

**CELEBRATING THE LIFE
OF
NORMAN WATSON**



**24 FEBRUARY 1921 - 25 SEPTEMBER 2006
AGED 85 YEARS**

"He hath delivered my soul in peace" (Psalm 4:18)

E U L O G Y

(Written by Norm)

On February 24, 1921, Norman was born at the home of his grandmother, HARRIET JARVIS, at the corner of Robinson and Waterloo Streets, North Rockhampton, the first born of parents HAROLD and HARRIET ETHEL WATSON. He was named after the doctor who delivered him, Dr. Norman Charles Talbot. His parents' financial circumstances were such that they did not know how they were going to have sufficient money to clothe him.

Norm had two brothers and three sisters - Lorna (deceased), Jean (deceased), Gordon, Marjorie (deceased), Kevin who lived for one hour only, and an unnamed stillborn sister.

Norm received his primary school education at the Frenchville State School in Rockhampton and his secondary education at the Rockhampton Technical College, reaching the Junior level (currently Grade 10).

In August 1936, he commenced employment as a Stenotypist at the Central Queensland Meat Export Company, Lakes Creek, Rockhampton and rose to the position of Personnel and Industrial Relations Officer.

His life was interrupted with the outbreak of World War II in 1939. He served his country in continuous full-time war service in the Citizen Military Forces from October 6, 1941 to November 30, 1945, and was in New Guinea at Milne Bay when the Japanese Forces landed there on August 26, 1942. Other areas of overseas service were Donadabu north of Port Moresby, Madang and Torikina in the south of Bougainville where he was when peace was declared in August 1945. He was promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal in April 1942 and then to the position of Pay Sergeant in November 1942.

After the war he returned to his position at the Lakes Creek Meatworks. In February 1955, he was transferred to the Redbank Meatworks company located at Stanley Street, South Brisbane

(currently Southbank). He also became Chairman of the Queensland Meatworks Companies' Committee.

In 1963, Norm resigned from the Redbank Meatworks to take up a similar position with Ampol at their Brisbane Refinery at the commencement of its construction. He subsequently became Ampol's Industrial Relation's Officer for Queensland. He retired from Ampol in 1986, something to which he did not look forward to, but soon grew to accept, finding that there was plenty of scope for the living of a worthwhile life, and wondering how he ever found time to go to work. In those days, retirement was compulsory at the end of the month of an employee's 65th birthday.

His parents, and his Grandma Jarvis were foundation members of the Church of Christ, Rockhampton, which opened on November 18, 1928. They had given their lives to Christ during the preceding six weeks evangelistic mission conducted by E. C. Hinrichsen who, with a similar tent mission, also established the Church of Christ at Gympie, Maryborough, Bundaberg, Mackay and Townsville.

At the age of 12, during the ministry of S. W. Vanham, who baptised and married both Mavis and Norm, he made his decision for Christ on September 3, 1933, and was baptised on September 24, 1933. At the age of 17, he began an active role in the life and work of the church assisting in the Lord's Day morning services, presiding at the Lord's Table for Communion, Scripture reading and serving Communion, Bible School Teacher and Superintendent, Young Peoples Christian Endeavour Society activities and leadership and song leading at gospel services. He preached his first sermon when he was 17, the title of the message being, "Decision for God, Demanded!". Subsequently he did a fair amount of lay preaching for various churches both in Rockhampton and Brisbane through to 1997. He was Deacon and Secretary of the church at Rockhampton for many years.

When he and Mavis and the family moved to Brisbane in August 1955, he became actively involved in the work of the Church of Christ, Ann Street, conducted the Boys' Club at the Church of Christ, Rocklea for a couple of years, and became actively involved in the work of the Brotherhood of Churches of Christ in Queensland. He was a member of the Conference Executive serving as Conference Secretary from 1956 to 1963, and for a second term from 1984 to 1989. He was

elected as Vice President of Conference in 1978, and Senior Vice President the next year, and then President the following year. During that year when he and Mavis toured the State visiting the majority of the churches, he was thrilled with the spirit of Brotherhood. Also there was the privilege of having a young lady confess her faith in Christ at Nambour and another at Gympie in response to the gospel message entitled "Jesus is Lord and Coming King" which was his theme for the year of his presidency.

He served as a member of the Home Missions and Social Service Committees for a number of years, and as a member of the Advisory Board for 33 years until 1991, and also as Business Manager of "The Christian Echo", the monthly magazine of Churches of Christ in Queensland, from 1957 to 1991, and editor of the weekly Sunday paper of the Church of Christ, Ann Street, Brisbane from 1974 to 1994. He was the author of the Centenary book entitled "Century of Witness" released at the Churches of Christ Centenary Celebrations in September 1983.

He became a member of the Board of Deacons at the Church of Christ, Ann Street, in 1963, when he was elected as one of the Elders, and elected as Church Secretary in 1966 continuing through to April 10, 2001 when deteriorating health forced him to resign from both positions at the age of 80 years.

His extensive involvement in the life and work of the church and the Brotherhood would never have been possible had he not had such a sacrificing, considerate, caring and understanding wife as Mavis who has been supportive to the utmost and stood by him through all of those years which involved sacrifice not only for her, but the family also, and he pays a special tribute to each of them.

Mavis first came into his life in his late teens through a friendship between Norm's parents and one of her Uncles and Aunts (George and Edith Hook) who resided at Moonmera where the Uncle was the station master, and he and his wife were members of the Church of Christ at Rockhampton. Because of this relationship, his parents became friendly with Uncle George's sister and husband who had two daughters (the youngest was Mavis) in Gympie, and on an exchange holiday visit with Norm's eldest sister, Lorna, brought the two sisters, Iris and Mavis, to holiday at his place in Rockhampton. A romance

was the result. It was largely a romance by correspondence, but it still blossomed and grew stronger and stronger until he and Mavis announced their engagement on August 25, 1941, little knowing that the commencement of over four years of continuous army service was less than two months away. During a brief period of leave following active service in the Milne Bay, New Guinea conflict, he and Mavis were married by S.W. Vanham (he had baptised both of them) at the Church of Christ, Crescent Road, Gympie, on January 8, 1944. The expectation was that he was going to be transferred to the Army Finance Corps located in Brisbane, but that never eventuated, and after a honeymoon of four days he was off to the Atherton Tablelands, and from there to Madang, and then to Torakina in the south of Bougainville Island until the war ended. He was discharged on November 30, 1945.

He and Mavis were greatly blessed with five sons (John, Graham, Jeffrey, Ross and David) and three daughters (Bev, Annette and Lynelle) and their respective spouses, twenty-one grandchildren and two great grandchildren, all of whom he was very proud, and for whom he gave God great praise and thanks along with such praise and thanksgiving that the Lord brought Mavis into his life. An appropriate special tribute to Mavis is contained in the last chapter of the Book of Proverbs which says:-

"Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life. She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.... She gets up while it is still dark and stays up late.... she provides food for her family.... She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.... She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple She makes linen garments.... She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom and faithful instruction is on her tongue. She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her saying, "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all. Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works be her praise at the city gate."

In 2004, it was apparent that Norm and Mavis were in need of care, and as a result, Graham the second eldest son, offered to provide the care they needed. After 50 years of living in their Auchenflower home, the home was sold. Graham also sold his home, and together they moved to a new home at Labrador on the Broadwater at the Gold Coast. Norm was tremendously grateful for Graham's kindness and sacrifice, as it allowed he and Mavis to continue to live together for the remaining years that the Lord would give them, and be secure in the knowledge that they would be cared for, and in the event that Mavis was left, she would be provided for.

Norm's constant aim in life was to love his family, and to provide for them, and to love all relatives in the wider family, to love and serve his Lord with all his heart in the work of His church and to have compassion for people, and to do much, but nothing that would not add to the happiness, comfort and welfare of someone. He did not profess to be the greatest ever as a son and son-in-law, brother and brother-in-law, husband, father and father-in-law, grandfather, great-grandfather and friend to many, but he endeavoured to be the very best he could possibly be at all times. His constant aim was to allow Christ to be manifested in his life that others might find The Way. One of the deepest desires of his heart was for his family, loved ones and others to find the One who is The Way and who said *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

At the end of Norm's life, just as the Apostle Paul said to Timothy, he was able to say with confidence that:-

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge, shall give to me on that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing"

And with the hymn writer Charles Wesley:-

"No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ, my own."

WHAT A WONDERFUL SAVIOUR IS JESUS MY LORD!

And finally Saint John the Divine wrote in The Revelation, the final book in the Bible:-

“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me – “Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.”

ADDENDUM

Beginning in 2004, Norm began to show signs of the onset of dementia which slowly progressed to a point, where in recent months, at times it was quite severe. Although he was accustomed to a sharp mind and very good memory, he accepted his condition very well.

Since moving to Labrador, Norm and Mavis worshipped at the Southport Church of Christ. To not attend church every Sunday for Norm was just not negotiable. On quite a number of occasions, he would begin to prepare for church, and would have to be told, “it’s not Sunday today, Norm”. Needless to say, when his Doctor advised him two weeks before his passing that he should only attend half a service, he was mortified. Under substantial protest, he acquiesced, but as events transpired it only happened the once.

At 6:30 AM on the morning of Monday, 25th September 2006, it was necessary for him to be transported to the Alamanda Private Hospital in Southport. He subsequently passed away in the hospital at 10:20 PM on that day from heart failure. Although he will be greatly missed, the family is grateful to the Lord that he did not have to suffer for any extended period, the family was able to spend the final hours with him and that he and the family are spared the progression of the dementia.

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