

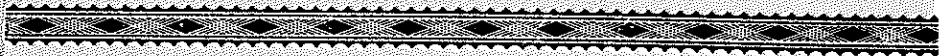


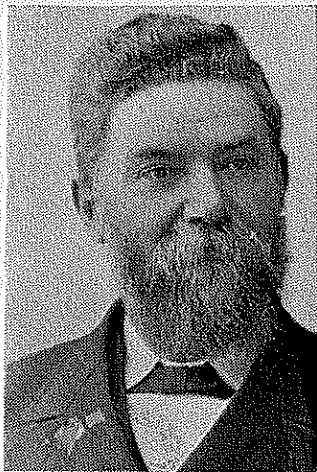
Fifty Years in Ann Street



SEPTEMBER, 1948.

A short history of the Ann Street Church of Christ, Brisbane, in commemoration of the golden jubilee of the purchase of the present chapel on September 19, 1898. The jubilee also coincides with the 65th anniversary of the foundation of the city cause on September 23, 1883.





LEFT: The late Mr. W. T. Clapham, minister of the church, through whose initiative the present building was purchased in 1898. RIGHT: His daughter, Mrs. W. V. Mills, who is still very active in the work of the Ann Street Church.

FOREWORD

◆ Fifty years in the life of a church bring many changes and recall the memory of many names highly honoured among us. The loyalty and devotion of men and women who loved the Saviour is recorded on every page of this history. One of our great joys is that we have still with us those who were in membership when our chapel was purchased. Our prayer and hope is that we may venture into the next half century with the same courage and faithfulness as they, and that our building will continue to see lives changed and men and women won to the Saviour to Whom we shall give all the honour and all the praise.

FRANK HUNTING.

September, 1948.

A Hymn for the Jubilee

O Master, let me walk with Thee
In lowly paths of service free;
Tell me Thy secret; help me bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care.

Help me the slow of heart to move
By some clear winning word of love;
Teach me the wayward feet to stay,
And guide them in the homeward way.

Teach me Thy patience; still with Thee
In closer, dearer company,
In work that keeps faith sweet and strong,
In trust that triumphs over wrong;

In hope that sends a shining ray
Far down the future's broadening way;
In peace that only Thou canst give,
With Thee, O Master, let me live.

WASHINGTON GLADDEN,

Churches of Christ Hymn Book, No. 498.



CHAPTER I

FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

◆ Sunday, September 19, 1948, will be celebrated as the jubilee of the purchase by the Ann Street Church of Christ of the building in which it now worships. These 50 years will not, however, span the whole history of this congregation. During the 15 years that preceded the purchase, the Church of Christ in Brisbane had been growing from its humble beginning till the extent of the work made the acquisition of such a building both necessary and possible. The story of those early years, so richly under-

lined by the deep faith and courage of our pioneers, will remain an inspiration to our people as long as Ann Street's history is remembered.

The foundation date of the church is September 23, 1883. On that date almost exactly 65 years ago a few brethren who had sought one another out met for the first time. But this tiny cause was strong, and its strength was to grow so that it would survive the years and withstand buffetings from the world and from within.

This beginning erased a cheerless note on previous attempts by the Church of Christ to establish itself in Brisbane. It is recorded that as early as 1871 some brethren met at Albion; then, in 1882, Stephen Cheek came to Brisbane on his bold mission to establish churches in this State. He did not then succeed in Brisbane; and as he went on his triumphant, yet sad crusade for Christ in Queensland he wrote of its metropolis that it was "noted for its apathy." He died in the Warwick district in the following year. He had given his life for his work.

The church that was formed in Brisbane in 1883 first met in the Synod Hall. Brethren Crawford and Keith assumed the oversight, and other members included Mr. and Mrs. T. Wright and Mr. J. Paradine.

Proof that this little church went into action immediately is provided by the report of two baptisms in March, 1884. Two converts were immersed by Mr. D. A. Ewers in the Jireh Baptist Church. One of these was the late Mr. W. Hackett, whose family have followed him in loyalty to the Ann Street Church.

The church had changed to the Temperance Hall for its meeting place, and under the sincere leadership of competent brethren the work prospered.

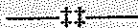


Photograph taken in 1948 of a group of members who were associated with the church when it was bought 50 years ago. Front row (left to right): Mesdames M. Potter, E. Berlin, J. B. Ash. Middle row: Mesdames E. Barter, B. Ritchie, W. V. Mills. Back row: Messrs. W. V. Mills and J. B. Ash. Several others were absent.

Recalling these years, the "Jubilee History" in a few eloquent lines reflects graphically the astonishing progress made by the new church in less than a decade:

In 1889, it says, Mr. C. Fisher, who attended the intercolonial conference in Melbourne, was delegated "to find a suitable preacher and to obtain as much financial help as possible." The record goes on: "The aid and the man were both forthcoming. The result was that Mr. W. S. Houchins took up the work and spent about two years here. The cause prospered exceedingly, the church became known, meetings were packed, and many were added. For a short season a larger place, the Centennial Hall in Adelaide Street, was occupied."

After having returned to the Temperance Hall the church moved in Mr. P. A. Dickson's ministry to a building at the corner of Wharf and Adelaide Streets which had been vacated by the Baptists.



CHAPTER II

A HOME OF OUR OWN

◆ A new chapter in the life of the still young church was opened with the arrival of Mr. W. T. Clapham in 1896 to become evangelist. Because of his foresight and enterprise "another fitting was accomplished"—this time to our present chapel.

The building, erected by the United Methodist Free Church and occupied since August 4, 1881, became available for disposal in 1898 because the Methodists were removing to other premises. How the Church of Christ secured it is best told in the words used by Mr. W. V. Mills in an address as an "old timer" at the diamond jubilee tea of the church in 1943:

"Hearing that the building was on the market for sale for £1100, Mr. Clapham hurriedly obtained the necessary deposit of £100 through the influence of Mr. Booty, the manager of the then London Bank. Mr. Booty was at one time a member of the church.

"I might mention that we got ahead of our friends the Brethren by a few hours—they also were after the property."

The chapel did not then have the partition that rises behind the present platform. A description of it at the time said: "It is well situated and of good size, with comfortable seating accommodation for from 500 to 600 people. The lower hall could easily hold 100 persons."

Mr. Mills's record of the history of the building states that it was not until Mr. W. H. Nightingale's arrival many years later that any serious attempt was made to reduce the building debt. A share scheme cleared some of the amount, and later on large sums were raised each year by the women of the church through sales of work. Appeals also were made for straight-out giving.

Quarter of a century ago, when the city was rapidly expanding and large suburbs were developing, the sale of the Ann Street property was mooted. The proposal was to abandon the city church and establish several causes in the suburbs. The city valuer, however, advised the church not to sell. The site, he said, was likely to become very valuable because the council proposed to spend a lot of money improving this part of the city by the widening of Petrie Bight, the formation of Barry Parade, the provision of Centennial Park, and the building of a high level traffic bridge across the river. On this advice the proposal to sell was dropped.

The forecast of that city valuer has been realised since. This property, bought for £1100, was valued at £4,500 twenty-five years ago. To-day it is worth more than £11,000.

CHAPTER III

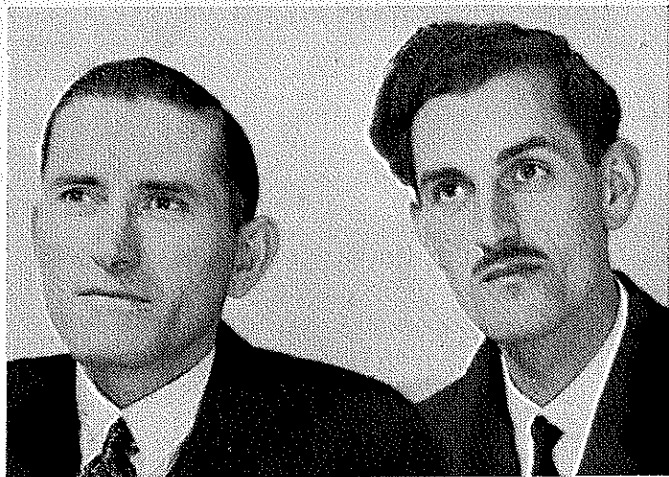
THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED

◆ In the years that followed the purchase of the building the congregation had its triumphs and reverses, but ever there were faithful brethren who abandoned themselves to the one great task of glorifying God by raising a church that would give a lead to the cause in Queensland and help men nearer to the Master.

In this they had been given a splendid example in the enterprise of the church in the years before 1898. Much personal work had been done, auxiliaries had been active, and a feature of church life had been street meetings. Begun by Mr. Houchins, open air services were first held on the corner of Queen and Edward Streets on Sunday nights at 6.30. They followed immediately after the Salvation Army, but usually the crowd stayed for our meeting then went with our people to the Temperance Hall for the Gospel service. Open air meetings also were held for an hour on Tuesday evenings. When the church moved to Wharf Street this work was continued on vacant land on the other side of the street. The open air venture was an effective part of the church's ministry in those now distant days.

At intervals in later years missions — some of them on a spectacular scale—were held, giving renewed impetus to the life of the church.

The Church of Christ meanwhile was taking a more clearly defined position in the community. One of the ministers, the late Mr. A. C. Rankine, was very jealous of its status. His protests remedied the customary omission to invite the Church of Christ to be represented at public functions. On his objections Church of Christ services were separated from the



Leading the work of the church in 1948 are Messrs. Frank C. Hunting (left), who is senior minister, and Mr. C. J. Mackenzie, assistant minister.

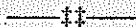
“Other Church Services” group in newspaper advertisements and appeared under their own heading.

After the purchase of the Ann Street building little change was made until the ministry of Mr. F. Collins just over 10 years ago. He conceived a splendid interior beautification scheme, and it is a tribute to his leadership and to the support of the members that it was so effectively carried out. Central feature is the tiled baptistry with the rich leadlight background. This is a gracious tribute to the memory of Mr. and Mrs. Clapham.

The 1939-1945 war introduced another memorable phase in the life of the Church. Morning and night it was difficult to accommodate the congregations; the attendance of scores of Australian and American servicemen was an inspiration; it was a privilege to have American and Australian chaplains occupying the pulpit.

With the return of peace the church's task became harder as the wartime enthusiasm waned. Much had to be done in a membership field that extended from Northgate to Corinda, from Enoggera to Mt. Gravatt. The calls for help in deep personal problems were many. The Church accepted the challenge of this need and decided to appoint a second minister. Now our ministers, Messrs. F. C. Hunting and C. J. Mackenzie, are devoting themselves to a wide personal work and to the upbuilding of the church for a new march forward.

From that small beginning in 1883 the church has continued to grow. Statistics in 1903 showed an enrolment exceeding 200 ("some are weak and sickly" and "a few sleep") of whom about 120 attended Communion each Lord's Day. Last complete statistics show that in 1947 the church had a membership of 342, including 38 isolated and 54 listed as not active. For that year the average attendance in the morning was 183 and at night 77, while the number who broke bread averaged 150.



CHAPTER IV

WIDENING GOD'S WORK

◆ These figures do not, however, tell the real story of the expansion of the work. Ann Street is mother to other churches. Writing in 1903, Mr. Main deplored that Ann Street was "the only church of this faith in Brisbane. The scattered membership militates against the meetings and work. Slight efforts have been made to extend, without success."

Services had been conducted for a time at Lutwyche and Kelvin Grove, a Mr. Stevenson baptised converts from meetings at Taringa, and a school was held at South Brisbane; but nothing permanent resulted until causes were formed at Albion (1911), Annerley (1914), and Hawthorne (1914). Albion in turn mothered the Kedron Church (1929) and Annerley the Moorooka Church (1931); then Moorooka extended to Rocklea about 1941. Thus there are six suburban churches that may trace their origin to Ann Street.

Mr. Nightingale two years ago wrote interesting and amusing reminiscences of the erection of the Hawthorne chapel in one day. He undertook to get the money, the volunteer builders, and the food for them. He took three days off to visit West Moreton Churches, which gave him £100 in cash and promises free of interest. Members also promised sheep and other food, including bags of pumpkins, potatoes, and cabbages. A good crowd of men volunteered to help on the building. Mr. Nightingale next appealed to all churches in Queensland and secured further promises of money, men and food. The job was tackled despite the protests of pessimists that the building should wait till the war was over, and the predictions of others that Christ would come and the church would not be necessary. Before dawn on November 14, 1914, seventy-five men were ready to start work. At 10 p.m. the building was swept out and the workers together sang "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow." Next day 250 people crammed into the building, and 30 or more accepted Christ.

This great day, one of the peaks in the graph of Ann Street's history, was typical of the spirit of co-operation and progress that inspired other ventures.

CHAPTER V

MEN WHO HAVE SERVED

◆ In its 65 years Ann Street has been served by 24 ministers, including great men who became outstanding figures in the life of the Churches of Christ in Australia.

The names of the ministers in the order in which they served, and the years of their appointment, are: 1884 F. W. Troy, 1885 H. Goodacre, 1886 D. A. Ewers, 1888 J. Park, 1890 W. S. Houchins, 1892 P. A. Dickson, 1896 W. T. Clapham, 1900 A. R. Main, 1903 H. Maston, 1904 J. Colbourne, 1907 C. Watt, 1909 J. I. Mudford, 1912 W. H. Nightingale, 1915 A. C. Rankine, 1922 F. Alcorn, 1927 H. Bassard, 1932 F. Collins, 1939 A. Brooke, 1940 R. L. Williams, 1941 R. L. Arnold, 1941 A. Brooke, 1942 L. A. Trezise, 1944 F. C. Hunting, 1947 C. J. Mackenzie (assistant minister).

Those remembered particularly are:

Mr. Ewers: Had a great influence on the expansion of the Church of Christ in Queensland in the early years.

Mr. Houchins: Brought a great impetus to the work of Ann Street Church; "a big, powerful man who baptised married couples together."

Mr. Clapham: The man whose foresight gave the church its present building.

Mr. Main: Subsequently principal of the College of the Bible; probably the most influential teacher in the history of the Church in Australia; died on his way to Brisbane to conduct the Ann Street anniversary service in 1945.



THE BOARD OF OFFICERS OF THE ANN STREET CHURCH, 1948.

Front row (left to right): Messrs B. N. Stanway, sen., J. Smith, R. Feeney, D. Stocks. Second row: Messrs. W. H. Howard (assistant secretary), C. J. Mackenzie (assistant minister), H. A. Schutz, E. W. Potter (treasurer). Third row: Messrs. H. J. Wyeth, W. V. Mills, H. J. Payne (Chairman), G. McKeivie (secretary). Inset: Messrs. R. Gardew and F. C. Hunting (senior minister).

Mr. Rankine: A capable teacher, strong defender of the position of the Churches of Christ, zealous worker for overseas missions (one year the annual offering reached £120), held record for length of service with Ann Street.

Mr. Collins: Did memorable work in consolidating the church, and will always be remembered for his beautification scheme.

Mr. Brooke: Became Chaplain-General of the United Churches.

Mr. Trezise: While an Army chaplain did splendid work in the church during the busy war years. Now in a larger work in Victoria.



CHAPTER VI

AUXILIARIES AT WORK

◆ The history of the church is also the record of loyal and constant effort by all auxiliaries—the Bible School, and, under varying designations, the women and the young people.

Though they have contributed incalculably to the work of Ann Street, their experience affords possibly the brightest of all chapters in this story of 65 years. With their work has been allied delightful social relationship.

The women in earlier years were happy in the preparation of frequent banquets, for which all the food was supplied by members and friends of the church. Not only did this raise considerable sums of money for the work, but, more importantly, it brought crowds of our members together in an atmosphere in which they revelled.

They were great days for the young people. At one period they had picnics every Saturday afternoon. Entertainment in the social hall and in homes kept the young people together. At different periods the church has had strong cricket and tennis teams.

Behind these auxiliaries have been men and women ardently devoted to Christ and His Church. If anyone were to be singled out for excellence of service it would be Mrs. E. Berlin, who was one of the very early members of this church, and yet only recently relinquished the secretaryship of the Women's Fellowship after 30 years' continuous service.



CHAPTER VII

THE TASK OF THE FUTURE

◆ With the foundation that is furnished by this eventful history, Ann Street Church has much upon which to build as it faces the imperative demands of the future. Inevitably much of what is attempted will centre on this old building.

It is appropriate, therefore, that one of the golden jubilee aims is to found a £2000 fund out of which extensions and improvements may be financed. The plan is to build at the rear so that the social hall may be enlarged, that greater Bible school and kindergarten accommodation may be provided, and that other facilities may be added, including an up-to-date kitchen. If the generosity of the members makes this possible, every phase of the Church work will be assisted. All auxiliaries that have contributed to Ann Street history will have additional facilities to make them more efficient in their tasks of the future.

The years that lie ahead, however, demand more than this building expansion; yet this venture in bricks and mortar should be the token of a larger work in the way that counts most before God. This old church should be busier in the education and training of its own people to shoulder the God-given responsibility of bringing men and women to Christ. A vital faith and positive witness should radiate from this place, drawing to its refuge seekers after Truth.

More than it has ever been in the past, this chapel should be kept busy in the work of the Master—the home of a congregation no longer hesitating, but fulfilling with new zeal and fidelity its natural mission as a source of leadership and inspiration in Church of Christ enterprise in Queensland.



