

HOWARD METHODISTS PAY TRIBUTE TO PIONEERS

HOWARD, July 14.—A very sincere tribute to the pioneers of the Howard Methodist Church was paid by the President of the Methodist Conference, Rev. T. N. Dellar, last Saturday afternoon when he dedicated a memorial wall in front of the church, in the presence of the services rendered by the church organist, Miss L. Barker, who for the past 32 consecutive years has held the position.

"I dedicate this Memorial Wall in memory of the pioneers of the Methodist Church of Howard, as a permanent reminder of our debt to them, and as an inspiration to make the future more glorious than the past," he said.

Speaking of the church, the Rev. Mr. Dellar said that it contained a wonderful fellowship which was world-wide. He congratulated those responsible for the wall on their endeavours to perpetuate the memory of the old pioneers who blazed the track in the years gone by and who had assisted in many ways to spread the Christian faith and establish churches all over the Commonwealth. Mr. Dellar paid a special tribute to the ladies of the church for the splendid work that they were doing. He congratulated Mr. J. F. Whitby on his very comprehensive report on the doings of the church and those associated with it since its inauguration up to the present time.

Rev. Mr. Lee, of Childers, presided at the function, and on the dais with him were Rev. T. N. Dellar, Rev. G. T. A. Phillipson (M'boro), Miss L. Barker, Mr. B. H. Corser, M.P., Mr. D. Farrell, M.L.A. Mr. Lee extended a welcome to the gathering which included visitors from Childers, Bundaberg, Palomba, Takura, Biggenden, Torbanlea, Maryborough, and Burrum.

The ceremony opened with the singing of the hymn, "O God Our Help in Ages Past," to the accompaniment of the Maryborough Salvation Army Band.

MR. CORSER'S TRIBUTE.
Mr. Corser said he was pleased to be associated with the movement to honour the pioneers of the Methodist Church at Howard. He apologised for the unavoidable absence of Senator A. Rankin. He was pleased, he said, to have the opportunity of expressing his appreciation of the splendid work done by the pioneers who had done so much for the country, town, and church. Mr. Corser spoke of the sacrifices made by the pioneers and congratulated the trustees and ladies for erecting the memorial wall in their honour.

Mr. D. Farrell said he was honoured to be present on such an auspicious occasion. He was pleased to be with the people of Howard and district who had done so much for him in the past. "Having spent many years of my life in Howard, I know many, if not all, of the pioneers who worked for the Methodist Church, a church that I attended," he said.

Special mention was made of the services rendered by the church organist, Miss L. Barker, who for the past 32 consecutive years has held the position.

"This," said Rev. Mr. Lee, "is a record that will be hard to beat and one of which Miss Barker should be justly proud. Miss Barker is enjoying good health and it is our sincere wish that she will be long spared to fulfil the position of organist."

The Maryborough Salvation Army Band rendered some stirring marches and many favourite hymns which were very much appreciated by all present. A musical programme was presented. Mr. N. Truscott was heard to advantage in a vocal solo, "Within This Holy Temple." Mrs. G. T. A. Phillipson very sweetly sang "Sunshine and Rain," while Miss Shirley Lee sang "There is not the End." Miss L. Barker delighted the gathering with an organ solo entitled "Scherzo" by Fallouard.

After the dedication ceremony, the ladies of the church guild served a dainty afternoon tea. A jumble stall conducted by the ladies was well patronised.

SUCCESSFUL APPEAL

An appeal was made by the Rev. Mr. Lee for funds towards the memorial wall. The collectors were two pioneer trustees of the church, Messrs. Joseph Whitby and Ralph Shaw. After the collection the trust secretary, Mr. J. F. Whitby, announced that the donations received and the results of the appeal would more than pay for the erection of the memorial wall which would cost in the vicinity of £150. He thanked all who had assisted in any way to make the function a success.

The Sunday morning and evening services at the Methodist Church were conducted by the Rev. D. T. Dellar. The morning service was devoted to the youth of the district when the Howard Scouts paraded. The church was filled to overflowing. An inspiring and educational address was delivered.

The evening service was attended by members of the Masonic Fraternity, members of the Pride of Howard Lodge and the Miners' Help Lodge of the Protestant Alliance Friendly Society of Australasia, and members of the Methodist Church Ladies' Guild. Again the seating accommodation was taxed to the utmost.

The secretary of the trust, Mr. J. F. Whitby, extended a welcome to Mr. Dellar, to the members of the various societies and the ladies' guild, and to members of the congregation, and expressed the sincere wish that the president's visit and address would be of great benefit to the Methodist Church.

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. J. F. Whitby, secretary of the Howard Methodist Trust, gave a lengthy report of the history of the church and the pioneers. He said—

"I am very proud and happy to have the opportunity of welcoming you all to this function this afternoon. As is the case in any organisation—national, political, or civic—this church is very proud of the pioneers to whom it owes so much. Although the expectations of some may not be fully realised in the symmetry and pretentiousness of the Pioneer Wall, let us, however, turn our minds to something that cannot be bound by mere brick and mortar—an engendered sentiment that will enable us of this generation to keep alive the spark kindled by our forbears approximately 68 years ago.

"Like all churches and other organisations working for the uplift of the community, this church has travelled along an undulating path—sometimes on the crest, sometimes in the trough, but to-day we feel we are right on top of the wave, and hope and pray that this church (not the building, but the people who comprise the church) will ride that wave to prosperity insofar as their example of love, forbearance, and Christian citizenship is concerned.

"In order to help you to stune your minds to that spirit which we strive to cultivate to-day—that of the honouring of the pioneers, I would like to read to you a brief outline of the early history of our church.

"The earliest record we have is the original minute book of the Sunday School, and we understand the establishment of the church and the opening of the Sunday School were synchronous. The church was built and its original furnishings were made by the late Mr. S. Ward.

"The date of the inaugural meeting of the Sunday School was May 13, 1884. Prior to this, periodical services were held by the minister, Wesley Church, Maryborough.

Three names are prominently linked with the establishment of the church, viz., George Barker, John Tench and Charles Whitby. These three were local preachers of the Primitive Methodist Church in England and were known to each other over there. They, with their families, sailed from England between the years 1873 and 1880 and although primarily settling in different localities in this country, they eventually found themselves thrown together in the small settlement of Howard.

It was not long before they gathered together a number of Primitive Methodist friends and founded the Howard Primitive Methodist Church.

"Among the pioneer families, in addition to the three aforementioned, were those of the Steleys, W. Stevenson, Daniel Roderick, D. P. and J. L. White, Ralph Shaw, T. J. Watkins, S. Ward, John Flint, George Hewlett, Thomas and William Watson, John Stafford, W. Hore, —Davies, James, Wainwright, —Jeffreys, —Jones, —Hume, G. and R. Nichols, G. Anderson, William and James Hamilton, P. Carter, David Boyd and many others. Incidentally, Miss Isabel Marshall was on the teaching staff of the Sunday School in 1888. She later married Mr. B. P. Steley and was the mother of our good friend, John Steley.

FIRST MINISTER
The first resident minister was Rev. Edward Knight. Howard was the first Methodist church to be established in the Burrum, Isis and Palomba districts. The missionary enterprise of these stalwart pioneers was shown by the fact that some of them (and I think the late Messrs. Ralph Shaw, John Tench and Rowland Watson were numbered among them) rode on horseback to Horton and there established their cause, later pushing on to Childers, while others crossed the river to Torbanlea. And so, with the passage of time, we find that although Howard is Childers' mother church, Howard is now being worked from Childers. Other pioneer local preachers who assisted the Rev. Knight were Messrs. G. Barker, J. Wainwright, Eli Jones, Thomas Watson, Rowland Watson and D. Boyd. Mr. Boyd, whose wife is a daughter of Mr. D. Roderick and sister of Mr. Arthur Roderick, who, as with us to-day, is the only person from Howard to become an ordained minister of the Methodist Church.

"In the year 1898 the Union of the Primitive Methodist and the Wesleyan churches was united in Australia. Childers became a circuit with an ordained minister, and Howard, Burrum and Torbanlea a circuit in the charge of a probationary minister.

"The Shaws, Tenchs and John Ross, settled in Burrum and nurtured the cause there while among the Torbanlea enthusiasts were Mr. and Mrs. James Wainwright. It will be remembered that Mrs. Wainwright died only a few years ago after attaining the very mature age of 95 years.

"Up until 1909, when the Howard Methodist Church Trust was formed, the church was governed by what was known as the church management committee and the property was vested in Church Union Trustees in Brisbane. Rev. E. J. Moorhouse, who later resigned to again take up school teaching and is now a district inspector of State schools, was the minister at the time. The original members of the Trust were Messrs. J. Tench, D. Roderick, T. J. Watkins, S. Ward, J. Ross, Jos.

J. Tench, D. Roderick, T. J. Watkins, S. Ward, J. Ross, Joe Whitby, J. Cathcart, Theo. Watson, Tom Ward, Roeben Watson, Andrew Hume, with Mr. John Barker (founder of our estimable friends, Dave and Joe and Mrs. A. J. Roderick) as the first secretary. Mr. D. Roderick was the first treasurer.

One of the first registered duties of the Trust was to dispose by sale of the parsonage for the sum of £68. Incidentally this dwelling recently changed hands again after 40 years for a sum in the vicinity of £500.

Some of the more recent events were— The placing of 18 new seats in the church in 1932 during the ministry of Rev. G. W. Brown. Some of the seats are memorials to worshippers who have passed on to the Great Church Above. In 1939 (late Rev. A. Walker) the old windows were replaced by new ones with Artex glass. In 1940 (Rev. T. C. Toft) the vestry was added at the cost of £137 15/-, and financed by an interest free loan from the Methodist loan fund. In 1948 (Rev. A. N. Michael) the exterior of the church was maintained at a cost of £84. And now in the year 1952 we have the erection of the pioneer memorial wall during the ministry of Rev. M. Lee.

That the church in the early days was very much alive can be gauged by the fact that it formed the first brass band in Howard, known as Howard Pioneer Band of Hope Band under the conductorship of Mr. Charles Maxwell. The only known surviving members of the band are Messrs. W. Bilborough (cornetist), Joe

Whitby (bass drummer) and Charles Tench (tenor horn). The church choir, if not instrumental in inaugurating the Fisteddof movement in this district in the very early days, played a prominent part in that movement. The first conductor was Mr. E. Maxwell followed by Mr. D. Roderick, Mr. John Farrell and Miss Barker. The first church organist was Miss Maria Watkins.

Our present organist, Miss Barker, has been at her post for 52 years and is still rendering yeoman service. We pay a very warm tribute to this little lady who has maintained a very strong link with the pioneers by her lifetime of service in dispensing music that is worth going a long way to hear.

The years have not dimmed her sight nor hearing nor the dexterity of her fingers and we as trustees express our sincere thanks to Miss Barker for services past and present, and express the sentiments of one and all when we pray for continued health and strength to enable her to continue in an office in which she gives such valuable and unsurpassed service.

The first annual report of the Sunday School in 1884 gives the enrolment of scholars at 118—68 girls and 50 boys with an average attendance of 75. There were two female teachers and 11 males with an average attendance of nine. The Sunday School, after having been on the decline for a number of

years, is now on the up grade. The enrolment is now 56 and an average attendance of 40.

The Ladies' Guild, with Mrs. A. Neale as president and Mrs. A. H. Burgess as secretary, has a membership of 18, which is, we think, an all-time record.

Thus, Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, you can visualise how this great pattern of Methodism, of which we are all so proud, was woven. We of to-day, who bear the torch handed to us by those tried, true and trusty pioneers, and whose duty it is to keep it burning so that we, in turn, may hand it on to yet another generation of Methodists, pay homage to the memory of that loyal and faithful band. If the pages in this history of the church written during our regime are but half as colourful as those written by our founders, we need not be ashamed.

The trustees were greatly encouraged by the promise of support from the Ladies' Guild when deciding to erect the lamellar tribute. Their donation was £50 while the Sunday School subscribed £20. Other work planned included a chain wire fence to the corner, the laying down of a lawn and planting of ornamental trees and shrubs. We sincerely thank our donors for their generosity and hope that when the offering is taken all will be infused with the spirit which guided and spurred our pioneers to these mighty deeds of which we are so proud.