

THE HISTORY OF THE SYDNEY CHURCH ON THE OCCASION
OF THE 25th ANNIVERSARY, JANUARY, 1985.

(Utilizing the SCRIPT used in the production
of the narrated Slide Presentation -
"Sydney and Beyond".)

The voice of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, who by the late 1940's was broadcasting the "World Tomorrow" program across the U.S.A, was the same voice later heard by 1000's throughout Australia - the same voice which heralded the BEGINNING OF GOD'S WORK in AUSTRALIA.

Mr. Armstrong's first "World Tomorrow" program had a "MUSTARD SEED" beginning on Radio Station 'KORE' in Eugene, Oregon on 7th January, 1934 - 51 years ago.

For 51 years American radio listeners have been able to hear the GOOD NEWS of GOD'S COMING GOVERNMENT to this earth: but 22 years elapsed before Australians could first hear God's Apostle on radio. The broadcast first went to air in Australia on the 14th April, 1956.

This broadcast commenced for one ½ hour period each week on an A.W.A. Network of 8 stations. By 1957 an additional 4 stations were added, and in 1958 a further 3 stations with the total at that time of 15 Radio Stations.

Growth was beginning to take place, it appeared that God was preparing Australia for a future enlarged coverage.

On 10th November, 1959 the Director of God's fledgling Work in Australia, Mr. Gerald Waterhouse arrived in Sydney with Mr. Ted Armstrong to look for suitable office space for the establishment of God's Church in Australia. They found space in the M.L.C. Building in North Sydney which at the time was the most impressive Office Building on the north side of the Harbour.

Mr. Harris of A.W.A. was instrumental in expanding "The World Tomorrow" program to country areas. (Some years later he was to write to Mr. T. Armstrong his appreciation of the World Tomorrow Program, and of the people he was serving in the Church's North Sydney office). His efforts enabled the Program to expand from a ONCE A WEEK schedule to 6 NIGHTS a WEEK basis, broadcasting over 12 Stations in 1959. These expanded broadcasts produced a Mailing List of 5,000 and further growth was expected.

Twelve days after Mr. Waterhouse and Mr. Ted Armstrong arrived they opened the now familiar P.O. BOX 345, at North Sydney and in December they signed the Lease for the 7th Floor of the M.L.C. Building.

On the 24th December, 1959 the AUSTRALIAN Office opened for business, under the direction of Mr. Gerald Waterhouse, who also became God's first resident Minister in Australia. On the same day Mr. Waterhouse wrote the First Letter to be sent from the office advising that a Bible Study was to be held on 21st January, 1960, at Mr. Waterhouse's residence, 45 Coolaroo Road, Lane Cove.

By the end of January, 1960 Mr. Waterhouse again wrote that a Hall had been obtained so the full Sabbath Services could be held. The Hall was actually the Auction Room of the Real Estate Institute of N.S.W. situated at 30 Martin Place, Sydney. It was at this site that 30 people comprising 19 Adults and 11 children gathered on the 30th January, 1960 for God's True Church's FIRST SABBATH SERVICE in Australian history. The Church was known then as the RADIO CHURCH OF GOD.

To the Church's First Commission (until now the 'Broadcasts') was added in February, 1960 Double Page Advertisements of the 'Plain Truth' in The Readers Digest. Later, Readers Digest colour spreads appeared and by 1964 these adds accounted for ½ the Australian & New Zealand P.T. Subscriber lists.

The office functions were expanding as well and Mr. Charles Hefner arrived from Pasadena to dub transcription tapes for the Broadcast.

Prior to Passover of that year the Services were transferred to

The Australian Institute of Builders Hall at Milsons Point, adjacent to North Sydney. Twenty nine (29) people took the Passover - the 1st in Australia, and kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread as a full festival comprising of Services and Bible Studies.

Services remained at Milson's Point for 3 years & 9 months before moving to the A.M.P. Theatre for a short stay.

In May 1960 Mr. Dexter Faulkner was added to the Office Staff and in June Mr. Tony Hammer also arrived to assist in the office.

In July 1960 the P.T. had grown to such a stage that an Australian Edition was commissioned to be printed in Australia by Wilke & Co. of Melbourne. This was to be a significant STEP in the history of the P.T. in this country. The same month the W.T. Broadcast was contracted to be heard on Radio Station 2GB from Monday to Friday at 10.30p.m. for 7 weeks.

In August 1960 Gunar Freibergs left Australia to become the 1st Ambassador College student from "down under"! He was the 1st of a great number of young people who were to follow this practice.

The 1st Feast of Tabernacles to be observed on this continent was in October, 1960 at the Institutes Hall at Milson's Point. Some travelled 2,000 miles to attend this Feast. Among them was a West Australian photographer, Mr. Frank Clarke, who was later to be employed as photographer for the Church in Australia. 103 people attended.

This growth also brought persecution. The N.S.W. Council of Churches who were the Licensees of Radio Station 2CH, the AWA Network station in Sydney, objected strongly to the World Tomorrow Broadcast and its content, which they claimed was contrary to their held beliefs and they required the Broadcast to cease. Rather than hurt God's work this persecution resulted in Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and Mr. Guy Bolam (the Work's New York advertising agent) flying to Sydney to confer with Messrs. Harris & Fox of A.W.A. Mr. Armstrong, with favour from the Almighty, melted the effect of the persecution in so much that a FURTHER 39 Radio Stations were ADDED by the NETWORK, bringing the total stations to 48 and having the capacity to reach almost 99% of Australia's population. The 2CH contract ended on 6th November and the 2KY contract commenced prior to this on 31st October. The NSW council of churches may have won a round, but it is clear that God and His church won the fight. By November 1960 the Mailing List had grown to 15,000 and the Church, now just 1 year old had experienced an attendance growth of 500%. This growth and its attendant work load meant that the office staff needed to expand once again. Mr. Gene Hughes arrived from Pasadena to become the Business Manager, and Australians Mr. Don Abraham, Mr. John Churchland and Miss Noelene Hack were added to the expanding office staff.

By June 1961 the Radio coverage had increased to 31 stations, of which 28 broadcast 6 nights a week.

The Sydney Church had grown to 96 and consideration was given to commence a Spokesmans Club.

Mr. Hammer held Church services at Melbourne where over 30 people attended. Mr. Hammer later moved to the Southern capital as its inaugural Pastor.

In August 1961 Mr. Waterhouse conducted the 1st Bible Study to be held in Brisbane and he was advised that his talents were to be used in yet another country. It was about mid 1961 that an elementary printing machine was installed to print office stationary, envelopes, forms etc.

By September, 1961 Mr. Wayne Cole arrived from headquarters to become Director of the Work and the growing number of personnel.

The 1961 Feast of Tabernacles was held at Blackheath in the local Community Hall. In attendance were 171 people from all over Australia.

On 19th December, 1961 Mr. Waterhouse left Sydney for Pasadena and then South Africa. Mr. Waterhouse had successfully completed his mission in having raised up God's Church in Australia.

Early in 1962 the 1st edition of the "Church of God News" appeared. This locally produced news letter became a vehicle in reporting to the growing number of Australian churches news of local interest such as reports of Baptising Tours to Western Australia, Brisbane and New Zealand. August, 1962 saw Miss Jessie Emmett arrive

to take up position as personal secretary and Mr. Bill Myers also

arrived and worked for many years in the Letter Answering Department.

About this time the Church was granted, by the Commonwealth Government of Australia, full and official Registration to operate in Australia.

The 1962 Feast of Tabernacles was once again held at the Blackheath Community Hall, which was beginning to look too small for future needs. About mid 1962 growing pains were affecting the Printing Dept., so a 6 room premises was leased at 132 Arthur Street, North Sydney to house a New Offset Printing Machine to expand the production to include the printing of Booklets as well as the Church News and the Stationery needs. This modest equipment achieved an output of 80,000 items per month.

By late 1962 Spokesmans Clubs had been established in both Sydney and Melbourne and skills were being learned that are rarely taught outside of God's Church.

Mr. Ted Armstrong visited the office in December, 1962 to witness first hand the growth achieved since 1959. Mr. Don Abraham was ordained to the office of Deacon, becoming not only the 1st. Australian employee of the Work in Australia but also the 1st Australian to be ordained.

At the close of 1962, 1,000 letters were being received each week. The mailing list amounted to 23,000 and 3,200 were enrolled in the Correspondence Course.

In June, 1963 the 1st regular Church Service was established in Brisbane with 100 attending.

The 1963 Feast of Tabernacles was again held at the Blackheath Community Hall to an ever increasing number of people. Such was the growth that plans were formulated to purchase a 40 acre property for the purpose of building our own Tabernacle. A suitable property was found, of all places in Blackheath. The property had belonged to The Osborne Ladies College, the main building had been gutted by fire. Commanding a panoramic view of the Kanimbla Valley it had everything the Church required to build a Feast site. Throughout 1964 the building of the Tabernacle went ahead, under the direction of Mr. Barry Dawes, with members travelling from Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong each Sunday to assist with the preparation and construction. The Architect was Mr. Harry Smith a member of the Sydney Church. The Feast of 1964 was the deadline and it was met.

Earlier in 1964 on 1st February, the venue of the Sydney Church was changed to Anzac House in College Street. This meeting site remained until a few months after the Feast.

The Feast of Tabernacles of 1964 was a Milestone in as much that the Australian Brethren met together in God's Tabernacle in Blackheath. Over the 8 day Festival period all enjoyed the Sermons, facilities and activities in the right kind of environment.

On 23rd January, 1965 Newcastle had its 1st Church Service with 62 in attendance.

By March the decision had been made to move the Church's Printing Department, Ambascos Press to new Factory Premises in Hotham Parade, Artarmon. Mr. H.W. Armstrong had authorised the establishment of a greatly enlarged Press facility so that it could be used to PRINT the Australasian Edition of the PLAIN TRUTH. The 2 storey facility housed a 2 Colour Roland, Offset sheet-fed Press, capable of printing 16 pages of the P.T. on 1 sheet of paper 7,000 times each hour. Other equipment consisted of plate making equipment, folding, stitching and trimming machinery to enable a quality production. Later a Maintenance and a Carpenters Shop were added to the facility as well as housing the Mailing list and the personnel to perform the duties. The March issue was the 1st to be produced by Ambascos Press.

During March 1965 the Church meeting hall was changed to Petersham Town Hall so as to be able to accommodate the larger congregation. Petersham became the venue for many years and is fondly remembered for the Feasts, Fellowship and Social events that were also held there. During this period the Sydney Church Band was formed.

The Feast of Tabernacles of 1965 highlighted the growth and enjoyment being experienced by the brethren, so further extensions

were approved for the next Feast, along with a Beautification program to the grounds and walkways to bring to the site the standard and tone of Ambassador College. The extensions included a Wood panelled Ministerial Dining & Lounge room and a re-siting of the Stage area within the Tabernacle to improve the internal layout for the ever increasing congregations. A sound control room was also installed at this time. The Tabernacle enjoyed excellent lighting both natural and artificial. Many will recall the Meal Tent that was erected at the rear of the Tabernacle because of the ever expanding congregation. All meals were cooked in our own kitchen complex, with many men enjoying the opportunity to serve the hot meals for the benefit of their fellow brethren. In later years meals were served in the Tabernacle itself. The Huge building was a multi function facility, used for Children's parties, social evenings, fun shows, formal balls, square dances as well as the Meetings and meals. Outside well equipped playgrounds catered to the energies of the children, and many families availed themselves of the famous scenic areas in the district. Baptisms were performed in the huge swimming pool of a nearby Guest House.

By 1966 regular comments were being made about the ever-increasing growth of the Church who supported the across Australia coverage of the World Tomorrow Radio Program. This growth meant that Ambascosol Press needed to be re-housed and that the Church had outgrown the original M.L.C. Building Office complex. The office was moved to the newly erected Combined Assurance Office Block.

In 1969 the Press finally found new premises at 7 Lancelote Place, Artarmon where it was to become one of the most modern printing plants to be found in the Sydney area. The facilities efficiency was soon to become the envy of the printing industry. In addition to a huge Mailing Department, the complex had its own Mechanical Workshop to maintain not only the equipment but the Work's fleet of vehicles. Also a most comprehensively equipped photographic dark room served not only Australia but Pasadena as well. Among the assignments were photographs to support editorial material for the P.T. Movie footage was made of special interviews that could be used for the World Tomorrow T.V. Program.

In August 1972 Mr. Wayne Cole returned to the U.S.A. after a term of 11 years as Regional Director; his successor was Mr. Dennis Luker. Growth brought increased costs in supporting the Sydney office and printshop. These factors led to a decision to build a Regional Office with the possible addition of a Printshop at a new development site at Burleigh Heads on the Gold Coast area of Queensland. In 1974 while the project was being built, the P.T. circulation reached record heights assisted by an extensive News-stand program. The program was expanded even further in 1975, the year when the printing of the P.T. was transferred to New Zealand.

The actual Office move to Burleigh Heads was effected in March, 1976. The office opening attracted representatives of Local Government The Albert Shire Council and the City of the Gold Coast, which represented a new concept in Australian Office design. The architect George Adams planned the office building to fit in with the natural contours of the site, utilizing the bushland setting. The opening ceremony was conducted by Mr. Les McCulloch representing the Church Headquarters and Sir Bruce Small the Mayor of the Gold Coast.

During 1976 the Church membership had risen to 2,700 with 4,000 attending 30 congregations around the Continent.

In 1977 to reduce production and mailing costs, the P.T. Printing was moved to Singapore. Another reason for the change was the expected additional P.T. circulation, generated from the World Tomorrow Program being shown on T.V. Stations around the country. Altogether 50 T.V. stations carried the telecast.

In 1978 Mr. Dean Wilson took up the Directorship of the Church and introduced P.T. Lecture campaigns which were held in 150 locations. 1978 was the last year the Feast of Tabernacles was held at Blackheath before the complex was sold. A total of 4750 attended the Feast Sites around Australia. In 1979, 80 and 81 the Sydney Churches were

allocated to attend the Feast of Tabernacles in Port Macquarie, 1982 Canberra and in 1983 and 84 Gosford. In 1985 the Feast will be held in the Ulladulla Area on the mid South Coast of N.S. Wales.

Throughout all these years, there has always been opportunities for every member to Grow and Serve at Socials, Dances, Picnics, Fun Shows, Children's activities, Senior Citizens Functions and Spokesmen Clubs.

The youth have constantly been catered to at various camps, such as Bent's Basin at Wallacia. The first S.E.P. Camp was held at Stanwel Tops; later a property was prepared at Mangrove Mountain. About 1970 the MacMaster's Beach Campout was established and has continued through to the present time.

In July 1980 Mr. Robert Fahey was sent by Headquarters to become the Regional Director and Mr. Gerald Waterhouse once again addressed the combined Sydney Churches. In May, 1981 the Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne Churches enjoyed a visit from Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. The Sydney meeting was held in the Sydney Town Hall. The attending brethren signed a Scroll which was presented to Mr. Armstrong.

Since 1956 when Radio Broadcasting of the World Tomorrow commenced in Australia - the Godd News of God's Kingdom has been constantly preached in Australasia.

The Sydney Church area had the privilege of being the "Father Church" chosen by God to begin HIS Work in this area of the World. The Church has continued to grow from the initial congregation of 30. Let's pray that the Almighty will continue to bless the Work of His Servant, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong both in Sydney and beyond.