilled interim ministries in Hobart, Georgetown and Sheffield.

While completing his studies in Sydney, Dennis received a call to the Burnie Baptist Church and it was there that he was ordained and inducted on 15<sup>th</sup> March, 1981.

#### **THE REV. PETER McLEAN**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1979, the Hobart Baptist Church ordained to the ministry Peter McLean on his induction to the position of Assistant Minister.

McLean, the son of the Tasmanian Baptist Minister, the Rev. R. McLean, is musically orientated. As early as 1969, he had formed part of a group called "The P.K. Union" which stood for the Preacher's Kids Union - the group members were all children of the manse. While singing with the P.K.U. in a coffee-house in Queensland, McLean's second-hand faith became his first-hand. Asked by a rough and ready Presbyterian minister the subject of his singing that evening, McLean replied that they were going to tell the audience that "Jesus loves them". The preacher disagreed, "You tell them

that 'Jesus loves me' and you will have something to say". From that time on, they did just that.

In 1972, the group disbanded and McLean joined a Rock and Roll band called "Manner" and wrote all their own songs. They performed around the North-west coast of Tasmania.

Two years later, he entered the Bible College of N.S.W. as a private student. As yet, the ordained ministry was not in view. He became the Youth Minister at the Epping Baptist Church in his second year of studies. On completion of studies, and now married to his singing partner, Linda Bridge, he entered the Baptist Theological College of N.S.W. Within a year, he was in a full-time position in a team ministry at Mount Druid, part of the inner city of Sydney, a built up area with high rise flats. This was a team ministry. McLean was involved in marriage and family counseling and the Family Life Movement. Studies continued part-time and so did singing in various public meeting places. Linda worked with disadvantaged mothers. But McLean was not attracted to the welfare approach to ministry. It was over Easter 1978 that their second child died. With the offer open to work in music full-time - they were now playing six or seven evenings a week - the acceptance of the call to Hobart was a major decision of their lives. Acceptance meant ordination.

The twenty-nine year old McLean soon found himself remaining as sole minister when Glasby left in June, 1980. Not long after the prefix "Acting" was dropped from McLean's title and this was fitting, for he assumed the full role with wholehearted devotion. McLean's ministry was characterized by the most unselfish, patient and loving regard for all members of the church family, and great warmth towards strangers who crossed the church's portals. His special gifts in the areas of music, counseling and personal support were well complemented by his quiet, thoughtful preaching style. His is truly a ministry of our times, taking the Word of God sincerely and effectively to where the people are - spiritually, intellectually and even geographically. He is the first minister of this church to testify to neighbours within the walls of the Sir William Don Hotel.

McLean was farewelled in October 1981. His three years in Hobart had been a marvellous experience for a young man.

McLean and his wife, Linda, soon began ministry at the "House of the Gentle Bunyip" in Melbourne. In August 1983, he became Pastor of the New Market Baptist Church.

For McLean "we are all pilgrims learning what it means to be followers of Jesus Christ and

expressing that in ways which are honest and true to our own personhood."

### **ALL AT SEA**

The week long holiday activities programme in January 1979 by the church for North Hobart children was an enormous success. The theme was "The Sea" and aboard the Good Ship Barnacle was a group of about fifty seamen who, after five days at sea, proved very able-bodied.

They launched out into a swelling tide of apprehension to face the prospect of an all-too-watery grave. The very idea of sailing with an unseasoned crew and thirty-odd landlubbers in a ship which, if the Navy had seen her, would have considered flotsam was, to say the least, presumptuous. But with Captain Bob (Boss-Walker) at the helm, they all pulled together and sailed the Barnacle on a fairly straight course - backwards. The old tub went astern all the way, thanks to the artist who did not know the sharp end from the blunt end!

Their task was to teach their recruits all about life at sea, tanning hides, getting tied in knots, waxing and whaling and leg pulling. They also taught them how to sail along in harmony. Cast included Petty Pete McLean, Helen Morris, a musical mermaid, Old Crowe Bosun, Ros Van Dalen; Barnacle Bill Folkerts and Seaweed Jan Kuplis.

### **GLASBY'S FAREWELL**

In June 1980, the church farewelled Glasby and his wife, Peg. They had not spared themselves in the ministry. When members had suffered loss, tragedy or had reason for great rejoicing - Rex and Peg had been there to share with them. Their caring humanity came through at all times and their personal examples had had a significant impact on the life of the church.

Glasby's six years of service contained many new and innovative ideas. One particular highlight was the presentation of the special ministry to young children during the morning Church services, another being the "Friday Night at the Tab." Glasby has a unique way of getting things done, especially through others - "I think the thing I appreciate most in our church is the willingness of people to respond to a call for aid. That is always most encouraging."

Like most 'parish pump' ministers, he lived in the community a fair bit. He was thankful to the church for allowing him to live his own life. He supported Life Line as a telephone counsellor, assisted in the Attorney General's Department as an Honorary Probation Officer and was a member of the Board of Management of Freedom from Hunger, the Benevolent Society and St. Ann's.

Early in his Hobart ministry, he was advised to "Keep loving them, Rex" - and that for Glasby had been the easiest thing for him to do in Hobart.

### **BEYOND HOBART**

Glasby had accepted the invitation from the Victorian Baptist Union to assist in the western suburbs of Melbourne where six churches in the Footscray area were endeavouring to work more closely together following the release of "The Western Suburbs Conference Report". The project failed because the churches, which were prepared to do some things together, were not interested in union. What Glasby as senior Pastor, and his two assistants - the Rev. Ross Langmead, the author of the report, and the Rev. Alan Marr, did achieve was the formation of the Westgate Baptist Community. During this time, Glasby was a member of Council of the Baptist Union of Victoria.

In April 1983, Glasby accepted the position of mine camp manager at the Edinburgh Camp, Tabubil, in Papua New Guinea, near the Irian Jaya border. Among his hopes is to the establishment of a health clinic at nearby Wongbin where infant mortality is 30%.

For Glasby, the total Christian message is that Jesus frees and unites. "Inner religion, as beautiful as it may be, is only the beginning and must be earthed in real life in the community."

### **CENTENARY RESTORATION**

On the recommendation of the Deacons (based on research and information presented by engineer and church property officer, Dr. Harry Thomas), the church, in August 1980, approved a three staged programme for restoration of the Church structure and the launching of an appeal for \$70,000. The structure over the last few years had shown signs of movement in the foundation and subsequent cracking in the walls and arches. In order to meet the cost of restoration, an Appeal Committee was appointed to organize the appeal to raise the \$70,000 in gifts, promises and interest-free loans over a period of three years to coincide with the Church Centenary in 1984.

With assistance from the State Government, the National Trust Restoration Fund, many business firms and friends of the church, together with interest accruing on unspent monies, the target was achieved in just over twelve months. The items of work completed included placing electrical mains underground and provision of a new switchboard; strengthening of the church walls by means of clamps and ties; restoration of stonework; re-glazing of numerous windows; exterior and interior painting; new sewer, storm

water and cold water lines; new fencing and asphaltting of the laneway and church yard.

A Thanksgiving Service was held on 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1981, at which the Rev. J.D. Williams, President General of the Baptist Union of Australia, was preacher to a near capacity congregation. Parliamentary and civic leaders attended

### **GRAHAM R. CLEMENTS**

When, in March 1981, Rogers unexpectedly resigned as Secretary, Graham R. Clements (who had been Assistant Church Secretary some years earlier) was requested to become Acting Secretary, as the then Assistant Secretary, Eric Welch, was overseas. Clements was elected Secretary in October of the same year, continuing until late 1982.

The son of active church members of long standing, Graham Clements grew up in the church and was baptized in 1946. He was educated at the Elizabeth Street Practising School adjacent to the Tabernacle, Hobart High School and the University of Tasmania, graduating B.A. Dip Ed. Clements took up a career in high school teaching, serving the Education Department in Queenstown, Wynyard and several schools in Hobart. In 1973, he was appointed Principal at Huonville High School and, two years later, at Taroom High School.

After the departure of McLean in October 1981, the church entered a pastorless period which was to last until November 1983. It was, however, most valuably served by the interim ministries of Revs. George McAdam, Eric Marks, Graham Watkins and, later, Revs. Alex Fraser and Chester Martin. The sometimes lengthy periods of dependence on local preachers (of various denominations) for pulpit supply were something of a strain, for the Secretary then assumed many of the less formal functions of a minister, while scouring the State for suitable people to lead the worship services. After unsuccessfully approaching twelve prospects to take one evening service, Clements wondered if he would have to manage by himself, possibly filling up with extra hymns and prolonged periods of silent prayer!

In the meantime, Clements ran a high school of eight hundred students and sixty staff situated quite some distance from the church.

### **VIETNAMESE REFUGEES**

There were two schemes operating in 1980 and 1981 to bring Vietnamese families from the refugee camps to Tasmania. The first was one of direct sponsorship when a community group guaranteed considerable assistance to a family finding accommodation and material support.

The other scheme brought refugees to Mt. St. Canice hostel -a Commonwealth hostel, funded and organized by the Commonwealth. The families at Mt. St. Canice also needed befriender groups to help them adjust and settle. As they moved from Mt. St. Canice into rented accommodation, they were most grateful for support and friendship. In May 1981, the church passed an "in principle" motion that the church would look at ways in which it might become involved.

Early in 1982, the church began befriending the Hong family who had travelled to Hobart via Singapore and moved into Mt. St. Canice in December. In Vietnam, they had had a shop which sold flour, milk and sugar. They left Vietnam in a fourteen metre boat with forty-eight people aboard. For five days, they had sat huddled in the boat with no food or water, feeling very seasick. They spent the next two months on an Indonesian island which had been turned into a refugee camp.

In June 1981, the family had found a home in North Hobart. The house is compact but adequate and, thanks to the church family, now fully furnished. The next task was to find employment for the head of the household.

#### **SIEBRAND PETRUSMA**

In October 1981, Siebrand Petrusma retired as Church Treasurer after six years in office. He had followed Max Levett in the position. Petrusma had sought over the six annual reports and budgets to give a spiritual dimension to this area of the church's life.

Born in Haren in Northern Holland, his primary education was completed just prior to the Petrusma family (ten in all) emigrating to Tasmania early in 1951 and settling in Penguin. After completing his secondary education at the Ulverstone High School, he initially worked at the Van Diemen's Land Company and, later, at Burnie Board and Timber Pty. Ltd.

He married Carol Boyes on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1960, and promptly left his bride in Tasmania so as to take up an appointment as a teacher trainee in Papua New Guinea. His years as a teacher in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea (several as Head Teacher) also provided unique opportunities to work alongside Christian missionaries.

When he was posted to Port Moresby, Petrusma returned to an administrative position and resumed his accountancy studies in which he subsequently qualified. While in Port Moresby, the family joined the Boroko Baptist Church, and finally returned to Tasmania, settling in Hobart in 1972. After serving some time as State Accountant at Myer, Petrusma joined his two brothers in retailing in which field he is still actively engaged.

In the later years of his treasurership, he and his wife began a weekly home Bible study evening with a number of the young people. This work continued for many years. It was Petrusma's joy on 18<sup>th</sup> April, 1982, to baptize seven of his young people before a packed congregation. At a later date, a further number were baptized. Petrusma continues to serve the Baptists of Tasmania on Union Council.

#### **ERIC WELCH**

At the Annual Meeting in October 1982, the church had a new Secretary, Englishman Eric Welch. Born in New Milton, Hampshire, and brought up in the Ashley/New Milton churches Welch was baptized in July 1944. It had to be an afternoon service because the churches had no black-out and the south coast was in the front line. At the end of the war, he joined the Royal Air Force at the Technical Training School at Halton, Buckinghamshire. Seven years later, after trips to Malta and Ceylon, Welch left the service and returned to College in Bournemouth. He and his wife, Gloria, joined Ashley Baptist Church. For some time, he worked for de Havilland Aircraft Co. as a design engineer and then for the Science Research Council at Rutherford Laboratory, travelling in Switzerland and Yugoslavia designing and purchasing electrical equipment for University research teams. It was while living at Woolton Hill, Newbury that Welch returned to Scouting as Group Leader.

Itchy feet and high taxation, the offer of a job by the H.E.C. and promise of better weather, all combined to bring the family to Australia, arriving in Hobart in August 1970. Prior to taking office at the church, he was responsible for the Sandy Bay Scout Group with one hundred boys and twelve leaders.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### CENTENARY CHALLENGE

#### DR. FRANK REES (1983-

After two years of interim ministries, the church welcomed its new Pastor, Rev. Dr. Frank Rees, on 11 November, 1983.

Frank Rees was brought up in Moe, in country Victoria, and was baptised into the Baptist church there. His preparation for the Christian ministry involved a long period of university and theological studies. At the University of Melbourne he completed a B.A. (Hons), in 1971 and an M.A. in 1973. By this time he had already begun studies for a B.D. at Whitley College, the Baptist College of Victoria, which he completed with Honours in 1975. He served the Tottenham Baptist Church as student pastor from 1973 to 1975 and was then called to the East Doncaster Baptist Church where he served full time until 1980. During the Doncaster pastorate he pursued theological research on the 'servant model' of the Church, for which the degree of Master of Theology was awarded in 1981.

Between East Doncaster and Hobart, Dr. Rees was on study leave in Manchester, England where he undertook doctoral studies in theology, his thesis being entitled 'The Relationship between Doubt and Faith in the Christian Journey'. During this period of studies overseas, Frank's wife, Dr. Marilyn Rees, a medical practitioner, also undertook postgraduate studies, for the Fellowship in Anaesthetics.

With this extensive academic background and pastoral experience in different areas of Melbourne, Dr. Rees has come to Hobart to work with the church in developing its own particular ministry in this city. During 1984 the primary thrust of his leadership has been to encourage the church to face the challenges of the future on the basis of the strengths inherent in its 'one hundred years of witness'.

Dr. Rees is seeking to lead the church towards its 'centenary challenge'. Throughout 1984, several ministers have preached at special Centenary Celebration services. They have urged the church to proceed with hope, confident of God's power enabling the church to meet the challenges and possibilities of the future. It has been stressed that the church does not honour its founders and former leaders by simply copying their actions and perpetuating long-established practices and structures. To honour the great tradition they have established it must now seek to build upon that foundation, working out in our

own time and situation what we must do in response to God's missionary call. As a consequence Dr. Rees and the Deacons have commenced a long-term review of the church's ministry.

One feature of this review process has been biblical and theological reflection. Several of the study groups in the church have worked through the booklet "Being the People of God Today". Dr. Rees has preached on themes related to this material. A number of complementary themes have arisen out of these studies. One dominant concept has been the idea that the people of God are called to a life of 'holy worldliness' that is, the people of God must live in constant awareness of the presence of God, but this presence is not apart from the world but in the world, in all of life. Hence the people of God must live a "world-related" life, for the sake of God and his Kingdom in and for the whole world. The missionary life of the Church is thus seen to arise out of its encounter with God. The church is called to be a people of justice and love because God is such a God.

In response to this 'centenary challenge', the church has adopted the concept of a Centenary Project. In addition to some immediate gifts and activities, this project has meant the setting up of a series of planning groups to explore the future directions of the church's ministry. A deliberate attempt has been made to include the widest range of the people of the church in these consultations.

As the church reflects on one hundred years of growth with all its achievements and disappointments; the times of success and those of regret; the times of building and others of consolidation - it is clear to us now that in every period of our history we are called to one thing above all else: to be faithful to the God who has called us to be his people. We have come to acknowledge God's faithfulness to us 'from age to age', and to sing with both understanding and feeling For the might of Thine arm we bless thee, Our God, our fathers' God.

In so doing our 'remembering' is not merely a backwards-looking recall of past days but an affirmation of where we now stand. We have known the faithfulness of God. Therefore in faith and hope we will go forward to a new era and another hundred years of witness.

## APPENDICES

In Hobart from 1983 and in reminiscent to that of F.W. Boreham, Dr. Rees undertook a strong pulpit ministry which drew a number of outsiders to the church. He was farewelled in 1990 with the acceptance of the offer to be Professor of Systematic Theology at Whitley College. Later he was appointed Principal of the College.

During the Pastorate of Dr Frank Rees, the Rev. Ken Godfrey, B.A., Dip. Theol., was appointed Assistant Pastor. Prior to that Godfrey had been chaplain in Inter-Church Trade and Industry Mission. He too had trained at Whitley College. With the departure of Dr Frank Rees, Godfrey became pastor. Godfrey displayed marked preaching ability and counseling skills and played a leading role in the Baptist Union of Tasmania. In May 1998, after almost twenty-five years ministry in Tasmania, Ken and his wife Margaret accepted a call to the Broken Hill Baptist Church in New South Wales.

Doug Duncan began with the church in February 1999. In earlier years in Hobart he assisted in the establishment of the private Christian tertiary institute, Westminster Hall. Duncan was born in India to parents who were serving as missionaries in China. During his time at Hobart Baptist Church he was ordained to the Christian ministry. The Church grew in numbers under his enthusiastic ministry. He commenced "Sundays on Thursday" as an attempt to provide for those who could get to Sunday Services. He set up the Hobart Baptist Careforce under the Federal Government's Work for the Dole scheme. His ministry at Hobart concluded in June 2004. In the final decade of his life, he returned to New Zealand to pastor the Hanmer Springs Presbyterian Church. Diagnosed with cancer in 1998, he died on 5 October 2011.

In November 2005, the Rev. Steve Chapman, B.Th., Dip. Min., B.Sc., Dip. T. BCD, FGAA was inducted into the pastorate. Chapman and his wife, Jenny, came from Adelaide, South Australia. Ecumenical in outlook, he saw evangelism and mission as a key emphasis of his

ministry. During his time the 'Meet & Make Craft Group' was commenced under the leadership of Max and Junette Levett. These years also saw the arrival and incorporation of the 'Karen Refugee People' into the church's life and the establishment of 'The Church With No Walls' as a ministry of the church. Jenny, a musical teacher contributed greatly to the musical life of the church. She founded and directed the 'Choir of High Hopes Hobart Inc.' Chapmans were farewelled in 2010. Jenny had accepted a position as Music Director of Yirara College in Alice Springs, a Lutheran boarding school for Indigenous students. In 2014 she received the Order of Australia Medal.

Pastor Stephen Baxter was inducted into the Pastorate of the Church in September 2010 for two days a week. He was already Director to coordinate the Hobart 2020 Vision team. He brought with him a wealth of experience as a Pastor, business executive, mentor and educator. Married to Jenny, they had spent most of their lives living in Melbourne's inner-east, and being part of Hawthorn West Baptist Church (HWBC). Stephen had held various positions across three different organizations: 36 Media Ltd, the publishers of "On Being/Alive" and "Christian Woman" magazines; "Servants in Hawthorn Inc", an incorporated arm of HWBC, which run a rooming house and flats for the underprivileged; and "Caring Coordinator", a full time position working in the local community. In January 2004 Stephen and Jenny and their family moved to Poatina, Tasmania, where Stephen oversaw Fusion's accredited training. Stephen has a Master of Education. Stephen is one of the Tasmanian Baptist's Regional Directors.

In 2013 the church appointed Matthew Burns as Assistant Pastor who had a Masters of Ministry from Morling College, the Baptist College of NSW. He had met his wife Naomi at the College. While at College, Matthew had undertaken two student pastorates. After two years at the Hobart church he resigned and later became Pastor of the Tarroona Baptist Church.

## Lessons for Today from the Hobart Baptist Church 120 Years Ago

There was a spirit of optimism and self-confidence in the Tasmania in 1891 with the staging of the Launceston Exhibition at the end of November. This was Tasmania's first major attempt to reveal its economic progress and potential. While Hobart the capital had a third more people than Launceston that year, Launceston was the economic capital at the time. But only a few months before the opening of the Exhibition, on 3 August to be exact, the Bank of Van Diemen's Land closed its doors. The event paralysed Hobart business. If the "Old Bank", founded in 1823 seen as solid as ever, was vulnerable, then so everything else in the business world. Panic swept Hobart but there were no runs on other banks. The Bank of Van Diemen's Land's shares were worth next to nothing and depositors had little hope of recovering their investments. The bank was heavily involved in West Coast mining. Two years earlier Victoria's Premier Permanent Building Land and Investment Association had collapsed. For five months before the collapse of the Victorian association, shearers across Australia had been on strike and in the outback rabbits reached plague proportions. Among those who lost his savings in the VDL Bank was our highly respected church secretary, deacon and lay-preacher, Samuel B. Pitt, who saw a way out of the crisis with some underhand business dealings but when these ultimately came to light, he was forced to stand down from his official church position. He was also suspended from membership for three months. S.T. Burleigh took his place as Secretary with J.T. Soundy continuing as Treasurer. It would be twelve years before he would resume his former position as Secretary. His son saw events in a better light, "In business, my father was not successful, being too trustful of men who proved untrustworthy," he said.

Once the depression hit, unemployment rose sharply. There was no effective social welfare safety net, and those who could find work did so at depressed wage levels. This combination of unfortunate events led to a period of comparative poverty in Tasmania. The depression in Tasmania was brought about by the collapse of mineral prices worldwide.

While Australia's population was 3.25 million, Hobart had fewer people than Ballarat or Bendigo in Victoria. In Australia 19% of women were in the work force and Liberal Philip O. Fysh was Tasmania's Premier.

By now a good number of the Hobart Baptist congregation had been on a journey together, commencing with the occupation of the old Exhibition buildings in Hobart in 1893, to the corrugated iron shedifice erected where the Tabernacle now stands, to the stone school room and now the stately Tabernacle itself, opened in 1889. The tabernacle was "a building that any denomination might be proud of, which is not stuck in a corner where people would have to spend a day to find it." There was a loyal following.

The first Hobart Baptist church, the old Baptist chapel in Harrington street, was let out to Seventh day Adventists and to the Independent Order Of Good Templars and The Royal Black Institution hired it for their monthly evening lodges

Irish born McCullough, our pioneer pastor, began in Hobart in 1883. He walked the block of Elizabeth, Liverpool, Murray and Macquaries streets on Friday evenings handing out leaflets telling folk he was a graduate of Spurgeon's College in London and of Sunday services.

McCullough's preaching was a clear, straight-forward atonement theology. Beyond that, there wasn't much else to learn. According to McCullough the Bible said all that needed to be said and one had to take it on face value, word for word. There was no need for any creative and imaginative approach. There was little openness to stories, poetry and new ways of viewing things. To stand apart and critically evaluate a text was unheard of and only led to doubt and disbelief. It was considered that the Gospel must be preached faithfully in all its simplicity, with the results left to God.

It was reported at the Annual church meeting in 1891 that the membership, whilst steadily increasing, had not continued to grow as in previous years. Of those who joined the church, "more than half as many have gone away as have been added". It was a year "not all sunshine, or all cloud and shadow, but a mixture of both." The year before McCullough had given notice of resignation but had been encouraged to stay on.

In April McCullough initiated the formation of the first Christian Endeavour Society in Tasmania. The church was also conducting a Mutual Improvement Society and a young men's Bible Class. The women had their Sewing classes and there were 250 children enrolled in the Sunday school with and twenty-two teachers and an

average attendance of 157. In July the church was moved by the suicide of Frank A. Wackrill, one of their Bible class scholars, a professed Christian who blew out his brains outside a hotel in Bridgewater one evening.

As with other Nonconformist and Anglican ministers, McCullough was on the board of the Ragged School which was situated at the Lower Collins street and supported, with Soundy, the "Discharged Prisoners' Aid and Rescue Society". McCullough preached at the opening of the new Sunday-school at the Primitive' Methodist Church, Collins-street, which replaced the original structure which was proving inadequate. McCullough took part with the clergy from the Church of England and the Roman Catholic, Congregational Church and Primitive Methodist Churches for "A Day of Humiliation and Prayer". This was prompted by the prevailing sickness and depression which was gripping the country. McCullough's part was to conduct a prayer meeting.

This was the year that the year William Booth, founder of the Salvation army visited both Launceston and Hobart and was met by Baptist leaders and others, but the colony was shocked when he ordered a special train put on to take him the Launceston and a steamer to convey him to Melbourne at a cost of at least £300.

The men and women of the Tabernacle worked hard for a successful "Sale of Gifts" fair to aid of the Building Fund. It would be more than a decade before the debt of the Tabernacle was paid off.

Our church welcomed visiting evangelists such as Englishman Henry Varley .The church joined Varley for a fortnight's mission at the temperance Hall. Most of the Baptist choir members were involved. Among the many addresses Varley spoke on "The Advantages and Obligations of Chastity", the "End of the World" and "Our Lord's Counsel and Remedy for Care and Anxiety". Those who planned to come were asked to bring their Bibles and be early.

Among the other visiting speakers was internationally acclaimed Temperance speaker, the Rev Mark Guy Pearse. Pearse was from the East End of London and he preached with "a burning conviction which thoroughly possessed him". Another speaker was Baptist Missionary, Miss Pappin, from Fureedpore, India. She wore Indian native costume at her meetings. Our church hosted the Annual Assembly Baptist Union Meetings which meant the re-erection of additional passenger platforms at the railway station.

#### Lessons for Today

1891 saw the close of the two golden decades of church life in Tasmania and Australia during

which church attendances were at a record high and church buildings were erected a break-neck speed. It was a case of erect a church or chapel and a congregation could be guaranteed. But by the 1890s questions about a literal approach to the Bible were being asked, thus raising questions that the likes of McCullough were not trained to answer. Even so the Victorian era preaching of McCullough would continue at our church for another decade and a half and then there would be a major change. Even so our church, so well located in Hobart, was set for a glorious half century as it became a business man's church of Hobart. It would commence the Sandy Bay and Moonah churches, but by the 1970s it had so given itself in new church ventures around Hobart that it had considerably weakened itself. Further, church life as exemplified by the McCullough's years and later has now passed as our society is now fragmented into non-church cultures. While the message is the same, that of a self-giving God who came amongst us in Jesus, this message today needs to be tailored to these cultures. That is both our challenge and our pain.

### Lessons for Today from the Hobart Baptist Church 110 Years Ago

1901 was the year in which the colonies of Australia became a Federation. It was marked with the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall, who also visited Tasmania. Australia's population stood at 3,773,801. The Government old age pension was one shilling a day.

By 1901 the White Australian Bill was gaining support. Presbyterian clergyman JB Ronald promoted the idea of a "snowy" white Australia. "Let it be pure and spotless ... never let us try to blend a superior with an inferior race ... It is not Christian morals any more than it is good socialism to believe that we can blend not to our deterioration with these people," he said. This was also the year in which "My Brilliant Career", a novel written by Miles Franklin, was published. In 1901 the different branches of the Presbyterian Church united in Australia and Methodists numbered 500,000, about 7.5% and rising while the census indicated that Baptists were 2.5% of the population.

Our church in Hobart was in its second pastorate which began officially in August 1897 but they first met the Edinburgh born Rev. James Blaikie in December 1896 as he filled in. He was then forty-nine. Church folk might have first heard of him from a Mercury news story two years earlier while he was pastor of Auckland Tabernacle:

SANKEY AND MOODY V. MONKEY, the Auckland correspondent of the Christchurch states that recently when Pastor Blaikie, of the Tabernacle, proceeded to hold his usual open-air services in front of the City-Hall he found a man with a barrel-organ and a monkey in possession. The blending of sacred and secular music was so irresistibly comic that a crowd of several hundred people soon assembled. The young lady who played the harmonium for Pastor Blaikie had no chance against the barrel organ, aided by the meretricious attraction of the red - petticoated, cocked hatted monkey, but was encouraged to persevere by the choir singing "Hold the fort". At this stage Constable Eastgate put in an appearance, but, finding both parties had permits, he adopted a policy of masterly inactivity, and retiring, left the solution of the difficulty to the "survival of the fittest". The crowd began to take sides, one portion being for the pastor and the other for the barrel organ man, and more particularly the monkey; so that there seemed a probability of a serious street quarrel. Constable Howell, who was unaware that constable Eastgate had been about, came on the scene, and, witnessing conduct which he thought likely to create a breach of the peace in a public

thoroughfare, interposed, and requested the barrel organ man to move on. Then after some parley, he did. Some of the tradesmen in the vicinity complain that these street services in the middle of the day interfere with business.

In Auckland in 1892 Blaikie had followed the Rev. Thomas Spurgeon. That year Spurgeon returned to London to fill his father's pulpit at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Blaikie was fundamentalist in his preaching. Our leading Australian Baptist historian, Ken Manley, sees a close connection between the Spurgeon tradition (as seen best in Tasmania) and the later fundamentalism to emerge clearly in the second decade of the twentieth century in North America. He writes,

The Rev James Blaikie, a Spurgeon's man in Tasmania in the 1900 debate about Higher Criticism in the [Tasmanian, Victorian and South Australian] Southern Baptist, sounds exactly like the later fundamentalists when he deplored the loss of old landmarks and opposed claims made for 'inspired scholarship'.

During his time in Hobart Blaikie penned a number of letters to the Mercury on various subjects. One on 15 February 1898 spoke of "Black Tuesday", 1 February 1898, when fire engulfed Tasmania while in Victoria 2000 buildings were destroyed and twelve lives lost. The disaster which was described as unparalleled in the history of the colony was, according to Blaikie, "an act of God. Being so, we ought, in a public way, to acknowledge God, or we as a people will miss the benefit of distress, for is it not written, 'When His judgments are abroad in the earth the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness?'" Blaikie concluded by pleading for public and national prayer as "the sin of the nation is at the back of all this desolation". A month later he wrote again, this time softening his approach by requesting books for those who suffered in the fires. Another letter put the case for uniform shop closing hours while a fourth deplored the nation's low birth rate. In 1901 Blaikie was President of our Baptist Union of Tasmania, with its fourteen churches.

In 1906, after eight years in pastorate of the Hobart church, Blaikie accepted a call at a Castlemaine Baptist Church but was soon to die, on 2 January 1907. A thanksgiving service was held at Hobart with the pulpit was draped in black cloth and appropriate hymns sung. At the close of the service the "Dead March" from "Saul" was played. The new minister, the Rev. F. W. Boreham preached an impressive sermon. He

likened Blaikie to the patriarch Enoch who had "walked with God".

During the Blaikie years Sunday observance remained a community issue, especially in regard to the running of Sunday trains, as did the social evil of gambling, with Tattersall's being the main culprit.

In 1901 the seventh church anniversary was held and in the annual report it was stated that twenty-two new members had joined the church during the past year, seventeen of them being baptised, an increase of thirteen to 167. The finances were in a sound and healthy condition. The Sunday-school was well attended while the Christian Endeavour Society had a membership of 100. The church continued to support its branch church at Constitution Hill. Ten out of the twenty original members were still on the church roll, one, Joshua T. Soundy, had been in office as deacon from the beginning and had been treasurer for fifteen years.

#### **Lessons for Today**

Our church initially was a Spurgeon church in that the first four pastors had trained at Spurgeon's College. The nature of the preaching of Robert McCullough and James Blaikie was understandable in that their mentor Spurgeon had a strong dislike for modernist thinking (stemming from historical criticism which sought to answer a series of questions affecting the composition, editing and collection of the Christian scriptures). Leading London preacher, Joseph Parker, said of Spurgeon, "He was ever simple, loving, gentle and boundlessly kind, except when he was stung by the nettle of 'modern thought'. Then he became almost papal; he excommunicated whole assemblies; he issued manifestos; he darkened the whole chapel sky with thunder, whose bolts of tallow wrought no havoc."

His students learnt and worked on the principle that the "Bible is our only guide". McCullough's colleague, the Rev James Samuel Harrison who conducted services at Deloraine and oversaw the reconstituting of the church on 26 December 1880, was a product of the Spurgeon mould. He was content that Deloraine Church's first constitution should simply read, "For the present the Bible is our only guide as to church matters. We expect it will be enough." Thus in their preaching they gave straightforward messages. This too was the approach of the early Brethren preachers in Tasmania. Their speeches were delivered in an extremely lively, enthusiastic and pungent style which brooked no equivocation. The evangelists were merely mouthpieces of the Word, and if anyone crossed them then they doubted Jesus himself, provided of course that all hearers held the Bible to contain incontrovertible

truth. Hence, Blaikie's reference to Black Tuesday as an act of an angry God (as Danny Nalliah of Catch the Fire Ministries in our day took Black Wednesday) was merely taking the Bible at its word as seen in the denunciations of prophets of old Israel, denunciations of their own people. Both Blaikie's and Nalliah's theology fall short because they have failed to listen to the cry of pain which must have issued from these calamities. It is better to just listen without rebuff, without explanation and maybe suggest that God too was weeping and thinking, "I didn't mean it to be like this."

### Lessons for Today from the Hobart Baptist Church 100 Years Ago

On 1 January 1911 the Australian Capital Territory officially came into existence. Three years earlier it was decided to establish the nation's capital in the Southern Highlands of NSW. The first Australian census took place in April. Prior to Federation, the different colonies conducted their own censuses. It indicated that of the population 13 percent were Methodist, 8 percent Presbyterian, 2.5 percent Congregationalist and 2.5 percent Baptists. In May one penny became the uniform cost of sending a letter to anywhere in the Commonwealth of Australia, but while Victoria had been using the penny postage system for some time. Other states reduced their charges. Mixed bathing considered offensive. In August controversy surrounded mixed bathing following claims by church leaders that the behavior was offensive and undermined the moral fabric of society.

The Rev. Frank William Boreham, a man who was almost previously unknown was in his fifth year at the Hobart Baptist church. He had transferred from a small village in New Zealand called Mosgiel. Boreham's advent to the ministry in Hobart in 1906 coincided with an improvement in the economic condition of the State, but he was coming to a church with deep divisions. David Enticott who has completed a Master of arts Degree on Boreham, titled, "Finding His Voice", says that Boreham found a church that was more focused on itself and their internal battles than on the wider community. There had been a recent rift in the congregation over the lining in of the dome. When the newly installed ceiling to the dome did not improve the acoustic quality of the building Joshua T Soundy and two other deacons resigned in protest. In August 1905 five new Deacons were elected and Pastor James Blaikie soon left. At the time Hobart Baptist was a community prone to criticising its ministers and further there existed an environment where to bring in any new form of thinking or theology was to express doubt. But from the outset, even though Boreham had retiring personality, his preaching captivated the congregations. Before the end of his first year, the deacons gave appreciative remarks of the ministry and the offer of a permanent situation was made and accepted. Boreham was a laborious worker and a great reader. His sermons were an imaginative blend of influences such as photography, writing, a love of literature, a creative approach to evangelism, education and biography. What he read he remembered and he had the faculty for using his wide

knowledge in explanation and application of the truth. Enticott says that Boreham did not share such a reactive or overly cautious faith. His theology was not radical, but instead he valued a rational and intelligent approach to matters of belief and religion. He held that the mind was as valid a way of discovering God as was the Bible and that the intellect could be a vital source of divine revelation. What is more, Boreham was not a strict literalist when it came to Biblical interpretation as were earlier ministers, Robert McCullough and James Blaikie. He preferred to find different meanings in a passage rather than pursue narrow understandings. Enticott adds that Boreham was even open to the work of the German Higher Critics, and was open to new ways of understanding the Bible. He believed that an unthinking, misguided allegiance to the Bible was just as mistaken as an unthinking, misguided allegiance to the church. The first was the mistake of the Protestant, the latter of the Roman Catholic. It was the wording and the creativity of his messages, rather than his theology, that were radical at Hobart. This was to be a vital determinant of his ongoing success as a minister and a key reason for his acceptance by a conservative congregation.

His children's talks were entrancing to the youngsters, and no adult was too old to enjoy his stories and observe the morals attached to them. His "Once Upon a Time in the Land That Never Was," or "Once Upon a Time in the Land That Really was", captivated the children's attention, while such stories as "Robinson Crusoe" and "White Fang" (to mention two) furnished quite a number of stories for "Boys and Girls, Girls and Boys," as he addressed them. The conductor for the 1911 Sunday school anniversary that year was J. G. (Jimmy) McLeod, our Margaret Hart's father.

Since he possessed in no ordinary degree the gift of fluent speech, it was not surprising that the Hobart crowds soon began to throng his services. The ministers of the other denominations were no match. They were either rather old in their pastorates or of mediocre calibre and it was the habit of many to go in for sermon tasting. After his commencement, one could hear the sermon-tasters telling others of the wonderful sermons they heard at the Tabernacle on Sunday nights. Not surprising, there was nothing slipshod, everything was well done by Boreham. He never appeared in the pulpit or on the platform without a well prepared message which he delivered in well-chosen words with great freedom and often

with the power of eloquence. His wizardry with words entranced his audiences.

The winter evening addresses became a special feature of his work and the church building was repeatedly packed to its utmost capacity. The 1911 he began a series titled, "Texts That Have Made History". They included Luther's, Bunyan's, Hugh Latimer's, Francis Xavier's, Livingstone's, Spurgeon's texts, and others. . Enticott notes that in the end "Texts that Made History" extended to more than one hundred messages over five years. His sermon titles revealed Boreham's genius:

The Leaves that Litter the World: The Question of Inspiration.

The Haunted House of Every Man: The Marvel of Myself.

The Riddle of the Universe: The Puzzle of Evolution.

Blood Stains and Teardrops: The Perplexity of Pain.

The Trail of the Serpent: The Mystery of Temptation.

The Cry from the Abyss: The Horror of Hell.

The Soul's Awakening: The Phenomenon of Conversion.

Beaten in Battle, but Winning in War.

The possibility of mourning at one's own funeral

Enticott explains "The Haunted House of Every Man":

He unfolded his topic slowly, starting with fables and fairy tales of haunted houses. The aim was to unlock the imagination of his listeners. These haunted houses were symbols of a universe where much happened that could not be understood. Places such as the towering Mount Wellington held untold memories. He then introduced the concept of the brain as a haunted house. A quote was included from Bill Sykes in Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. Boreham had taken his listeners on a journey and crept up on God like someone nervously wandering through a haunted house. His apologetic strategy was clever and well thought out.

He was in constant demand as a visiting speaker, whether it be at the Congregational or Methodist churches or the Friends' High School half-yearly gathering. In 1911 as secretary of the Council of Churches he noted, "There was no city in the world where it was more delightful to live and work than Hobart, with its fine Christian spirit between the churches."

On Wednesday nights at the tabernacle he gave lectures on such characters as Richard Baxter,

John Hampden, Dr. Chalmers, Francis Xavier, Bishop John Coloridge Patterson, "Half an hour with. C. H. Spurgeon". These lectures were reproduced in the *Mercury*.

During Boreham's time at Hobart the membership went from 180 to 320. This was in stark contrast to Baptist patterns across Tasmania. In 1912 the Annual Meeting of the Tasmanian Baptist Union spoke about the lack of conversions and in light of this an hour was spent asking God to bring more people into the churches. The growth of his church afforded Boreham with space to be creative, adds Enticott.

Boreham was born of Anglican parents at Tunbridge Wells, in Kent in 1871. He early acquired facility in public speaking. He preached his first sermon at seventeen at an open air meeting in London. In 1892 he was received into Spurgeon's College. His ordination took place at Mosgiel on 15 March 1895. In New Zealand he commenced journalistic work supplying weekly contributions to local newspapers and monthly leaders for the New Zealand Baptist, of which he soon became editor. With the passing of the years came the thrill of seeing his contributions being regularly reprinted in a religious journal in Australia.

Although Boreham had had published "The Whisper of God", a book of sermons, in 1902, it was in Hobart in 1911 that he seriously took up the task which was to make him famous through the English speaking world - publishing his writings in book form. In 1911 he had published the book, "George Augustus Selwyn, D. D. Pioneer Bishop of New Zealand. Few religious writers in the following years were so avidly read. In 1912 Boreham was asked to write an occasional editorial for the *Mercury*. He agreed, and eventually it was arranged that he should contribute an article each week. This arrangement continued until his death. Week by week and year by year, the Saturday editorial column bore the stamp of Boreham's delightful literary qualities - 2,500 editorials in all!

#### Lessons for Today

One: As a church and congregation we have the possibility of making a great contribution just in the way we treat our ministers. If the Hobart Baptist Church had not plucked its minister from relative obscurity in a small New Zealand town in 1906, who knows how the story of F.W. Boreham's preaching and life would have been written?

Two: Although how interesting is this study of Boreham's time in Hobart, settled church life is now a thing of the past - life and church life has changed. Let me illustrate: from 1936 to 1953 Boreham preached regularly on Wednesdays at midday for city workers at Scots Church on the

corner of Russell and Collins Streets in Melbourne. On one occasion Hobart-born J D Williams, who had grown up in our church, introduced himself to Boreham at the end of one of the services. Williams' grandfather was Boreham's church secretary in Hobart. In their conversation they moved to the state of the Christian church in Australia, a subject near to the hearts of both of them. "You know what?" commented Boreham with most likely a note of regret, "They don't even come to hear me these days!" Boreham and Williams were seeing the Church as an institution to which outsiders must come in order to receive a certain product, namely, the gospel and all its associated benefits. But the church of the future can no longer depend on the "attractional model" but on its members personally engaged in reaching the "lost" of their communities with the Good News of Jesus. We can no longer operate on the principle that pastors and staff are only those who build the Church. This is what "Liquid" and "Missional" churches are all about.

### Lessons for Today from the Hobart Baptist Church 90 Years Ago

1921 can be remembered for a number of reasons. Edith Cowan became the first woman to be elected to the Federal parliament, the first Rotary club was founded in Melbourne and the decimated Australian aboriginal population stood at only 75,604. In that year 5,332 people registered as Baptists in the Tasmanian census. But most importantly for 1921, Sydney cartoonist James Bancks created a new comic strip for the Sydney Sun featuring a small red-headed boy called Ginger Meggs! (I'm only kidding.)

At our church Spurgeon College man, the Rev. Edward Herbert Hobday, was in his final year. The church had changed considerably from its early days. The "Bible only" Baptists had been replaced by a more socially respectable congregation. The previous pastorate under the Rev. F.W. Boreham had brought this about. As we saw in the previous article – Lessons for Today from our Church 100 Years Ago - Boreham did not share a reactive or overly cautious faith. His theology was not radical, but instead he valued a rational and intelligent approach to matters of belief and religion. What is more, Boreham was not a strict literalist when it came to Biblical interpretation as were earlier ministers, Robert McCullough and James Blaikie. He preferred to find different meanings in a passage rather than pursue narrow understandings and the Hobart crowds thronged his services with the membership rising from 180 to 320. But Hobday was as different from Boreham as Boreham from McCullough and Blaikie even though Hobday had something very importantly in common with Boreham: he was an orator of some note. Hobday was also a social activist imbued with the Social Gospel thinking of the time which sought to inspire Christians to strive to bring all society as well as the individual into conformity with the teachings of Jesus.

He believed, the example and teaching of Christ authorises fundamental changes, not only in man's spiritual belief, but in human society, for the former is incomplete without the latter. Our soul is saved so that we may go out and save the world, physically, materially, mentally, morally, spiritually.

Hobday blamed weakening of the moral consciousness of the time partly on church preachers themselves:

We have preached the love of God at the expense of the law of God and God's mercy at the expense of God's holiness. I am afraid that we have allowed ourselves to be grievously misunderstood crediting the calamitously false impression that sin is not nearly so serious a

thing as our fathers supposed it to be and that the forgiveness of sin is quite a simple affair. It is just possible that the shallowness of modern thought in regard to moral questions is partly due to the shallowness of much of our modern preaching.

For Hobday, "sin [according to] the Scriptures is a fearful and tremendous fact, a most awful and appalling reality, a stupendous and staggering problem - a problem utterly beyond any human power to solve!" Here Hobday was probably responding to a scathing attack on the Social Gospel by Reinhold Niebuhr who said that it lacked realism and was weak on its understanding of sin. The Social Gospel defined sin as essentially selfishness and did not deal adequately with the Classic understanding of sin as pride and rebellion against God. The Social Gospel advocates said that man rarely sins against God alone.

Hobday as a Christian Socialist openly spoke of Jesus as a revolutionary. The outworking of this philosophy was dramatically seen in 1919 at the height of the epidemic which arrived with the winter. With the all schools, churches, libraries, picture shows, skating rinks, billiard rooms, in fact all public meeting places closed throughout the State, Hobart was divided into thirteen districts each supervised by a minister of religion. Hobday was in charge of the North Hobart area. He undertook "to visit every house and report on the needs of the sufferers in the influenza epidemic" and in doing so soon discovered more than he bargained for. Hobday as the Committee's chairman drew attention to the disgraceful housing conditions of the poor. With moral outrage he delivered a scathing indictment on the landlords. The epidemic had exposed gross social evils but neither Government nor the public knew how to, nor were they yet committed to altering them and Hobday let them know just that through the Mercury. The Ware Street Mission in North Hobart was set up by the church's response.

A survey of the 1921 Mercury reveals just the extent of Hobday's social concern. As President and Secretary of the Council of Churches he canvassed through the newspaper and before the City Council a "dry" Regatta and for the closure of the theatres for "Sunday Pictures". With other clergy he solicited support for the first batch of the Dr. Barnardo Boys about to arrive in Tasmania from England. The man who was "down and out" found in him a friend - not of the easy chair type - but one who was ready to

appear for them at the Police Court, and use his influence in tempering "mercy with justice." And many had the chance and used it, of making a fresh start, as the result of his work. In fact, one of the boys of the Tabernacle said when he heard of Hobday's resignation: "They will have to build another gaol now." Hobday stood against the sale of intoxicating liquors from "liquor booths" at festival occasions. He was on the executive of the Hobart Benevolent Society. At a forum to discuss the objects of the Secondary Teachers' Association, Hobday took his stand against excessive individualism, holding that competition must give way to co-operation. He even had an input on where Hobart's War Memorial should be sited.

On the church front, Hobday encouraged his congregation to attend the combined Council of Churches church services. The Hobart Baptist annual report for 1921 showed an increase of twenty-five members for the year, there having been forty-one new members and 16 erasures through death and removal, leaving a total of 310. During his five years in Hobart the membership has been maintained, notwithstanding many removals and stringent revision. His Literary and Debating Society now had an attendance exceeding 100; his church monthly paper, the "Baptist Church Chronicle", had been adopted as the official organ for the Baptist Union of Tasmania and the weekly church plate offerings amounted to £556 (a record).

The report continued with the church congratulating itself on gaining a "son". It said, "In 1908, the church had secured a daughter of the name of Moona, and this year she had secured a son of the name of Sandy." On 12 October the official opening took place of the Sandy Bay Baptist church. The church had purchased and restored the dilapidated Anglican Matthias's Hall in Sandy Bay at a cost of about £1900.

This great bowling enthusiast, outstanding orator and elocutionist and concerned Hobart personality was given a Town Hall farewell on 24 November. The function was attended by the Lord Mayor, the Premier, church leaders, members of Parliament, Chamber of Commerce businessmen and some Freemasons. His church farewell took place two days earlier. Such was his acceptance in Hobart that his portrait was printed in 1 December issue of the Mercury. For

family reasons he and his wife were off to England; In 1949, while holidaying in Hobart, he undertook an interim ministry at the Tabernacle for three months.

Lessons for Today:

Hobday teaches us that individuals skills responding to the call of God with vision and leadership can make a difference. Hobday believed that church members must have a certain responsibility as far as the national, social and civic life of the city was concerned thus bringing in the promised Kingdom of God. If they saw any problem, they were obligated to do something about it even if they weren't going to get instant success. Hobday also understood that the nation itself is accountable to God for how it treated its weaker, less-privileged members. He appreciated the truth that if people live below a certain level of human dignity or material comfort, they may be hindered in response to the Gospel message.

The later non-denominational Church Of The Saviour in Washington is a church which would have pleased Hobday, for it is a church which had caught the balance between preaching the Gospel and being socially concerned. Elizabeth O'Connor's book, *Journey Inward, Journey Outward* tells its story. Its founder, Baptist Gordon Crosby, like Hobday, appreciated the "costly grace" of Christian commitment". The true Christian ministry, he believed, must be an "inward and outward" journey — meaning both a spiritual pilgrimage toward God and a dedication to the service of humanity for Christ's sake. "Reconciliation of man with God," said Cosby, "cannot exist outside the reconciliation of man with man." The Journey Inward in the communal life of the Washington church has three components – with ourselves, with our God and with other as church members. The Journey Outward, in its contact with others, also has three components - presence, service and dialogue.

So as a church have we lost our social vision? Definitely not when you consider our welcoming hand to refugees, our acceptance of the Karen people, our Church Without Walls and our Meet and Make, each being our ways of reaching out in love. Do we see them as a preparation for people's hearing the Gospel? Are we using them as a means of spreading the gospel? And if not, do we need some help in achieving this?

## Lessons for Today from the Hobart Baptist Church 85 Years Ago

While electricity in England in 1926 was still a luxury and a convenience enjoyed by comparatively few, in Australia it was fast becoming a necessity. Here there was a boon in electrical appliances. The Hecla Electrics Company was producing electric kettles, grillers, cookers, hot water services and stoves. Over 100,000 Hecla electric fires were in use. The electric iron was now installed in nearly every home and the electric vacuum cleaner was coming in. The electric hot water jug was common place. Hot water was now on tap in many homes. In the same year Joan Sutherland, opera singer, was born, as was Jack Brabham, racing car driver and the Hit song of the Year was "Bye Bye Blackbird".

The Rev. Donovan F. Mitchell, B.A., was in his third year at Hobart. Mitchell was a native of Entli, Kent, England, and came to New South Wales in 1911. A carpenter and joiner, he soon entered into Home Mission of the Baptist Union of New South Wales, and served as the pastor of the Mortdale and Hornsby churches. After a period of probation he became a theological student at the Baptist College of NSW. He was ordained in 1920. At the commencement of 1921 Mitchell became the minister of the Bankstown (NSW) Church, and at the same time enrolled as an Arts student at Sydney University devoting himself to philosophy, and was successful in gaining first place with high distinction both in 1922 and 1923. He commenced at Hobart on 8 April 1923 and took for his text in the evening service, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." The church had been without a pastor for eighteen months. He was the first minister from NSW and with his coming attendances increased immediately.

A highlight of the 1926 year was the Gipsy Smith mission. Mitchell, now as Secretary of the Tasmanian Council of Churches, was Secretary of the Campaign Committee and Hobart Baptists played a major part in the mission. Our church's choir master, Norman Farrar, led the 250 voice mission choir. During the campaign Gipsy (Rodney) Smith, perhaps, the best loved evangelist of the time, spoke at the Strand Theatre and the Congregational Memorial Church. Hundreds were turned away on the Sunday night of 2 May. At the final meeting Gipsy Smith told of his life story, something audiences never tired of hearing. At his meetings he would interrupt his sermon and burst into song. Such was the life of this one who once said, "I didn't go through your colleges and seminaries. They wouldn't have me ... but I have been to the feet of Jesus where the only true scholarship is learned," never had a meeting without conversions. It

appears the case in Hobart as it was reported that there was much soul searching among the Baptists. Outstanding preachers were welcomed to the Hobart Baptist church in these years, among them the British Baptist, Dr. F. B. Myer, benefactor George Mueller and Catherine (Kate) Booth-Clibborn, the eldest daughter of the founders of the Salvation Army.

At Hobart Mitchell emphasised young people's work, especially in study groups. Discussions at their guild included, "Is success or failure the greater strain on character?" and "Is it ever right to tell a lie?" Lectures were also given by others such as Corly Butler who spoke on "The Wonders of the Stars", Miss Jessie Johnson who spoke on "Tennyson" and Margaret Hart's father, G J McLeod MA, who spoke on "Landmarks of English Literature". Social evenings formed part of the syllabi. Mitchell who joined the young at tennis, was a leader at their picnic outings. Church camps were held at Bellerive and Taroonna.

As with Boreham, Mitchell gave sermon series on Sunday evenings. One such series was on the City of God. The Mercury often carried Mitchell's addresses, such as "The Meaning of Christ", "The Man Whose Eye was Closed" (Balaam), and "King Solomon and the Lily". He was a sought out speaker by various non-Baptist churches and other organisations such as the Hobart Rotary Club. Mitchell gave three addresses at the Southern Tasmanian Sunday-school Teachers' Union on revelation - "Revelation and Hero Worship", "Revelation and the Open Heart" and "Revelation and Nature".

What impression Mitchell's learned ministry had on Eric Burleigh is unknown, but it was in 1926 that Burleigh left for ministerial studies at the Bristol Baptist College in England. Subsequently he had such an outstanding ministry among our Australian Baptist churches that in South Australia the Baptist Theological College was named after him. In August Jack Kippax crossed to Melbourne to complete his studies at the Melbourne College of Pharmacy in preparation for foreign missionary work. In 1926 the church's own Rev. Ray Farrer was Secretary of the Australian Baptist Foreign Mission Committee, and a member of the Federal Foreign Mission Board. That year he was also President of the Baptist Union of Tasmania.

In 1926 the church had celebrated its 42nd anniversary. The church secretary was John Soundy who had become Mayor of Hobart two years earlier.

A target of £300 was set for the installation of a pipe organ and the church continued to support its branch church at Sandy Bay. During Mitchell's vacation the Rev. F.W. Boreham spent a couple of weeks in Hobart and preached on two Sundays and delivered a lecture on Burke and Wills.

The church, as part of the Council of churches, supported the move to close down the Sunday evening movie theatre presentations which were drawing people away from church services. Three theatres were operating Sunday evenings. Hobart was the only city in Australia where the churches had such a handicap. Early next year, on 27 February 1927, Mitchell's four-year' ministry in Hobart came to an end. It was said that "the regret of every member was very keen (by his departure), yet the sadness was tempered by the realisation that Mr. Mitchell would be enabled to wield more influence in the larger sphere" In other words he would have a greater influence in Adelaide than Hobart. His ministry had been of a scholarly nature, entirely distinct from any previous ministry at the church. In Tasmania, Mitchell had had a wide sphere of influence. For near three years he had been editor of the Tasmanian Baptist Church Chronicle, he was the State representative on the Federal Board of Education, closely associated with Toc H, and involved with the Australian Christian Student Movement.

But of great interest to Baptist historians is not what he achieved in Hobart, but in what followed. He served the Flinders Street Adelaide Church for nearly six before moving to Armadale in Victoria.

Soon after he arrived in Victoria he was invited to lecture in Theology at the Baptist College of Victoria. The Principal, the Rev. W. H. Holdsworth, wanted to resign and the Executive Council of the College saw in Mitchell a successor but the Assembly of the Victorian Baptist churches in 1939 did not endorse Mitchell's appointment. Mitchell who had secured the B.D. degree in 1937 was a liberal thinker and had espoused Biblical Higher Criticism. Not long afterwards, Mitchell resigned from the Baptist ministry and entered the Presbyterian Church with pastorates at Surrey Hills and the College Church, University, Carlton. Later he explained this momentous decision: he now saw the Presbyterian system as more in harmony with the New Testament than the independent or congregational system. Further, the Presbyterian system of government afforded a more effective evangelistic instrument than the independent system since the Gospel was able to be maintained with more honour within the Church and with greater dignity and unity in the face of the world. The Presbyterian Church was also, he

held, better able to exercise the oversight of the House of God than the congregational bodies as it maintained the historic presbyterate and exercised an ordered government through graded Courts. Mitchell's case was, and remains, one of the bitterest upsets in the wider Australian Baptist community. His death in May 1954 was unreported in Baptist publications.

#### Lessons for Today

Mitchell's ministry was a brief one in the life of our church. Our church had ten pastors over its first 100 years. As mentioned, in 1926 Burleigh and Kippax moved on, two leaders in their own right (Kippax was to return as many of us know.) Having been part of our church now for thirty years, I have come to see the sometimes disquieting coming and goings of so many folk, pastors included. We are literally a pilgrim people in that we are always moving on, some more than others. As a result I have begun to see the local church in the same light as I see youth hostels where some stay for a night or two, others for a week or more and some run the place. None of us likes change but we live with it every day. So how do we handle such change - by being willing to take greater risks and as a church being on the move ourselves? Or do we just grin and bear change, getting anxious or even desperate? Or do we structure our ministry in the light of it? Feeling connected with change can be very powerful and take us by surprise. A new Pastor can mean a radical change of direction for a church. The world we look on next week in church is a new world, a world no one has ever seen before, not since time began. In church life change for the sake of the Gospel can mean the surrendering of vested interests, more equality in relations between the sexes, more recognition of the contribution of children, and more sharing of responsibility between pastor and people. So do we look at our church today with fear and trembling or do we see change as a sign of new day, a new dawn in which God's Spirit will lead of us all to a deeper freedom and to a more abundant life

### Lessons for Today from the Hobart Baptist Church 80 Years Ago

In 1931 the nation was in the midst of the world wide depression with the unemployment rate reaching its peak of 32 per cent the next year. The depression lasted for almost the whole of the 1930s. Because of the depressed state of the economy in 1931, the Commonwealth Arbitration Court reduced all wages in its jurisdiction by 10 per cent. On 23 February Dame Nellie Melba, one of our great singers died. Likewise the acclaimed artist Tom Roberts breathed his last on 14 September. In this year the most successful Australian company of the 1920s, Holden Motor Bodies Ltd., was forced to merge with the large American company, General Motors. In 1931 the first airmail bound for Australia was dispatched from London. Australia had its first Australian-born governor-general. The Australian pound was tied to the sterling at £125 Australian to £100 sterling. On 13 October the Rev. Robert McCullough, aged seventy-seven years, died in South Australia. He had been knocked down by a motor car while engaged in pastoral visitation. At the beginning of the year the Rev. Harold Hackworthy was still in his first year of the Hobart Baptist church. He was its first Australian born pastor.

For about three and a half years the church had been without a regular minister before Hackworthy came. He had spent a month in the Tasmanian capital some eight years previously, in August 1922 and conducted services at the church. Bill Hughes in his recent biography of Hackworthy, writes, "[In] his capacity for work Hackworthy was probably at his physical and mental best during his time in Hobart. His capacity for work during these years in particular was quite remarkable. He was a happy and energetic person." He was here for almost a third of his life in active ministry.

Hackworthy was born at Newcastle, New South Wales, in 1891. He found employment as a carpenter and joiner and then had thoughts about the medical profession, but the call to the ministry intervened. He entered the New South Wales Baptist Home Mission in 1911 and pastored a Baptist church for two years. In 1914 he entered the Baptist College of Victoria as a New South Wales candidate for the ministry but the outbreak of war interrupted his plans. In 1915 he enlisted in the A.I.F. He saw service in such places as Polygon Wood, Ypres and along the Somme and was awarded the Military Cross for conspicuous bravery under enemy fire. But not even four years service in the Australian Army could divert him from the call to ministry. On returning to Australia and after graduation, he held pastorates

in NSW, Victoria and in the UK.

He had a strong, forthright, forceful personality, but above all he was a man of strong principles and high ethical sense. One or two of the current older members of the church remember "Hack". Graham Clements, although aged only eight when Hack departed, clearly recalls the strong, even magnetic personality, and the convivial yet forthright manner of this amazingly effective minister. Recalls Graham, "He would bound into our house at Lenah Valley unannounced, vigorously play the piano for a while, exchange cheery words with my parents and then rush out the door again.

"Hackworthy was forthright in relation to alcohol, opposing the extension of drinking hours in Tasmania and happily accepted that he was "his brother's keeper". This attitude came to the fore on one occasion at a public function in Hobart. Hackworthy singled out a publican and addressed him in the imperious way he sometimes had by saying, "It has come to my ears that there is out-of-hours trading at your hotel. That must cease. If it does not, I shall take steps to see that it does." Amongst his own Baptists he could be equally blunt. In a letter to Home Mission Secretary in 1939, speaking in derogatory terms of the Pastors of Smithton and Ulverstone respectively, Hackworthy wrote, "[Rev Sydney E Hawkes] Hawkes simply displays his usual methods. [Rev. E. Mc-Intosh] McBrown is an ass." Another time he got into hot water through a sermon he preached on social righteousness taking a certain town as an illustration.

Hackworthy conducted Armistice Day Services and Anzac Day Services. In these and other ways his activities were not confined to the Tabernacle. In 1932, for instance, he was elected President of the Tasmanian Council of Churches. He also worked for the betterment of his fellow returned servicemen through a number of organizations set up for that purpose. He was also a member of the Council of the University of Tasmania. In 1931 he was chosen as the speaker at the Anzac Day Service in Hobart's City Hall and was on the District Executive of Toc H, being Padre to the Hobart Branch. In 1931 he was President of the Baptist Union of Tasmania. Hackworthy became the editor of the Baptist Church Chronicle in July of this year and remained so until the end of 1939.

His work among the young men of the church was particularly successful and this aspect of his ministry was particularly evident during his time

at Hobart and later in North Adelaide He was described as a "man's man". Hughes records that although scholarly, his scholarship was never of the bookish type; it was related to practical issues. "To talk with him was to be stimulated intellectually," writes Hughes. He attracted many young men to the church at Hobart. Hack's - he was always "Hack" to them - practice was to invite the young men of the church to come to his home after the Sunday night service to discuss his sermon or to raise any other topics of interest or concern to them. Among those gathered were Ron Soundy, Laurie Gluskie and Max Daghish. There were no limits on the subject matters for discussion. Hughes records these meetings:

He would light his pipe, put his feet up and invite them to talk. No topics were banned, anything from predestination to [men's sexual matters]. They could discuss the sermon, or any topic that might be of interest to them, and these talks ranged over politics, world affairs, war and theology in many expressions. ... Hackworthy gave himself to them, thinking out loud, encouraging them to think and to evaluate commonly accepted ideas, but also to consider different ways at looking at these issues. In his encouragement and support he saw a number of young men of his churches drawn into the ministry through his influence.

In September 1931 the Rev. F. W. Boreham visited for four weeks and enjoyed a civic welcome at the Town hall. Each week in the capital he preached at the Tabernacle. In November the Rev. C. J. Tinsley, of Stanmore, Sydney, conducted an evangelistic mission for a week.

Shortly after his ministry commenced the long-serving Sunday School Superintendent, G. J. McLeod, MA, who had been the superintendent for twenty years, was posted to a new position in Launceston. McLeod, Margaret Hart's father, was a schoolteacher. His transfer created a major problem for the church. When there was difficulty in finding a suitable replacement, Hackworthy decided to take on the job himself. The dux of the school that year was Miss Edna Burge on the girls' side and Master Jack Williams on the boys' side.

On the civic front, the Secretary of the Hobart church, John H. Soundy, continued as an

Alderman of the Hobart City Council. He was also Mayor of Hobart.

In the week before his departure to take up the Pastorate of the North Adelaide church at the commencement of 1940, "Hack" accompanied the young men of the church to an evening along the beach. To celebrate his leaving, the young men physically took hold of him and unceremoniously dumped him in the water. On a more serious note, his farewell included a civic reception in the Lord Mayor's room at the Hobart Town Hall. He had ministered in Hobart for ten years.

Lesson for Today from 1931

One has to go back 130 years in Hobart to find another shining example of someone who was intensely interested in discipling young men (and women). C. E. Walsh, a local lay preacher in the 1880s is the person who comes to mind. By the 1880s half of Hobart's school age children were regular Sabbath (Sunday) school attendees. The young men of the Sunday School Union were told that "through such work that which all thoughtful men and women long for — the amelioration of the social and moral condition of the people would be brought about." Into the ranks of the Associated Sunday Schools were drawn most young men of sensitivity and spirit (500 strong in 1868). As its Secretary Walsh was the spark and dominating personality. He believed that he had been, "called to God for this one work, and specially prepared for it." He wrote, "Woe unto me if I allowed anything to interfere with or mar its full and complete performance." He set himself, "To carry out this higher public work, to implant within them those principles ... which will make them better citizens ...' For all of his adult life he dedicated himself to this mission, refusing offers of municipal and political careers in order to superintend the moral training of groups of youths and maidens, 400 at a time. (See Peter Bolger, "Hobart Town" page 170).

One of our Baptist Regional Superintendents, Jeff McKinnon has written, "I think all truly godly people find 'the one thing' and do it." For Walsh "the one thing" was the children of the Sabbath School Union, for Hack it was the young men of our church. There is a truth in saying that when we find that "one thing", we have to learn to say "No" to the other requests.

## Lessons for Today from the Hobart Baptist Church 70 Years Ago

In 1941 Australia was at war. At the end of January our troops in North Africa received high praise following the capture of Tobruk. A few weeks earlier the Federal Government banned the Christian sect the Jehovah's Witnesses. Within days the sect bundled their documents in trucks or fed them to the incinerator at their headquarters. A few weeks earlier again noted aviator Amy Johnson drowned in the Thames estuary as her plane crashed. Robert Menzies was prime Minister but he resigned on 29 August and Arthur Fadden took over but his government lasted only two months with the swearing in of John Curtin on 8 December. Tragically 645 men and officers were lost with the sinking of the HMAS Sydney in December. At the end of that month there was a major shift in Australia's external policy. Australia was now looking to America rather than Britain for support in the Pacific War.

On 17 November the previous year the Rev. Edward Roberts Thomson had commenced his ministry at the our church. He was the seventh pastor of the Hobart church. With preaching being his primary gift, he delivered powerful and thoroughly evangelical addresses.

Even though English born, Roberts Thomson was raised on the rich farmlands of Table Cape just out of Wynyard and attended the Open Brethren Assemblies. Eventually he became associated with the Burnie Baptist Church and married Gwendolin May Joyce. He trained at the Baptist College in Melbourne and worked for the Tasmanian Baptist Home Mission in Smithton and then took the pastorate in Hamilton, Victoria. The Bristol Baptist College followed where he completed his B.A. with honours in Theology.

On 12 April 1941 Marjorie Mary Johnston of Devonport married Ronald George Soundy, the son of the Lord Mayor of Hobart, John Soundy. The best man was the bridegroom's brother Sgt Pilot John (Jack) Trevor Soundy of the RAAF. Within two years, on 7 January 1943, Jack was dead, lost on a bomber raid in the New Guinea area. The building next to our sanctuary is named after him. By the end of 1941, thirty of the church congregation had already left for overseas or home defence service; yet young Jack was the only one to lose his life. At the peak, the church had over one hundred people at the war in one capacity or another. This made the work of the Sunday school difficult, with so many teachers away. In order that people would not forget them, a large board was erected and on it were displayed the photographs of those absent. Since blackout regulations applied during certain

periods of the war, Life Deacon Joseph Hawkes, cabinet maker and bricklayer, who had constructed the communion table in Hackworthy's time (David Saunders had carved the panels), made plywood shutters in frames for the church and Sunday school windows which had to be in place if lights were to be used.

In October at the Annual Baptist Assembly Hobart Baptist church choir master, S. T. Burleigh caused a storm by declaring, "The Temperance Movement is dead and we might as well admit it." He added that the liquor trade, by advertisement and propaganda, had beaten its church opponents. He also opined that local option polls were dead affairs and carried no weight: such from a Baptist with temperance work being in the forefront of his denomination's work.

Throughout the 1940s sporting fixtures became extremely important to participants in the church's life with the Baptist Hockey Club remaining the leading team in the Southern Hockey Association.

In October 1941 our daughter church at Sandy Bay celebrated its 20th anniversary.

Roberts Thomson was strongly ecumenical. In 1941, in conjunction with the representatives of the Church of Christ, he boldly and diligently worked on a basis of union between the Baptist Churches of Hobart and the Church of Christ in Collins Street. In their American beginnings the Churches of Christ held that churches should be similar to those described in the New Testament: simple and with autonomous congregations. They were convinced that the New Testament taught believers' baptism by immersion and that it was in the act of baptism that one was regenerated (born again). The church valued the words of Mark 16.16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Initially in America they linked their newly formed church to the Baptist denomination, even though they openly stated their opposition to fundamental Baptist beliefs and practices such as confessions of faith, ordination, church associations, infrequent communion, the testing of candidates before baptism and baptism as symbolic of the convert's faith. The Church began in Australia in 1870s with their operandus being to invade Baptist churches and take them over. Church of Christ minister, O. A. Carr, tried this in Hobart in 1871 at the Particular Baptist chapel but was unsuccessful, but even so eighteen Baptists withdrew with him and commenced a Church of Christ work in Collins Street. In

Queensland they were successful and effectively turned a Baptist church into a Church of Christ.

By 1941 the Church of Christ doctrine of baptismal regeneration emphasis had faded and in most aspects there was little difference between them. Talks in 1942 produced a doctrinal statement that seemed to be acceptable to both. An historic service was held at our church on 21 September as all the Baptist churches and Churches of Christ in the Hobart area combined for morning worship. Further joint services followed. Discussions amongst Baptists continued at the 1942 Annual Assembly in October taking into consideration a wider union, this time between all the Baptist churches and the Church of Christ churches in Tasmania. The progressing doctrinal basis of union said that faith was essential to salvation but faith was to be understood as "the entire response" of the believer, and that it should be followed by baptism which is "linked to the gift of the Holy Spirit". The annual conference of the Church of Christ at Easter in 1943 sought a slight amendment to the doctrinal basis of union. In so doing it authorised the committee to proceed with discussions. However, the Baptist Assembly of that year amended the doctrinal basis of union to read, "Baptism, though not a necessary pre-requisite to the gift of the Holy Spirit, is in scripture linked to it." This resulted in a stalemate and the church union venture lapsed.

From February 1944 Roberts Thomson took leave to serve as a chaplain with the Royal Australian Air Force. He resumed the Hobart pastorate on 3 February 1946. In 1949, he accepted a call to the Brunswick Baptist Church. It was his ninth call in eighteen months. Late in October, the church said farewell. His years in Hobart had been happy, years in which new Tasmanians had been flocking to the Island and new industries had formed. In consequence new suburbs sprang up around Hobart.

In his third year at Brunswick, Roberts Thomson applied for the position of Principal of the New Zealand Baptist Theological College in Auckland and commenced in March 1953. There he undertook a PhD on the relationship of Baptists to the Ecumenical Movement throughout its history. It was subsequently published under the title, "With Hands Outstretched".

In May 1961, he commenced as Principal of the Baptist Theological College of New South Wales but his ecumenical position made things most difficult for him and the difficulties continued until his resignation from an impossible situation three years later. He offered his services to the Presbyterians and they received him without condition and licensed him. He retired in 1973 and then served in seven more Presbyterian pastorates.

#### Lessons for today

Denominationalism is not what it used to be. The Ecumenical Movement began at the commencement of the 20th century and the Anglicans were in fact the driving force for it. The previous century is remembered as a period when the Roman Catholic and Protestant church relations barely existed and the Royal Orange Lodge in Tasmanian was greatly driven by Baptists. Things have certainly thawed between Protestant churches at least. Our congregations no longer exist in denominationally insulated cocoons. Today many a Baptist easily attends a Uniting or Presbyterian church locally if no Baptist church is accessible and once entrenched, it is known fact that a new Baptist cause in the area generally fails to persuade the "lapsed" Baptist to return. Baptists are known to easily join an Anglican church and be taken by its higher level of worship though it is still a bit of a rarity to find a Anglican preaching in a Protestant church or vice versa. Today people are more concerned about the style of worship, the depth or biblical basis of preaching, the "maturity" of the minister and leaders, the genuine expression of love and acceptance and the perceived "presence of God" than whether it is a Baptist, Uniting or whatever church.

Today the concern is the division between the church as a whole and the society out there. And it is interesting how many Baptist churches on their notice boards write "Baptist" in small type below their moniker. The times are a-changing!

Know what you are walking into. Roberts Thomson's strong ecumenism came out in his doctorate of 1962 in which he wanted Baptists to recognize that they were merely part of the true church along with other Christian denominations. During his time as Principal of the NSW Baptist College NSW Baptists were decidedly unready and unwilling to enter into communion with other denominations, especially if those dominations were affiliated with the WCC and its regional bodies. This was a view that appeared lost on Roberts Thomson. Jesus said, "Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." (Matt 10.16)

Sadly all our hard work can soon be forgotten and we need to take this into account. Ron Rogers, who later pastored the our church, recalled that people did not speak much of Roberts Thomson, and that memories of the more colourful personalities, of Harold Hackworthy who preceded him and Merlyn Holly who followed him, stayed longer in people's minds. We need to stop at times and ask do we need the job or does the job need us? But what we can be sure of is that the Hobart church needed Roberts Thomson in the 1940s.

### Lessons for Today from the Hobart Baptist Church 60 Years Ago

The first woman to be hanged in Victoria since 1896 went to the gallows on 20 February 1951. Jean Lee was convicted of a double murder. That year Australian troops were on the ascendancy in Korea against communist troops. On 22 April the Menzies' Liberal Government was returned despite a loss of five seats. On 10 May our nation celebrated fifty years of Federation. In June "school of the air" opened for outback children. In March the Hobart Baptist church celebrated its 62nd anniversary when the Rev. Samuel John Merlyn Holly, BA., was beginning his second year. This short and always well-dressed man was becoming a familiar sight in his clerical collar. He admitted that he liked to get out of it. "It's not that it makes me hot or uncomfortable; it is just that I hate being a stuffy shirt," he explained. His once red hair was turning grey.

Holly, son of a coal miner, was born on 31 March 1906, in Blaena, Monmouthshire, Wales. Blaena was a little village which clung to the side of one of the hills. It was a typical mining town where long drab terraces told the real price of coal in human sweat and pain. No beauty spot, it was dominated by the ugly machinery of the coal mine and surrounded by the black seas of refuse tips. One redeeming feature was the Salem Baptist Church. At the age of twenty-one the opportunity to start a new life in Western Australia beckoned him. As he packed he sold his piano. Having felt the call to the Christian ministry he began ministerial training in the new land in 1929 and worked as a ministerial assistant. Such was the demand for his gifts of music and song that the Presidents of the Baptist Union took him along so that he could play and sing in the dark during the screening of lantern slides. The Leederville Baptist church in WA followed and the congregation grew from eleven to a full capacity of one hundred. After nine years there, and now married to Dulcie, he commenced at Knightsbridge in South Australia. The church soon became an outstanding work in the South Australian Baptist Union. Wartime chaplaincy followed and then chaplaincy at King's College where he worked with the Rev. Harold G. Hackworthy.

During Holly's years at Hobart others left for training for the Christian ministry, among them Hobartian Ken Tuck who gained his B.D. from the University of Melbourne in 1951, and later an M.A. and a London B.D.

In January the church enjoyed the visit by Ernest Brown, a former leader of the British Liberal Nationals and former President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland. In April the church's women's choir won the women's choir

contest sponsored by Davies Brothers Limited with 87 points against the Hobart Country Women's Association branch choir with 85 points. That year the entrance foyer to the church sanctuary was the sound-proofed and seating re-arranged to provide the two aisles instead of the central one. David Williams' company carried this out without interfering with the use of the church for services. New carpet was laid. Church member Athol Townley, who had entered politics in 1949 held the seat for Denison as Liberal member in the House of Representatives in 1951, was appointed Minister for Social Services and Minister in charge of War Service Homes.

Two families made important moves in 1951 and in due time they would make an important contribution to our church: Angus and Mavis Watson and their family left England for Brisbane and the Petrusma family (ten in all) migrated to Tasmania, settling in Penguin.

The next few years would see members sharing in the commencement of a new Baptist church at Lenah Valley; would witness the marriage of Margaret McLeod and John Hart (on 6 March 1952) and marvel at the installation of the Chalmers' Church pipe organ.

Naturally after sixty-two years nearly all the early members of the Church had died and now their children were dying too. Among them on 28 September 1951 was Mrs. Doris Margaret Layton. She was the daughter of William Lake and his wife who had arrived in Hobart in 1888. William, a Spurgeon's College graduate and missionary for the Hobart City Mission for thirty years who died in 1913 while his wife died twenty years later. Harry Sidwell who had come to Australia in 1883 and joined the church in 1889, died on 22 August 1952. Its former beloved pastor, Hackworthy, died on 13 August 1953.

This decade saw the continued change in Australia's social values. One in four people were still attending church weekly, down from one in two in 1880. Grace at meals was still being said by one in three families and the Bible was read by 1,000,000 people weekly. During Lent, according to 1954 figures, nearly 1,500,000 adult Australians went to church each Sunday. Of every 100 in church, 41 were Roman Catholics, 26 Church of England, 14 Methodists, 6 Presbyterians, 2 Baptists and 11 of other denominations. But in Tasmania the public overwhelming wanted state lotteries even though it remained divided on Sunday movies. A nationwide Gallup Poll revealed that amongst every major religious group in Australia there was a widespread feeling that Australia needed a religious revival. Of the church attendees

approached, 51 per cent said "Yes", 31 per cent said "No," and 18 per cent expressed no opinion. Among Baptists 74% said "Yes", 17% said "No" and 9% expressed no opinion.

Holly's Welsh ancestry was evident in debate. At Assembly time in South Australia, the house would fill up if he was to speak. He could not stand complacency by his fellow Christians in regard to such issues as Hyper-Calvinism, Vietnam and the Council of Churches combatting both Pharisaism and injustice in the modern church. He wrote to the Mercury on the question of the term of jail sentences for those found guilty of sex offences saying, "I suggest it takes more than three months in jail to clean up the moral mess in the minds of such an individual who perpetrates a crime of this nature." In regards to the betting laws he publicly expressed the view that horse racing was a corrupt sport from which young people needed safeguarding. With the move in 1953 to set up a lottery to take the place of Tattersalls, he said it would be regrettable to start a State lottery and that it was unfortunate that Tasmania had had to depend upon Tattersalls as a source of revenue. Obviously nothing has changed!

In December 1961, a call came from the Collins Street Baptist Church, Melbourne, which was in ferment. Holly accepted and served there until 1972. He returned then to the Leederville church.

#### A Lesson from 1951

There are many lessons from 1951 but I shall restrict myself to one, namely while in looking back some see only a twist of fate, others catch a glimpse of the providence of God. I would have seen Holly a few times in the 1960s as I was a member of the inner city Baptist church of South Yarra. I never got to know him though I wish I had. I had no idea that years later I would be in Hobart myself.

Holly's childhood was not a happy one. He knew more of hell than heaven and his sensitive little soul shrank from bullying methods. He left school early in a time of severe depression and worked intermittently in coal mines for the next six years. In that devastated area where mines closed, some never to open again, he grew familiar with the lock outs and strikes. This brought to the youth a sickening of heart and a feeling of hopelessness. But, as has been said, at the centre of the social life in Blaena was the Salem Baptist Church. it was here that young Holly learned of God's grace under the aged and blind preacher, the Rev. D.E. Williams, who had no use for a sentimental religion; for him grace was as strong as steel and love was courage. He kept

in touch with the world of Christian thought through the devotion of his housekeeper who would spend hours reading to him from the most recent theological works.

Another person in Blaena made a deep impression on Holly. It was Aneurin "Nye" Bevan. Bevan was born in nearby Tredegar and he too was the son of miner. Bevan's father was a Baptist and his mother a Methodist. Like Holly Bevan left school at an early age and began working in the local colliery. Now Bevan's father was converted to socialism and young Bevan became a well-known local orator. He was seen by his employers as a revolutionary and for this was put off. He rose up in the South Wales Miners' Federation and gained his life-long respect for Karl Marx. He emerged as one of the leaders of the South Wales miners' strike in 1926 and entered parliament as a long time member of the Labor Party. Bevan was elected as Deputy Leader of the Labour Party in 1959 and contributed greatly to the Welfare State after World War Two.

Holly remembered Bevan well as a fiery young orator in his late teens in Blaena. Holly wrote, "In fact it would have been Nye's oratory that started me asking the question, 'What shall I do with my life?' He chose politics and I the church. Nye Bevan's torrent of words gave me a choice, speak for God to men – pulpit or speak for men alone - politics. Nye Bevan's path and mine went in different directions. He never purged the bitterness of those grimy days from his soul. I never forgot - nor ever will forget the days, but Christ enabled me to purge the bitterness, never dimming my vision of better days for all as summed up in the theme of the kingdom of God." Holly continued, "Nye had a wife Jennie who shared his bitterness and continually fanned it into flame. I have a wife whose generosity of spirit led me in a better direction. Without her, my ministry would never have been effective." To the very end Holly remained true to his call. In 1979 he said, "I would, if the clock could be put back, follow the same path along which God has led me. I would not have it otherwise than it was, when I was ordained to the ministry and the sacraments. To that I was called and that was the work I was destined to exercise. To be a preacher of the word in its entirety was and still is my destined way until voice and strength fails me." While the first couple of years at Hobart were disappointing to Holly, the church remembers him as the one who left a record unequalled in the history of the church. He died on 20 July 1979.

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