

Religion and Social Issues:

Discussions and Resolutions of the
Baptist Union of Queensland,
1938–1973.

Ken Smith

The sun, hedonism and the horrors of the war have defeated religion in Australia. The comfortable classes have filled the void with the Union Jack, Anzac Day, Armistice Day, Empire Day, and other symbols of Imperialism. A secular religion has replaced the religion of the spirit. Protestants have removed the crucifix from the sanctuary, and installed the national flag. The Protestants have decorated their churches with the insignia of Imperialism. The people had new idols: the idols of pleasure and comfort. Australians were sailing in the sea of plutocracy, because with the increase in consumer goods the capitalists could toss sops to the hungry and the needy to make them complacent. Talk of a better world made little appeal to people contented with their lot, a people who believed food, shelter and a bit of fun were all you needed to know on earth. Australians have never been hungry enough, have never suffered enough to inspire them to die for social justice.

Manning Clark
A History of Australia,
vol. VI, pages 135, 136.

Considering the apathy exhibited by our own people we can hardly be surprised that the evils to which we have drawn repeated attention are gaining a still firmer hold upon the community.

Arthur E. Bickmore
Report of the Temperance, Morals
and Public Questions Committee,
Baptist Union of Queensland,
Yearbook, 1945, page 82.

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ABSTRACT

In this essay¹ the various social issues which have attracted the attention of Baptists in Queensland over the period 1938–1973 are examined briefly. This period is chosen to cover the year before World War II started and the year after involvement in Vietnam ceased. There are occasional references to happenings outside this period.

The definition of “social issues” used is that any issue which was mentioned in the reports presented to the Annual Assembly of the Baptist Union is included, as is any matter which was the subject of a resolution at the Assembly. Also mentioned are some remarks made by Presidents of the Union during their Presidential Addresses, though these are treated less comprehensively. In some years during this period it seems that no written report was presented by the committee which had responsibility for social matters, though verbal ones were made.

A topical, rather than chronological, approach has been adopted here. The various issues which have been raised from time to time have been considered in groups of allied areas. The major emphasis throughout this period has been, as may be expected, on alcoholic liquors, gambling, Sunday observance, and various matters relating to sex. Other issues dealt with are State aid, racism and Aborigines, war and peace, and some miscellaneous matters.

For most of the period the issues considered were the traditional ones. However in the last five years, from 1969 to 1973, a wider range of topics came to the fore, albeit briefly. This period is given separate treatment.

It is concluded, in line with a charge at the 1944 Presidential Address, that in very many cases the reaction to the points raised was coloured as much by the political and social beliefs of the constituency as by their conservative religious ideas. There is also evidence that the increasing influence of American ideas on Australian society has played some part. Overall, it seems that during this period the attitude of Baptists in Queensland towards social issues was, except on alcohol and gambling, little different from the attitudes of other conservative groups in society.

¹The author wishes to express his thanks to the Officers of the Baptist Union of Queensland for allowing free access to the Union Archives. His thanks are also due to Rev. Dr David Parker, the Union's Honorary Archivist, for assistance in finding items in the archives.

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1 Introduction

Most Christian denominations have some way of making pronouncements, from time to time, about issues in society which concern them. This is normally done through a press release by an authorised officer, or by a public statement by the recognised leader of the denomination, or by resolutions passed by a duly constituted meeting, commonly an annual gathering of the denomination. The Baptist Union of Queensland follows this procedure with one significant difference. Baptists in general have a strong belief in liberty of thought and belief, within the generally wide guidelines of any doctrinal statement. There is thus an understandable reluctance to entrust to any single person the responsibility of making public statements on behalf of the Union as a whole. This has, in general, been the attitude of most Baptists in Queensland until quite recent years. At present (1990) the General Superintendent and/or President are entrusted with the responsibility for making public statements. For the period under discussion, however, only decisions made at either the Annual Assembly or the monthly Union Council meetings were held to represent the views of the Baptist Union.

This essay, therefore, is, in the main, restricted to consideration of the reports presented annually by the relevant committee, and any resolutions passed. There are occasional references to the annual Reports of the Union Council to the Annual Assembly, and to some of the addresses delivered by the President on his induction. These addresses indicate that at least some of the men who were elected to the office had, for their times, views which many others would have regarded as radical.

White, in his centenary history of the Baptist Union of Queensland², included a brief chapter entitled "Social Issues"³. This covered the main 19th century issues. For the 20th century the only topic he mentioned was the conflict between Catholics and Protestants over religion in politics, which took place in the 1920s and 1930s. Buch⁴ has looked at the period 1919–1939 in more detail, and compared the attitudes found in different Protestant churches. There seems to be no published work dealing with the Baptist Union and social issues in the post-depression years.

There are a number of practical difficulties associated with data required as information for this essay. Minutes of meetings of the Committees seem not to have been preserved in many cases. Even some of the material circulated to the churches from time to time is apparently missing from the Union Archives.

A serious difficulty in judging the attitude of the average Baptist to social issues, based on records of meetings, lies in the voting procedures at the Annual Assembly. All ministers and pastors are delegates, and, in addition, each church is entitled to a number of delegates based on its membership. In order to attend the various business sessions of the Assembly a delegate needs to be free of other duties. In practice this means that many delegates are retired people. Thus, with the large number of ministers, it is only to be expected that an extremely conservative outlook will dominate the proceedings.

A further difficulty in judging even the attitudes of delegates can be found in the recording of minutes. It is clearly not practical to have a Hansard type recording, with all speeches taken down verbatim and preserved for posterity. Thus while movers and seconders of motions are listed, with the wording of any resolution or motion, in most cases only the names of any other speakers are given, and not even a summary of any points they made. For almost all

²John E. White: *A Fellowship of Service: A History of the Baptist Union of Queensland 1877–1977*. Baptist Union of Queensland, Brisbane, 1977.

³*ibid.*, pp. 174–180.

⁴Neville Buch: *Protestant Churches and their Attitude to Public Issues in Queensland, 1919–1939*. Unpublished B.A. Honours thesis, Department of History, University of Queensland, 1987.

resolutions it is not even recorded whether a person spoke for or against it. In a few cases the minute books do not even record the wording of the resolution or motion, which had apparently been circulated in printed form earlier.

Due to the absence of previous work covering the period 1938–1973 this essay contains a large number of quotations of statements, resolutions and motions made at different times. Most of these are taken from the annual Yearbooks of the Union, or from the minutes of meetings. These are quoted exactly as recorded, grammatical obscurities and infelicities included, with the exception that obvious errors in spelling have been silently corrected (except for quotations from American sources where the spelling is unchanged).

In the next section the role of the Social Questions Committee is discussed, followed by a section on membership. Then follow separate sections giving an outline (in varying degrees of completeness) of reports and resolutions dealing with particular matters. Those chosen are, in order: alcohol and gambling; Sunday observance; sex, pornography and censorship; State aid; racism and Aborigines; war and peace; and some miscellaneous matters. For most of the period the matters discussed are much as would be expected from a fairly conservative Christian denomination. However in the last five years of the period under review, 1969–1973, there was an upsurge of interest in wider aspects of social issues. This period is covered in a separate section. This is followed by a very brief section dealing with some of the issues which arose in the period after 1973.

In the concluding section the overall attitude of Baptists in Queensland, as indicated by Reports and Resolutions of the Annual Assembly, is discussed. It is shown that, in general, the only social issues which were considered of lasting importance in the period 1938–1973 were the perennial ones of alcohol (and other drugs) and gambling. Various matters relating to sexual morality were also fairly regularly raised. From time to time other issues were mentioned, but seem to have been quickly passed over.

Towards the end of this period there was an upsurge of interest in wider issues, sparked off in part by the effects on society of Australia's involvement in the conflict in Vietnam. Although things fairly quickly returned to the standard criticism of drink and gambling, the seeds of renewed interest in social problems were sown. In the years from the late 1970s, not considered in detail here, there has been a much greater interest in, and concern for, the wider scene.

For convenience of reference, various items relating to membership of the Committee and to its reports for each of the years from 1938 to 1973 inclusive are collected in Appendix A. This gives the location of the printed report of the Committee, and brief descriptions of each of the resolutions passed at the Assembly, with page numbers in the minute books where any discussion is recorded.

2 Names and Role of Committees

Since the earliest days of the Union there were various committees whose charter seems to have been to consider problems arising from social aspects of the Christian message. The words “seems to have been” are needed, since, as will be seen, there was no formal recognition of any such committee in the Constitution of the Union until 1956. These committees went under a variety of names, and appeared to operate in a variety of ways. In some years there appear to have been several committees. Thus in the 1917/1918 *Yearbook*⁵ we have listed both a Public Questions Committee and a Temperance Committee. The following year the Temperance Committee became the Temperance and Strength of Empire Committee⁶ (the Public Questions Committee remained on the list). 1933 seems to have been the peak year, with a Social Service Committee, a Temperance Committee, a Public Questions Committee, and a Rural Employment Committee⁷, each of these considering different aspects of what could legitimately be regarded as “social issues”. The depression years seem to have brought home to people the need to consider wider questions than those of drink, gambling and sex.

At the start of the period under consideration the name was the Temperance, Morals and Public Questions Committee⁸. It held this name until 1953, when it became the Temperance and Morals Committee⁹. No reason appears in the records for dropping the “Public Questions” part of the title. In fact, subsequently the Committee was still sometimes referred to as the “Public Questions Committee”.

But it was not until fairly extensive alterations were made to the Constitution of the Union in 1956 that this aspect of the work received formal recognition. A clause was added to the list of committees in section XVII of the Union Constitution reading¹⁰:

11. Temperance and Morals Committee consisting of not less than 4 persons who shall consider and advise upon action in connection with, or make public statements relating to matters of public concern.

The retention of the title of the Committee, and the apparent lack of discussion about it, indicates, as much as any resolutions, what most Baptists saw, at the time, as coming under the label of “social issues” — alcohol and sex. The resolutions passed at the same Assembly were 13 in number¹¹. Three of them dealt with opposition to the State aid for private schools; five dealt with opposition to alcoholic drinks; three dealt with gambling; one supported film censorship; and the remaining one is worth quoting in the light of subsequent events. It read¹²:

This Assembly records its appreciation of the efforts of the Right Honourable, The Prime Minister of Australia, in seeking to reach a solution to the Suez Canal Problem. It would respectfully remind the Right Honourable, The Prime Minister,

⁵Baptist Union of Queensland, *Yearbook*, 1917/1918, p. 6.

This annual publication, in some years entitled *Yearbook and Church Directory*, will subsequently be referred to as *Yearbook* with the date.

⁶*Yearbook*, 1918/1919, p. 7.

⁷*Yearbook*, 1933, pp. 11, 12.

⁸*Yearbook*, 1938, p. 12.

⁹*Yearbook*, 1953, p. 13.

¹⁰*Yearbook*, 1956, p. 121.

¹¹Baptist Union of Queensland: *Minutes of Annual Assembly*, 1955 to 1962, pp. 88, 89.

These minute books are referred to subsequently as *Assembly Minutes* for the appropriate years, with the page number.

¹²*ibid.*, p. 89.

of the potential for peace resident in the World Church and would that it be taken into account in the counsels of the nations.

That was on 26 September 1956. Just over a month later, on 31 October, the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt commenced. In the words of Geoffrey Sawyer¹³:

It was probably a consciousness of the likelihood that the Menzies Government would support Eden's folly which led to the Australian delegation in New York behaving with such vacillation.

Many Australians expressed their concern at Menzies uncritical support for the British attack on Egypt. There was no mention of Suez at the following Assembly (1957).

In the constitutional amendment we see the desire to be seen to be active in the social area. In practice, this has been tempered (some would say blocked) by the reluctance to entrust individuals with power to make statements. As far as the records indicate neither the Committee nor any of its successors *ever* made a public statement, other than through the President or the General Secretary/Superintendent. In fact, public statements of any kind have been very rare.

In another general review of the Constitution in 1966 the committee's title was changed to "Social Questions", which it has borne ever since. There was a slight widening of its duties, and the revised section under "Committees" in the Constitution read¹⁴:

13. Social Questions Committee consisting of not less than four persons who shall consider and advise upon action in connection with, or make public statements relating to, matters of social importance.

The only other Constitutional change affecting the Committee, within the time covered by this essay, was in 1970. Rather than having the Committee operating independently, its work was felt to fall under the general heading of "Community Service". It was thus renamed as the Division of Social Questions within the Department of Community Service. Its charter was not changed.

¹³Geoffrey Sawyer: The United Nations. Chapter III in *Australia in World Affairs 1956–1960*, ed. Gordon Greenwood and Norman Harper. F.W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1963. P. 148.

¹⁴*Yearbook*, 1966, p. 178.

3 Membership of Committee

Since, as with most committees, the chairman plays a leading role, some mention of the membership is warranted. Mr Arthur Bickmore was convener from 1933 until 1955. From 1955 to 1959 Rev. H. White was convener (in some years he was described as "Secretary"). From 1959 to 1968, and from 1969 to 1973 (when he retired due to ill health) this task was taken over by Rev. A.J.M. (Max) Howard. In 1968/1969 Dr N.W. Jacobsen was convener.

The number of members on the Committee has varied considerably, as has the proportion of ordained to lay people. As Appendix A shows, once a person was appointed to the Committee he (during the period under review very few women served on the Committee) tended to remain on it for a number of years. The slow turnover of members may have been, at least partly, responsible for the fact that resolutions using almost the same wording were presented and passed with almost monotonous regularity.

During the earlier part of the period under discussion the number of ordained clergy on the committee far outweighed the laity. A typical year is 1950, when there were seven clergy and only two laymen. In 1955 it was a little more even, with four clergy to three laymen. Things were much more representative towards the end of the period. In 1970 the ratio was three clergy to six laypeople, two of the latter being women.

Women did not achieve a place on the committee until 1960. But the representation of women was at the expense of a layman, rather than one of the clergy. That year there were five ministers, one layman and one laywoman.

The delay in women gaining representation is not particularly surprising, as women in most churches played no prominent role over most of the years under consideration. It was only with the war years, and the absence of so many men, that some Baptist churches even opened the way for women to serve as deacons. Women had been represented on the Foreign Missions Committee for many years, and had also been on the Sunday School Committee for some time. However the move into other areas of service was long delayed. Indeed, up to the present time (1990) there have been no women on the Executive Committee of the Union.

No information is available on the ages of the members of the Committee. However from available information on the dates at which the ordained members first had pastoral charge of a church, it seems that these, at least, tended to be middle-aged. This, again, is not surprising. For most of the period under discussion the running of the affairs of the Union was seen to be the task of the more "mature" members, and the younger ones with fresh ideas had very few opportunities to put these forward.

4 Alcohol and Gambling

Two issues which have been of perennial concern to most Protestant denominations are their attitudes towards alcoholic beverages and gambling. Baptists in Queensland are no exception. At almost every Assembly in the period under review alcoholic drinks (and other drugs) and gambling came in for condemnation. Since these topics came up so often, and there was little change in the sentiments expressed in the resolutions, little point would be served by considering them in detail. However there were times when a slightly different approach seemed evident, and some of these will be mentioned.

As an early example we have the Report of the Committee to the Assembly in 1940. Here patriotism was used as an excuse for eliminating intoxicating liquors¹⁵:

In view of the present crisis we observe with alarm the increasing drinking habits of the community, and urge patriotic hosts and hostesses to exclude intoxicants from social and farewell functions.

At the same Assembly there were reports of recent temperance meetings, at which resolutions had been passed requesting that Officers' and Sergeants' Messes should be "dry", in the same manner as those for Other Ranks¹⁶.

As an example of the rather intemperate language used in some resolutions, the one on alcohol from the 1970 Assembly is fairly typical. This was prepared by Rev Max Howard, and read¹⁷:

Baptists again re-iterate their uncompromising attitude to all the ramifications of the Liquor trade. We re-affirm our abhorrence of a commodity, the manufacture, sale and use of which tends to nothing but eventual waste, disharmony, crime, disease and death. It is our belief that the greatest proportion of anti-social acts and attitudes can be found associated with the use of alcohol, including the unnecessary traffic homicide upon our roads.

We call upon our legislators to face the problem as Statesmen, and deal with it in true concern for the desperate moral situation liquor has created.

This is one of many resolutions passed over the years which expresses more pious hopes than specific courses of action. With no suggestion of specific ways in which politicians could "deal with it" such a resolution is quite likely to be simply ignored — and was, no doubt.

Gambling occupied the attention of the Assembly at frequent intervals. The first mention of this in the period under review was at the 1939 Assembly, where the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade was commended not only for abstaining from using gambling to raise funds, but also for not holding picnics on Sunday. The resolution read¹⁸:

The Assembly congratulates the Queensland Ambulance Transport Board (Parent Centre) on the splendid success of their system of voluntary contributions and their decision to discontinue all forms of gambling as a means of obtaining funds; and we express the hope that the previous practice of conducting Sunday picnics has also been abandoned.

¹⁵ *Yearbook*, 1940, p. 62.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 63.

¹⁷ *Assembly Minutes*, 1970–1975, p. 22.

¹⁸ *Assembly Minutes*, 1934–1945, p. 186.

At the same Assembly a resolution opposing the Golden Casket was passed, which read¹⁹:

This Assembly again enters an emphatic protest against the continuance of the Golden Casket which we regard as an unsound method of finance, whether viewed from the economic or ethical standpoint; we regard it as an affront to the true spirit of charity, the very existence of which it threatens, and we appeal to all our members to keep their hands clean and their consciences clear in relation to it, and to exercise all the influence we possess, especially with young people, to discourage any participation in it.

There is evidence that at around the same time a resolution was passed suggesting that gambling was unpatriotic. It read²⁰:

This Assembly re-affirms the abhorrence so frequently expressed in the past of all forms of gambling, including wagering, betting and the golden casket, and urges both Federal and State Government[s] to recognise the present state of war as a call to eliminate or at least minimise them with a view of diverting the interests and energies of a large section of the people into useful channels. We further suggest to the Federal Government that, in the present crisis, it would be preferable to impose a tax on amusements rather than on the necessities of life.

An early example of criticism of the extent of gambling can be found in the Report of the Committee to the 1944 Assembly. After some general remarks, the convenor, Mr Arthur Bickmore, suggested that affluence was a prime reason for the rise in the amount of money being spent on Casket tickets. He wrote²¹:

There is no doubt that the moral landslide so noticeable during the past few years and to which we have referred in previous reports has been aided by the unusual amount of money being handled by many who have not previously been so well off.

Nowhere in this Report, or previous ones, is there any suggestion that a large part of any “moral landslide” in the years immediately preceding 1944 could be attributed, as other writers have said, to the presence of large numbers of United States (and other) servicemen on recreation leave.

In 1956 one of the resolutions condemned what most non-Christians, and even a large number of Christians, regarded as relatively harmless — bingo. The resolution read²²:

This Assembly expresses its concern that police action in raiding a “Bingo School” in Brisbane should have been referred to as “indiscreet”. We express strong support of the police and their action and [sic] in breaking up an unlawful game, and call upon all concerned to uphold the law of the land at all times.

There appear to be no subsequent references specifically to bingo in either the reports of the Committee or resolutions passed.

A resolution at the 1965 Assembly²³ condemned

¹⁹ibid., page 187.

²⁰Loose, undated, carbon copy of the resolution is located between page 189 and page 190 of *Assembly Minutes*, 1934–1945. This may have been displaced from the 1940 Assembly.

²¹*Yearbook*, 1944, p. 76.

²²*Assembly Minutes*, 1955–1962, p. 89.

²³*Assembly Minutes*, 1962–1970, p. 117.

...every form of gambling for profit, pleasure or on any other pretext. ...the results of gambling can only issue in waste, disappointment, discontent and ruin.

Very few of the resolutions mentioned the loss of money as a reason for not indulging in gambling. They almost all concentrated on the immoral aspects of making a profit from the misfortune of someone else. It is somewhat surprising that in the whole of this 35 year period nobody saw fit to mention the obvious fact that if bookmakers can make a living from gamblers, there are perfectly good reasons for not gambling, whether one is a Christian or not. Such a resolution, strongly promoted in the media, may have had more influence than all the pious resolutions put together.

One noteworthy omission from resolutions over most of the period under discussion is any condemnation of drugs other than alcohol. It was not until the late 1960s that smoking was condemned, and there appears to have been no resolution specifically directed against other drugs, despite the widespread increase in the use of marihuana which took place from the 1950s onwards.

5 Sunday Observance

Another topic of interest at many Assembly meetings in the earlier part of this period was people's behaviour on Sunday. There are regular references in the records to the so-called "Continental Sunday". As Buch²⁴ has shown, in the period between World War I and World War II most Protestants, and perhaps especially theologically conservative groups such as Baptists, felt a very strong attachment to England. They wanted to preserve what they felt was an important part of their heritage. Further support for this is provided by the work of Vose, who writes²⁵: that the migrants to the new country brought with them

... as unseen baggage their differing beliefs and biases and individual conceptions of the church's relationship to the community.

Part of this "unseen baggage" was the use made of Sunday. Protestants brought with them the idea that services were held at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m., and the day was used for various devotional recreations. Anything which conflicted with this was held to be un-Christian, if not anti-Christian. They quite forgot that the tradition of the 11 a.m. service arose in a culture where the servants remained at home preparing the midday meal while the master and mistress of the house, with their children, went to church (or chapel). Since there were very few servants in the new country, and the climate was quite unsuitable to midday services, especially in summer, it is not surprising that conflicts arose about what to do on Sunday.

Most of the complaints about "Sunday Observance" come from the middle part of the period under review. It is not surprising that complaints about what people did on Sunday were, generally, missing from reports and resolutions during the war. With so many people engaged in shift work, any such resolution would only have brought down scorn on the head of the Union, and possibly even charges of disloyalty to the war effort.

Most of the complaints relate to playing sport on Sunday, though from time to time the issues of trading hours and work occurred. Part of one resolution passed at the 1960 Assembly read²⁶:

This Assembly further to protest, to Commercial interests and to the trade union Movement, against the increase in Sunday trading and work.

Possible reasons for the gradual fall off in emphasis on Sunday sport will be suggested at the end of this section, after some of the evidence has been discussed.

In 1949 the matter of Sunday Observance was linked not only to morals, but also to patriotism. A resolution passed at the Assembly read²⁷:

This Assembly reiterates its warning that the increasing disregard of Sunday Observance and the serious increase in Sunday sport is destined to lead to great moral loss and national insecurity, and invites all lovers of God and of country to combine their efforts for the restoration of Sunday as a day of rest and worship.

The appeal to "lovers of country" seems to have fallen on very deaf ears, as will be seen when a resolution at the 1958 Assembly is considered.

In the Report of the Committee to the 1950 Assembly there was a reference to "... undivided observance of the sacredness of the Day of Rest". The Report then went on to say²⁸:

²⁴Neville Buch, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

²⁵Heather Vose, *Australian Baptists in the 19th Century*. Pp. 1–22 in *Australian Baptists Past and Present*, ed. Michael Petras. Baptist Historical Society of NSW, Eastwood, NSW, 1988. The quotation is from p. 2.

²⁶*Assembly Minutes*, 1955–1962, p. 224.

²⁷*Assembly Minutes*, 1946–1954, p. 124.

²⁸*Yearbook*, 1950, p. 97.

While the Queensland Cricket Association appears to have kept its fixtures away from Sunday, we much regretted to observe during the past few seasons some of our leading players participating in games arranged for that day. Quite recently the Christian conscience was again affronted by the holding of the second series of motor speed contests in Lowood District, to which thousands of spectators were attracted.

Here we have criticism of both individuals and organisations. In subsequent years individuals did not come in for any criticism, but opposition to organised sport on Sundays continued.

By 1957 opposition to sport in general on Sundays was waning somewhat, and attention was turned to “commercialised” sport. One resolution passed at the Assembly that year read²⁹:

This Assembly expresses its support of the Queensland Council of Churches in its endeavour to prevent commercialised Sunday sport. This Assembly requests the Brisbane City Council to write a clause into the proposed lease of Lang Park to the Queensland Rugby League enforcing its own ordinances.

This resolution shows how much things have changed over the last 30 years. Such a resolution would be unlikely to be proposed today by even the most ardent supporter of the “sacredness of the Day of Rest”.

The following year (1958) Sunday films came under attack. But here it was not just the day itself that was brought into the resolution — patriotism was brought into the picture again. The resolution read³⁰:

In view of the widespread tendency towards a secularised Sunday, this Assembly protests against the granting of permission to screen pictures on Sundays at Kallangur, and calls upon all lovers of God and of country to combine efforts for the restoration of Sunday as a day of rest and worship.

The “lovers of country” had obviously been unmoved by the 1949 resolution, and this one managed no better. Apparently showing films on Sunday was not thought to lead to “national insecurity”, or maybe now that the Cold War was over it was thought that security was adequate. There were no further references to Sunday films in subsequent Assembly resolutions, possibly because television had arrived, and any suggestion that watching films at home was an acceptable form of rest, while watching the same film in a cinema was a sin, may have had a somewhat stormy reception.

The last resolution relating to Sunday observance was put forward in 1962. It read³¹:

This Assembly views with deep regret the City Council’s decision to frame by-laws to allow Sunday to be further divorced from its spiritual significance, and to allow sporting bodies more legal freedom with public utilities, parks and playing fields in the interests of such desecration.

Now resolutions have changed from outright condemnation to just an expression of regret. It is also uncertain whether “desecration” is the appropriate word to be used.

There are a number of possible explanations of the decline in opposition to sport and other secular activities on Sundays. Three which come to mind are the increasing mobility

²⁹ *Assembly Minutes*, 1955–1962, p. 114.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 156.

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 303.

of the populace, the arrival of television on the scene, and the influence of closer contacts with Baptists from USA. By the 1960s most families in Australia owned a car. Thus while in earlier times a Sunday afternoon outing may have consisted of just walking to the nearest park, now it was possible to visit friends on the other side of town, or even go to the beach. Taking a picnic lunch or tea to the nearest park had been regarded as a quite acceptable activity for Sunday. But is this so very different to taking the same lunch out to a place many miles away in the car, or even to the Gold Coast?

The influence of television was mainly on the attitude to sport on Sunday. It is all very well to watch TV on Sunday as a form of relaxation, but when much of the afternoon is taken up with broadcasts of sporting events, overseas as well as Australian, it is very difficult to honestly maintain that playing sport, or attending a cricket match, on Sunday is sinful, while watching these or other forms of sport in one's own living room is *not* sinful.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s there was much greater contact between Baptists in USA, particularly some from the Southern Baptist Convention, and Baptists in Australia. Notable among these are the many crusades conducted in these years, such as those by Billy Graham. Many Australians met many Americans socially, and soon discovered that although the Southern Baptists were extremely conservative theologically, they had quite a different approach to Sunday activities. In USA there seems never to have been the strong English influence of a day kept free from secular activities. When people realised that some of the most fundamentalist Christians could happily go to church on Sunday morning, and then have lunch at a fast food place rather than going home for it, they began to realise that many of their objections were cultural rather than Christian. But even the most liberal of Queensland Baptists have been startled in more recent years to discover that some Southern Baptist churches have changed the times of their services to avoid clashing with the broadcast of a baseball game, or, in more than one instance, have attempted to incorporate the broadcast into the service!

Whether one of these reasons played a dominant role in the decline of opposition to Sunday Sport, or whether perhaps it was Mr Howard's emphasis on alcohol and gambling, or maybe some other reason, is probably unlikely ever to be determined. Whatever the case, the result was that after 1962 there were no further resolutions about the sacredness of Sunday, or its "desecration".

6 Sex, Pornography and Censorship

Traditionally any matter relating to sex has been regarded by most conservative Christian denominations as either not to be talked about, or to be condemned. In this Protestants show that they have not yet broken completely from ideas about sex which held sway in the Catholic church throughout the Middle Ages, when chastity was held to be the highest state in which Christians could live.

Baptists in Queensland have a long history of passing resolutions supporting censorship, wanting to ban pornography, and trying to maintain Christian moral standards in the community. In many of these the British cultural bias of the church is clearly evident. There have also been resolutions aimed at trying to keep matters relating to sex out of the hands of children. Most of these efforts have proved to be of little value.

While Mr Arthur Bickmore was convenor of the Committee issues relating to sexual morality were mentioned more frequently than under Rev. Max Howard later. Mr Bickmore saw sexual matters as being on the same level as alcohol and gambling. In the Report to the 1944 Assembly he wrote³²:

The fact is we are concerned that the trinity of evils — drink, gambling and impurity — are an unholy alliance that can always be depended on to work together in an attempt to frustrate the plan and purpose of God. Consequently, it is the duty of the Churches and of every individual Christian to bear witness against them, resist their advance and combine to effect their destruction.

Here we are given a glimpse of the rather roundabout way sexual matters are referred to. Just what might be regarded as “impurity” is not detailed. This lack of a willingness to use straightforward, simple language runs through a number of the resolutions proposed in later years.

There were a number of attempts to join forces with other Protestant denominations over matters of sexual morality. However most of these seem not to have been of any lasting consequence. One such attempt took place during 1942 and 1943. Part of the Report of the Union Council to the 1943 Assembly read³³:

Under the auspices of the Queensland Council of Churches a very important meeting was held in November last [1942] at which the Rev. T.C. Warriner, M.A., B.D., gave the opening address. At this meeting a Provisional Committee was appointed including the Temperance League, the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., etc. At a subsequent meeting the Queensland Council of Christian Morality was launched and a constitution adopted. Work of various kinds — Educational, Legal, etc. — has been undertaken, but it must be confessed that the difficulties are many and progress slow.

The report mentioned that “all the non-Roman churches” were involved in this move. However the “difficulties” appear to have been rather too many, for there is no further mention of this Council in subsequent reports to the Assembly.

Censorship of films was mentioned at the 1949 Assembly. It also came up in 1956, when the resolution was³⁴:

³² *Yearbook*, 1944, p. 75.

³³ *Yearbook*, 1943, p. 28.

³⁴ *Assembly Minutes*, 1955–1962, p. 89.

This Assembly draws the attention of the Censor of Films to the present unsuitable groupings of films — those for Adults only and those for General Exhibition — practised by many theatres.

This was not as strongly in favour of stricter censorship as some earlier resolutions. Again it showed the beginning of a trend away from blanket censorship towards some form of protection of children from undesirable matter.

It is quite certain that those who supported the resolutions calling for stricter censorship of films at earlier Assembly meetings did not anticipate what would happen before the next Assembly — the banning of a film which many Protestants wanted to see. The first of the resolutions put forward by the Temperance and Morals Committee read³⁵:

That the Baptist Union of Queensland requests the Minister for Customs to investigate the banning of the film “Shadow over Italy” and authorise a re-consideration of the ban.

[that] the matter of this protest be brought to other Protestant bodies.

The film was one which was rather uncomplimentary to the Catholic Church. This should have alerted people to one of the dangers of calling for stricter censorship — it is very difficult, if not impossible, to frame precise definitions which will pass *only* those items which are regarded as suitable by those in favour of censorship, and at the same time pass *all* items in this category. Baptists were caught here. If films offensive to a significant number of people, on either moral or religious grounds, are to be banned, then Protestants cannot, in all justice, object to the banning of a film which Catholics might find offensive. The same thing happened many years later with “The Last Temptation of Christ”, but this time it was many of the same Protestants who were calling for the ban, instead of demanding that the ban be reconsidered.

The lesson seems to have been partially absorbed, since at the 1959 Assembly the resolution about censorship was worded with rather more care. It read³⁶:

With the object of providing safeguards for the morals of young people, this Assembly expresses the hope that both State and Federal governments will take steps to impose a stricter censorship in relation to literature, films, and advertising, with the object of preventing the entry, publication and circulation of those which feature unsavoury references to sex.

Here we see more evidence of a move away from total censorship towards an attempt to provide some sort of guidance in moral issues to young people. The idea of protecting the young was to gain increasing support over the next few years. However it still concentrates on sex, and the possibly far more socially harmful matter of violence is completely ignored. There seems to have been little attention paid to violence in the media, by Queensland Baptists, until the late 1970s. The resolution also leaves quite up in the air just what is meant by “unsavoury references to sex”. Here again we have the reluctance to spell out just what might be involved. This is one area in which legislators have also been deficient, with references to “a tendency to deprave or corrupt”. But legislators seem to have been much more aware than most Christians of the dangers of unbridled censorship. Section 4(2) of the *Objectionable Literature Act* in Queensland says³⁷:

³⁵ibid., pp. 113, 114.

³⁶ibid., p. 186.

³⁷*The Objectionable Literature Acts, 1954–1967*, p. 2.

Nothing in this Act shall apply with respect to . . . any publication . . . which represents in good faith and with artistic merit any work of recognised literary merit, or any scriptural, historical, traditional, mythical or legendary story only.

The inclusion of “scriptural” is clearly quite necessary, in view of the many uninhibited mentions of sexual matters in the Bible, a matter which is quite frequently forgotten, or passed over, by those urging stricter censorship.

At the 1965 Assembly, along with resolutions condemning alcohol, gambling and racism³⁸, there was one which read

That the Union enquire into the reason for the granting of permission to bare top dancers to perform at Festival Hall, Brisbane, when previously because of representations made performers in Her Majesty's were obliged to appear clothed, and if necessary a protest be lodged in appropriate quarters.

Even at this fairly late date it would appear that there was a significant failure to distinguish between Christianity and Western culture. By 1988 things had changed dramatically. Part of the Assembly programme for the bicentennial year was a performance by an Aborigine troupe of a Christian corroboree at the Roma Street Forum. All participants appeared in traditional dress, and rather than complaints about bare breasts there was overwhelming approval.

At the 1971 Assembly the Social Questions Division was requested to look into the selection of books set for reading in schools, about which there had been complaints. This is dealt with later in the section covering 1969 to 1973.

Over the latter part of the period under review there was a noticeable decline in the number of resolutions condemning matters involving sex. This may, in part, have been due to the influence television was having on the whole community. Reading a “dirty book” means taking some active steps to get hold of it in the first place. Watching an adaptation of the same book on TV requires no such effort. It is quite likely that many of those who voted for some form of censorship in earlier years had neither read the books nor seen the films about which complaints were made. Later they had seen these in their own living rooms. It is quite possible that many of them realised that things were not as bad as they had been painted. In addition, it would be somewhat hypocritical to condemn showing a film in a theatre, and then proceed to watch the same thing at home. There was also the growing realisation, particularly during the years of involvement in the conflict in Vietnam, that there were many more important issues than trying to keep a check on the sexual behaviour of individuals in the community.

³⁸ *Assembly Minutes, 1962–1970*, pp. 116–118.

7 State Aid

In this section “State Aid” is restricted to consideration of the matter of Government funding for non-State schools. White³⁹ mentions the 19th century opposition to accepting grants for land, etc, from the State. He also mentions⁴⁰ the somewhat reluctant acceptance, in 1954, of Government subsidies for aged peoples homes, and subsequently for child welfare. State Aid for education in religious schools was another matter, and opposition to this continued until the late 1960s.

In the early part of the period much of the opposition can be seen as a flow-on from the Protestant-Catholic conflicts over politics in the 1920s and 1930s. Most Protestants were very wary of anything which could reduce the influence which they felt they exerted in the community. If Catholic schools received financial support from the State, it was feared that this would be the thin end of the wedge, leading, eventually, to such schools being fully funded. It was to be a number of years before Protestants realised that they, too, could share in the cake, by setting up their own schools.

The many resolutions in the earlier part of the period all said much the same thing — State money should not be used for support of a particular religion. The peak of complaints seems to have been reached in 1956, when there were three resolutions, each attacking different aspects of State Aid. The first⁴¹ protested against Federal funds being used to assist with interest payments incurred by non-State schools. The second⁴² complained that any system involving State Aid to what were described as “non-Governmental” schools would constitute “a serious infringement of individual liberty and conscience”, and said that people would be “called upon to resist” the introduction of any such system. Just what form any resistance would take, other than passing ineffective resolutions, was not said. The third resolution on the topic⁴³ (which was in fact the 13th resolution on the list) used the phrase “free, compulsory and secular” as a catch-cry, and suggested that if the State Government had surplus funds for use in the education area these should be used to improve the amenities in State schools.

During almost all his period as convenor of the Committee Rev. Max Howard was strongly opposed to any form of State Aid. He mentioned the matter in nearly every report to the Assembly, and frequently proposed resolutions opposing such aid. The Report of the Social Questions Committee to the 1964 Assembly contained a lengthy statement about State Aid⁴⁴. This was discussed and approved. It was then moved⁴⁵:

That the Committee for Social Questions be asked to continue its investigations of the question of State Aid to denominational schools.

This it apparently did, but the eventual outcome was not what a number of opponents to State Aid wished. The 1966 Assembly saw the beginning of the end. Three resolutions on alcohol, gambling and racism⁴⁶ were passed. The fourth resolution read⁴⁷:

³⁹John E. White, op. cit., p. 25.

⁴⁰ibid., pp. 162–165.

⁴¹*Assembly Minutes*, 1955–1962, p. 88.

⁴²ibid., p. 88.

⁴³ibid., p. 89.

⁴⁴*Yearbook*, 1964, pp. 132–134.

⁴⁵*Assembly Minutes*, 1962–1970, p. 84.

⁴⁶ibid., pp. 146, 147.

⁴⁷ibid., p. 147.

That we, in this Baptist Assembly, again challenge the right of any Government to aid sectional [sic] teaching with public money, as is the case with State Aid to non-State schools. Moreover, we call for stronger support to be given to our State School system in preparing our young people for this modern world.

By this time there was widespread acceptance of the idea of Federal support for aged persons homes and hostels, especially those run by churches. Apparently some more clear thinking Baptists were aware of this, and an amendment was moved⁴⁸:

That the resolution (4) on State Aid be referred back to the Social Questions Committee for further investigation and fuller statement in the light of the various uses now made of public monies: the statement to be sent to the Executive of the Union and Council.

This was passed, but whether any such “fuller statement” was ever prepared is not evident from the existing records. In some subsequent years, notably 1968 and 1970, the Report of the Social Questions Committee complained about the increasing level of State Aid. In 1968 Mr Howard made another attempt to put through a resolution opposing State Aid. It read⁴⁹:

That this Assembly call upon the Queensland Government to spend available funds on the further improvement of its own system of education in preference to the expenditure of such funds on non-State schools.

After Mr Howard had spoken to the motion the General Secretary of the Union, Rev. Frank Stone, moved⁵⁰:

That the foregoing motion and the matter of State Aid be referred to the Council and to the 1969 Assembly.

This was passed. Whether the matter was ever subsequently discussed at the Union Council is not clear, but it certainly did not come up at the 1969 Assembly, which is discussed later in the section dealing with the years 1969 to 1973.

The last gasp of the anti-State Aid lobby was at the 1972 Assembly. During the discussion on the Report of the Social Questions Division, but before the resolutions prepared by the Division were considered, Rev. H.J. Hands moved the following resolution from the floor of the Assembly⁵¹:

That bearing in mind the Baptist principle of the separation of Church and State, the executive of the Baptist Union of Queensland investigates the involvement of the Union with the various State authorities in the acceptance of State finance to assist in the running of Union enterprises.

At this time not only were aged persons homes largely dependent on Federal financial support, but also the salary of the Assistant Youth Director had been paid, in part, by the State Government for three years⁵². Further, there were a number of prominent Baptists whose children attended private schools, and there had been some initial discussions about the possibility of Baptist Churches setting up their own “Christian Community Schools”. The ensuing discussion is not recorded, but the motion was lost. Thus the Baptist Union of Queensland joined most other denominations in accepting money from secular governments, with few qualms, for some of its operations.

⁴⁸ibid., p. 148.

⁴⁹ibid., p. 239.

⁵⁰ibid., p. 239.

⁵¹*Assembly Minutes*, 1970–1975, p. 106.

⁵²See *Yearbook*, 1969, p. 123, and *Yearbook*, 1972, p. 162.

8 Racism and Aborigines

One of the first mentions of racism at Assembly meetings in this period came in the Presidential Address of Rev. T.C. Warriner, the Principal of the Theological College, in 1944. The theme of his address was the way Christians had failed to make any significant impact on those outside the church. He blamed this, in part, on failure to follow Christian principles. He said⁵³:

There are enough professing Christians in our nation to effect revolutionary changes in the national life if in casting their votes they were controlled by Christian principles. Christians have often failed here. Too many have well-nigh excluded Christ from the sphere of politics and have allowed their political allegiance to be determined predominantly by selfish worldly concerns, or by class loyalties.

Such questions as the White Australia Policy, Racial Relations, and Tariffs must be considered in the light of God's purpose for mankind, and not merely as they affect our personal or national interests.

There is no record of any reactions to this part of the address (unfortunately no copies of *The Queensland Baptist* for the years 1926–1949 appear to have been preserved). Over the next few years drink and gambling (again!) seem to have been the dominant issues.

One of the earliest resolutions about racism was passed at the 1949 Assembly. It condemned the White Australia policy, and read⁵⁴:

This Assembly expresses its definite disapproval of our existing Immigration Laws in their operation to preserve the so-called "White Australia" Policy, believing that the term itself is objectionable, if not insulting, to other races and likely to result in a forced immigration of coloured and hostile people. We suggest an amendment of the present law to conform with the American quota system which would leave the control of immigration in our own hands without giving unnecessary offence to our neighbours.

This was a rather brave statement, since at the time there was widespread support within the general community for the policy. It also contains the first hint of moves away from regarding England as "home" to an acceptance of Australia's geographical position. It was to be quite a number of years yet before attitudes towards "our neighbours" came to dominate thinking, but the seeds had been sown.

Most of the resolutions on racism were worded in somewhat general terms, and could be supported even by those Christians who agreed with separate development, provided it claimed to be equal. Typical of these is the one from the 1962 Assembly, which showed that even at that late time there were some people around who considered black people to be almost another species. It read⁵⁵:

As Baptists who believe all men of all races, classes and creeds are in equal need of a saviour from sin, and in grace are equal brothers in one Lord, we re-affirm our traditional stand on the unity of mankind. Therefore we declare against all forms of discrimination, segregation and division on racial or any other ground which would set one man at disadvantage with another.

⁵³ *Yearbook*, 1944, p. 32.

⁵⁴ *Assembly Minutes*, 1946–1954, p. 123.

⁵⁵ *Assembly Minutes*, 1955–1962, p. 303.

The phrase “unity of mankind” or something equivalent occurred in various other resolutions on racism as well. This seems to have been included as a form of mild reproof to those who had been influenced, at that time, by some Baptists in South Africa and USA who did not accept blacks as equals. It is worth pointing out that Rev Max Howard, during his time as convenor of the Committee, regularly put forward resolutions on racism. These were all accepted, but whether they had any significant influence on the thinking of people appears doubtful, in the light of later reactions when Aborigines were specifically mentioned.

First specific mention of Aborigines seems to have come at the 1958 Assembly. Until the 1960s the general political feeling in Australia was that Aborigines should be “integrated” into society. The 19th century idea of “protecting” them until they gradually died out had been quietly forgotten, except in Queensland where there were still official “protectors” of Aborigines until 1965. This showed itself at the 1958 Assembly, where one of the resolutions read⁵⁶:

This Assembly pledges itself to do all in its power to assist in the integration of the Aborigines into the social, economic, political and religious life of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Various attempts at integrating Aborigines into the “religious life” of Australia failed. It was only when they were able to use their own culture to express Christianity, as in the 1988 corroboree mentioned above, that any significant progress of Christianity among Aborigines occurred. As with many other resolutions, the rather pious feelings expressed here were not translated into action. It was not until 1987 that the first Aborigine-run church affiliated with the Baptist Union of Queensland was established, and it was not until 1988⁵⁷ that the Union committed money specifically to the support of Aborigine churches in Queensland. Even then it was a fairly nominal amount.

The lack of action flowing out of the 1958 resolution is displayed quite clearly in the Report of the Committee to the 1962 Assembly. After mentioning some racial disturbances against Aborigines the Report said⁵⁸:

The institution of Aboriginal Week has favourably highlighted the problem — and thereby contributed a little toward its solution.

There was no hint, at this Assembly, that Baptists might actively engage in activities which would assist Aborigines.

The first confession about the wrongs done to Aborigines seems to have come at the 1970 Assembly. This was the Cook Bicentenary year, and there was considerable focus on Aboriginal matters throughout the year. The report of the Committee to the Assembly mentioned the way Aborigines had suffered, as did the ensuing resolution. These are treated in detail in the section dealing with the years 1969–1973.

From time to time resolutions have been put forward in the Assembly which some have seen as too divisive to be put to a vote. Most of these have been in the social issues area. Although it falls outside the period under discussion, one such, relating to Aborigines, was put forward at the 1982 Assembly, and is worth mentioning here. The Report of the Committee⁵⁹ included 16 resolutions on general matters, and 8 resolutions under the heading “In vitro fertilisation, A.I.H., A.I.D. and Related Issues”. Three of these 8 were “affirmed”, and the

⁵⁶ *Assembly Minutes, 1955–1962*, p. 155.

⁵⁷ Baptist Union of Queensland, *Annual Reports, 1988–89*, p. 110.

⁵⁸ *Yearbook, 1962*, p. 120.

⁵⁹ Baptist Union of Queensland, *Annual Reports, 1981–82*, unnumbered four page loose insert.

others “added as information”⁶⁰. Of the first 16 resolutions, two dealt with Aborigines. One of these expressed concern about the high proportion of Aborigines in prison, and was passed. The other read⁶¹:

This assembly expresses itself as sympathetic to the claim of the aborigines for land rights, in view of the fundamental importance of the matter within their culture. We urge the government concerned to offer land to be used for their purposes, but to make the holding and use of it subject to the conditions that apply to all land holding.

This resolution, in spite of its fairly mild wording, was not considered. It was resolved⁶²:

that resolution 16 be not included at this point of time.

Given the politically conservative views of most Baptists, and their desire to be seen as non-racist, it is easy to see why the preferred view was not to consider the resolution. Passing it would conflict with their feelings that the Aborigines should buy their own land, just as white people do (passing over the fact that the land was stolen from the Aborigines in the first place). On the other hand rejecting it would reinforce the views held by many people outside the church that conservative religion is the servant of conservative politics, and have shown them to be racist into the bargain. The best thing to do in such a circumstance is either not to consider the motion, or to refer it to some other committee where it can be quietly forgotten. In this case the matter was not forgotten. Various people kept pressing, and there was a lengthy discussion on “Land Rights” subsequently. However this will not be treated here, since it falls outside the period being discussed.

⁶⁰ *Assembly Minutes*, 1980–1983, p. 161.

⁶¹ Baptist Union of Queensland, *Annual Reports*, 1981–82, unnumbered four page loose insert, Resolution 16.

⁶² *Assembly Minutes*, 1980–1983, p. 160.

9 War and Peace

The 1939 Assembly met just after the outbreak of World War II. Thus, not surprisingly, there seems to have been no consideration given, in reports presented to the Assembly, to issues arising from the war. However after the Report of the Temperance, Morals and Public Questions Committee had been received, and before proceeding to discuss other resolutions, a resolution of "Loyalty and Admiration" was passed. It read⁶³:

We, the ministers and delegates of the Baptist Union of Queensland in Annual Meeting Assembled, desire to express at this time of National Crisis, our loyalty to the Person and throne of His Gracious Majesty King George VI. We are unfeignedly thankful to God for the superb courage and patience displayed by His Majesty's ministers in their efforts to prevent the outbreak of hostilities. We believe that the conflict in which our Empire is engaged is one for the liberties of the nations of the world and their deliverance from the curse of military domination. We pledge ourselves to do all in our power to sustain the morale of our people in this hour of danger, and we pray Almighty God, the ruler of the Nations, so to dispose events that the issue shall be a Righteous, a speedy and a lasting peace.

Similar resolutions were, no doubt, passed by most other denominations in the early days of World War II.

The Report of the Union Council to the 1940 Assembly includes several paragraphs about the war. These read in part⁶⁴:

Country after country has been devastated and subjugated, but alone our Empire fights on more determined than ever that the New Paganism shall not have the last word . . .

In common with all the members of that Commonwealth of Nations to which we belong we give thanks to Almighty God that we are still able and willing to stand and to fight for the triumph of those great principles of justice, freedom and truth . . . We pledge afresh our devotion to the Cause of Right, and unite in the heartfelt prayer that God may scatter those who delight in War, and hasten the coming of the day of peace — a peace that shall endure.

These sentiments are little different to those which would be expressed by a gathering such as the RSL. The Report of the Temperance, Morals and Public Questions Committee included the sentence⁶⁵:

We notice with much approval the military determination to protect their men from immoral women and sly-grog.

Throughout the war years there seems to have been no suggestion that women might need to be protected from immoral members of the military forces!

The war does not seem to have been seen as having a dominant role in reports presented to the 1941 Assembly. In 1942, after the entry of Japan into the conflict, there was a realisation that Christianity and Western Civilisation were not synonymous. Two sentences in the Report of the Union Council⁶⁶ read:

⁶³ *Assembly Minutes, 1934–1945*, p. 185.

⁶⁴ *Yearbook, 1940*, p. 27.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 62.

⁶⁶ *Yearbook, 1942*, p. 27.

That the year 1942 with all the bright heavenly light of previous years, should be in this appalling position is a disgrace upon our civilisation for which nothing can atone. That Christianity and Civilisation are vastly different things is once more clearly demonstrated, and with the demonstration comes the challenge to a more Christian way of thinking, living and acting.

Two years later (1944) there was a slight swing back towards the traditional support for military efforts. The Union Council Report included the sentence⁶⁷:

The steady rise of Allied strength, culminating as it has done in the invasion of Europe, with remarkable victories in West, South and East, coupled with the slow but sustained pressure on the Pacific and Asiatic fronts, has resulted in a renewed sense of security, with the assurance of coming peace.

The following year (1945) the Assembly was held after the conclusion of the war. The Report of the Union Council came close to returning to the jingoism of the 1940 Report. One sentence read⁶⁸:

In reporting to this — the first Peace-Time Assembly for six years — the members of your Council give thanks to Almighty God for the remarkable deliverances so manifestly granted to our Empire and Allies, and for the cessation of hostilities, first in Europe, and then in the Pacific theatre.

The condemnation of “the New Paganism”, so prominent in the 1940 Report, was missing. There was now more emphasis on peace, but the impression is still left that God was on the side of “our Empire and Allies”. This is reinforced by the passing of what is described in the minutes as a “Victory Resolution”. It was moved by Mr A.E. Bickmore, the convenor of the Temperance, Morals and Public Questions Committee, though not as part of the Committee’s work. It was seconded by Rev. H.D. White, who was to become convenor of the Committee in 1956. The first two sentences of the resolution read⁶⁹:

The Baptist Union of Queensland in its 1945 Assembly, renders thanks unto God for his merciful deliverance from the throes and horrors of war, and for the victory he has vouchsafed to the Allied Nations. During the six years of conflict we have been inspired by the example of His Majesty, the King, and encouraged by the devotion and efficiency of our Empire Statesmen and Service leaders, to whom and to all those who by their active service have contributed to this grand result we offer our gratitude.

This strikes most modern ears as rather out of keeping with true Christian principles. However for the time it was quite standard, and similar resolutions were doubtless passed by almost all denominations, Protestant or Catholic, liberal or conservative. That the mover and seconder of this motion were members of the Temperance, Morals and Public Questions Committee over the next few years goes far towards explaining the way patriotism and love for country were brought into various resolutions, as mentioned in section 5 above dealing with Sunday Observance.

Over the next few years not much seemed to stir Baptists in Queensland about war and peace. At the 1955 Assembly a rather odd resolution was passed⁷⁰. It read:

⁶⁷ *Yearbook*, 1944, p. 37.

⁶⁸ *Yearbook*, 1945, p. 34.

⁶⁹ *Assembly Minutes*, 1934–1945, p. 334.

⁷⁰ *Assembly Minutes*, 1955–1962, p. 30.

The Baptist Union of Queensland in Annual Meeting assembled expresses gratitude to God for the past few years kept free from major conflict in spite of the many indications of ill-will and the fears caused by the Cold War; and prays that the recent conference of the heads of State may yet produce conditions leading to international goodwill and peace, bringing to an end the present upheavals in several parts of the world, that all the Kingdoms of the world may speedily become in fact as well as in vision “the Kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ”.

It is far from clear what the framer of the resolution, or those who supported it, had in mind by either “few years” or “major conflict”. The war in Korea had come to a halt just over two years before, in July 1953. The French had finally given up in Vietnam in May the previous year, after a sound thrashing at Dien Bien Phu. The “recent conference” was probably the one at Geneva which worked out the terms for elections in Vietnam. Within a very short space of time this had been repudiated by the South, with the connivance of USA. Even before the conflict was renewed in Vietnam, there was the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt, with its ensuing disruption. The lessons of history about pious resolutions seem not to have been absorbed.

Consciences were stirred in 1957. One of the resolutions passed read⁷¹:

In view of the possible danger to mankind from the continued testing of nuclear weapons the Baptist Union of Queensland meeting in Annual Assembly urges the Commonwealth Government to use every endeavour to bring about mutual agreement on the abolition of such tests.

This came as a partial response to the rise of the nuclear disarmament movement. This started off in England, and at the time Baptists, like most Australians, felt much more closely tied to England than USA. However shortly after this the Commonwealth Government offered the use of various facilities in Australia to the British Government for testing nuclear weapons. This, no doubt, came as a shock to some of those who supported the resolution. Since there is no further mention of nuclear testing it seems likely that support for “the Mother country” took precedence over what was seen in 1957 as a moral issue.

By 1961 the more general cause of peace had come to the fore. At the Assembly that year a somewhat grammatically confused resolution was passed. It read⁷²:

That we pledge ourselves at all times to promote the cause of true peace, where that promotion includes a free and frank co-operation on all potential fronts of force for the good of the whole. As Baptists we cannot see the cause of peace served by one-sided disarmament alone, but we see it as the cause of inter-social righteousness and justice protected at all costs. In this we are sincere as those who know the peace of God in Christ.

It is not clear what the supporters of the resolution understood it to mean. It seems that disarmament was favoured, but only if it was mutual. While it is impossible to be certain, the last sentence of the resolution may well have been included to offset the (at that time) strong support there was for the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade — care needed to be taken to avoid accusations of being a Communist dupe.

Nothing further on the general issues of war and peace was put forward by the Social Questions Committee until the Vietnam years. At the end of the Report of the Committee to the 1967 Assembly, under the heading “Miscellaneous”, we find the words⁷³:

⁷¹ibid., pp. 114, 115.

⁷²ibid., p. 250.

⁷³*Yearbook*, 1967, p. 153.

The war in Vietnam is still with us with no sign of conclusion in sight. The Communist repudiation of “colonialist aggression” seems to leave them free to conduct their ideological advance in their own typical way — infiltration and lying propaganda.

In expressing these sentiments Mr Howard was only reflecting the views of very many Baptists in Queensland, and, indeed, throughout Australia. During 1967 and 1968 there was considerable discussion in *The Australian Baptist* on the matter of pacifism. One contributor to the debate was Mr Phil Hancox, who had been President of the Baptist Union of Queensland in 1964/1965. His report of some of the “Letters to the Editor”⁷⁴ indicates the extremely strong anti-Communist (some would say paranoid) views held by a number of Baptists in those years.

Hancox was a strong supporter of the right of conscientious objection, and had himself spent four and a half months in prison during World War II for his beliefs. There were a number of other Baptists in Queensland who were of a similar frame of mind, but they found it difficult to persuade others to follow the traditional Baptist belief in “liberty of conscience”. The matter was eventually raised formally at the 1969 Assembly. This is treated separately in the section dealing with the years 1969 to 1973.

⁷⁴Phil Hancox: *Cavalry or Calvary?* — *The Christian's Dilemma*. Christians For Peace, West End, Brisbane, 1984. Pp. 91–100.

10 Miscellaneous Issues

The resolution supporting Menzies over the Suez Canal during the early part of 1956 has been mentioned above. There were a variety of other resolutions which do not fit in to the categories above. Some of these are considered here.

The Report of the Committee to the 1940 Assembly mentioned a number of Resolutions, including one on proxy marriages⁷⁵. However the minutes of the relevant session at the Assembly simply list nine resolutions by numbers⁷⁶, and do not give the text. It is thus uncertain just what the resolution was about. The report also mentions resolutions about British evacuee children⁷⁷, but again the actual wording of the resolutions is absent from the minutes.

Among other issues criticised by Rev T.C. Warriner in his 1944 Presidential address was materialism among Christians. His words⁷⁸:

Another example of the prevalent materialism is the pursuit of pleasure, comfort and ease which seems to be the chief concern of many. There is a deplorable lack of discipline among us. Christ made it clear that self-denial and self-discipline are required of all his followers.

are timeless. Down through the ages church leaders have been calling for less interest in material things, with, usually, as little lasting effect as Mr Warriner achieved.

In the Report presented to the 1945 Assembly the matter of industrial relations occupied about a page. It pleaded for both sides of any dispute to sit down quietly and talk things over, and referred to⁷⁹

... the almost constant warfare between capital and labour, employer and employee — and the evident determination of each class to persist in it.

No concrete suggestions were made for resolving conflicts. Evidently Mr Warriner's Presidential Address of the previous year, calling on Christians to become involved in such matters, had gone largely unheeded.

A recurring theme throughout the period (and also in subsequent years) has been the general apathy displayed by Baptists in Queensland when it comes to taking action about social issues. Mr Warriner's Presidential address about lack of political involvement has already been cited. The Report to the 1945 Assembly contained some of the harshest words ever addressed to the constituency by the convenor of the Committee. At the 1944 Assembly it had been resolved⁸⁰ that an essay competition be organised, the essays to take up any point (or points) covered in the 1944 Report and expand them suitably. The competition was split into three sections: one for those aged 14 to 18; one for those aged 18 to 25; and an open group, mainly intended for those 25 and over. Mr Bickmore reported in 1945 that only *five* essays had been received in the 14 to 18 age group, and *none* in either of the other two sections. He was unable to contain his feelings, and wrote⁸¹:

⁷⁵ *Yearbook*, 1940, p. 65.

⁷⁶ *Assembly Minutes*, 1934–1945, pp. 214, 230 and 231.

⁷⁷ *Yearbook*, 1940, pp. 65, 66.

⁷⁸ *Yearbook*, 1944, p. 33.

⁷⁹ *Yearbook*, 1945, p. 88.

⁸⁰ *Assembly Minutes*, 1934–1945, pp. 320, 321.

⁸¹ *Yearbook*, 1945, p. 82.

Considering the apathy exhibited by our own people we can hardly be surprised that the evils to which we have drawn repeated attention are gaining a still firmer hold upon the community.

As with previous appeals, this seems to have had little lasting effect on the bulk of Baptists in the State.

The 40 hour week was raised at the Assembly in both 1948 and 1949. The concept itself was neither supported nor condemned, but fears were expressed that the moral tone of the State would suffer. In 1948 the issue was Sunday Observance, and a resolution was passed which read⁸²:

With the introduction of the 40-hour week and the almost general demand for a workless Saturday, this Assembly draws attention to the danger of a secularised Lord's day and urges our ministers and youth leaders to realise the demand for positive teaching if Sunday observance is to be retained and more firmly established.

In 1949 the Report of the Committee blamed it for the alleged increase in gambling⁸³:

It is to be feared that one of the causes of the recent heavy increase in gambling is the extra idle time on the hands of so many since the adoption of the 40-hour week.

It may be questioned whether these points were the main ones in the minds of the delegates, or whether, in some cases, financial considerations may have played a part. Remembering that at that time the ownership of private motor cars was considerably lower than today, it is somewhat difficult to see how additional free time on Saturday could really be blamed for people's behaviour on Sunday. Both these issues, taken together with Mr Bickmore's comments in 1944 about the way additional money had led to a "moral landslide" (see page 7 above) indicate the completely middle class attitudes held at the time. It is clear that a number of Baptists felt that the "lower classes" could not be trusted with either additional money or additional free time — they would only waste them. No such criticisms were levelled at the upper classes. Consideration of these attitudes could be valuable as a separate study.

The 1949 coal miners' strike was mentioned in the report of the Committee⁸⁴, and alluded to, though not by name, in the resolutions that year. One of the resolutions supported the arbitration system, rather than strike action. It read⁸⁵:

As a Christian Church, we, the representatives of the Baptists in Queensland, express our unrelenting opposition to the aims and methods of those who seek, by sowing seeds of discord and discontent, to dislocate the industrial machinery of the nation, thereby creating hardship and loss to many sections of the community; and we affirm our whole-hearted support of Arbitration, and maintain that with such a system in operation it should be universally acknowledged that no right to strike can exist.

Baptists have no set liturgy in worship (though in many churches the order of service is quite firmly fixed), and tend to regard many practices of other denominations as purely

⁸² *Assembly Minutes*, 1946–1954, p. 91.

⁸³ *Yearbook*, 1949, p. 88.

⁸⁴ *Yearbook*, 1949, pp. 88, 89.

⁸⁵ *Assembly Minutes*, 1946–1954, p. 123 ???.

formal ritual. It is thus surprising that at the 1950 Assembly one such ritual was praised. A resolution read⁸⁶:

This Assembly commends the Royal National Association for its initiative in arranging for the "Blessing of the Plough" in connection with the Annual Show, and congratulates the Council of the Association and all others concerned on the success of the service.

This was passed in the early days of the ecumenical movement, when Baptists in Queensland were still quite happy to be involved in co-operative ventures with other denominations. With the rise in anti-ecumenical sentiments within the denomination any such co-operation, or commendation, would be most unlikely at present.

It is worth noting that resolutions on this fairly wide range of issues all occur in the years up to the early 1950s, while Mr Arthur Bickmore was convenor. After Rev. Max Howard took over the resolutions became quite predictable in content, though their number and the wording varied. Until pressed by the Assembly in 1969 he concentrated on alcohol and other drugs, gambling, State Aid, and support for the National League of Welfare and Decency. In many years he also included a rather generally worded resolution on racism. It is thus apparent that the convenor of the Committee seems to have a dominating effect on which topics are considered to be of "social importance", to quote the Constitution of the Union. It is true that in some years additional resolutions to those put forward by the Committee were moved and passed, but these have been relatively few in number.

⁸⁶ *Assembly Minutes*, 1946–1954, p. 162.

11 The Years 1969 to 1973

The last five years of the period under discussion are worth considering separately. These were the last years of Australia's involvement in the conflict in Vietnam, with the associated unrest throughout society. There were a number of fairly prominent Baptists who did not support involvement in a civil war. There also was, at this time, a realisation that social issues other than alcohol and gambling should be of concern.

The convenor of the Committee in 1968/1969 was Dr N.W. Jacobsen. He put forward only four resolutions at the 1969 Assembly: the first supported the National Health and Medical Research Council's Report condemning smoking; the second was on alcohol; the fourth offered support for the work of the Temperance League and the National League for Welfare and Decency. The third resolution was yet another attempt to get people actively involved in taking action about social issues. It read⁸⁷:

That delegates to this Assembly take back to their churches the plea that Baptists throughout the State exercise their individual rights as Australian citizens and become more personally involved in the fight against the declining moral and cultural standards within our community.

The addition of the adjective "cultural" shows that even at this late date people tended to equate Western culture with Christian standards. This resolution seems to have been as ineffective as others in the same vein passed in earlier years, and exhortations from Presidents of the Union.

After these four resolutions had been passed, Rev R.W. Hodgson (who was to become President of the Union in 1971/1972) spoke from the floor of the Assembly. He criticised the lack of attention being paid to matters which were being widely discussed in the community. He then moved the following motion⁸⁸:

That the Social Questions Committee be asked to draft appropriate resolutions on the subjects of censorship, conscientious objection and student unrest, prostitution and free love, to be dealt with at an appropriate time.

A number of speakers supported Mr Hodgson, and the motion was passed. However it was easier to get a motion passed than to disturb the traditional attitude of Rev. Max Howard, who returned as convenor in 1970.

The Report of the Social Questions Committee to the 1970 Assembly was quite extensive, covering five pages together with the resolutions⁸⁹. However, it is not unfair to describe it as "the mixture as before". There was a page and a half on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs; half a page each on gambling, State Aid, racism, and moral standards (that is *sexual* moral standards). With half a page of preamble, and three-quarters of a page for the five resolutions, there was not much left for the request from the previous Assembly. It was covered in just one paragraph which read⁹⁰:

Resolutions from 1969 Assembly, re Censorship, National and Military Service, Student unrest, Marriage and Sexual behaviour, have been studied by the Committee and the Executive Committee and will be further studied by the Social Questions Committee.

⁸⁷ *Assembly Minutes*, 1962–1970, p. 261.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 262.

⁸⁹ *Yearbook*, 1970, pp. 154–158.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 158.

The section of the Report on racism is worth special mention, since this appears to be the first time that the problems being faced by Aborigines were specifically mentioned. This was the Cook Bicentenary year, and there was considerable agitation among some sections of the community for better treatment of the original inhabitants of Australia. Part of this section in the Report read⁹¹:

The Cook Centenary [sic] has highlighted some awkward historical facets of our past. We Christians have mostly fought for aboriginal dignity, equality and integration. But as the status is achieved, what does the whole thing mean? For most aboriginal folk the only difference is: Once they could not drink liquor, now they can drink like a white man! This is, to them, the picture we have painted of the difference. If it is colour we emphasise, perhaps the white man's heart has been many shades darker than his aboriginal brother's skin! Let us, as Baptists, make up the leeway in love and service while we may, for the sake of Him who died for every race and kind of man.

While there were a number of Christians who fought for Aboriginal dignity and equality, on the whole this paragraph gives too rosy a view of relationships between most Christians and Aborigines. This view is not too surprising. Until the 1970s very few Baptists (or other Christians, for that matter) had had any significant amount of dealings with Aborigines. This can be laid at the feet of the various State Governments over the years, who tried to segregate Aborigines as much as possible.

The five resolutions dealt, respectively, with alcohol, censorship, gambling, sexual morality, and racism. The one on racism is worth quoting, since it seems to be the first one which accepted some responsibility for the state of Aborigines in Australian society. It read⁹²:

Baptists re-affirm their conviction of the Unity of Man in need of Saving Grace, and repudiate the artificial barriers which sinful and unregenerate man has raised between people of differing races and colours.

Once more we commit ourselves to the debt we owe to our own Aboriginal peoples of Australia, accept the stigma our past neglect has incurred and pledge our hand to raising their status above the squalor we have helped, as a Nation, to impose.

The words "Once more" in the second paragraph are misleading. No record exists (at least for the years from 1938) of any earlier commitment to assisting in the redress of past treatment of Aborigines.

The resolution was not seen as adequate by some members of the Assembly. A motion criticising the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Act was moved, seconded, and then withdrawn, after a number of people complained that they were unfamiliar with the Act and thus could not be expected to vote on it. Mr K. Smith then moved⁹³:

That the full implications of the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Act be investigated and a motion concerning it be brought to the 1971 Assembly.

This was passed. However no such motion was brought to the 1971 Assembly, or any subsequent Assembly.

In a subsequent session of the Assembly, Rev. J.E. White (who had been President of the Union in 1959/1960, and became Convenor of the Social Questions Division in 1978)

⁹¹ibid., p. 157.

⁹²*Assembly Minutes*, 1970–1975, p. 22.

⁹³ibid., p. 23.

moved what was described as a “Special Conscience Resolution”. This was no doubt inspired by the large number of people who, by now, were pressing for recognition of conscientious objection to a particular war, as opposed to objection to war in general. It read⁹⁴: with the punctuation as in the original:

In order to guide our people in Christian decision-making and living in the complex circumstances of our present social order, we reaffirm our belief in the primacy of God’s will expressed through Christian conscience.

We hold:–

- : that God has first claim upon life, and we must obey Him;
- : that the Scriptures are our ground for believing that it is our right to enjoy liberty of conscience;
- : that our Baptist history and tradition confirm our faith in a way of life based on obedience to God through conscience;
- : that there is no human circumstance in which the authority of conscience should be overruled on the grounds of expediency.

We therefore, as a Baptist Union Assembly, affirm as a basic conviction that the rights of conscience must be fully guaranteed by governments under all circumstances and at all times.

This seems to have been quite uncontroversial. Only one person spoke to it, and it was passed. Whether the implications of the motion were appreciated is another matter. In effect it severely criticised the Federal Government for its continued refusal to take into account the conscientious objections many people, not only the young men affected, had to our involvement in the civil war in Vietnam.

Turning now to 1971, the Social Questions Division (it was now a Division of the Department of Community Service) session at the Assembly was one of the most notable of all those in the period under discussion. The resolutions and motions covered a wider range of topics than in any previous Assembly. They are listed in full in Appendix B, and the topics covered were: distribution of information papers to the churches; alcohol and drugs; objections to the speedy passage of legislation in State Parliament; national military service; Christian family life; abortion; religious liberty and human rights; sex education in State schools; and books set for reading in secondary schools. Even though one on the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Act, as requested by the 1970 Assembly, was missing, this was a very wide range of topics.

The first motion was put forward by the General Superintendent, Rev. F.J.C. Stone, since the Union Constitution did not provide for circulation of such papers to the churches. (When the Union Constitution was revised in 1979, and the Social Questions Committee was moved to being a Functional Committee of the Executive Committee, it was also authorised “. . . to produce material, for the guidance of church members, on social issues”⁹⁵. The next six resolutions came from the Social Questions Division. The one on sex education in schools was introduced by the General Superintendent, on behalf of the Chinchilla church. The final resolution was also put forward by the General Superintendent, who had received a list of allegedly offensive books from an individual. These resolutions will now be briefly discussed.

⁹⁴ibid., p. 35.

⁹⁵Baptist Union of Queensland, *Handbook*, 1978–1979, p. 71.

The first resolution was acted on fairly promptly. The Report of the Division to the 1971 Assembly mentioned that resource papers on Abortion and on National Military Service had been prepared⁹⁶. According to the Report of the Division to the 1972 Assembly⁹⁷ these resources papers, together with one on Homosexuality, had been circulated to the churches. In addition it was stated that what were described as “resource notes” had been prepared on Homosexuality, Abortion, National Military Service, Sex Education in Schools, Student Unrest, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Act, and Literature Censorship (it is probable that the first three of these are the “resource papers” mentioned earlier). Copies of the resource papers on Homosexuality and Abortion are in the Union Archives, but the only part of the one on National Military Service located was a pile of cover sheets. None of the other “resource notes” have yet been located. Possible effects of the circulation of these on the thinking of Baptists will be considered when the 1972 Assembly is considered shortly.

The resolution on alcohol and drugs is worded in a less vituperative manner than some of the earlier ones. It also indicates a significant change of attitude on the part of Mr Howard towards State Aid. Previously he had vigorously opposed all forms of this. Now he was urging Government subsidies for church work in the area of rehabilitation of alcoholics.

The one on the legislative process was one of the very few ever passed which was highly critical of the National Party Government. Complaints had been made earlier about the passage of legislation on the liquor trade and gambling without allowing time for electors to express their views, and some of the events of 1970/1971 caused further concern.

The one on National Military Service is one of the few which have caused considerable dissension in the Assembly. Repeating it here for convenience, it read⁹⁸:

We submit that National Military Service for Home defence should legitimately be regarded as the responsibility of a Christian citizen. Enforced military service outside Australia in support of what he regards as misguided involvement, is something which the Christian can legitimately and conscientiously refuse.

If a Christian young man takes the view that he should refuse enforced overseas service on conscientious grounds, his stand should evoke the understanding, sympathy and friendship of other Christians.

After the approval of the “Special Conscience Resolution” the previous year, it would have been expected that a fairly mild expression of support for the conscientious beliefs of young men would be almost automatic. But it was not to be. After two speakers, with replies by members of the committee, Rev. W.W. Solomon, one of the older ministers, raised a point of order⁹⁹. He drew attention to the fact that the Churches had not had opportunity “to consider the controversial matter in the last paragraph” of the resolution, in accordance with By-Law 17. This By-Law read¹⁰⁰:

COMMUNICATION

Each Church shall have the right to express its views on the life and witness of the Union through its representatives on the Assembly or Council, or by communicating in writing with the General Superintendent or the Secretary of any Committee, Department, Division or Agency.

⁹⁶ *Yearbook*, 1971, p. 100.

⁹⁷ *Yearbook*, 1972, p. 119.

⁹⁸ *Assembly Minutes*, 1970–1975, p. 65.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 65.

¹⁰⁰ *Yearbook*, 1970, p. 204. Minor amendments were made to the Union Constitution at the 1970 Assembly, and this is the one in operation at the 1971 Assembly.

The General Superintendent replied to the point of order, and the By-Law was apparently ruled inapplicable by the chairman. Mr Solomon then moved¹⁰¹:

That the motion before us be not adopted until it be referred to the Churches.

There were several speakers to this. Among the points made¹⁰² were the way older members had answered the call of their country in 1939, obedience to the laws of the land, and a statement that since we did not know the full story behind the conflict we should trust our elected leaders who were in a position to know. Mr Solomon's motion was passed. An annotation to the minutes¹⁰³ reads:

It was understood that the motion could be recast and that papers for and against should be prepared and forwarded to the churches and the matter returned to the 1972 Assembly for discussion.

The opposition to the motion indicates that there were a significant number of Baptists who preferred obedience to the laws of the land to following the dictates of conscience.

The resolution on Christian Family Life was uncontroversial, and was passed with little discussion. However it also broke new ground. This was the first time that the ball had been firmly placed in the parents' court as far as moral education is concerned. There had been, and there was to come at this Assembly, remarks critical of outside influences on children. The motion attempted to point out the enormous influence committed parents can have. Whether it was heeded seems somewhat doubtful.

The resolution on Abortion was the first such to be brought before the Assembly. In previous years the Reports of the various Committees had, from time to time, commented about the pressure for reform of the laws relating to abortion, and related matters, but no specific resolution on abortion had been put forward. The resolution was regarded as in some sense a preliminary to the paper to be circulated to the churches. There were six speakers, all in support of it. Rev. J.E. White asked whether abortion should be permitted for a pregnancy following rape¹⁰⁴, but one of the medical doctors present stated that in most such cases the woman did not seem to be unduly disturbed by the pregnancy. The only really significant point was made by Dr W.A. Gill, Lecturer at the Baptist Theological College. He asked whether any consideration had been given to a statement about the time of origin of a new human being¹⁰⁵. This sticky biological/theological problem seemed to pass over the heads of almost all the delegates, but was taken up in the paper circulated in 1972. The motion passed unopposed.

The Manifesto on Religious Liberty and Human Rights originated at the Baptist World Alliance Congress in June 1965. The Baptist Union of Queensland is part of the wider grouping of Baptists throughout the world, and from time to time resolutions of the Baptist Union of Australia or the Baptist World Alliance have been adopted separately. This was one such. Again, there was no controversy, and it passed with only one speaker.

The last two resolutions, requesting the Committee to look into sex education in schools, and books set for reading, were passed unopposed. The list of alleged objectionable books contained such classics as *Coonardoo* by Katharine Susannah Pritchard, and *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. The objector seemed to feel that the ugly faces of racism in

¹⁰¹ *Assembly Minutes*, 1970–1975, p. 65.

¹⁰² Personal recollection of the present writer.

¹⁰³ *Assembly Minutes*, 1970–1975, p. 66.

¹⁰⁴ Personal recollection of the present writer.

¹⁰⁵ Personal recollection of the present writer.

Australia and capitalism in USA should not even be mentioned to school children. As far as the records indicate no resolutions arising out of these matters were brought to the Assembly. However when the Select Committee on Education in Queensland (the Ahern Committee) was set up the Baptist Union made a submission¹⁰⁶. This was prepared by a sub-committee of the Union's Department of Youth and Christian Education, and these two topics were included in the submission¹⁰⁷. The submission supported the introduction of sex education in schools, principally because parents were failing in their duties to provide such education and children needed accurate information. It was rather more ambivalent on reading lists, and implicitly criticised many lists of allegedly objectionable books by saying¹⁰⁸:

We are aware that we cannot protect our students from the realities of life, nor do we consider this advisable.

It should not be assumed that this statement represents the views of Baptists in Queensland, as a whole, at that time. The sub-committee which prepared it consisted mainly of school teachers and educationists, and the submission was approved by the Union Executive without referral to any wider body. It indicates that, at least among one section of the constituency, there was a realisation of the futility of trying to ban children from coming into contact with some aspects of life.

After the happenings of the previous three Assemblies, it might have been expected that the 1972 Assembly would have seen a much greater interest in a wide range of social issues, and perhaps some further strong differences of opinion among delegates. There was indeed some conflict, but it started even before the Assembly got under way. Phil Hancox writes¹⁰⁹:

In view of the strong convictions I held regarding the Christian's role in time of war, it was hardly likely that many would regard me as a worthy candidate for the presidential chair.

In spite of his well-known pacifist position, he was elected Vice-President at the 1971 Assembly, to become President for 1972/1973. The events preceding his induction are worth quoting at some length. They are presented in Appendix C, but one paragraph of his response to the minister of the City Tabernacle Baptist Church is worth repeating here¹¹⁰:

"God help us!" I replied. "Are you saying that the word "Peace" must be eliminated from the Christian vocabulary and transferred to the Communists for their exclusive use?"

In his Presidential Address¹¹¹, entitled "The Price of Peace", Hancox mentioned some of the many Christians down through the ages who refused to retaliate when subjected to violence. He mentioned those in the first few centuries who were persecuted by the Roman authorities. Skimming briefly over the next millennium, he mentioned some of the incidents in the early days of nonconformity. He then turned to modern times, and gave Northern Ireland and Martin Luther King as examples. His mention of Dr King was like a red rag to a bull to one member of the audience¹¹².

¹⁰⁶Baptist Union of Queensland, *Submission to the Select Committee Inquiring into Education in Queensland*, 1978.

¹⁰⁷The full list of topics covered is listed in Appendix D.

¹⁰⁸*Submission to the Select Committee Inquiring into Education in Queensland*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁹Phil Hancox, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

¹¹⁰*ibid.*, p. 103.

¹¹¹*ibid.*, pp. 104–121.

¹¹²*ibid.*, p. 121.

The remarks of the senior minister of the City Tabernacle Baptist Church (see Appendix C) about Hancox's suggested "Peace" sign did not augur well for any resolution relating to conscientious objection, and so it turned out, in spite of the Presidential Address. It may be suspected that most members of the audience took the address as an exposition of theology, rather than as something which they should apply to their own lives. But before considering the resolutions, some comments about the contents of the "Resource Papers" circulated to the churches is in order.

The Report of the Social Questions Division to the 1971 Assembly mentioned that the one on Abortion had been prepared by Dr Les Sands (who was to become President for 1984/1985) and the one on National Military Service had been prepared by Mr Ken Fielding¹¹³. Other information¹¹⁴, not recorded elsewhere, indicates that the one on Homosexuality was prepared by Dr Len Knott (who was to become President for 1976/1977). Since no copy of the one on National Military Service has been located, comments about the content of these resource papers can only cover the two sexually related matters.

The one on Abortion¹¹⁵, prepared by Dr Les Sands, comes in two parts. The first part of the paper dealt mainly with medical and legal aspects of abortion, since most people for whom it was intended would be unaware of much of the medical background, and the differing laws throughout Australia and overseas. Among its conclusions were¹¹⁶:

1. The Abortion Law needs restating, but there is a very real danger of going too far and creating more problems than are being solved. Also, it is not purely a legal matter, as medical, ethical, moral and theological issues are also deeply involved. . . .
2. The problem of unwanted children must be dealt with — not by eradicating them, but by making them wanted. . . .
3. The problem of illegitimacy needs further study, and the Church can fill a very real need in helping the girl "in trouble". . . .
5. The law concerning sterilisation, especially in regard to males, needs clarifying.

...

These points all seem quite reasonable. They indicate that the simplistic approach held by some theologically conservative Christians is defective, and that a considerable amount of thought needs to be put into suggestions for handling the problem of undesired pregnancies.

The second part of the paper, following up the query from Dr Gill at the 1971 Assembly, was entitled "When does the foetus get its soul?". This was an attempt by a layman (though a medically well-informed one) to outline the two main theological ideas: creationism (meaning that God creates each soul separately¹¹⁷ (the paper was written in 1971 before the current meaning of "creationism" had risen to prominence) and traducianism (meaning that the soul comes, in some way, from the parents¹¹⁸). The advantages and disadvantages of both these positions were briefly covered. Not surprisingly, the author came to the same conclusion that had been reached earlier by the Reformed theologian Berkouwer¹¹⁹, that there is no

¹¹³Yearbook, 1971, p. 100.

¹¹⁴Personal discussion in 1989 with the then General Superintendent, Pastor F.W. Stallard.

¹¹⁵Baptist Union of Queensland, *Abortion*, 1972. Described as "A Resource Aid to Baptist Churches prepared by The Social Questions Division of the Department of Community Service".

¹¹⁶ibid., pp. 6, 7.

¹¹⁷P.B.T. Bilaniuk, "Creationism", vol. 4, pp. 428, 429 in William J. McDonald (Editor in Chief) and others, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. McGraw-Hill, New York, 1967.

¹¹⁸P.B.T. Bilaniuk, "Traducianism", vol. 14, p. 230 in ibid.

¹¹⁹G.C. Berkouwer: *Man: The Image of God*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1962. Chapter 8, "Creationism and Traducianism".

satisfactory answer. The problem is complicated by the biological facts which the anti-abortionist lobby is either unaware of or ignores. The paper did not mention that those who claim that "ensoulment" takes place at fertilisation need to consider the possible subsequent splitting into identical twins (or triplets, or . . .): does this mean that the soul splits? There are also the theological arguments which have raged over the status of those embryos which have split incompletely, leading to the so-called "Siamese twins". There is also the problem of the occasional rejoining of two partially developed embryos. The paper did, however, mention the theological problem of spontaneous abortion, which is another issue avoided by the anti-abortion lobby. The author wrote¹²⁰:

Bearing in mind that about one third of all pregnancies never produce a live baby, one wonders, facetiously, if Heaven will be filled with the souls of aborted fetuses.

This, too, should be kept in mind by pro-life supporters. There seems to be no record of any response to this paper by a theologically more qualified writer.

The Resource Paper on Homosexuality¹²¹ was prepared by Dr Len Knott. This paper covered legal and medical aspects of homosexuality, and endeavoured to give some indication of the size of the problem. It pointed out the need to distinguish between homosexuality as a condition, and homosexual acts. It also indicated that there was very little which could be done to change a homosexual orientation. An important part of the paper dealt with misconceptions about male homosexuals. It pointed out that¹²²:

Many homosexuals do not have undesirable character traits, and the majority do not most certainly have psychopathic medical histories.

...

Another misconception about homosexuality relates to paedophilia, a sexual perversion or deviation in which an adult person, male or female seeks sexual gratification from a pre-adolescent child. It can be either hetero or homosexually directed. It is unfortunate that this condition has come to be associated by some people with homosexuality. Homosexuals do not, as a rule, prefer small boys as partners.

Since the penalties, in Queensland, then ranged up to 14 years hard labour, the paper concluded¹²³:

We have said before, that as Christians, we cannot but regard homosexual acts as sin, but must we go on harshly dealing with these people while others commit sexual sins for which we make no such provisions.

This paper was written well before AIDS had arrived on the scene. This new scenario *should* not lead to any change of attitude towards penalties for homosexual behaviour, but most people would probably feel otherwise.

The Report of the Division to the 1972 Assembly, as mentioned earlier, said that all three of these had been circulated to the churches¹²⁴. It was therefore to be expected, particularly

¹²⁰Baptist Union of Queensland, *Abortion*, 1972, p. 10.

¹²¹Baptist Union of Queensland, *Homosexuality*, 1972. Described as "A Resource Aid to Baptist Churches prepared by The Social Questions Division of the Department of Community Service".

¹²²*ibid.*, p. 3

¹²³*ibid.*, p. 5.

¹²⁴*Yearbook*, 1972, p. 119.

in view of the resolution the previous year requesting discussion on conscientious objection, that some such resolution would be forthcoming. Things turned out quite differently!

It would have been a golden opportunity for the Baptists in Queensland to show that they had a wider concerns than alcohol and gambling. People in the churches had been given the opportunity to study the issues of abortion, homosexuality, and compulsory military service. There was no valid reason which could have been raised to defer a vote on these matters. But it seems that the traditional issues were *still* regarded as most important.

Delegates to the Assembly had received copies of the resolutions to be put forward during the Social Questions business session. These did *not* include one about military service. This point was raised during the discussion on the report of the Committee¹²⁵. The General Superintendent read out Mr Solomon's resolution from the 1971 Assembly. It was then moved¹²⁶:

that we note this and defer it to the Half-Yearly Assembly with the view to formal resolutions to be presented to the 1973 Assembly.

This was passed, and the remainder of the Report was discussed. When the time came for the resolutions to be presented, there was one on alcohol, one on the newly introduced breathalyser, one on gambling generally, one on poker machines, and one on racism¹²⁷. Nothing about abortion, though this may be excused since this had been the subject of a lengthy resolution in 1971. But there was nothing on homosexuality, student unrest, censorship, prostitution or free love, as requested at the 1969 Assembly. Perhaps these were felt too contentious and divisive. It could truly be described as "the mixture as before".

The Half-Yearly Assembly in 1973 was held on 6–7 April 1973, at the Geebung Baptist Church. The minutes of this are quite brief¹²⁸, and there is no mention of any resolution or discussion about National Military Service in either the minutes or the programme of the Assembly which is included in the minute book¹²⁹.

Things were no better at the 1973 Annual Assembly. Apparently time for the session devoted to Social Questions ran out, for a motion was moved¹³⁰:

That any social or moral questions deemed to be urgent shall be presented in the form of resolutions to the Union Council on Thursday evening 27th September.

This was passed. But when the time arrived at the Union Council meeting for the Social Questions Committee resolutions, it became clear that much of the momentum for change, which had grown over the past four years, had been dissipated. There were only four resolutions which were "deemed to be urgent", as resolved at the Assembly. The first was on alcohol, the second on gambling, the third on poker machines, and the fourth on racism. Since national service and involvement in the conflict in Vietnam had been abandoned by the Whitlam Government as soon as it was elected at the end of 1972 it could reasonably be claimed that any resolution on military service was no longer "urgent". It would, however, have been a chance to make some such statement away from the heat of being involved in a military conflict. This would, to use the words of Mr Hodgson's original motion at the 1969

¹²⁵ *Assembly Minutes*, 1970–1975, p. 105.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 106.

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 130–132.

¹²⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 138.

¹²⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 137.

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 179.

Assembly¹³¹, have been a rather more “appropriate time” than a year or two earlier, since the matter had been passed over during almost all the time Australia was involved in Vietnam.

The one on racism is worth quoting, to show that even after the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Act had been brought to the attention of delegates, and a “resource note” on it had been prepared by the Social Questions Division, they were still quite reluctant to express views which conflicted with those of the ruling State Government. It read¹³²:

We reaffirm that sinful man stands equal in need before a Holy God, and equal in claim upon the Divine Mercy and Grace.

We therefore call upon Christians in all levels of responsibility to display genuine love and understanding for men of all races, cultures and creeds. We assert that toleration is not enough. Only the self-sacrificing examples of heaven born love can, we believe, conquer the arrogance of racism.

As with many of the earlier resolutions about racism, this is simply a statement about theological beliefs, with a call for Christians to be involved, but no condemnation of institutionalised racism.

Thus we come to the end of the period under review with the same social issues being considered as at the beginning: alcohol and gambling. There was, during these final five years, a time when it looked as though Baptists in Queensland might break out of their traditional mould and start to consider wider issues. That change, however, would have to wait for a few years yet.

¹³¹ *Assembly Minutes, 1962–1970*, p. 262.

¹³² Baptist Union of Queensland, *Minutes of Union Council*, September 27, 1973.

12 Events after 1973

Before concluding this essay it is worth making a few comments about events subsequent to 1973. During this period there was a swing towards considering a wider range of issues of social concern. In part this can be attributed to different convenors for the Committee, but external events also played a role.

A small number of conservative Christians had always urged more interest in the sins of society than the traditional emphasis on personal sin. This came to a head at the Congress on World Evangelization held at Lausanne in July 1974. This was the first world-wide congress organised by evangelicals at which there were a large number of delegates from countries outside Europe and North America. These delegates kept pressing for some statement on social issues, and as a consequence when the Lausanne Covenant was formulated it included a section entitled "Christian Social Responsibility". This read, in part¹³³:

... we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ.

This did not have any great immediate effect on the thinking of most Baptists in Queensland, nor, indeed, on the thinking of most people in other theologically conservative denominations. This is shown by the congress which was termed "Lausanne II", held in Manila in July 1989. This produced a Manifesto, consisting of 21 brief affirmations, which were expanded in 12 sections "... which are commended to churches, alongside the Lausanne Covenant, for study and action"¹³⁴ (emphasis added). The inclusion of the word "action" expresses the feelings of many people that the earlier statement, though well-intentioned, had mostly fallen on deaf ears. (Whether the 1989 one will do any better remains to be seen). Affirmation 9 reads¹³⁵:

We affirm that the proclamation of God's kingdom of justice and peace demands the denunciation of all injustice and oppression, both personal and structural; we will not shrink from this prophetic witness.

This was expanded in Section 4, one paragraph of which reads¹³⁶:

The proclamation of God's kingdom necessarily demands the prophetic denunciation of all that is incompatible with it. Among the evils we deplore are destructive violence, including institutionalized violence, political corruption, all forms of exploitation of people and of the earth, the undermining of the family, abortion on demand, the drug traffic, and the abuse of human rights. In our concern for the poor, we are distressed by the burden of debt on the two-thirds world.

The mention of "political corruption" was quite apt, since this Manifesto was promulgated in the same month the Fitzgerald Report was released in Queensland!

Some Baptists in Queensland were stirred by the words of the Lausanne Covenant, and although the process has been slow, there now seems to be more awareness of social issues other than alcohol and gambling. Since 1973 resolutions have been passed condemning

¹³³The Lausanne Covenant. Pp. 3–9 in J.D. Douglas (ed.): *Let The Earth Hear His Voice*, World Wide Publications, Minneapolis, 1975. The quotation is from p. 5.

¹³⁴The Manila Manifesto. Pp. 110–126 in Alan Nichols (ed.), *The Whole Gospel for The Whole World*, Regal Books, Ventura, California, 1989. Introduction to the Manifesto, p. 110.

¹³⁵ibid., p. 111.

¹³⁶ibid., p. 115.

apartheid, smoking (a much more dangerous practice than drinking alcohol), and advertisements on TV which demean women. Concern has been expressed about the environment and about uranium mining. The way in which advances in technology have far outstripped law and ethics was discussed at one Assembly. Support was expressed for North-South dialogue. The Union, through its representative on the committee chaired by Rev. A.C. Male, continued to support the introduction of Human Relationships courses in schools. Extensive discussions have been held on Aboriginal Land Rights and on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Women. Both of these were supported in part and opposed in part. The Union has also made a number of submissions on social and ethical issues to outside bodies such as the National Health and Medical Research Council, and the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal. These submissions were prepared by members of the Social Questions Committee.

This essay has considered only official actions of the Baptist Union of Queensland. Despite the changes after 1973, there have also been some individual Baptists who have felt that not enough was being done, particularly for Aborigines. In 1980 Rev. Bob Bickerton, then Pastor of The Gap Baptist Church, formed the Baptist Social Action Group¹³⁷ (which later changed its name to the Baptist Social Justice Forum). This was independent of the Baptist Union, and was a group of concerned people (not only Baptists) who met from time to time to discuss problems facing Aborigines and attempt to provide help where possible. It has had no very great effects, but the seeds of future work have been sown.

¹³⁷Bob Bickerton, letter dated March 31, 1980.

13 Conclusions

The resolutions about social issues passed at the various Annual Assembly meetings of the Baptist Union of Queensland over the period from 1938 to 1973, from the brief samples presented above, are those which might have been expected from almost any theologically and politically conservative denomination. The overwhelming majority of resolutions relate to individual sins, such as drinking alcoholic beverages, gambling, sexual misbehaviour and the like. The major corporate sins of society, such as greed, emphasis on material possessions, abuse of the environment for profit, and so on received scant attention, if any.

Over the period considered here there was a decline in objections to various aspects of life in society such as Sunday Observance and State support for denominational schools. Neither of these really falls within the area of Christian ethics, which is what any committee with the name "Social Questions" should be attempting to address. There were, from time to time, attempts to address wider issues, but general support for these moves had to wait until later years.

This shows quite plainly that there was considerable implicit support for the conservative side of the political field. This is not too surprising, given the conservative background of most of those who formed the Protestant churches in the early days of white settlement in Australia. It is perhaps surprising that a conservative political outlook lasted so long in Christian circles. In part this can be attributed to the growing influence of the American way of life after the arrival of television in the 1950s. In USA conservative theology has, until quite recently, been closely allied with conservative politics, the rise of the "New Religious Right", as it is called, being just the latest in a number of such moves. It has really taken the growing influence of the so-called "Third World" in evangelical circles to show that this religious-political alliance is not, at bottom, Christian.

Although he was writing specifically with the American scene in mind, some words of Nathan Hatch could be applied to Baptists in Queensland with very little change. He wrote¹³⁸:

In the first place, evangelicals have sustained the conviction that religious knowledge is not an arcane science to be mediated by an educated elite.

...

A second tendency is that evangelical scholars are far more likely to speak and write to a popular evangelical audience than to pursue serious scholarship.

...

Even when facing the most serious and complex intellectual issues, the instinct of evangelicals is to play them out before a popular audience. ...

Because of its democratic coloring, evangelical thinking also manifests a third tendency: it measures the importance of an issue by its popular reception. ...

The keen sensitivity of evangelicals to public opinion also has a fourth implication: a tendency for the values of the audience to color the substance of thinking.

If the words "religious knowledge" in the first of these extracts are replaced by "knowledge of the problems of society" we can see one reason why many of the resolutions passed at Assembly meetings seem so innocuous. The idea that the average Christian is just as capable

¹³⁸Nathan O. Hatch, *Evangelicalism as a Democratic Movement*. Pp. 71–82 in *Evangelicalism in Modern America*, ed. George Marsden. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1984. The quotations are from pages 78–80.

of giving a valid opinion on some of the complex issues facing society as a trained sociologist is widespread in evangelical circles. But the most serious effect in any attempt to get members of churches to accept criticisms of society lies in the way the importance of concepts are judged by their reception by the audience, and by the way what are perceived as the values of the audience determine any proposed actions. One example of this is the reception of the motion supporting conscientious objection, considered above. Another prime example was the attempt by the Logos Foundation, during the 1989 Queensland election, to push four particular topics of individual morality as more important than social morality. The rejection of this approach, even by evangelical churches, showed that in 1989 thinking had changed about the importance of various issues.

The evidence listed above shows that in many cases the attitude of the Convenor of the Committee charged with presenting resolutions to the Assembly has a major influence on which topics are mentioned. This is not unexpected, but it should serve as a warning to people who serve in this position in the future, to be aware of the many issues outside their own particular hobby horses.

When the resolutions passed over a number of years are considered as a whole, it can be seen that the actual wording of the motions varies considerably, depending on the topic. There are some social issues which do not affect most Baptists personally, such as consuming alcoholic beverages and gambling (though there are a number, some highly regarded, who do so indulge). Others, such as conscientious objection, and attitudes towards Aborigines and/or non-European migrants, affect Baptists in much the same manner as others in the community. Resolutions on the first type of topic have been quite strongly worded, some of them coming close to being defamatory. Those on the second type have been worded much more vaguely, and in some cases could even have come from a purely secular socially concerned organisation.

This indicates clearly how correct Mr Warriner was in 1944 when he accused Baptists of allowing their attitudes "... to be determined predominantly by selfish worldly concerns, or by class attitudes". The most recent example of this (and outside the period discussed here) was the reaction to remarks made by the General Superintendent just before the 1989 State election. He joined with other heads of churches in saying that corruption was a vital issue in the election, and was backed up by the President of the Union, Rev. Norm Weston, who said¹³⁹:

We are undoubtedly concerned about the moral issues raised by the Logos Foundation but our concern goes beyond that to the area of corruption.

We are very concerned about the corruption that occurs in the political scene and I believe corruption will become the main issue in the minds of people in the lead-up to the election.

Many Baptists were critical of this, some going so far as to say that he was advocating a vote for the Labor Party¹⁴⁰. Other Baptists supported the stand taken¹⁴¹. Mr Stallard was quite unrepentant. After mentioning that the importance of issues such as abortion, homosexuality and pornography should not be minimised he went on to say¹⁴²:

¹³⁹Jason Gagliardi, Corruption a key issue at election — churches. *The Courier-Mail*, November 6, 1989, pp. 1, 2. The quotation is from page 1.

¹⁴⁰L. & D. McLean, Letters to the Editor. *The Courier-Mail*, November 17, 1989, p. 8.

¹⁴¹K.G. Smith, Letters to the Editor. *The Courier-Mail*, November 24, 1989, p. 8.

¹⁴²F.W. Stallard: A Pastoral Letter from the General Superintendent. November 1989.

What has been a concern has been the way the Logos Foundation appeared to be drawing attention away from a major issue confronting all Queenslanders, regardless of one's political persuasion. That issue is the widespread corruption in society which has been exposed by the Fitzgerald Inquiry and which is complete anathema to an open, honest and effective government.

I stand by my statement that as Christians, we must participate with good conscience and open minds in the political process. This should include our support for the complete processes of the law to be carried through in regards to those who have found themselves coming under scrutiny by the Fitzgerald Inquiry.

This aspect of support for the conservative side of politics can be seen in many of the resolutions passed over the years. Those relating to the Vietnam War are typical, as is the failure to offer specific criticisms of the treatment of Aborigines in Queensland. The problems faced by anyone who tries to get conservative Christians to keep their politics from influencing their theology was described 15 years ago by the evangelical Anglican John Stott. He wrote¹⁴³:

Some Christians, however, do not limit their conservatism to their biblical theology. For the fact is that they are conservative by temperament. They are therefore conservative in their politics and in their social outlook, in their life-style, dress-style, hair-style, beard-style and every other kind of style you care to mention! They are not just stuck in the mud; the mud has set like concrete. Change of any kind is anathema to them.

The prime example of this is the approach to State Aid for non-State schools. This rumbled on for over 40 years, with much the same arguments being raised over and over again. It was not until a significant number of Baptists in Queensland were sending their own children to private schools that such resolutions were no longer brought forward. But here again, as Mr Warriner said in 1944, it may have been their own personal interests, rather than the interests of society as a whole, which affected their public statements.

It would be premature, particularly in view of the furore over corruption in Queensland mentioned above, to claim that there is now widespread interest in, and concern for, matters of social concern outside the traditional ones. But from the sample listed above of topics considered over the period from 1973 to 1989 it seems that a not insignificant number of Baptists in Queensland are showing more interest in a wider range of social issues. This can only be for the good of the denomination as a whole, and will lead to closer involvement in the problems facing society.

¹⁴³ John Stott: *Balanced Christianity*. Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1975. The quotation is from page 20, in the chapter "Conservative and Radical".

A Membership of Committee and Resolutions Presented to Assembly

Due to the incompleteness of records held in the Archives of the Baptist Union of Queensland it has not been possible to obtain complete information about the activities of the Committee responsible for consideration of social issues. The following list is as complete as the author has been able to make it. In cases where there appears to be a significant gap in the records, this is noted.

The list on the following pages gives, for each year from 1938 to 1973 inclusive, the following information:

1. The names of members of the Committee responsible for consideration of social issues, who were appointed at the Annual Assembly in that year; these are as printed in the annual *Yearbook* or obtained from other sources, usually minutes of meetings of the Union Council.
2. The pages in the *Yearbook* where a printed version of the report of the Committee may be found, for the twelve months up to June in that year: this is the report presented to the Assembly in that year. If the report is recorded as being printed in some other manner, this is noted.
3. The pages in the minute books where any resolutions relating to social issues are mentioned. Unless otherwise noted, all resolutions were passed.
4. A brief summary of the the topics covered by any resolutions. As well as resolutions brought to the Annual Assembly by the Committee, there are included other resolutions on social issues moved by officers of the Union or delegates to the Assembly.

There is also some miscellaneous information provided, which is felt worth including so that a fuller picture may be obtained.

1938: Committee members were: Mr A.E. Bickmore (Convenor); Revs W. Bell, A. Butler, P. Goodman, E.F. Heather, E.A. Kirkwood, S.M. Potter, T.C. Warriner, H.G. Weller; Messrs W.E. Bush, A.H. Richer, S. Carey Carter.

The reception of the report is recorded on page 158 of *Assembly Minutes 1934–1945*. It was resolved (see *Assembly Minutes 1934–1945*, page 163) that the report be printed in *The Queensland Baptist*, but, since no copies seem to have been preserved from these dates, it cannot be ascertained whether or not this was done.

No resolutions on social issues were passed at this Assembly.

1939: Committee members were: Mr A.E. Bickmore (Convenor); Revs W. Bell, A. Butler, P. Goodman, E.F. Heather, E.A. Kirkwood, T.C. Warriner; Messrs W.E. Bush, S. Carey Carter.

The report was apparently presented in duplicated form, since pages 184 and 185 of *Assembly Minutes 1934–1945* refer to its discussion and reception.

Resolutions may be found on pages 185–187 of *Assembly Minutes 1934–1945*. They cover: loyalty and admiration for the King; support for the Temperance League; support for the QATB for the introduction of voluntary contributions and its “decision to discontinue all forms of gambling as a means of obtaining funds”; and opposition to the Golden Casket.

A loose piece of paper between pages 189 and 190 of the same volume of *Assembly Minutes*, which also cover the 1939 assembly, is a carbon copy of a resolution opposing gambling in view of “the present state of war”. This may have been misplaced from the 1940 Assembly.

1940: Committee members were: Mr A.E. Bickmore (Convenor); Revs W. Bell, A. Butler, P. Goodman, E.F. Heather, E.A. Kirkwood, T.C. Warriner; Messrs W.E. Bush, S. Carey Carter.

The printed report may be found on pages 60–66 in *Yearbook 1940*.

On page 65 of this we read “ The resolutions which follow, include one expressing our views on the recent suggestion of proxy marriages and one relative to the British evacuee children”. However no such resolutions follow in the *Yearbook*. On pages 214, 230 and 231 of *Assembly Minutes 1934–1945* nine resolutions are listed as being passed. However they are listed by number only, and the text of the resolutions is missing. Apparently they were circulated in printed form.

1941: Committee members were: Mr A.E. Bickmore (Convenor); Revs A. Butler, E.F. Heather, G. Haughan, E.A. Kirkwood, T.C. Warriner; Messrs W.E. Bush, S. Carey Carter.

No report of the Committee appears to have been presented to the Assembly, nor were any resolutions on social issues passed.

1942: Committee members were: Mr A.E. Bickmore (Convenor); Revs A. Butler, G. Haughan, E.A. Kirkwood, T.C. Warriner; Mr C.G. Sweetman.

The report is not printed in *Yearbook 1942*. Apparently it was circulated in duplicated form.

Resolutions may be found on pages 275 and 276 of *Assembly Minutes 1934–1945*. They cover: loyalty to the King, support for his call to prayer, and sympathy for the

death of the Duke of Kent; the uselessness of prayer while disregarding the laws of God; a call for the abolition of horse and dog racing and betting; against alcohol; a call for a crusade for purity; protest against the extension of widow's pension to de facto widows.

1943: Committee members were: Mr A.E. Bickmore (Convenor); Revs A. Butler, E.A. Kirkwood, T.C. Warriner, H. White; Mr C.G. Sweetman.

There is no printed report of the committee in *Yearbook 1943*. However in the Report of the Council, on page 28, in a paragraph which refers to "moral purity", there is reference to the setting up of a "Provisional Committee" with representatives from "all the non-Roman churches and several other bodies ..."

Resolutions may be found on pages 289 and 290 of *Assembly Minutes 1934–1945*. They cover: temperance; support for the Temperance League; support for Sunday School teaching about temperance; urge Federal government not to relax restrictions on horse racing; urge State and Federal Governments to restrict gambling; moral landslide — urge parents to exercise more control over their children.

1944: Committee members were: Mr A.E. Bickmore (Convenor); Revs A. Butler, E.A. Kirkwood, W.W. Solomon; Mr C.G. Sweetman.

The printed report may be found on pages 72–79 in *Yearbook 1944*.

Resolutions may be found on pages ???–??? of *Assembly Minutes 1934–1945*. They cover:

temperance;

morals;

gambling;

1945: Committee members were: Mr A.E. Bickmore (Convenor); Revs A. Butler, A.J.M. Howard, E.A. Kirkwood, C.E. Martin, T.C. Warriner; Mr C.G. Sweetman.

The printed report may be found on pages 82–85 in *Yearbook 1945*.

Resolutions may be found on pages ???–??? of *Assembly Minutes 1934–1945*. They cover:

Victory minute (moved by convenor)

1946: Committee members were: Mr A.E. Bickmore (Convenor); Revs J.C. Farquhar, E.A. Kirkwood, T.C. Warriner; Mr C.G. Sweetman.

The printed report may be found on pages 89–91 in *Yearbook 1946*.

Resolutions may be found on pages ???–??? of *Assembly Minutes 1946–1954*. They cover: ?????; ?????; ?????.

1947: Committee members were: Mr A.E. Bickmore (Convenor); Revs J.C. Farquhar, E.A. Kirkwood, C.E. Martin, T.C. Warriner; Messrs F. Jones, J.F. Sullivan, C.G. Sweetman.

There is no printed report of the committee in *Yearbook 1947*.

Resolutions may be found on pages ???–??? of *Assembly Minutes 1946–1954*. They cover: ?????; ?????; ?????.

1948: Committee members were: Mr A.E. Bickmore (Convenor); Revs J.C. Farquhar, E.V. Marks, W.A. McKay, F.T. Smith, T.C. Warriner, H. White; Pastor J.F. Sullivan; Mr C.G. Sweetman.

The printed report may be found on pages 70–74 in *Yearbook 1948*.

Resolutions may be found on pages 91 and 92 of *Assembly Minutes 1946–1954*. They cover: drink driving; gambling; teenage delinquency; 40 hour week leading to a “secularised Lord’s Day”; materialism; opposition to a proposed hotel to be run by Brisbane City Council if liquor available; opposition to wet canteens in trainee military camps; and deploring the action of the Premier in releasing from prison men convicted of picketing.

1949: Committee members were: Mr A.E. Bickmore (Convenor); Revs A.E. Kirkwood, J.H. Knights, E.V. Marks, W.A. McKay, F.T. Smith, H. White; Pastor J.F. Sullivan; Mr C.G. Sweetman.

The printed report may be found on pages 85–90 in *Yearbook 1949*.

Resolutions may be found on pages 123 and 124 of *Assembly Minutes 1946–1954*. They cover: drinking; gambling; opposition to strikes and support for arbitration; opposition to the “White Australia” policy and support for a quota system; urging removal of “everything which threatens religious liberty or the freedom of individual conscience”; Sunday observance.

1950: Committee members were: Mr A.E. Bickmore (Convenor); Revs P.T. Evans, A.E. Kirkwood, J.H. Knights, E.V. Marks, W.A. McKay, F.T. Smith, T.C. Warriner, H. White; Mr C.G. Sweetman.

The printed report may be found on pages 94–98 in *Yearbook 1950*.

Resolutions may be found on pages 161, 162, 173 and 174 of *Assembly Minutes 1946–1954*. They cover: support for the Temperance league; wet canteens; drink driving; opposition to the Golden Casket; support for blessing the plough; Queensland Rugby Union Sunday fixtures; united action on righteousness and holiness; and opposition to a licensed hotel to be established by TAA at the airport.

1951: Committee members were: Mr A.E. Bickmore (Convenor); Revs A.E. Kirkwood, E.V. Marks, W.A. McKay, F.T. Smith, H. White; Mr C.G. Sweetman.

The printed report may be found on pages 94–97 in *Yearbook 1951*.

Resolutions may be found on page 194 of *Assembly Minutes 1946–1954*. They cover: support for local option; protection of women and children against drunks; opposition to speed boats on the Brisbane River on Sundays; support for the Lord’s Day Observance Society; concern at increase in criminal tendencies in society; and opposition to the White Australia policy, with suggestion that it be replaced by some quota system.

1952: Committee members were: Mr A.E. Bickmore (Convenor); Revs A.E. Kirkwood, E.V. Marks, W.A. McKay, F.T. Smith, H. White; Mr C.G. Sweetman.

The printed report may be found on pages 93–98 in *Yearbook 1952*.

Resolutions may be found on pages 230–232 of *Assembly Minutes 1946–1954*. They cover: commendation for work of the Temperance League; gambling; opposition to off-course betting; housing camps — urged Government to provide homes for families;

support for the Lord's Day Observance Society; concern over pornographic books, magazines, pamphlets and films; opposition to State aid; and call for stricter censorship at both State and Federal level.

1953: Committee members were: Mr A.E. Bickmore (Convenor); Revs A.E. Kirkwood, E.V. Marks, W.A. McKay, F.T. Smith, H. White; Mr C.G. Sweetman.

The printed report may be found on pages 90 and 91 in *Yearbook 1953*.

Resolutions may be found on pages 257–259 of *Assembly Minutes 1946–1954*. They cover: opposition to off-course betting; support for the Road Safety Council and opposition to drink-driving; call for stronger censorship; commendation to the Army for giving National Service trainees opportunities to attend church services; and opposition to State Aid.

1954: Committee members were: Mr A.E. Bickmore (Convenor); Revs R.W. Brown, J.C. Farquhar, E.V. Marks, T.C. Warriner, H. White; Mr C.G. Sweetman.

The printed report may be found on pages 90–94 in *Yearbook 1954*.

Resolutions may be found on pages 281–283 of *Assembly Minutes 1946–1954*. They cover: support for the Temperance League; concern over the increasing use of alcohol; opposition to the White Australia policy (an amendment expressing support for SEATO was lost); support for the Queensland Council of Churches' opposition to betting shops; gambling; juvenile delinquency and sexual immorality among teenagers; support for the Objectionable Literature Act; and support for the Lord's Day Observance Society.

1955: Committee members were: Mr A.E. Bickmore (Convenor); Revs R.W. Brown, J.C. Farquhar, E.V. Marks, H. White; Messrs R.J. Morris, C.G. Sweetman.

The printed report may be found on pages 97–100 in *Yearbook 1955*.

Resolutions may be found on pages ???–??? of *Assembly Minutes 1955–1962*. They cover:

recent years free of war ????

drink driving; drinking generally; Sunday observance; State aid; gambling; and opposition to SP betting shops.

1956: Committee members were: Rev H. White (Secretary); Revs R.W. Brown, C.L. Miller, M.E. Peck; Mr R.J. Morris.

The printed report may be found on pages 101–103 in *Yearbook 1956*. It records the death of Mr A.E. Bickmore, the previous Convenor of the Committee.

Resolutions may be found on pages 88 and 89 of *Assembly Minutes 1955–1962*. They cover: opposition to Federal assistance with interest repayments by non-State schools; general opposition to Federal aid to non-State schools; drink driving; drinking generally; support for public hearings before the Licensing Commission; under age drinking; reduction in the alcohol content of liquor; gambling; children selling Art Union tickets; support for a police raid on a bingo hall; film censorship; support for Menzies over Suez; and opposition to Queensland funds for non-State schools.

1957: Committee members were: Rev H. White (Convenor); Revs R.W. Brown, R.E. Jarrott, W.W. Solomon; Mr R.J. Morris.

The printed report may be found on pages 104–108 in *Yearbook 1957*.

Resolutions may be found on pages 113–115 of *Assembly Minutes 1955–1962*. They cover: opposition to the banning of a film offensive to RCs; Sunday sport; under-age drinking; support for public hearings before the Licensing Commission; and request that committee investigate the production of non-alcoholic beverage “with a view to making its sale popular among young men”.

1958: Committee members were: Rev H. White (Convenor); Revs R.W. Brown, R.E. Jarrott, W.W. Solomon; Messrs R.J. Morris, S.T. Sparrow.

The printed report may be found on pages 108–112 in *Yearbook 1958*.

Resolutions may be found on pages 155 and 156 of *Assembly Minutes 1955–1962*. They cover: drink driving; opposition to beer gardens; breaches of the Liquor Act; integration of Aborigines into society; Sunday films; and criminal tendencies in society.

1959: Committee members were: Rev H. White (Convenor); Revs R.W. Brown, R.E. Jarrott, W.W. Solomon; Messrs R.J. Morris, S.T. Sparrow.

The printed report may be found on pages 107–112 in *Yearbook 1959*.

Resolutions may be found on pages 185 and 186 of *Assembly Minutes 1955–1962*. They cover: drink driving; local option; stricter censorship, especially in matters relating to sex; and reduction of alcohol content of beer.

1960: Committee members were: Revs A.J.M. Howard, W.K. Holmans, W.W. Solomon, N.E. Weston, J.E. White; Mrs M. Morcom; Mr S.T. Sparrow. No Convenor is given.

The printed report may be found on pages 124–129 in *Yearbook 1960*. It is described as “Prepared by Rev R.W. Brown”. It contains a copy of the manifesto on religious liberty adopted by the Tenth Congress of the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Rio de Janeiro on 30th June 1960.

Resolutions may be found on pages 223–225 of *Assembly Minutes 1955–1962*. They cover: State aid; gambling; drink driving and banning children from beer gardens; Sunday sport and trading; support for the Literature Board of Review; and make people aware of the dangers of obscene literature.

1961: Committee members were: Rev A.J.M. Howard (Convenor); Revs W.K. Holmans, G.W. Martin, N.W. Mergard, W.W. Solomon, N.E. Weston, J.E. White; Mrs M. Morcom; Mr S.T. Sparrow.

The printed report may be found on pages 131–135 in *Yearbook 1961*.

Resolutions may be found on pages ???–??? of *Assembly Minutes 1955–1962*. They cover: drinking; State aid; support for Bischof (Police Commissioner); gambling; Sunday observance; peace and disarmament; and a request to set up a Committee to prepare a case against provision of State aid.

1962: Committee members were: Rev A.J.M. Howard (Convenor); Revs W.K. Holmans, G.W. Martin, N.W. Mergard, W.W. Solomon, N.E. Weston, J.E. White; Mr S.T. Sparrow.

The printed report may be found on pages 120–123 in *Yearbook 1962*. Resolutions may be found on pages 303–305 of *Assembly Minutes 1955–1962*. They cover: Sunday observance; against Racism; gambling; drinking; State aid (2 resolutions); and a request for the incoming Executive to prepare a statement on State aid.

1963: Committee members were: Rev A.J.M. Howard (Convenor); Revs W.K. Holmans, N.W. Mergard, W.W. Solomon, N.E. Weston, J.E. White; Mr S.T. Sparrow.

The printed report may be found on pages 123–127 in *Yearbook 1963*.

Resolutions may be found on pages ???–??? of *Assembly Minutes 1962–1970*. They cover:

alcohol;
gambling;
racism;
State aid;
censorship;

1964: Committee members were: Rev A.J.M. Howard (Convenor); Revs W.K. Holmans, J.H. Knights, W.W. Solomon, N.H.J. Suffolk, J.E. White; Mr S.T. Sparrow.

The printed report may be found on pages 130–134 in *Yearbook 1964*. The separate report on State Aid to non-State schools is on pages 132–134 of *Yearbook 1964*.

Resolutions may be found on pages ???–??? of *Assembly Minutes 1962–1970*. They cover:

alcohol;
gambling;
racism;
support for the National League of Welfare and Decency;
State aid;

1965: Committee members were: Rev A.J.M. Howard (Convenor); Revs N.P. Jones, J.H. Knights, W.W. Solomon, N.H.J. Suffolk, J.E. White; Mesdames M. Eagle, M. Morcom; Messrs S.T. Sparrow, C.G. Sweetman.

The printed report may be found on pages 126–129 in *Yearbook 1965*.

Resolutions may be found on pages ???–??? of *Assembly Minutes 1962–1970*. They cover:

alcohol;
gambling;
support for the National League of Welfare and Decency;
racism;
opposition to bare-top dancers;

1966: Committee members were: Rev A.J.M. Howard (Convenor); Revs N.P. Jones, J.H. Knights, W.W. Solomon, N.H.J. Suffolk, J.E. White; Mrs R. Eagle; Messrs S.T. Sparrow, C.G. Sweetman.

The printed report may be found on pages 137 and 138 in *Yearbook 1966*.

Resolutions may be found on pages ???–??? of *Assembly Minutes 1962–1970*. They cover:

alcohol;
gambling;
racism;

opposition to State aid — this was referred back to the Committee for further discussion, a report to be brought to the next Assembly;

1967: Committee members were: Rev A.J.M. Howard (Convenor); Revs N.P. Jones, J.H. Knights, W.W. Solomon, N.H.J. Suffolk, J.E. White; Mrs R. Eagle; Messrs S.T. Sparrow, C.G. Sweetman.

The printed report may be found on pages 150–153 in *Yearbook 1967*.

Resolutions may be found on pages 205–207 of *Assembly Minutes 1962–1970*. They cover: alcohol; tobacco; drugs; racism; gambling; support for the Temperance League; and support for the League of National Welfare and Decency.

1968: Committee members were: Dr N.W. Jacobsen (Convenor); Revs A.J.M. Howard, N.P. Jones, D. Kassel; Pastor E. Davidson; Dr L.G. Knott; Mrs R. Eagle; Mr C.G. Sweetman.

The printed report may be found on pages 151–153 in *Yearbook 1968*.

Resolutions may be found on pages 237–239 of *Assembly Minutes 1962–1970*. They cover: alcohol; the breathalyser; racism; gambling; and support for the National League of Welfare and Decency.

Premier ???

State Aid — this one was referred to the Union Council and the 1969 Assembly

1969: Committee members were:

The printed report may be found on pages 159–160 in *Yearbook 1969*. It gives Dr N.W. Jacobsen as Convenor.

Resolutions may be found on pages 261 and 262 of *Assembly Minutes 1962–1970*. They cover: support for the NHMRC's Report condemning smoking; alcohol; the lack of involvement of Baptists in social issues; and support for the Temperance League and the National League of Welfare and Decency. There was also a resolution requesting the Committee to look at censorship, conscientious objection and student unrest, prostitution and free love.

1970: Committee members were: Rev A.J.M. Howard (Convenor); Revs N.P. Jones, D. Kassel; Drs N.W. Jacobsen, L.J.L. Sands; Mesdames H. Bardwell, R. Eagle; Messrs K. Fielding, K.G. Smith, C.G. Sweetman.

The printed report may be found on pages 154–158 in *Yearbook 1970*.

Resolutions may be found on pages 21–23 of *Assembly Minutes 1970–1975*. They cover: alcohol; censorship; gambling; sexual morality;

opposition to casinos ???;

and racism. There was also a resolution requesting the Committee to consider the full implications of the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Act. In a subsequent session at the Assembly a "Special Conscience Resolution" was passed (*Assembly Minutes, 1970–1975, p. 35*) supporting freedom of conscience.

1971: Committee members were: Rev A.J.M. Howard (Convenor); Revs R.E. Jarrott, N.P. Jones, R.J. O'Neill; Drs N.W. Jacobsen, L.G. Knott, L.J.L. Sands; Messrs K. Fielding, K.G. Smith, C.G. Sweetman.

The printed report may be found on page 100 in *Yearbook 1971*.

Resolutions may be found on pages 64–66 and 72–74 of *Assembly Minutes 1970–1975*. They cover: circulation of information and discussion papers; alcohol and drugs; criticism of the speedy passage of legislation in State Parliament; national military service (this one was not passed, but referred back to the churches for discussion); Christian family life; abortion; religious liberty and human rights; sex education in State schools; and books set for reading in State schools.

1972: Committee members were: Rev A.J.M. Howard (Convenor); Revs R.E. Jarrott, N.P. Jones, R.J. O'Neill; Dr L.J.L. Sands.

The printed report may be found on pages 119 and 120 in *Yearbook 1972*.

Resolutions may be found on pages 130–132 of *Assembly Minutes 1970–1975*. They cover: alcohol; the breathalyser; gambling generally; poker machines; and racism.

See also pages 105, 106 in *Assembly Minutes* for other resolutions ???

State aid — lost

1973: Committee members were: Revs L.A. Maycock, N.P. Jones, R.J. O'Neill; Dr N.W. Jacobsen.

The printed report may be found on pages 31 and 32 in *Yearbook 1973*. It mentions Rev A.J.M. Howard as Convenor.

No resolutions were passed at the Assembly, but “urgent” ones were referred to the Union Council. They may be found in the *Minutes of the Union Council* for September 27, 1973. They cover: alcohol; gambling; poker machines; and racism.

B Resolutions and Motions on Social Issues, 1971 Assembly

The following is a full list of the resolutions and motions passed under the umbrella of the Social Questions Division of the Department of Community Service at the 1971 Assembly of the Baptist Union of Queensland. They can be found on pages 64–66 and 72–74 of the Minute Book of the Assembly for 1970–1975.

1. Information and Discussion Papers

That we approve *in principle* the printing of papers prepared by the Department of Community Services — Social Questions Division and their distribution to the Churches, and that this be implemented through the Department of Community Services, the Executive Committee and the Union Council.

2. Alcohol and Drugs

Baptists view with deep loving concern the devastation caused in the lives of those people who, are dependent on Alcohol and Drugs. We emphasise the culpability of individuals and organisations who, for personal; gain, push these things on to members of the community.

We press for more intelligent and scientifically guided legislation to prevent and minimise the effects of these things, and for better facilities for the care and treatment of alcoholic and drug victims in separate institutions, apart from mental hospitals. We believe the Church should be given an opportunity to participate in the Government-subsidised treatment of these unfortunates, as it does with the care of the Aged and Children.

3. The Legislative Process

We, the representatives of the Baptist Churches of Queensland hereby submit that the full content and text of any legislation which contemplated by the Government, which is not of a highly urgent and/or confidential nature, should be published at least one month prior to the first reading of the Bill in Parliament.

We submit that legislation enacted in secret is a denial of the structures of democracy, and a reversal of the procedures by which members of Parliament are openly elected by their constituents to represent them. We further submit that once such secretly introduced legislation becomes law, the only alternatives offered to society are complete submission on one hand, and civil disobedience and lawbreaking on the other. This could eventually emerge as them forcing of the will of a person or a Party by law so enacted upon the whole state or nation, and could become the very tap-root of tyranny.

We believe that Christians, as individuals, should become more deeply involved in the political and public affairs of their community, in order that Christian principles may find wider expression in future legislation.

4. National Military Service

We submit that National Military Service for Home defence should legitimately be regarded as the responsibility of a Christian citizen. Enforced military service outside Australia in support of what he regards as misguided involvement, is something which the Christian can legitimately and conscientiously refuse.

If a Christian young man takes the view that he should refuse enforced overseas service on conscientious grounds, his stand should evoke the understanding, sympathy and friendship of other Christians.

5. *Christian Family Life*

We commend to all people the advantages of Christian family life. We believe that the future behaviour of our children is largely determined by the love and discipline bestowed on them by their parents, and by the example set by the parents in their attitudes towards each other, and towards those with whom they come into daily contact. We suggest that all Baptist families set aside a regular time for family worship, teaching, and frank and open discussion on all subjects, thereby making the family unit the basis for Christian education.

6. *Abortion*

This Assembly views with concern the increasing agitation for reform of the laws relating to abortion. We wish to make clear the following points —

1. Legislators must always remember their duty to protect the rights of the weak and innocent.
2. The sanctity of human life must always be remembered and preserved.
3. Destruction of a foetus should be permitted only for extreme circumstances, where there is no other reasonable alternative, for the preservation of the physical and mental health of the mother.
4. While recognising that there are genuine psychiatric grounds for abortion, the attention of legislators is drawn to the fact that in places where the Abortion Laws have been liberalised, psychiatric indications are most open to abuse, and have been used to justify abortion for the most trivial reasons. Any change in our present laws must strongly and effectively guard against this possibility.
5. We cannot accept abortion for socio-economic reasons as being morally justifiable. A Government agency should be created with power and ability to provide adequate counselling and finance to deal with any possible socio-economic reason which would otherwise be claimed as a ground for abortion.
6. Under no circumstances can abortion be accepted as a means of birth control; nor can we accept "abortion on demand", as either a theoretical right of a woman, or as a practical philosophy on which abortion laws are based.
7. In many instances where Abortion Laws have been liberalised in other places, more problems have been created by the legislation than have been solved. Our present law in Queensland is not perfect, but the utmost care should be exercised by legislators to ensure that any proposed change is really for the better, from the points of view of morality, ethics, medicine, biology, theology, philosophy and practical living. Unless we can be reassured on this, we prefer the present law.

7. *Manifesto on Religious Liberty and Human Rights*

(Adopted by the B.W.A. Congress, June 27, 1965).

1. We thank God for the great opportunities given to many men, women and children for a full, healthy, and free life; for the increasing mastery over the powers

- of nature and their use for the common good; for new facilities for education, communication and travel; for the decrease of discrimination because of race or creed; and for greater civil and religious liberty in many parts of the world.
2. We reaffirm our faith that the gospel of God's free salvation in His Son, Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, is for all man, without distinction, and that today as in previous generations it speaks to man's every need, convicting, redeeming, transforming, guarding the human spirit and requiring the ending of exploitation and tyranny, and the provision of full opportunities for its free acceptance and for worship, witness and service.
 3. We suffer with our generation in and through the neglect of God and preoccupation with selfish ends; in the misuse of many opportunities and powers; in failure adequately to mobilize human and material resources to meet men's needs; in acquiescence in policies which deny basic human rights and bring suffering to individuals and communities; in lack of concern for those driven from their homes, imprisoned for conscience sake, and stunted in body, mind and spirit.
 4. We appeal to our fellow Baptists and our fellow Christians everywhere to show concern in these matters; to study what the teaching of Christ implies for human freedom and dignity; to manifest this in their relations with one another, both individual and corporate, and to interpret to the world the reconciling and liberating message of God's love. We appeal to the governments of all lands, not only to preserve law and order, but also to recognize and guarantee religious and civil liberty and the right of men to maintain or change religious allegiance and freely to worship, witness, teach, and serve.

8. *Sex Education in State Schools*

The Social Questions Division be asked to report through the Department of Community Service and Executive Committee to the Council on this matter, with a view to supporting a Christian viewpoint on this subject.

9. *Questionable books set for reading in State Schools*

Resolved to ask the Social Questions Division to report on this through the Department of Community Service to the Executive and Council, with a view to maintaining high moral standards.

C Phil Hancox on Peace: The 1972 Assembly

Phil Hancox's autobiographical record of events just before his induction as President of the Baptist Union of Queensland in 1972 ¹⁴⁴.

What more appropriate theme could occupy the minds of Assembly delegates in those troubled times than that of "Peace". My search through the records revealed that only once during the 95 years of Queensland Baptist history had this word been used in the subject of a presidential address, and then, in a restricted sense.

That was it! The theme of the Assembly would be "Peace". The subject of the address would be "The Price of Peace". Many matters calling for attention could now be finalised. Assembly programmes, advertising brochures and other literature demanded careful preparation. As with other types of conventions, it was customary to have the theme of the Assembly painted attractively, and placed above and at the back of the pulpit/platform.

"Yes, that would be easy enough for the promotions committee to handle. We could have the one word 'Peace' in the centre, with two or three doves painted each side. Splendid!" So I thought!

What a surprise awaited me when I approached the senior minister of the City Church where the Assembly is always held.

"You can't have a sign 'Peace' stuck up there in the Church", he said, with such a look of surprise that I should be so naive as to introduce such a "subversive" idea.

"Why not?" I persisted.

"Well, I'm not sure our deacons wouldn't wonder whether our Church was sponsoring a Communist's Conference," he said in a tone that gave me no confidence to pursue the matter.

"God help us!" I replied. "Are you saying that the word "Peace" must be eliminated from the Christian vocabulary and transferred to the Communists for their exclusive use?"

"I don't know about that, but I do know that this Church would never consent to having the sign "Peace" stuck up there behind the pulpit."

It was no use my "kicking against the pricks" any further, but I determined there and then that in my address on "Peace" I would make some passing reference to the misuse of that word.

¹⁴⁴Phil Hancox: *Cavalry or Calvary?*, Christians For Peace, West End, Brisbane, 1984. P. 103.

D Submission to Select Committee on Education, 1978

The following is a listing of all the topics covered in the submission by the Baptist Union of Queensland to the Select Committee on Education in Queensland (the Ahern Committee)¹⁴⁵. This submission was prepared by the Department of Youth and Christian Education, even though a number of topics mentioned fall under the purview of the Social Questions Committee. It was approved by the Executive Committee of the Union.

1. Christianity and Humanism
2. Concern Regarding Indecent Literature on Reading and Text Book Lists
3. Sex Education
4. Discipline, Respect and Responsibility
5. Importance Placed on Marriage and Family Life
6. The Problem of the Practically Oriented Student and the Slow Learner
7. Religious Education in Schools
8. Human Relations Courses
9. Numeracy and Literacy
10. The School and the Community
11. The Teaching of Special Creation and Evolution in our Educational Institutions.

¹⁴⁵Baptist Union of Queensland, *Submission to the Select Committee Inquiring into Education in Queensland*, 1978.

Bibliography

This bibliography is divided into two parts. The first contains items preserved in the Archives of the Baptist Union of Queensland which have been approved by either the Union or one of its Committees, and thus may legitimately be regarded as having official status.

The second part consists of other items which were consulted during the preparation of this essay.

All items are arranged alphabetically by surname of the author, or by title for those where no author is given.

A. Baptist Union of Queensland Documents.

1. *Abortion*, 1972. Described as "A Resource Aid to Baptist Churches prepared by The Social Questions Division of the Department of Community Service".
2. *Annual Reports*. These, published separately since 1977, are the reports presented to the Annual Assembly in September each year.
3. *Handbook*. This, an annual publication since 1977, lists members of committees, ordained ministers, students in training, people who hold various offices in churches affiliated with the Union, and similar information.
4. *Homosexuality*, 1972. Described as "A Resource Aid to Baptist Churches prepared by The Social Questions Division of the Department of Community Service".
5. *Minutes of Annual Assembly*. These bound volumes contain the official minutes of the Annual Assembly meetings. Each volume contains those for several meetings, but any one Assembly may extend over two volumes.
6. *Minutes of Union Council*. These are the official minutes of the monthly (until September 1989) Union Council meetings.
7. *Submission to the Select Committee Inquiring into Education in Queensland*, 1978. Prepared by a sub-committee of the Union's Department of Youth and Christian Education.
8. *Yearbook*. Prior to 1977 the *Annual Reports* and *Handbook* were issued in combined form under this title. Delegates to the Annual Assembly received the reports in preliminary form, referred to as the "White Book", most issues of which do not seem to have been preserved in the Union Archives.

B. Other Items.

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20. Queensland, *The Objectionable Literature Acts, 1954–1967*.
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23. Stallard, F.W.: A Pastoral Letter from the General Superintendent. November 1989.
24. Stott, John: *Balanced Christianity*. Hodder and Stoughton, London 1975.
25. Vose, Heather: Australian Baptists in the 19th Century. Pp. 1–22 in *Australian Baptists Past and Present*, ed. Michael Petras. Baptist Historical Society of NSW, Eastwood, NSW, 1988. *Baptist Historical Studies*, No. 5.
26. White, John E.: *A Fellowship of Service: A History of the Baptist Union of Queensland 1877–1977*. Baptist Union of Queensland, Brisbane, 1977.