

LOCAL CHRISTIAN HISTORY

MT. REMARKABLE JUBILEE 150

ECUMENICAL CHURCH SERVICE. 1986

It does not take much searching to find evidence of the Christian heritage within the District Council of Mt. Remarkable proven simply by the quantity of church buildings scattered throughout.

But a look through various history books of the area finds that Christianity goes deeper than these church buildings although they do convey a measure of the convictions of the people. The Christianity of our forefathers was their lifestyle, their love for God and His word interwoven inseparably in their daily lives. The pioneers laboured from before dawn until after dark in heat and dust or wet and cold conditions. Surely Sunday would be only a day of rest, but, no, it was a day of worship and fellowship. It was a happy day.

It would seem that with the pioneers the Lord had his servants ministering alongside. A Jesuit priest from Austria, Father Aloysius Kranewitter, as early as the 1840's, was the first priest to minister to the Catholics of the northern sheep runs. The Jesuit priests from Seven Hill, among them Fathers Pallhuber and Tuppiener paid fairly frequent visits to the settlers from Clare to Blinman, rich and poor, Roman Catholic and Protestant alike. They rode thousands of miles in all weathers, visiting shepherds' and splitters' huts, comforting the sick, baptising the children, conducting marriages and funerals.

Bishop Short, an Anglican was another man who ministered to the people of the area. On one of his trips the Bishop was absent from home for six weeks having travelled 700 miles, visited 20

stations, 5 townships, 55 huts and preached to 738 people in 29 congregations in woolsheds, men's kitchens, and local courthouses. During this time he baptised 29 children, married 1 couple and confirmed 14 people. Those who attended the services were from all stations of life. From one such service in a woolshed situated somewhere between White Park and the Bridle Track near Melrose he recorded: "... rode along the hills for a view-at 6 service 17 people attended, shearers very attentive Back at dusk with a good gallop."

The 1870's saw much activity in the establishment of places of worship. Prior to this services were held in homes, woolsheds, town halls, courtrooms, hotels, on the back of a waggon - generally wherever appropriate. For instance, in Wirrabara, every Saturday evening the Salvation Army Band would march down the streets to the beat of the drum to hold an open air meeting outside the hotel.

At Appila West the Bible Christians used Mr. Noah Clack's house for services and Mr. J. Sanders at White Cliffs. At Mr. George Hollit's house at Wirrabara the meetings were so well attended that on a nice moonlight even-

ing there would be more people out on the back verandah than in the dining room. Mr. Hollit's dining room was the historic room in which Mr. George, a missionary of the Bible Christian Church, said that if they could get the right man to start a general store at the crossroads (where Booleroo Centre is now situated) it would be a better proposition to build a Bible Christian Church there rather than at White Cliffs. There is validity in Mr. George's claim to be the founder of Booleroo Centre. Mr. Dyer the first store owner was found and arrived in December, 1878 for preliminary work. This comment of Mr. George indicates that Booleroo Centre was founded primarily for the establishment of the Christian faith. Their church building was erected in 1879.

Information gathered from all towns in the district shows that an exercise in inter-denominational co-operation ensued. As buildings began to be erected one church group would hold services in the morning and a different group in the afternoon or evening.

At Appila West the settlers were of various denominations; Church of England, Presbyterian, Bible Christian, Wesleyan, Primitive Methodist, Lutheran and Roman Catholic. To erect one church under so many ideas was almost impossible, so they erected a building in the name of trustees to be used as a school during the week and a place of worship on Sunday, with the trustees having complete control.

The Lutherans stemmed from Prussia and came north from the Adelaide area in the early 1870's. Since these Lutherans had left their homeland because of religious persecution it was natural that freedom to worship God should receive first consideration in their new country.

The first church services at Pt. Germein were often conducted by the Captains of the vessels and around the 1870's it is known that they were held in the homes of Captains Mortuse, Kincome and Murdock. A small paling hut and the dining room of the Pier Hotel, now known as the Beach Cafe were also used. The first ministers were the Reverend

Sampson and Corvain of the Methodist and Church of England churches respectively. As a point of interest, the sea Captains were also known to have blessed the produce before it went on its journey.

It is clear that the founders of Christianity in this local district area were men of prayer and strong in spirit, uncompromising with sin in any of its subtleties.

Towards the end of the late 1880's each church group had erected a place for worship, and from that time these have been extended and remodelled as the need has arisen. Some of them are still in use today and many have descendants from the original families still attending.

We are at the close of the Grain Trade Re-Enactment having dedicated a full weekend celebrating our history. For what purpose do we look back on history but to learn from it.

Individually our Christian history began when we received Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Saviour. The Bible tells us that He chose us before the foundation of the world.

So we know that Australia's
Christian history has been
conceived in the mind of God
since before the foundation of
the world.

As we seek to learn from it
let us go with hope to the
Source of all history and
seek His direction for the
future.

Information gathered from Local History Books.

No Other Foundation: Jesus Christ

