



# THE AUSTRALIAN BAPTIST MOVEMENT THE POST WAR BOOM AND BAPTIST RESPONSES

## Enter Australian Baptist Ministries (1926)



At Sydney's Burton Street Tabernacle in 1926 a central coordinating network to empower and sustain mission was established – the Baptist Union of Australia. This is now known as Australian Baptist Ministries and is the oldest and largest national cooperative body of Baptists in Australia.

With the State Unions ABM coordinated work in Christian education, home missions (Church Planting) and various evangelistic movements. ABM also plays a key role today in working with the state-based Baptist Care bodies and speaking on issues of national Baptist significance.

## The Post-War Influx (1945)



*"Australia wants, and will welcome, new healthy citizens who are determined to become good Australians."*

Arthur Caldwell, Australian Minister for Immigration, 1945

Populate or perish was the slogan. The result was that between 1945 and 1965 more than two million migrants came to Australia.

## Baptist Response - New Initiatives Ripe for the Time

### Greater Focus on Church Planting

The State Unions – now in structured relationship through Australian Baptist Ministries each increased their focus on Church Planting. They worked with local churches and leaders on the purchase of land for future churches, provision of pastors and also low interest loans for Church buildings.

The concern remained for the first Australians. In 1949 Australian Baptist Ministries appointed the first missionaries to begin work at Yuendumu in the Northern Territory. In 1978 the work was transferred to Global Interaction.

### Education

The primary focus for education was the Sunday School and these continued to be a major connection point with the new communities across Australia. Open Air Sunday Schools were commonplace as Baptists sought to conduct ministry by all means possible.

Melbourne led the way in Senior age school development – a work that had been stalled by WW1. In 1923, a Baptist school for boys, Carey Grammar,

was founded and then in the 1940's Strathcona and Kilvington Girls opened. In Adelaide, Baptists joined with Congregationalists to establish King's College.

Today the connection of Baptist Churches with local Schools has emerged as a key ministry with and to the community.

### Evangelism and Evangelicalism

Another key focus was evangelism. In NSW for example – a State Evangelist was appointed for the first time and this soon spread nationwide. Campaigns and open-air crusades became commonplace.

Up to 1959 Baptists were in the vanguard of Australian evangelicalism. In NSW there were three key figures.

**G H Morling (1891-1974)** who, for the remarkable period of forty years served the NSW College (1921-1960). His commitment to 'doctrinal-experimental truth' and his balanced, non-controversial approach, coupled with an endearing nature, was a factor in the NSW Union

experiencing a cohesive period and unparalleled growth.

**C J Tinsley (1876-1960)** great life's work was in the Stanmore Church where he was pastor for forty years and which became a centre for pastoral evangelism. He was a strong influence on evangelists such as John Ridley.

**John G Ridley (1896 – 1976)**  
**The man behind Mr Eternity (Arthur Stace)** In 1930 Arthur Stace heard a John Ridley sermon on "Eternity" in the Burton



Street Baptist Tabernacle. Stace, a stretcher-bearer in World War I had lost his way on the streets of Sydney prior to his conversion. Ridley's line: "I wish I could shout 'Eternity' through the streets of Sydney!" captured Stace's imagination.

On leaving the church he used some chalk in his pocket to write "eternity" on the street. The word became a Sydney landmark. By the time Stace died in 1967 estimates are he had written eternity half-a-million times.



## The Beginnings of the Large Suburban Churches

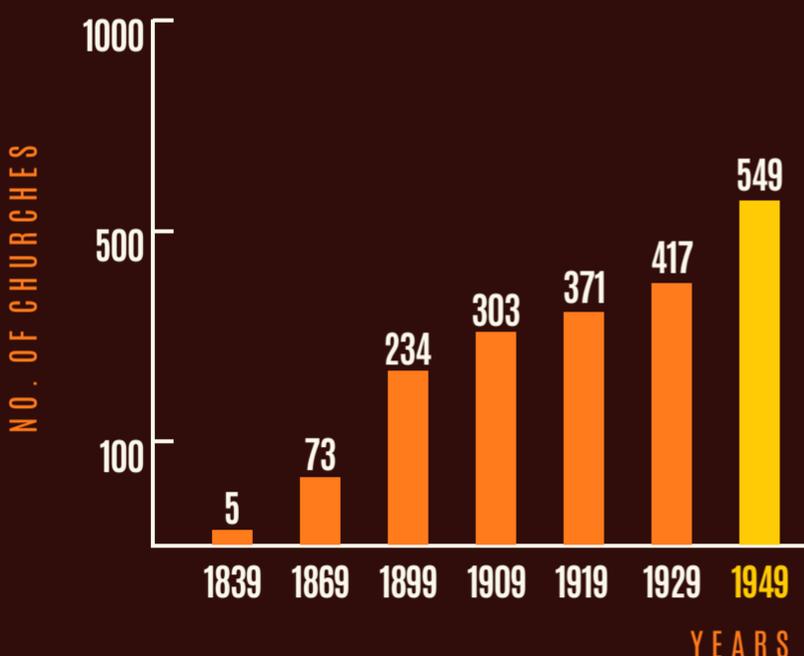


**Once Case in point 1949**  
**Crossway Baptist Church - Melbourne)**

In 1949 the suburb of Blackburn was mostly bush, apple and pear orchards. But it was quickly being populated. On August 3, 1952, adults and children met for a worship service & Sunday school at Blackburn South Primary School. On September 16, 1952 it was agreed to form a Baptist Fellowship. On land

provided by the State Union as part of its post-war influx response, a new hall was opened on April 24, 1954. In June 1954, the church was officially constituted. Today as 'Crossway' with a number of Church campuses, the Church has some 3'500 people as part of its weekly attendance. It is the largest Baptist Church in Australia.

## Local Baptist Church Growth



## WHO IS AUSTRALIAN BAPTIST MINISTRIES?

Australian Baptist Ministries is an evangelical movement of churches, State Baptist Unions and national ministries committed to proclaiming and demonstrating the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures.