

THE HISTORY OF THE PARKDALE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The first record of Christians who were interested in commencing a Church of Christ Fellowship in Mentone or Parkdale was with thirty-one people who lived in the district and contacted each other to come to a meeting on Thursday 10th February 1921. Twenty-two were members at Cheltenham with the others still in membership with Churches of Christ elsewhere although attending local Churches. The Meeting resolved to hold a Worship and Communion Service on Sunday the 20th February 1921 in the home of Mr & Mrs Hayes in Florence Street Mentone. (1)

Another meeting was held the following Thursday the 24th February when it was agreed to arrange all of their memberships to be transferred to commence a new Church Fellowship at Mentone. The next Meeting was called for Monday night the **18th April 1921** and a Worship Service for the following **Sunday the 24th April 1921** when the **31 Foundation Members** would change their membership to the new Church. At that Sunday Service they were duly received into the Fellowship and formed the new Mentone-Parkdale Church of Christ. They met in the Mentone Mechanics Institute and later in the old Recreation Hall on the Mentone Reserve that is now occupied by the Elderly Citizens Club.



Thomas Henry Parkes who had acted as Secretary for the previous meetings accepted the position as the first Secretary of the new Church. It was a position he held for seven years until his health became so bad that he had to resign. He also accepted the position of Agent for the Churches of Christ magazine called "The Christian!" It was decided to name the new Church the **Mentone-Parkdale Church of Christ.** (2)

It is interesting to note that six members of the Parkes family were represented in the **31 Foundation members.** **Thomas Henry Parkes** pictured left, his wife **Mary Ann** right and two of their sons, **Allan Eldridge** and **Frederick Stanley**, as well as their daughter **Constance** with her husband **Harold James Rees.** They were all to play an important and active role as the history of the new Church unfolded, Thomas as foundation Secretary for seven

years. Mary Ann led the Kindergarten for many years and was a very active leader in the Women's Guild. Constance was born on the 12th of March 1891 at Collingwood and commenced School at Glenferrie. She married Harold James Rees on the 6th of November 1915 at the Hawthorn Church of Christ Glenferrie Road Hawthorn where her father Thomas was Secretary for 12 years before the family moved to Cheltenham Church of Christ. Constance was Organist and Pianist for the Church for most of her life. Harold Rees became Treasurer of the Church in 1929 for 3 years and immediately after that served as Secretary for 27 years in two different periods. Allan Parkes was Auditor for the Church finances for many years and Treasurer for 4 years then an Elder. Right is a photograph of the time of Mary Ann Parkes.



In the months that followed the setting up of the new Church during 1921, the Secretary Thomas Parkes was given the responsibility of seeking out a suitable section of land on which they could build a Chapel. He found some land in Como Parade West that measured 132 feet wide and with a depth of 320 feet, and the Church bought it from a Mrs Sarah Phillips of Mordialloc for 500 pounds. The sale price was low provided that the land was used to build a church. A loan was negotiated from the E. S. & A. Bank at Cheltenham with a deposit of 50 pounds and the balance over 5 years at an interest rate of 6% p.a. and the Bank then held the deeds. The Churches of Christ Extension Committee became the Guarantor for the loan. (3)

The 31 Foundation Members who transferred in to form the Mentone-Parkdale Church of Christ were as follows:

Mr Alexander William Bradley	from Cheltenham
Mrs Myrtle Florence Bradley	from Cheltenham
Mr Percy John Osborne Bryce	from Cheltenham
Mrs Mary Bryce	from Cheltenham
Miss Ivy Clarice Bryce	from Cheltenham
Mr Frank Gilbert Chipperfield	from Fairfield Park
Mrs Beatrice Emma Chipperfield	from Fairfield Park
Mrs Rosa Dawes	from Cheltenham
Miss Rosa Dawes	from Cheltenham
Mrs Elizabeth Green	from Cheltenham
Miss Sarah Nuttall Green	from Cheltenham
Mrs Eva Agnes Hayes	from Cheltenham
Miss Alice May Hayes	from Cheltenham
Mr J. P. L. Janssen	from Swanston Street
Mrs Margaret Janssen	from Swanston Street
Miss Naja Alice Janssen	from Swanston Street
Mrs Ada Angela Johnson	from North Richmond
Mrs Edith Marriott	from Cheltenham
Mr Thomas Henry Parkes	from Cheltenham
Mrs Mary Ann Parkes	from Cheltenham
Mr Allan Eldridge Parkes	from Cheltenham
Mr Frederick Stanley Parkes	from Cheltenham
Mrs Gladys Victoria Edith Plumridge	from Cheltenham
Mrs Katherine Pritchard	from Cheltenham
Mr Harold James Rees	from Hawthorn
Mrs Constance Annie Rees	from Hawthorn
Mr Richard William Sones	from Cheltenham
Mrs Lydia Newsom Sones	from Cheltenham
Mr William George Sones	from Cheltenham
Mr George Dixon Erwin Tease	from Cheltenham
Miss Hilda Marion Isabel Tease	from Cheltenham (4)

With the land now available the fellowship commenced looking at whether or not to build a Chapel. In February 1922 **Edwin Gullock** and his wife joined the group of worshippers by transferring their membership from Swanston Street Church of Christ. On becoming aware of the situation he came up with a plan for a building. It seems that he was the sole Trustee of the disused Christian Fellowship building in country Victoria at Buninyong that is slightly south east of Ballarat, having been a member there before coming to Melbourne. He proposed that they dismantle it and transport it to Parkdale and re-erect it on the land in Como Parade West. The offer was gratefully accepted and Alex Bradley was given the responsibility of organizing it with the help of **J. M. Gilmour** who had joined the Fellowship in September 1921 from Cheltenham of Christ. A series of working bees followed and eventually the huge proposal was completed during late 1922. It was a Church building with dimensions of 39 by 20 feet that would accommodate about 120 seated people. (5)

OPENING CELEBRATIONS AND THE FIRST CONVERTS

The building was opened over two days of celebrations on **Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th of April 1923** with the building packed out and an overflow present. Three dozen communion glasses were donated by Cheltenham Church to add to their own to accommodate the numbers. The very first confession of faith in Christ was made in this new Fellowship on either that Sunday or the next.

A young lady by the name of **Myrtle Hodgson** who became Mrs Gordon Smith came to the front of the Meeting and witnessed to her conversion, but she then had to wait several weeks for baptism until the baptistery was completed. When it was finished she and two others, **Beuda Kenna** and **Geoff Bryce** were baptized by **Bro P. R. Baker** of Cheltenham. From Mentone-Parkdale the name was changed to **Parkdale Church of Christ**. There was definite interest in the local community and others were added to the membership as the new buildings were utilized and slowly the numbers increased. With great enthusiasm volunteers were recruited and a Sunday School was commenced with Bro Percy J. O. Bryce as Superintendent.

There was a lot of interest in holding a Tent Mission and in fact two Missions were conducted during 1923 by **Evangelist P. R. Baker** with **Bro. Val Woff** as Songleader and as a result 23 new members were baptized. The Tent was erected on land right opposite the Parkdale Railway Station. Slowly others joined the Fellowship by transferring their membership as well as many being admitted through Faith and Baptism. During the year of 1923 their numbers increased from the original 31 Foundation members until there were 79 on the roll. The first Preacher was **Bro Alex Wilson** for a short while and then **Bro Wedd** was engaged part time to preach and care for members and given 4 pounds a week for expenses. (6)

In the first few early years of the Church in it's infancy the various preachers who occupied the pulpit each Sunday indicates a list of men who later became very well known in the Brotherhood. They included several of the Foundation members **Thomas Henry Parkes**, **Percy John Bryce**, and **George Tease**. Others were **James E. Thomas**, **Alan Wedd**, **Robert Lyle**, **Sydney Mudge**, **J. M. Abercrombie**, **W. B. Blakemore**, **Alex Wilson**, **P. R. Baker**, **Harold Priestly** and quite a number of Students from the College of the Bible. **Howard Earle** who was a Student was the first regular

Minister or Preacher as they were then called, and was appointed part time. (6)



The lack of finance was the biggest problem to be overcome in the early years as it seems the members of the Fellowship were without jobs, older and on limited means, or on low wages, and consequently the Church suffered. Many different money raising plans and projects were used to assist in servicing the loans taken out and for other work that was carried out on the buildings. During 1924 many members made loans to the Church to help, some were quite substantial. This picture is a photograph taken in 1924.

They commenced several funds. A Building Fund and promises were received to the value of 110 pounds. A Mutual Fund, and a Fund to help pay the interest on the Bank Loan. The women conducted Snowball afternoons and Fete's that were all successful in raising money. To enable more regular giving it was decided to adopt the envelope system for weekly offerings. With all of this giving, the total liabilities were soon surprisingly reduced to 364 pounds.

There is no record of what sort of lighting was used in those early months, but in 1924 gas was installed in the Church with a note in one journal that says it was "for illumination and other purposes!" The normal gas meter that was installed was changed a few months later after it was found to be impractical. After much negotiation with the Mordialloc Council it was changed to a meter that was activated by putting a penny in the slot as it was used. (7)

FURTHER BUILDING ENLARGEMENTS AND ELECTRICITY

Several improvements were carried out to the building in the following years. A shed was erected at the rear for supplies and other materials. The building was enlarged in 1925 to accommodate a Kindergarten room at a cost of 450 pounds. Financial promises were received to pay for it. It raised some funds as they rented it to the local Council to conduct a Baby Health Centre. The fact of the Council using the premises helped a great deal in water being laid on to the Church. Mordialloc Council did the work and installed a water meter and they charged one shilling for every 1,000 gallons used. This was most unsatisfactory to the Church and after much further negotiations the charge of 10 shillings a year was agreed upon.

In 1927 a further enlargement was carried out to the building to extend the kinder hall by 20 feet and general Insurance was obtained for the first time at a cost of two pounds, fourteen shillings per year. This started a new round of money raising by direct giving, "Snowball" afternoons, fetes and Sales of works. The Bank overdraft at this time was 800 pounds. The installation of electricity and power to the complex was a great time of celebration late in 1928. One year later the rear shed was transformed into the Church Kitchen with the addition of built-in cupboards much to the joy of the Women's Guild as they had raised a lot of money for the project. The Bible School had increased in numbers and at that time partitions were added to the building for classes.

MINISTERS FOR THE FIRST SEVERAL DECADES

From the start of Worship Services various men were invited as they became available up until early 1924. From then part time Preachers were appointed the first being **Bro. Alex Wilson**. Then **Bro. Wedd** for a short time at 4 pounds a week, followed by **Bro. H. G. Earle** who served until 1926. His salary was firstly two pounds a week, but was later raised to 2 pounds 10 shillings. The first full time Minister was **D. Stewart** who was appointed at the start of 1927 for two years although he only stayed



for one. The Ministers were called Preachers and for the next few years were as follows: **A. W. Stephenson** from 1928 to 1934. **L. R. H. Beaumont** 1934 – 1938. **C. G. Taylor** who was a Student and ministered half time from 1938 to 1941 along with **A. W. Stephenson** who was also half time, both being paid 3 pounds 10 shillings. **Bro. Stephenson** then stayed for a second term full time between the Second World War years of 1942 to 1944 at 4 pounds a week, but was also working with the Austral Publishing Company as Editor of the Australian Christian. He stayed part time until the Church was able to engage **Jabez Wiltshire** pictured on the left, in 1945 whom they brought over from Perth W. A. and who served until 1947. Then **F. Manning** 1947 to 1949. **G. Barnett** 1950 – 1953. **C. Dunse** 1953 – 1957. **P. Perry** 1957 – 1963. **B. H. Crowden** 1963 – 1971 and **D. Stow** 1971 - 1974 (8)

The Annual Meeting in April 1926 heard the report that numbers had increased to 121. Two years later it had increased to 151 with the addition of 20 during that time. There were two areas of concern though because even though the roll was increasing, the attendance at the Sunday Services was never more than 65 to 70. Also the finances were not very healthy and needed urgent attention. The **Preacher D. Stewart** appealed to the Church by reporting that of the 83 members who lived in the district 13 did not attend. Because of these two concerns some special events were planned. The Special Meeting called in September 1927 decided that a Banquet Service be held at which every member would be urged to attend.

SOME IMPORTANT DECISIONS FOR THE YOUNG CHURCH

They then passed the resolution that “a Collection Box be given to each home for the specific purpose of reducing the Building debt, and that we accept the suggestion that the matter of finance should periodically be mentioned during the Lord’s Day Morning Service!” The Banquet Service was duly held at which the Assistant Secretary Bro. Collyer presented the position with the finances.

Then in line with the decision of the Officers he presented every family with a Collection Box. (9)

Since 1923 when the Church commenced meeting in the Parkdale building in Como Parade they had appointed three Trustees for the buildings and land as was necessary by law. They were two of the Foundation Members **Alexander William Bradley**, **Thomas Henry Parkes**, and **James Milne Gilmour** who joined in the first year. In 1927 Bro. Parkes had become ill and this was discussed and it was decided by a Special Meeting of the Church on the 19th May to transfer Trusteeship of the Land and Buildings to the Victorian Churches of Christ Church Properties Extension Committee.

The Kindergarten area was becoming very overcrowded and it was decided to extend that part of the building by 20 feet. Then during 1928 additional extensions were carried out to allow for an expanded Bible School and it was financed by a debenture scheme. The overdraft at the Bank had increased to 800 pounds and this stimulated a further round of all sorts of money raising programs by



the young people of the different groups Kappa Sigma Pi, Phi Beta Pi, the Christian Endeavour Society, the Bible School, the Sunshine Club, and the Women’s Guild Fetes and snowball afternoons. The Tennis Club conducted a very popular Concert to raise money. Many members continued with their direct giving to great

effect.(10) This is a photograph of the Church from the rear during the renovations in 1927.

In May 1927 the Board made several decisions that are of interest. They decided to ask the Bank to raise the overdraft from 800 pounds to 1000 pounds as they had almost borrowed to the limit and needed to be able to access more. The Bank agreed to the request. Bro. L. O. Collyer was appointed Assistant Secretary for the duration of the Secretary T. H. Parkes’ illness. It was decided after much debate that the Congregation may remain seated during Prayers of Thanksgiving for the Bread and the Cup during the Communion Service each Sunday.

On the 21st June 1927 there was a Special Meeting called to discuss the serious financial situation of the Church. A resolution was passed unanimously that had several parts to it. It was firstly decided that a special roll be created in two sections (a) Regular attenders and (b) Irregular attenders. Secondly that each Officer of the Board have a copy of the Roll, and that a copy be posted in the Chapel for all to see. Thirdly each Officer was to be responsible for several members on the Irregular Roll so that he could pray for them, visit them, and make every effort to have them moved to the Regular Roll. It was thought that in this way they could awaken the Spiritual Life of the Membership so that the finances would get better.

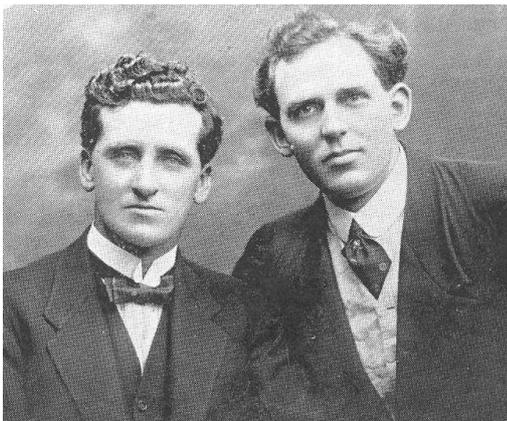
HALF YEARLY CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING 1927 (11)

As the Secretary **T. H. Parkes** was seriously ill, early in 1927 the Assistant Secretary Bro. **Lancelot Oliver Collyer** commenced to carry out the full Secretarial duties. He was also Superintendent of the Bible School and had joined the Fellowship in 1925 with his wife **Juliette** by letter of transfer from Swanston Street Church. Twelve months earlier they had come to Australia from Knaphill in England. He reported to the Half Yearly Business Meeting on the 4th August and moved a resolution of condolence to Bro Parkes on his illness. He reported that the remaining Church debt on the buildings was 887 pounds, 9 shillings and 6 pence.

The meeting heard that the Tennis Club had 22 adult members and 16 juniors and all the adults were members of the Church. It was resolved to allow the Tennis Club to build a second court beside the present one. The meeting resolved to recommend to the Board that Socials on the premises be concluded at 10.00pm. The Board met immediately and discussed it referring it back changing the time to 10.30pm and it was carried. The Meeting heard that of the membership there were 83 living in the district, but only 42% attended Sunday mornings and 50% attended at night. The average weekly offering was 4 pounds 19 shillings and 6 pence, but the weekly budget needed was 8 pounds.

THE HINRICHSEN BROOKER TENT MISSION

The Church held a Special Meeting of the Congregation on the 3rd November 1927 and it was resolved "to heartily accept the offer of Brethren **Ern C. Hinrichsen** and their own **Les Brooker** to conduct a

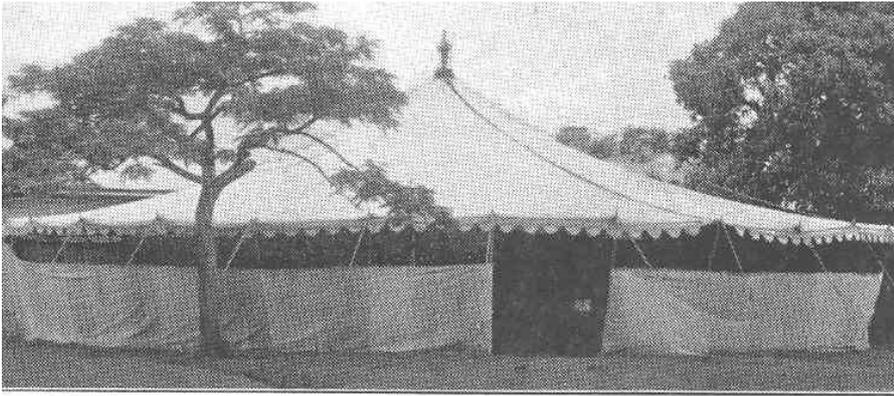


five week Evangelistic Tent Mission in January 1928 at a cost of 125 pounds!" The slogan for the Mission was "Jesus is the Answer!" From the Mission there was an increase to the membership of 17 both by baptism and transfer. To celebrate the blessing and thank the two brethren and to welcome the new members of the Church, a Special Social Meeting was held in January. **Bro Hinrichsen** seen on the right in the picture, was given a farewell with a gift. Following the same meeting the **Preacher D. Stewart** presented his resignation as he had been asked to join Bro. Hinrichsen as permanent Song Leader for Tent Missions. The Board accepted his resignation and resolved

immediately to look for a new Minister to take his place.

Two important decisions were made around that time. Firstly before the Mission it had been resolved after frank and earnest discussion that the cost of the Mission had to be met by the Church and not by any public appeal. They allocated 125 pounds for that purpose and affirmed that there would not be any public appeal. At a public meeting after the Mission when it was suggested that an offering should be launched all non-church members were asked to leave before the appeal was made. The offering raised the necessary funds to cover all costs and make a gift to the Missioner.

Secondly, because of the resignation of D. Stewart and the consequent search for a new Preacher, the Home Missions Board suggested that Parkdale combine with Chelsea Church of Christ in the Pastoral work and appoint a full time Minister and a College Student assistant. Parkdale rejected this plan, but did offer to help Chelsea in other ways such as presidents and readers at Worship Services. This they did for several years. It is interesting to note that following the appointment of **A. W. Stephenson** as the full time Preacher in February for a one month trial period they were about to make a decision on him when **Bro. D. Stewart** contacted the Church and offered to come back as Preacher as the move to work with Mr Hinrichsen as Mission Assistant had proved to be unsuccessful and too hard on his wife and family. The Officers rejected his offer and in March 1928 appointed **Mr Stephenson** for one year at a salary of 6 pounds per week.



The Mission Tent that was set up on vacant land on Como Parade right opposite the Parkdale Railway Station for the two Missions in 1923 by P. R. Baker and Val Woff. There were 30 conversions added to the Church during those efforts. Then in January 1927 it was used for the Hinrichsen - Brooker Tent

Mission from which a further 21 were added to the membership of the new Fellowship.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CHURCH ON THE 19 APRIL 1928

Thomas Henry Parkes sent a letter of resignation as Secretary because of his serious illness and Bro. L. O. Collyer the Assistant Secretary was elected Secretary. He accepted the position on the proviso that he resign as Superintendent of the Bible School. The Meeting decided to send a letter of sympathy to Thomas Parkes on the continuing ill health, and in appreciation of his past services to the Church as Secretary. Not long after that **Thomas Henry Parkes** died as the result of several strokes on the 29th July 1928 at his home in Como Parade Mentone, at the age of 67.

Mr Collyer then reviewed the year of 1927 in which they had their first full time Minister. Twenty new members had been added, 18 by faith and baptism, making a total of 117 members. He reported that there was a tremendous spiritual atmosphere in the Church following the Mission in January. It was planned to have an "Every Member Present Campaign and Pledge" Service on the 16th June to prepare for another Special Evangelistic Effort. The resolution stated, "Sincerely believing it is God's divine that all men should know His will towards them and His plan of Salvation, and recognizing our responsibilities and privileges in respect to the necessary proclamation of the Gospel in this District of Parkdale, Mentone and Mordialloc, we ask the Officers to organize a Tent Mission in the period September to October" (1928). The Mission was not held at that time because of the difficulty of obtaining Missioners. It was held two years later in October 1930 with **Bros. Ingram and Elliott** from the East Kew Church.

Elections were held for all positions and the following were elected:

Officers of the Board – P. J. Bryce, E. Gullock, L. O. Collyer, James Milne Gilmour, H. Rees, P. Sampson, A. Bradley, W. Fielder, Les Brooker.

Secretary – Lancelot Oliver Collyer **Assistant Secretary** – P. Sampson

Treasurer – P. Sampson **Auditor** – Allan Parkes

Deaconesses - Mrs Bryce, Mrs Baker

Organist – Miss Marjory Stewart **Assistant Organist** – Miss M. Gouldthorpe

Pianist – Mrs Constance Rees **Assistant Pianist** – Miss L. Gouldthorpe

Bible School Superintendent – Les Brooker (12)

Half Yearly Meetings were held regularly for the first ten years of the Church and in July 1928 it was decided to have a Special Campaign in 1929 to celebrate the 1900th Anniversary of Pentecost. Another decision made was that “**after studying the New Testament and seeing that they existed in that time, Elders and Deacons be elected!**” It was also resolved to ask every member to purchase a Churches of Christ Hymn book and a Bible for the Church. This resulted in 20 Bibles being purchased for the pews.

SEVERAL CONTENTIOUS ISSUES OF THAT TIME (13)

1. **Denominationalism.** The year of 1928 was a year of coming to terms with several issues that divided the Board of Officers in their beliefs with regard to Faith and Worship and Biblical Authority. The **Preacher Bro. A. W. Stephenson** was asked to speak at a Service of Welcome by the Ministers of the District in welcoming the new Methodist Minister to the area. The Officers completely rejected this suggestion. Their resolution was: “Approval be not accorded for Bro. Stephenson to attend the welcome meeting upon behalf of the Church, it being considered inconsistent for us as a Church which is pleading and teaching against Denominationalism to welcome into the community anyone who was perpetrating Denominational divisions in the Church!”

2. **Baptism and the Communion Service.** On another occasion some months later lengthy discussion took place on whether or not unbaptised people could participate in the weekly Communion Service. For and against was debated for a long time about this resolution: “That it be an instruction of the Presiding Brother at each Lord’s Day morning meeting when strangers are present to clearly indicate that only baptized believers walking orderly are entitled to participate of the Lord’s Table and that every effort be made to enquire if strangers are immersed believers before handing emblems to them in the endeavour to confirm participation strictly to immersed believers thus following scriptural procedure!”

The following vote on this resolution was divided by four in favour and three against! When the Chairman of the Board was asked what his vote would be he said he was against it. They then counted that the opinion was evenly divided four each way. It was then decided to leave the matter in abeyance and it seems that down through the years it was never raised again.

3. **Anzac Day.** In 1934 when the local community was organizing the next Anzac Day Service the Preacher Mr Stephenson was invited to take part. When he raised it with the Officers and after lengthy debate they refused him permission with this resolution: “The underlying principle of the observance of Anzac Day generally appears to be a glorification of the deeds of men in battle and therefore opposed to Christian teaching. Therefore as a Church we resolve to take no part in the local Anzac Service of Remembrance!” It was further resolved: “That the Tennis Courts be closed on Anzac Day in respect for those who keep the day as a special remembrance!”

4. **The Secretary Resigns on a Matter of Principle.** When the conduct of two members of the Church was brought to the attention of the Officers in 1930 it resulted in a vigorous debate. Some were of the opinion that they should be disciplined in some way, but eventually it was decided not to take any action. Bro. Lancelot O. Collyer felt so strongly about the matter that he resigned his Secretarial duties immediately and “from all positions of authority in the Church” because of the inaction of the Board. He and his family left the Church three months later. His resignation was accepted with regret and Bro. F. W. Collings was appointed to the position of Secretary.

THE CHURCH HAS BEEN SERVED BY FAITHFUL SECRETARIES

From the foundation of the Church the Secretaries have been: **T. H. Parkes** from 1921 to 1927, **L. O. Collyer** 1928 – 30, **F. W. Collings** 1930 – 32, **H. J. Rees** 1932 – 1953, **W. D. Fielder** 1953, **E. White** 1953 – 59, **A. Cooke** 1959 – 61, **H. J. Rees** 1961 – 67. He was followed by **Arthur Scott**



seen here on the left at the time, who had been Assistant Secretary for three years before being elected Secretary in 1967 until 2001. He served the Church in the Secretariat for 37 years. In 2001 **Gwenda Mathieson** was appointed to the position and is still serving in that capacity.

The 1929 Annual General Meeting decided to urge every member to tithe their offering as it was Scriptural. The Church rejoiced in the report of an addition of 55 new members in the 12 months to January 1929 with 36 baptisms as well as 19 new members who transferred from other Churches, to bring the total number on the Roll to 206. The first Homecoming Anniversary of the Church was held on the 26th November 1929 with the new **Minister A. W. Stephenson** as the speaker. It was an excellent time of renewing friendships and welcoming earlier members, and was used to encourage additions to the membership so that numbers increased to 245 by 1930 yet the active membership was only 159. (14)

Another Special Meeting of Men on the 29th January 1930 had some special concerns. Several speakers raised the importance of spiritual things and challenged the men to answer the call of Jesus to “Follow Me!” **A. W. Stephenson** the Preacher asked the meeting to discuss how the men of the Church could best serve the cause of the Lord in this district. The Guest Speaker was **A. W. Ladbroke** the Preacher at the South Yarra Church and he spoke on the subject “Man’s sphere of work in the present day Church of God!” They made plans to clean up the Church grounds and make them attractive as well as build new fencing for the property. Another concern resulted in the decision to conduct a quarterly Social for Adults, and to set up a Men’s Social Committee. That Annual Meeting saw **F. W. Collings** being elected Secretary and **Harold Rees** as Treasurer. **Les Brooker** was appointed Superintendent of the Bible School. (15)

CONTINUING SERIOUS FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

During that year **Minister A. W. Stephenson** offered to reduce his salary by 10 shillings to 5 pounds 10 shillings a week because of the serious financial situation. The Church regretfully accepted the offer and challenged the membership to attend a Sunrise Prayer Meeting and to promise pledges to help the finances.

A Mission in October 1930 for 4 weeks brought “great spiritual blessing and uplift” and is reported as the largest crowd ever held in the Chapel since the opening as 150 on the final night heard **Bro. Ingram** speak on the subject “Will Jesus Come Again?” The record tells us “One sister made the good confession!” (16)

In spite of this the finances continued to deteriorate with the Depression having a big effect on the Offerings with the average down 4 pounds in August 1931, and **A. W. Stephenson** offered to resign. The Officers resolved to review the matter in 2 months and to lead the Church in continual prayer meetings. Special Social events and a money raising Sale of Works resulted in Bro. Stephenson being retained, but he offered again to take a further reduction in salary to five pounds a week. The offer was regretfully accepted. It was resolved that all members be asked to pray and read the Bible every day, and to seek God’s blessing on the Church.

Each member was asked to contribute one penny each week to reduce the interest on the current Bank overdraft as a special effort. This effort raised 124 pounds, 12 shillings in 12 months. Average offerings increased to six pounds during 1931-32.⁽¹⁷⁾

The year of 1932 saw some other matters of importance take place. Another Evangelical Mission was held from the 7th to the 12th August with **J. E. Shipway** as Missioner. There were no new members added, but the Fellowship was greatly blessed. The Secretary **F. W. Collings** resigned his position as he was leaving the district, and **H. J. Rees** was appointed. Then in December that year the Preacher **A. W. Stephenson** offered his resignation to take effect from May 1933. A Special Meeting was called for February to discuss the situation in detail. Also to decide whether to engage another full time or a part time Minister.

SERIOUS CONCERN OVER THE APPOINTMENT OF A PREACHER

The Meeting was duly held and a vote was taken resulting in a majority of 20 to 14 deciding not to accept the resignation and urge Bro Stephenson to stay. When accepting the invitation to stay **Bro Stephenson** offered to further reduce his salary to four pounds per week to help the Church. This was regrettably accepted, but because of the offer some members of the Board donated 3 pounds 3 shillings and 6 pence to assist with the Minister's salary. ⁽¹⁸⁾

In October 1933 a series of Spiritual Revival Meetings were held with **Bro. Patterson** of the Gardiner Church speaking and again the Fellowship received great blessing from the successful meetings. As the year turned into 1934 the matter of the Bank Overdraft was causing great concern so a Special Business Meeting resolved by a large majority to raise money for the interest payments by direct giving instead of resorting to Sales of work or other methods. In May **Preacher Stephenson** notified the Church that he would be resigning as from the 1st July.

The Fellowship greatly missed his Ministry and from July they obtained the services of a Student from the College of the Bible to minister each Sunday for one pound a week. Again it was debated whether of not to appoint a full time or a part time Preacher. Finally it was decided to engage a single man full time for 3 pounds per week. In September 1934 a new Minister was appointed in line with that resolution and **L. R. H. Beaumont** took over as Preacher. A year later **Bro. Beaumont** asked for and was given a 5 shilling raise in salary to three pounds, five shillings per week.

It's interesting to note the matter of the Preacher's salary. By 1945 the Advisory Board was concerned about the salaries Ministers were receiving and forwarded a letter to every Church recommending "that all Churches give earnest consideration to the financial support of their Preachers in regards to salary!" Another letter was sent out with the same message a year later. Then by 1947 the Conference Executive followed this up with a recommended minimum salary for all Ministers. Following that letter the then **Preacher Bro. Manning's** salary, was raised by 10 shillings to 6 pounds 10 shillings a week. Up until then it's worth noticing as a sign of the times, that several Preachers had asked for two weeks salary instead of taking their Annual holidays. It seems that they could not afford to take a holiday proffering to receive the money instead.

SOME INCIDENTAL DECISIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

The following decisions in the 1930's and 40's are of some interest:

** A Board Meeting early in 1932 expressed concern with the **Young People** of the Church as they showed little interest in attending worship services. Also when they did attend there was some considerable noise from their section of the Chapel during the devotions. Of particular concern in this regard was the girls, so a resolution was passed for two of the brethren speak to them about the matter.

** The applications by the Tennis Club to be able to **play on Good Friday and Anzac Day** were refused.

** The Board was urged to plan another **Mission with a Second Coming** emphasis, but it never eventuated as either the Committee failed to meet or the idea lost momentum.

** Another matter that caused great vigorous discussion and was entered into at all meetings of the Church was whether or not it was right to **observe Easter** as some maintained it was of pagan origin.

** **Drainage of the Tennis Courts** was causing problems with the neighbouring houses and it caused months of serious negotiations before the trouble was eventually solved by the digging of a huge drain. After the outcome was decided between the Solicitors from the Church, the Mordialloc Council and the householders, the drain was dug through the property of Mrs Croft who received compensation, with the outlet into Antibes Street. The Council was willing to allow the Church a loan for their portion of the costs of 69 pounds over five years and the Tennis Club agreed to pay the instalments. To finish the drain Antibes Street had to be dug up and the Church successfully urged the Council to have it constructed by Sustenance workers to enable some at least to receive a wage.

** The Board approved the purchase of a new tyre for the **Preacher's bicycle** that he had worn out in his visitations. The cost was 7 shillings plus 4 shillings for a light as he used the bicycle at night. He and all previous Preachers had used the Church bicycle for transport in spite of the fact that in 1952 according to a Conference initiative the Church commenced paying the Minister a Car Allowance. In 1954 when the **Preacher C. Dunse** sought to buy a motor car to make visitation easier the Board offered him a 250 pound interest free loan to assist him. He duly accepted this offer and bought a car, making him the first Minister of the Parkdale Church with a motor vehicle.

THE CHURCH PAPER

Several attempts had been made over the years to produce a weekly or monthly news sheet. The first seems to have been in January 1936 when the Preacher **L. Beaumont** produced the first issue of the "**Messenger**" to great acclaim and appreciation. It lapsed after twelve months or so because the paper and ink was costing too much. It firstly became bi-weekly, then monthly, then finished altogether. In 1948 the then Minister **F. Manning** produced a Church Newsletter called "**The Victory**" that lasted for several years before lapsing. In 1952 the Preacher **Mr C. Dunse** was given permission to produce a Church news sheet on a monthly basis to be called the "Church Messenger!"

The "**News and Views**" that we have now seems to have first been printed in 1975 when the Minister **R. E. Hillbrick** commenced writing and producing it. The Officer's Board of August that year gave him permission to produce the Newsheet, and the Annual General Meeting of March 1976 included a resolution of commendation of the paper because it was popular and greatly appreciated.

CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENTS AND BUILDING ENLARGEMENTS

To allow more room for the Bible Class to meet and so keep the weather out of the entrance, in 1935 it was decided to add a Porch at the front door of the Chapel and a donation of 20 pounds was given towards it. A year later the Young Men's Club did a lot of maintenance work and painted out the interior of the building with kalsomine, as well as improving the baptistery that took far too much water as it was very large. To further improve baptisms the Men's Club offered to buy a chip heater, but when the Board refused that offer they purchased a gas bath heater.

By 1938 the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works were contacted and negotiations entered into to enable the lavatories to be repositioned and sewered. The talks went on for quite a while and time passed without any progress. In fact 3 years passed and still the work had not been started. It was not until 1944 that agreement was reached and a timetable was set for the work to be started. Even then time seemed to slip away and a further four years passed before the work was finally completed in August 1948. It must be pointed out though that the whole time was right throughout the Second World War when man power was not easily available, and building materials were also very scarce. So after 10 years since the initial decision was made the new toilets were a great improvement and thought to be well worth the cost of 14 pounds 13 shillings. A Thank Offering was taken at the Celebrations and 45 pounds was raised. (19)

THE DISASTROUS FIRE IN 1939

The members were thoroughly distraught and greatly disappointed by a disaster that struck early in 1939. The kitchen and the vestry of the Church with all the contents were all thoroughly destroyed by a mysterious fire. The cause of the fire was never established, but it created serious disruption to the activities of the Fellowship for almost a year. The insurance claim was found to be satisfactory and with the help of volunteers over several months rebuilding took place. By May in 1940 a new Hall was built in place of the old kitchen, a new kitchen was built and a shed was attached.

In spite of that disaster the membership was continuing to rise slowly over the years. In 1937 there were 12 baptisms and 4 had joined by transfer. In the seventeen years of the Church's existence by 1938 the numbers on the roll had increased to 340. There had been 161 baptisms during that time. That year the Bible School had to be closed down for several months because of an epidemic of infantile paralysis that was sweeping the Nation. Schools were closed for some time and all meetings of children and young people were severely curtailed for four or five months. It affected a number of the Auxiliaries of the Church that at the time were quite considerable. There were groups such as Bible School, Adult Bible Class, Young People's and Junior Christian Endeavour, Cradle Roll, Kindergarten, Young Worshipper's League, Phi Beta Pi, Kappa Sigma Pi, Young Men's Club, Women's Mission Band, Choir, Tennis Club as well as the Church Prayer Meeting.

The January 1938 Annual General Meeting elected the following to office: **L. R. H. Beaumont** was the Preacher, but he concluded his ministry in May of that year.

Secretary – H. J. Rees, Assistant Secretary – B. Pateman,

Deacons – F. J. Brierton, A. W. Bradley, P. J. Bryce, J. M. Gilmour, B. S. Pateman, A. Rigg, P. Sampson, and A. Toyne.

Deaconesses – Mrs P. J. Bryce, Mrs A. Rigg, Mrs C. A. Box, and Mrs H. Burriss.

The Treasurer was J. M. Gilmour.

NUMBERS REVIEWED AND IMPROVEMENTS

It was very disappointing to the Leadership that the average attendance at Worship on Sunday mornings only averaged 68 during the year although for Sunday Nights the average was 85. In those days the Sunday Night Service was always the more important and the best attended. At Parkdale it followed the usual pattern of the day in that it was always a Gospel Service at 7.00pm. The Preacher reported that he had made 745 calls and 676 visits during the last twelve months. By 1940 the numbers on the roll had increased to 367 although the attendances at the Evening Worship were never more than 96. So it was decided to do a radical Roll Revision. A Supplementary Roll was set up that drastically decreased the Active Members to about 150.

New improvements were added to the premises over the next few years including new carpets in 1941. A six feet long cement block placed at the Chapel entrance and a cement path to it was laid down in 1942 by **Bro. A. W. Bradley** who was one of the Foundation members. His photograph is on the right. Over the years as he was a builder by trade, he did a tremendous amount of construction and repair work on all the Church buildings. Working bees painted the outside of the buildings and the baptistry was improved in 1943. In 1945 the **Preacher A. W. Stephenson** asked to have the phone installed at the Church and it was agreed that the Church would pay the rental with the Minister paying for any personal calls. Then in 1946 two thermolators were ordered from the Mordialloc Council to heat the Chapel. They were paid for with 20 pounds that the Ladies of the Snowball afternoons raised in a special activity.



WORKING THROUGH PRINCIPLES OF THE FAITH

Over the early years the Minute Books of the Officer's Meetings and the Annual General Meetings give clear indications of some of the issues the Church had to work through as they arose. In common with almost all Churches their simple faith in the instruction and guidance of the New Testament was put to the test and it forced them to a deeper study of the Scriptures for answers to such things as arose from time to time demanding a resolution from either the Officers or the Fellowship.

Dancing in the Church Hall: In 1956 there was a well attended Young People's Fellowship and in March of that year they wrote a letter to the Board asking for permission to hold a Dance in the Hall. The letter caused quite a stir among the Officers and after lengthy discussion they deferred it to the next meeting while they prayed about it personally in their homes. The April Board Meeting again debated the issue for quite some time before reaching the conclusion that they had to refuse permission for the Dance. The decision was unanimous and they decided to pass their answer on to the Young People in a special way. With concern for their feelings they resolved that the Board members meet with the Young People and that the Minister explain their reasons for the refusal.

A Christmas Day Service: Contrary to the way we have come to expect a Christmas Day Service each year, before 1956 it was not the custom. There was never a Service on **Christmas Day** except when it fell on a Sunday. Christmas Day in 1955 was a Sunday and the **Preacher C. Dunse** proposed that he conduct a Breakfast Celebration at 6.00am as well as the usual Services. After a great deal of discussion the Officers decided against the proposal. Then in 1960 Christmas Day was again on a Sunday and the **Preacher Phil Perry** ran a 6.30am Prayer Meeting as well as the usual Services, but it was not well attended. The next year 1961 after the Officers had discussed the matter for the whole year, it was decided to conduct the very first Christmas Day Service at 9.30am. The attendance was very encouraging and the Board decided to continue the practice. We have had a Christmas Day Service every year since.

The Position and the Role of Women: Deaconesses had been elected for quite some years and their duties were well documented, but in 1961 the ladies wrote to the Board asking to be represented at Board Meetings now and again. This led to the further thought that after all Deaconesses should be full members of the Official Board. After several meetings and quite some debate and a detailed study of many passages of Scripture the Officers called a Special Business Meeting of the Church in May 1961 to discuss the issue of Deaconesses. They called for the Church to be in prayer about the matter leading up to the Meeting. At the Meeting there was again lengthy debate and discussion on the issue. Eventually the Meeting passed a resolution saying "that women be elected as Deaconesses and to share with men in an equal status on the Board!"

The Church and the Masonic Lodge: During 1947 one of the Officers of the Board Mr Fielder requested the use of the Church to conduct a Masonic Service. It's unclear whether or not this was on a Sunday night or not. Permission was given and the Service was duly conducted. It became obvious to the Congregation that several members of the Board were members of the Masonic Lodge. The next year Mr Fielder made the same request and it led to further discussion with some members of the Board expressing their opposition to the Church being used for the use of the Masonic Lodge. Eventually permission was again given and the Masonic Service was duly held. The Board discussed the issue again at the next Meeting with a resolution passed that stated that "the Chapel not be used for outside groups any more!"

The Church and the Unitarian Fellowship: When E. L. Williams was Principal of the Churches of Christ College of the Bible he was requested to speak at different Organizations from time to time. On one occasion he was asked to be the Speaker at a Special Meeting of the Unitarian Church and duly accepted and carried out the engagement. When the Parkdale Officers heard of it they wrote a letter of protest to Mr Williams to the effect that the Principal of a College that proclaims Salvation through Jesus Christ should not be speaking at a meeting of a group that denies the divinity of Christ and indeed is atheistic in its belief. Mr Williams answered the letter saying that he upholds the divinity of Jesus and preaches Salvation through faith in Christ, and that he will go anywhere and speak of his faith to any group to which he has an invitation. The Board accepted the letter with its answer and acknowledged that was indeed an evangelical opportunity.

Which Translation of the Bible should be used in Worship: Many people made representations to the Board about the Scripture readings from the Pulpit Bible at Worship Services suggesting that a more modern translation should be used. The Officers debated this issue in 1965 for several meetings being unable to come to a resolution on the matter. The debate was around the true translation of the Scriptures and whether or not they should change from the Authorised King James Version that they had used since the Church commenced. Finally after many hours of debate over many Meetings, and much personal prayer, they came to the conclusion that they would purchase a Pulpit version of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible and use it in worship from that time. —

Serious thinking regarding the Second World War is shown in the way Air Raid Precautions were being carried out. A.R.P. lectures were being given regularly and in 1941 the Authorities asked for the use of the Church for weekly meetings. This was happily agreed to, but when the Sisters of the ARP Relief wanted to use the Church for a Protest Rally against the lack of materials, the Board refused to give permission. Another group asked to be able to use the Church to conduct meetings for the British-Israel World Federation and the Board took some time to debate the issue. After a letter of objection from **Mrs Constance Rees** seen here on the left (grandmother of Lois Woodward), permission was refused. Other groups to use the buildings were The Mordialloc Philharmonic Society and The Protestant Progressive Party.



A MUCH NEEDED NEW HALL

After 32 years of use the original building was in need of continual repairs so by 1954 it was decided to build a new Hall and to remodel the old one into a new kitchen. That project was taken two years of planning and decision making, but was completed by June 1957 with great celebrations especially from the ladies who appreciated the kitchen after so many years of inconvenience in the old one. From then the vision for the Church was a new Chapel building in front of the New Hall on Como Parade West.

THE OUTREACH SUNDAY SCHOOL IN IMES STREET (20)

Following some concern by several members of the Church it was decided in 1954 to commence a Sunday School for children on the “other side” of Point Nepean Road in an area of East Parkdale where no Churches were represented in any way. After the first money was donated a vigorous advertising program was conducted to obtain scholars in the area. Later that year volunteer teachers commenced teaching a number of children in the Recreation Pavilion on the Walter Galt Reserve and the Church paid rent for it to the Mordialloc Council. It was a pioneer work that was very taxing as the Pavilion was used on Saturday nights for Party and Social functions and it needed a lot of cleaning to have it suitable for religious teaching on Sundays. Some present day members of the Church were a part of that demanding work.

In 1955 with a view to a more permanent ministry in this way investigation found a block of land available on the corner of Imes and Chandler Streets for sale for 385 pounds. When this was made known **Miss Allamby** seen here on the right in 1970 when she had her 80th birthday, offered to donate the money to buy it as long as it was used to run a Sunday School. When the Council permission was obtained a loan was negotiated for 1500 pounds from the Churches of Christ Campbell Edwards Trust and the planning commenced in earnest. Quotes were obtained to erect a building and plans continued through much of that year. Towards the end of the year information was received that disused buildings were available from the Government at Eildon in Victoria.



In December 1955 after an application of purchase had been made and accepted, members of our Church Men’s Society journeyed to Eildon where the Government was getting rid of huts that had been used in a Government Construction. They demolished it and carried out a great achievement of transporting it to the land in Imes Street. The next few months were full of preparatory work in the way of excavation, putting in stumps and floor joists by the Men’s Society members until all was in readiness for the large task of erecting the building itself. After contacting the Churches of Christ Men’s Fellowship it was arranged to have a huge Brotherhood working bee on the Queen’s Birthday holiday weekend in June 1956 to finally erect and finish the building.

It had been a huge undertaking, but it was completed on the day and the Opening Ceremony took place on Saturday 23rd June 1956 with great celebration. The cost had been 3,569 pounds and was calculated this way. Cost of land – donated, Hut from Eildon – 500 pounds, constructing of road and guttering – 816 pounds, Sewerage – 254 pounds, materials – 1,999 pounds. In three and a half years up to December 1959 the loan had been repaid and the building was debt free. The Sunday School had been continuing in the Recreation Pavilion through all this, but transferred to Imes Street when the building was completed. A piano was donated by **Mrs Crabtree** and at its most successful there were almost 200 children there being taught by faithful teachers.

The Church conducted the Sunday School in Imes Street for 14 years until the scholars numbers dwindled and became too low to continue in 1970. A Sunday morning Worship Service was held at Imes Street on the first Sunday of each month from September 1957 to September 1964 with an attendance of around 45. In 1958-60 the small rooms in the building were rented out to the Parkdale State School for their Kindergarten Monday to Friday for 6 pounds per week with the approval and the expense of the Victorian Education Department. A concrete path and steps, as well as other improvements were carried out over time, but the building and land was eventually sold in 1973 for \$13,000 and the money went towards the plans for a New Hall on the Church site.

SOME CONCERNS AND DECISIONS OF THE 1950'S

** At the time it was a huge decision, but the AGM decided to change the time of the Sunday **Evening Service from 7 to 7.30pm** during the summer period to see what effect it had on attendances. They went back to 7pm in the following March and it was never changed again.

** There was great concern over the **noise being made by aeroplanes** flying overhead during the Sunday morning Service and it was decided to write to the Council to see if they could make some stipulation about it during Church times.

** There was a big debate in Board meetings and finally at an AGM about the Girls Club having **Folk Dancing**.

** Several objections were noted, but the **Christadelphians** were given permission to have a Baptismal Service in our Chapel as long as it was a private service.

** **The Mutual Fund** was suggested in July 1954 and started in November with the Church Auditor Miss Irene White appointed to conduct and administer it in April 1956. In the 1980's May Hargreaves was appointed Administrator of the Fund and has been serving faithfully in that position ever since. The Fund has contributed very wonderfully to the building programs over the years.

** Owing to the **noise that the Congregation** made during the morning Service following the Communion when they were preparing for the Offering to be taken, it was decided to sing a hymn immediately after Communion before the Offering.

** **Temple Day** was always held on a Saturday with an evening Meeting and items and all sorts of presentations. The Church was open from about midday Saturday for people to come and pray in Thanksgiving and for the result of the Temple Day Offering. The actual Offering was taken at the evening program. After many years and following the difficulty of obtaining people or groups to entertain it was decided to conduct Temple Day on a Sunday for the first time on the 12th August 1962. It has been on a Sunday around August ever since.

A MANSE CONSIDERED AS URGENT - FOR 20 YEARS⁽²¹⁾

When **D. Stewart** the first full time Minister was appointed in 1927 his accommodation was provided by the Church in rented rooms. That was the first time that consideration was given to building a Manse in the Church grounds facing onto Como Parade West. A committee was formed in 1928 with the brethren **P. Sampson, L. Brooker** and **A. W. Bradley** to investigate the feasibility of the project. At the time it was proposed to borrow money from the Independent Order of Rechabites. The matter was deferred until later when more consideration could be given it. It was never seriously considered again until 1941 when **C. G. Taylor** brought it up. After much discussion the matter was considered as urgent and a plan was brought up and suggested, but after some time thinking about it, was rejected. In 1943 when **A. W. Stephenson** was ministering and wanted to move into the district the matter was raised again, but again nothing seemed to come of it. **Preachers A. W. Stephenson, J. Wiltshire** and **F. Manning** in turn all resided in rooms the Church rented at 4B Montgomery Street Mordialloc.

In December of 1945 when the new **Minister Jabez Wiltshire** arrived his salary was going to be 6 pounds a week, it cost 25 pounds to bring him over, and his rent in rooms was going to be one pound, three shillings and sixpence each week. He again issued the challenge for the Church to build a Manse as an urgent requirement. Early in 1946 after doing some investigation Bro Wiltshire reported to the Board with a proposed plan for a Manse urging them to give it serious consideration.

He continued to say that it was very urgent for the Church to have a Manse. The plan he proposed entailed establishing a Savings Bank for the Church member's savings at the Bank rate of interest. That plan was rejected, but a loan from the Properties Corporation was investigated.

Following a Special Business Meeting on the 30 May 1946 the members heard that a loan from the Properties Corporation of 1200 pounds was available at 7% per annum over 20 years. The Meeting agreed that the Manse was necessary and resolved to go ahead, but not with that proposed loan. An Investigating Committee was appointed to come up with a plan. An unspecified donor gave 12 pounds as the start of a Manse Appeal and it remained the only funds in hand for the next several years. The Committee did not meet for three months and slowly the matter lost momentum again. The Minutes of the following several monthly Board Meetings of 1946 to 1956 record the Manse Report as "No report" or "the Committee has not met!"

Strangely there are no further records about a Manse for the next two years until 1948 when Minutes reveal that "further renovations are being carried out on the Manse!" There are no records to be found, but investigations from members who were there at the time tell us that sometime between 1947 and 1948 two older ladies bequeathed a house in Rupert Street Parkdale to the Church. It seems it needed repairs and all efforts during 1949 were directed to that end and it can be assumed that it was "the Manse" to which the Minutes are referring. It was renovated over a period of 20 months and the new **Minister G. Barnett** moved in during 1950. The Minutes record that a loan that rose to over 800 pounds was eventually taken out with the Properties Corporation for the Manse renovations. All Temple Day Offerings up until that time were directed towards that Manse at 3 Rupert Street.

Yet it was the dream of some members to have a Manse on their own land beside the Church. By June 1959 the mind of the Officer's Board was directed toward that project again and in October a Committee was formed to have plans drawn up and take the necessary steps to achieve it. Another loan was taken with the Properties Corporation and **in 1961 a brand new Manse** was built on the



Church site. The photograph shows the Manse beside the old Church as it was at that time. The Rupert Street house was then sold for 3,500 pounds. The money allowed

the loan to be reduced by that amount with the total cost of the new Manse being 5168 pounds. With the help of the interest from the Mutual Fund and other fund raising the loan was completely paid off in December 1962.

CONTINUING EVANGELICAL OUTREACH ⁽²²⁾

- Right from the start it has been the policy the Parkdale Church to continue conducting Evangelical Missions either in a Tent in front of the Church Building, or in the Chapel itself. In April 1923 the first Tent Mission was with **P. R. Baker** that resulted in 8 baptisms.
- Later that same year **P. R. Baker** was invited back for another Tent Mission in October-November that resulted in 22 confessions of faith. Fourteen were baptized at Parkdale and 7 at Cheltenham, and one by transfer. The attendances over the three weeks were between 60 and 100 in the Tent. Several Sunday Special Services or Missions were conducted in the following years with visiting Speakers or the resident Preacher.

- Then in January 1928 an **Hinrichsen-Brooker Tent Mission** was organized and over the three weeks period there were 21 members added to the membership. A gift of 100 pounds was raised to present to the Missioner at the Thanksgiving and Welcome Dinner at the end.
- From the 6th to 22nd October 1930 another effort was conducted when **A. J. Ingham and F. Elliott** were invited to present the Gospel in the Chapel for three weeks. It was a very successful and blessed time for the Church although only one person made the good confession and was baptized.
- The next Evangelistic effort was in August 1932 with **J. E. Shipway and C. Smith** conducting a 14 day Special Chapel Mission at which there were very good crowds and 3 confessions of faith. The very next year in October 1933 another Special Chapel Mission was organized with **H. J. Patterson** as Evangelist, bringing great blessing for the Fellowship.
- There were attempts to find a Missioner over the next two years without success, but in September 1936 Bro. **S. H. Mudge and Halliday** of the Oakleigh Church of Christ came and conducted a Mission that was enthusiastically supported as 700 home visits were made to issue invitations. There were 130 present on the first Sunday night. That same number attended on the Tuesday night as well with an overall average attendance of 95. There were three additions to the Church during the 11 day event. The Mission brought a great spiritual blessing to the Church that was greatly appreciated.
- By 1941 following several years of again being unable to invite a Missioner **A. B. Withers** and **A. T. Cuddy** responded and came for a week of Evangelistic effort in the Chapel that was of great stimulus for the congregation. The Second World War was in progress by this time and any further Mission activity was curtailed for the duration, but immediately following peace in Europe a one week Special Effort was conducted over two Sundays in November 1944 with **R. L. Williams**.
- In May 1946 the Minister at the time **J. Wiltshire** ran a Special Series of Services each Sunday for the particular purpose of deepening the Spiritual Life of the Church. It was of great blessing to the Fellowship and as a result the offerings were very much improved. The next organized effort that brought great stimulus was in 1947 when the Tent was set up for a wonderful spiritual time with the Evangelical team of **K. A. McNaughton and W. W. Saunders**.
- Another **Evangelistic Campaign** was conducted in 1948 as pamphlets were produced and visitors were called for to visit houses in the District. Five visitors went out after study sessions, but there is no record anywhere of what the results were other than the stimulus for the Church. After many years without any special effort a **Mini-Mission** was organized in March 1972 with **Gordon Stirling** as the Missioner.
- The **Bill Newman Crusade** was held in 1986 in the Bayside district and the Minister of that time **Keith Pitt** acted as Manager of the Crusade Committee with members of the Church active in support. A number of the young people of the Fellowship made first decisions at the Crusade and were baptized, with the Church receiving enormous blessing from that input.

It's interesting to note that as well as being Evangelical of mind the Parkdale Church has always supported Churches of Christ activities, and the work of like minded organizations. In 1945 after some months of struggling to keep up an increasing workload, **A. W. Stephenson** had to be released from full time ministry with Parkdale. He had taken on the work of Editor of the Australian Christian, and was regularly lecturing at the College of the Bible. He remained in membership preaching and taking part from time to time, but the Church released him for a much larger ministry.

Then in turn in 1947 they were forced to seek a new Preacher when they released their next Minister **Jabez Wiltshire** to another wider work. He was approached by the Committee for the “Special Effort for Evangelisation” to become Organizing Secretary for the Melbourne wide Mission with the American Preacher **Hyman Appleman** in 1948. Churches of Christ were prominent in supporting that Mission held in the Exhibition Buildings Melbourne attracting great crowds every night.

Two Preachers in succession concluded their ministries with the Church to go out on Missionary work. **Mr & Mrs F. Manning** went out to Africa in 1949 with the Sudan United Mission.

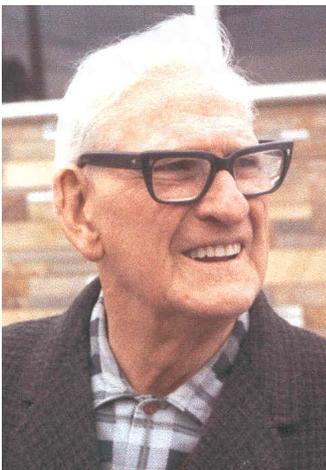
Then **Mr & Mrs G. Barnett** concluded ministry in 1953 to go out to Missionary work with the Aborigines Mission at Norseman W. A.

The Ministers and people of Parkdale Church of Christ have always taken an active role in the Mordialloc Inter-Church Council over the years. Most Ministers have been active in the leadership as it served the Community in various ways and held Meetings in the individual Churches, and the present **Secretary Gwenda Mathieson** has been a Representative and Chairperson over the years.

THE APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS ⁽²³⁾

From the beginning in 1921 the position of Elder does not seem to have concerned the Fellowship and none were appointed for 25 years until 1946. It seems that when Preacher **A. W. Stephenson** resigned early in 1945 because of outside duties he stayed as a member of the Church and preached regularly throughout the year with the help of visiting Speakers. In December that year the new Preacher **Jabez Wiltshire** commenced and in the AGM February 1946 the Church appointed **Mr Stephenson** as their first Elder and naturally included **Mr Wiltshire** as well making two Elders.

In 1947 after the Stephensons moved away **Mr P. J. Bryce** one of the Founding Members, was elected an Elder along with the **Preacher J. Wiltshire**. When **Mr Wiltshire** left **Mr Bryce** was the only Elder alongside the Ministers **F. Manning** and **G. Barnett**, until he died sometime in 1951. In May 1956 there was some concern expressed at the AGM that the Church did not have any Elders. Yet none were appointed until 1963 when **Ben Crowden** was appointed as Preacher. He was concerned that there should be Elders supporting him and **J. Mathieson** and **H. Rees** were elected for three years.



In 1966 **Mr H. Rees** was re-elected along with **Mr E. Clarke** for three years as was the custom, but by 1968 the Minister was the only Elder. When he left and the new **Minister Des Stow** arrived he was keen to have an Elder as support and in 1972 **Mr T. Cuddy (on the right)** was elected. 1975 saw two others elected to join him, **A. Parkes** and **W. Cunnington** who served for several years. By 1980 the **Ministers K. Turner, R. E. Hilbrick** and **Bruce Waldren** were the only Elders and that remained so until another new **Preacher Keith Pitt** came along and sought to have Elders to support the ministry.



In 1984 **Arthur Scott** was elected as an Elder and remained so during his lifetime. Then in 1989 **Mavis House** was elected making two Elders. Since that time the Elders to be elected have been **Gwenda Mathieson, Alan Payne** and joining them in 2004, **Lyle Yates**. Along with **Minister Ian Olive** those three remain the present Elders.

THE NEW CHAPEL BUILDING ⁽²⁴⁾

For several years meetings had been organized to discuss whether or not to build a new Chapel building facing Como Parade in front of the old one. In April 1958 the AGM records that they resolved to go ahead and Committees were appointed to make plans and discuss the possibilities. They met irregularly over several years, but finally plans were drawn up.

The impetus slowly increased until by late 1963 everything was ready, donations were coming in for the project, and tenders were called for. In February 1964 a tender for 13,900 pounds was accepted. Three months later this fell through as the builder went bankrupt and new tenders were called. A new tender of 13,020 pounds from A. V. Jennings was accepted and a loan of 9,000 pounds from the Properties Corporation was taken out. This loan was reduced to 7,000 pounds as a result of splendid



giving at the Opening of the New Chapel in front of the old Church. **A great deal of publicity was gained in the local community with the Mordialloc City News printing this photograph of volunteers working on the building when it was almost completed.**

The **New Chapel** was opened on **Sunday 23rd May 1965** by the **Conference President F. J. Funston** with a huge crowd attending including Cr. Ward, Mayor of Mordialloc and Mentone, who presented a very complimentary speech. The cost had been approximately 16,000 pounds including seating and carpets, and a new electronic organ that was installed in the Chapel. An anonymous donor presented the Church with a new organ stool. That year the Temple Day Offering was 61 pounds. Average attendance at Services was 82 in the morning and 65 at night. The Sunday School Superintendents were **A. Scott** at Como Parade with 65 scholars and **J. Mathieson** at Ives Street with 50 scholars. The Kindergarten was run by **Mrs M. House**.



The Officebearers were - **Minister Ben Crowden** (pictured right)

Elders – **J. Mathieson & H. Rees**

Secretary – **H. Rees,** **Assistant Secretary** – **A. Scott** **Treasurer** – **L. Clarke,**

Deacons – **D. Rhodes, A. Cunnington, R. Stroud, B. Hargreaves, H. How, F. Jones, G. House, E. Clarke.**

Deaconesses – **Mrs M. Box, M. House, G. How, H. Thomas, W. Cunnington.**

THE VISION FOR A NEW HALL AND KITCHEN COMPLEX

The AGM of February 1969 gave serious discussion to the need for a New Hall and Kitchen plus a new set of Toilets inside. A Committee was formed to investigate the possibility and plan accordingly and money raising efforts began to raise the finance. After several years of studying all the practicalities and bringing recommendations and further investigation, it was decided in December 1976 to call for a loan and go ahead with the project. It was planned to finance it with a loan for

\$7000 from the Properties Corporation, the money from the sale of the Imes Street property, interest from the Mutual Fund as well as numerous money raising functions.

The New Hall Complex was built and a Grand Opening held on the 17th July 1977 with over 200 people present with 170 staying for lunch. The cost had eventually amounted to \$35,783. By 1978 it was reported that \$50,000 had been paid out on the project including the lighting, repainting the Church, and the Interest bill. At that time there were 67 active members on the Church Roll. As a result of some problems with the wooden floor and the activities that were held in the Hall, a concrete floor was put down in 1982 at a cost of \$3481.

THE PLANNED GIVING APPEAL ⁽²⁵⁾

For many years there had been a lot of debate about the different methods of raising the financial giving of the members without any decision being made. There was opposition to every type of organized program until the AGM of 1972 when the decision was made to have an organized Planned Giving Campaign. After the decision had been made it actually didn't take place until 1975. It was conducted by the then Conference Field Worker **Trevor Giles** with the emphasis on the spiritual aspect of giving, and it was quite successful. Although not embraced by the whole congregation as some had reservations about pledging the offering and it being monitored, but most did join in and the Church was happy with the resultant increase in weekly giving.

Almost four years later in 1979 a follow up Planned Giving Review was also conducted and this time most of the members agreed to be a part of it. It was also of great benefit to the finances of the Church with the added advantage that it caused an improvement in the spiritual life of the fellowship. The Audio Visual that was produced for it enumerated what the Fellowship had achieved in the few preceding years. Such things as – **a New Manse – a New Chapel – a New Hall Complex** – and with all these improvements and expenses the Fellowship had still been involved in Missionary giving of hundreds of dollars to the wider work of the Christian ministry such as –

- (a) assisting Overseas Missions with building an Airstrip in Papua New Guinea as well as a Cargo Shed, an Outboard Motor and running costs for a Riverboat
- (b) donating to Aborigines Mission work with fans and easy chairs
- (c) financial and other support for the East Bentleigh Church of Christ for many years
- (d) financial support for Missionary Margaret Manning in Irian Jaya for many years.
- (e) continuing to give a good regular amount to the Brotherhood Departments.

MINISTERS OF THE LATER DECADES ⁽²⁶⁾



Following **D. Stow (left)** who concluded in 1974 **K. Turner** ministered for almost a year before **R. E. Hillbrick** for a five year period of 1975 to 1979. He was followed by **B. Waldron** from 1980 to 1982, then **Keith Pitt seen right with wife Frances**, came to become the longest serving Minister of the Church from 1983 to 1995. In 1996 it was **Albie Fitt and Ian Whitelock** in a dual capacity. In 1997 **Albie** pictured below on the left



ministered with **Cathie English** helping him for the year and then **Albie** continued until the year 2000. **Paul Smalley** ministered from 2000 to 2002.



Retired Minister **Peter Pitts** joined the Church and fulfilled a half time interim ministry for six months from 2002 to 2003, followed by **Ian**



Olive who commenced in 2003 and is still with the Church. **Ian and Lisa** are seen here on the right.

Parkdale Church of Christ has had a fine succession of **Preachers** who have from the very earliest served the whole Conference with distinction and honour. These who have occupied the pulpit of more recent years have carried on the same great tradition with power and authority of proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord. With those earlier **Preachers and Evangelists** setting the standard, the men and women who have followed them have maintained an excellent witness assisting the Church Fellowship in the endeavour to vigorously uphold the faith with the same power.

THE TREASURERS WHO HAVE SERVED THE CHURCH



Allan Parkes

Down the years the **Parkdale Church** has been well served by Treasurers who have ministered faithfully as follows. **G. Tease** in 1921, **A. Bradley** 1921-28, **P. Sampson** 1928-29, **H. J. Rees** 1929-32, **S. M. Gilmour** 1932-33, **Hazel Gilmour** 1933-46, **C. Box** 1946-54, **A. Cooke** 1954-60, **T. Stonehouse** 1960-61, **A. E. Parkes** 1961-65, **E. Clarke** 1965-67, **L. Bullock** 1967-70, **M. Bullock** 1970-71, **A. Cunnington** 1971-75, **B. Ward** 1975-76, and **Rex Scott** elected in 1976 has served in that capacity for 28 years to this present day.



Stan Gilmour

THESE LATER YEARS

In the last twenty years the Parkdale Church has continued to maintain a witness to the Lord Jesus Christ in keeping with the ideals of the Foundation Members and those who have followed on down through the years. The Morning Service was altered in 1978 to 10.15am to more easily accommodate other activities, and the AGM of April 1980 elected the following.

Minister – Bruce Waldron **Secretary** – A. Scott **Treasurer** – R. W. Scott

Deacons – L. Clarke, A. Cunnington, R. Gibson, C. Taylor

Deaconesses – I. Wells, M. Box, with M. Hargreaves and G. Mathieson being elected and welcomed onto the Board for the first time.

Auditor – I. Wells

Organists – A. Cunnington and L. Woodward.

Numbers have slowly fallen away in common with so many Churches of today, yet a regular 45 to 55 still maintain the worship. The Evening Service slowly became poorly attended and was discontinued in 1989. In later years a small, intimate style study group has grown up at 7.00 on a Sunday Evening and has met regularly to this day.

For over 83 years the Parkdale Church of Christ has maintained the positive, enthusiastic, vital influence for God that the early pioneers set out to bring to their community in their time, and is still investigating ways to make the witness for Christ more effective. The Fellowship has always offered grateful thanks to our Heavenly Father for all that has ever been achieved for the Lord!

To God be the Glory!

Perhaps it would be proper to conclude this compilation by proclaiming once more the firmly believed slogan of the famous Tent Mission of 1928 with Ern Hinrichsen and Les Brooker that has stood the test of time. Parkdale goes into future history with every faith that - **“Jesus is the Answer!”**

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2. Current Parkdale Church of Christ Roll Book
3. Half Yearly Church Business Meeting Minutes 1927
4. Current Parkdale Church of Christ Roll Book.
5. Parkdale Index of all Deacons, Business, Auxiliaries and Every Detail
6. Minutes of the Officers Meetings from 1927-30
7. Parkdale Index of all Deacons, Business, Auxiliaries and Every Detail
8. Minutes of the Officers Meetings from 1927-30 and Church Honour Board
9. Parkdale Index of all Deacons, Business, Auxiliaries and Every Detail
10. ditto ditto
11. Minutes of Church Business Meetings 1927-30
12. ditto ditto ditto
13. ditto ditto ditto
14. Parkdale Index of all Deacons, Business, Auxiliaries and Every Detail
15. Minutes of the Officers Meetings from 1927-30
16. Minutes of the Officers Meetings from 1935-48
17. ditto ditto
18. Minutes of the Officers Meetings from 1931-34
19. Minutes of the Officers Meetings from 1935-48
20. Records stored in the Church Archives on Imes Street.
21. Minutes of Annual General Meetings 1944-88
22. Parkdale Index of all Deacons, Business, Auxiliaries and Every Detail
23. Minutes of Annual Meetings 1930 - 2004
24. Parkdale Index of all Deacons, Business, Auxiliaries and Every Detail
25. Minutes of Officers Meetings from 1960 - 1980
26. Parkdale Church Honour Board.

