

THE BAPTIST UNION OF VICTORIA

ASSEMBLY - MARCH 1994

MINUTES of the meeting of the Assembly of The Baptist Union of Victoria held in the Great Hall, Carey Baptist Grammar School, on Friday, March 4, 1994 at 7.00 pm.

- Present** 73 Church delegates, 2 proxy delegates, 28 ministers, 12 members holding Union appointments, 2 committee members and 2 visitors.
- Chairman** The President, Mr B A Baxter, chaired the meeting
- Devotions** Devotions were led by the Rev Alex Lam.
- Welcome** A welcome was extended to those attending Assembly for the first time.
- Apologies** It was agreed to receive apologies and record them in the Assembly Roll.
- Union Secretary** The General Superintendent, the Rev John Simpson, informed the Assembly that Mr Don Sandy, the Secretary Designate, had suffered a leg injury requiring surgery, and would not be able to assume his duties until April 11. He asked members to pray for Mr Sandy. He informed the Assembly that Rev M P Warn would continue to act as Secretary until Mr Sandy could take up his duties.
- Minutes** Minutes of the Annual Assembly held in October, 1993 had been tabled at the meeting of Assembly held on December 10, 1993. It was resolved:
That the Minutes of Annual Assembly, 1993 as tabled at the meeting of Assembly held on 10 December, 1993 be taken as read and confirmed.
Minutes of the meeting of Assembly held on December 10, 1993 had been made available to members just prior to the meeting. It was resolved:
That the Minutes of the meeting of Assembly held on December 10, 1993 be taken as read and confirmed.
- President's Report** The President presented a report referring to his visits to churches and other meetings since the December Assembly. In particular he spoke of his pleasure in being invited to the 135th anniversary of the Bendigo Church, the church of his parents and own youth. While there he was informed that he was the only member or former member of that church, other than for some former ministers, to be elected to the Presidency of the Union.
He also remarked upon the great diversity he had found among the churches he had visited, saying that this was particularly noticeable in the variety of worship styles he had experienced. Regardless of the worship style he had been conscious of the presence of the Holy Spirit in each service. He said that while he may be more comfortable with a particular worship style than with others, he recognised that the Holy Spirit was not limited by the style of worship adopted. He urged Assembly members to refrain from being critical of worship styles other than their own preference.
The President also commented on the potential for outreach that churches conducting Playgroups had. He had noticed that some churches with Playgroups had found it difficult to get the non-church families involved in the Playgroups also to be involved in the church. He suggested that churches successful in this regard could be

of assistance to the others by sharing the methods they had used to accomplish this - perhaps through the Early Childhood Resource Field Worker, Mrs Gwenda Sibson.

It was agreed that the President's Report be received.

General Superintendent's Report:

The General Superintendent tabled a written Report covering the following matters:

- The Home-Call of Ollwyn Abbott;
- The Union Secretariat;
- The appointment of the Rev Geoff Rowse as an Assistant to the General Superintendent with a responsibility of pastoral care and visitation of ministers;
- Pastoral movements;
- New Pastors' Orientation Conference;
- Anticipating the Future; and
- Discovering the Power of Prayer.

Attached to the Report were two documents: *Becoming a People of Prayer*, and *WellSpring, 1994*. (The Report and each of the attachments are secured in the Assembly Papers File.)

Rev Alec Perrin

In speaking to his Report the General Superintendent reported that the Rev Alec Perrin had passed away that morning. He paid high tribute to Alec Perrin in his heroic struggle with illness over a long period of years. He requested prayer for Margaret Perrin.

Pastors' Orientation Conference

He also elaborated on the Pastors' Orientation Conference, which had been attended by 23 persons, and had concluded that day. Many of the pastors and their partners, who had also attended the Conference, had been able to stay on for Assembly. He presented them to the Assembly which welcomed them with acclamation. The President greeted each one personally, and then Mrs Gwynne Milne, Chair of Advisory Board commended them in prayer.

Administration Review

He enlarged on the section of the Report devoted to *Anticipating the Future*, and asked that the members would pray that the interim period the Union Administration was experiencing would be a creative time. He invited members who may have ideas on what the Union should be doing to forward them to him, indicating that Executive Council had established an Administrative Review Committee.

Rev Jill Manton - WellSpring

The General Superintendent invited the Rev Jill Manton to speak to the section of the Report *Re-Discovering the Power of Prayer*. Mrs. Manton spoke of the origins of WellSpring in her ministry at the Ashburton Church and how the Church had encouraged her to widen the scope of this particular prayer ministry and explained the ministry of Quiet days and Retreats.

Prayer requested for Rev Charles Wilcox

The General Superintendent requested prayer for the Rev Charles Wilcox and his wife, Helen. He explained that Charles was far from well and that some weeks ago while members of his family were travelling to see him they had sustained a serious injury in a car accident.

Following question and comment it was resolved:

That the General Superintendent's Report be received.

Financial Report:

The Chairman of Finance Board presented the Statement of Income and Expenditure of the Victorian Baptist Ministries and the Victorian Baptist Management Budgets for the six months ending 31 January, 1994 and commented upon them. (A copy of the Statement is secured in the Assembly Papers File.)

In his comments Mr. Alley pointed out that the response to the November Appeal was lower than for a similar period for the last seven years, and that over-all the response to the Ministries Budget was not only below the target for the year, but less than the response for the same period in the previous year.

It was resolved:

That the Statement of Income and Expenditure as presented be received.

**Carey Baptist
Grammar School-
Strategy Plan and
Building
Development:**

The Principal of Carey Baptist Grammar School, Dr. Ross Millikan, addressed the Assembly on the development of a Strategy Plan for the School which in its first two phases called for the re-development of the Junior and Middle Schools on the Kew Campus. The estimated cost of the development was \$6,000,000, and the School proposed to finance the cost partly from its resources and partly from bank borrowing. The School had submitted its proposals to the Finance Board of the Union, and the matter was coming before the Assembly with the support of that Board.

Following Dr. Millikan's presentation it was resolved:

That approval be given to Carey Baptist Grammar School to build a new Junior School and Middle School on its Kew Campus at an estimated cost of \$6,000,000, to be funded partly from its own resources and partly from bank borrowings.

It was further resolved:

That approval be given to Carey Baptist Grammar School to borrow up to \$2,500,000 for its new building program provided that the borrowing is secured by the assets of the School alone.

The President requested Dr. Millikan to convey to the School Board the thanks of the Union for making available the School's facilities for the conduct of this Assembly.

**Thanksgiving for
the life of Ollwyn
Abbott:**

The President drew the attention of Assembly to the order of service entitled *Ollwyn Charles Abbott - 1922 - 1994 - A Recollection and a Reflection* in the Assembly papers. (A copy is secured in the Assembly Papers File.) At this juncture the Assembly was telephonically linked to the home of Mrs Winsome Abbott and the President brought greetings to her from the Assembly and the Baptist family throughout Victoria.

The President led the Assembly in the Service of Recollection and Reflection, after which Assembly was led in prayer by the Rev Harry Monro. The service concluded with the singing of the hymn *God of Grace and God of Glory*.

**International
Year of the
Family Task
Force:
Mrs Margaret
Simpson, Project
Officer.**

The President introduced to the Assembly Mrs Margaret Simpson, who had been appointed Project Officer of the Union's International Year of the Family Task Force. Mrs Simpson addressed Assembly following which Mrs. Gwenda Sibson, a member of the Task Force, commended the Project Officer and her work in prayer.

The Task Force Progress Report to Assembly and the Project Officer's Report on the Theme of the Task Force for the IYF: *Families - Reality and Hope* (copies of which are secured in the Assembly Papers File) were received.

**Mission to
Victoria:**

The Mission to Victoria Superintendent, Dr Geoff Pound, presented a report from the Mission to Victoria Council. He referred to registration forms for a new Church Planting Training Course which would be sent out to churches but were available to members at the Assembly. He urged members to look out members of their churches who may be able to participate in the course.

**Korean Baptist
Church**

Dr Pound introduced to Assembly the pastor of the Korean Baptist Fellowship, the Rev Hans Juang. The Korean Baptist Fellowship, currently meeting in the Elsternwick Church, had been active for the past three years, and had work in other centres of Melbourne and in the Latrobe Valley. On the recommendation of the Mission to Victoria Council and Executive Council it was resolved:

That the Korean Baptist Fellowship meeting at Elsternwick be received as a constituent church of the Union.

**ECRC Field
Worker - Mrs
Gwenda Sibson**

On behalf of the Mission to Victoria Council and Executive Council Dr Pound spoke of the excellent service given to churches with Playgroups and Kindergartens by Mrs Gwenda Sibson, the Early Childhood Resource Committee's Field Worker. It was resolved:

That Mrs Gwenda Sibson be re-appointed as the Early Childhood Resource Committee Field Worker for a further term of two years.

Mrs Sibson briefly addressed the Assembly.

Evangelism Task Force:

The Rev John Merriweather, a member of the Evangelism Task Force, advised Assembly of a new initiative of that Task Force. He announced that on 29 March a meeting was to be held in Baptist Church House to launch "E.T's" - Evangelism Teams. He enthusiastically challenged members of Assembly to ensure that their churches had representatives at that meeting.

Missionary Department:

The Rev David O'Brien presented a report from the Missionary Department. The report provided information on the giving of Victorian churches to the ABMS for the first six months of the denominational year. Giving showed an increase of \$20,000 on that received in the same period of the previous year, but much of the amount given was designated for extra-budget items. Giving to the operational budget needs of the ABMS was down by \$15,000. The trend in Victorian giving was being repeated throughout Australia, and to date giving to ABMS was down by approximately 5% on the previous year. He urged members to encourage their churches to give well to the May Appeal.

He announced that from August 24-31 the Youth Choir from Filawe Hill, Zambia would be in Victoria and it was anticipated that regional meetings would be held so that all Victorian Baptists would have opportunity of hearing the singers.

He informed Assembly that churches would shortly receive invitations to consider sending their pastors on a ministry tour to Bangladesh, to get alongside Garo pastors and see what it is like to minister in one of the poorest countries on earth. Other visits were being planned for Central Australia, and early next year for Malawi and Indonesia.

He invited the President to present plaques acknowledging missionary service with the ABMS to Chris and Julie Barnden, who having served in Bangladesh for eight years are now in the pastorate at Grovedale; and to Philippa and Donna Christian who after serving in Zambia for seven years had recently been inducted into the pastorate of the Leopold church.

Amendments to Schedule B of The Baptist Union Incorporation Act, 1930:

The Acting Secretary, the Rev Milton Warn, re-introduced the report presented to the June, 1993 Assembly giving the required notice to amend Schedule B of The Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1930. (The report entitled *Report to Assembly concerning Small Churches and Trust Property* is secured in the Assembly Papers File.) The Report contained the text of two proposed amendments to the Schedule. The Acting Secretary reminded Assembly that the proposals had been widely publicised in the July, 1993 issue of the *Witness*, and again in the February, 1994 issue. He then summarised the reasons Executive Council had in proposing the amendments, following which it was resolved:

Report received:

That the report entitled "Report to Assembly concerning Small Churches and Trust Property" be received.

On the motion of the Acting Secretary it was then resolved:

New Clause 14A to be added to Schedule:

That Schedule B of The Baptist Union Incorporation Act, 1930 be amended by inserting an additional clause to be numbered 14A, the wording of which is provided in the report presented to this Assembly entitled "Report to Assembly concerning Trust Property and Small Churches".

The Acting Secretary then moved:

New Clause 15B to be added to Schedule:

That Schedule B of The Baptist Union Incorporation Act, 1930 be amended by inserting an additional clause to be numbered 15B, the wording of which is provided in the report entitled "Report to Assembly concerning Small Churches and Trust Property".

The motion was seconded. On behalf of the West Melbourne Church the following amendment was then moved and seconded:

Amendment to New Clause:

That in the proposed Clause 15B after the words "(but more than five)" the words "and in the opinion of Executive Council of the Union such church is no longer financially viable" be added.

Amendment Lost

Following discussion the amendment proposed by the West Melbourne Church was put and lost.

- Mr. David Corben then moved a further amendment:
- Further Amendment:** That in the proposed new clause 15B the words "*the number of resident of the church shall be reduced to twenty-nine or less (but more than* deleted and substitute the words: "*the Union provides financial assistance to the church by way of a loan*".
- Amendment Lost:** The amendment was seconded, and following discussion when it was put the amendment was lost.
- New Clause 15B approved:** The original motion was then put and carried.
(*The full text of the New Clause 14A and the new Clause 15B is printed as an appendix to these Minutes and forms part of these Minutes.*)
- Public Questions Committee:** The Union Information Officer, the Mr Geoff Holland presented three matters of the Public Questions Committee.
Petition re Pay TV He drew attention to a petition in the Assembly papers addressed to the Senate Committee looking at community standards for Pay TV and urged members to make copies to their churches and invite members to sign it, then to forward it to the Select Committee. He stressed that there was little time to do this.
- R-rated Material on Computer Games** He urged members to write to the Victorian Attorney General and to urge members urging that R-rated material be banned on computer games. Again, there is little time available for such letters to be effective.
- Freedom of Religion** He urged members to protest to governments when they read items of persecution. He suggested that letters be addressed to the consulates of such countries requesting that as in Australia their nationals enjoyed freedom of religion their governments should provide the same freedom to minority religious groups of whatever persuasion.
- The President thanked Mr. Holland and the Public Questions Committee for the continual work they performed for the Union.
- Assembly Dates:** The President drew attention to the dates published on the Agenda Paper:
Assembly dates for 1994 - June 3, August 5 and December 2;
Annual Assembly - October 6-10, 1994.
- Close:** The President offered prayer and the Assembly closed at 10.15 pm.

APPENDIX - TEXT OF NEW CLAUSES INSERTED IN SCHEDULE B OF THE BAPTIST UNION INCORPORATION ACT, 1930

14A. At any time the said Church at a Special Meeting duly convened and held as provided in Clause 10 hereof may request the Executive Council of the Union to exercise on its behalf the powers vested in the Church by clauses 4, 5, 7, 8 and 13 at a Special Meeting duly convened and held as provided in Clause 10 hereof and if the Executive Council of the Union so agree then the Executive Council of the Union or the department of the Union appointed under seal by the Executive Council to act on its behalf shall exercise the said power until such time as the Executive Council and the said Church by a majority decision of its members who have attained the age of eighteen years shall separately determine that the said power shall revert to the said Church ALWAYS PROVIDED that the said Church has so resolved and the Executive Council failing or refusing for one month so to resolve then the Assembly of the Union may direct the Executive Council so to resolve and the Executive Council so directed shall so resolve.

15B. In addition and without prejudice to the power hereinbefore contained if at any time the number of resident members of the church shall be reduced to twenty nine or less (but more than five) then the powers vested in the Church by clauses 4, 5, 7, 8 and 13 at a Special Meeting duly convened and held as provided in clause 10 hereof may be exercised exclusively by the Executive Council of the Union or the department of the Union appointed under seal by the Executive Council to act on its behalf ALWAYS PROVIDED that the Executive Council shall have determined to exercise the power hereby conferred upon it by a resolution of a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting at a Special Meeting called for that purpose and that the Secretary of the Union shall have given three months' written notice of the intention of Executive Council so to act to the Deacons or the officers of the said Church and to the Assembly of the Union and the Assembly shall have endorsed the action of Executive Council. There shall be no reversion of the power hereby vested in Executive Council unless and until the Executive Council and the said Church by a majority decision of its members who have attained the age of eighteen years shall have separately so resolved SAVE THAT the said Church having so resolved and the Executive Council failing or refusing for one month so to resolve then the Assembly of the Union may direct the Executive Council so to resolve and the Executive Council so directed shall forthwith so resolve.

Confirmed .. *Baldwin J. B...*

Date *3rd June 1994*