

## GBC – A History (December 6, 2009)



As we celebrate ten years in this facility – we thought it would be a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the history of this church.

In the mid-80's, a few believers began meeting in a home in Yeronga. In 1987, we moved into the old *Yeronga Gospel Hall* and had our services there.

We were drawn together by similar desires. We wanted to be fed by the word. We wanted to get away from the frills and just learn the Bible.

A number of men took it in turns to preach on a Sunday. We met through the week for study. We went slowly through a number of evangelism tools, including the early draft of *Christianity Explained*. We wanted to know how to share our faith.

One major study that helped shape us was when we took the doctrinal statement of *Grace Community Church* and worked our way through it. As a group we had grown to really appreciate the teaching of John MacArthur, so we managed to get the doctrinal statement of his church and studied our way through it.

We came across concepts there that were totally foreign to us. It was a very stretching time. I well remember the struggle we had with the doctrine of election. That study was a long one.

It was at this time that we made some basic organisational decisions. We opened a bank account. We chose a name – at that time the name was *Christ's Church* – because we were Christ's and we were a church.

I have very fond memories of this time. We were very small. Just a couple of families. So Sunday was a very social time. We sat around, sang a few hymns to a guitar. One of the men preached, usually with a large sheet that had a few key words on it that came to light as we worked through the passage. Even then, we worked verse by verse through a book of the Bible. We then had question time. After that, Andy Zerk

would get up with the memory verse for the week – and everyone would recite it. We closed with a song.

Being small, fellowship was easy. We all stayed for lunch – often at Yeronga Park. The afternoon was invariably – cricket or swimming and talking – for hours.

These were good times. Those few families were very much core families for our church. We studied together and developed doctrinal convictions together. We didn't have the baggage of denominational tradition and teaching. We came to the word and let it shape us.

At the end of 1988, we had to find a new place to worship. We moved into the *Spanish Baptist Church* in Woolloongabba and had our services there after lunch.

That church is now a wedding chapel in the same street as Koorong.

It was about this time that we began to realise a few difficulties. None of us had any formal theological training. We had come about as far as we could at this point. We needed someone with some training to guide us and shape us.

We wrote to *Grace Community Church* in the US and asked if there was anyone there who might want to come half-way around the world and pastor a small little group in Australia. A couple of men responded and said they might be interested.

Being the only single person in the group – I flew to the States to meet with these men. As it turned out, no one came. But, that trip shaped me.

*Grace Community Church* is a mega-church. I was used to a few families sitting in a circle, some on the floor, some on seats and having a very informal meeting. I attended services there with nearly 10,000 other people.

I sat in a few seminary classes. And after two weeks, I was hooked. I knew this was where I was meant to be.

I came back to Australia and talked it over with my friends here. If they wouldn't send a pastor here, I would go and get trained there. I resigned as a doctor and the church commissioned me to go to the seminary. In 1989 I got on the plane and headed to LA.

In the four years I was gone, basically the same group kept meeting. However, the Spanish Baptists sold their property and the church moved to the old Petrie Terrace Baptist Church for a few years. Then this was sold and demolished and Rosalie Baptist was kind enough to let us meet there.



When we first began to meet we met in their basement in the afternoons.



So while I was in the States studying – a small group were meeting in the afternoons in the basement of Rosalie Baptist.

During my time in the states – I met Dena we got married – had Heather and I met Dave D'Amour.

After four years at seminary, I came back to Australia in 1993.

It was an interesting time. The basement was so hot.

So soon after I got back we moved upstairs and began to meet in the main church building.



We had some rather old hymn books and we sung to a guitar or acapella. We wore suit and tie. It was a different lifetime.

When I got back we decided that the time had come to really get organised. We made several decisions:

- We wrote out a doctrinal statement and constitution. This was one of the hardest, yet most rewarding things we did.
- We incorporated so that the church could become a legal entity.
- We appointed elders – at that time it was almost all the men in the church.
- We changed the name of the church. We loved the name *Christ's Church*, but we felt it didn't convey who we were well enough. We met together and decided on the name *Grace Bible Church*. *Grace* – because we held to the precious doctrines of Grace. *Bible* – because this was the foundation on which we stood. *Church* – because we were a part of the body of Christ.

In this period, the Lord began to add to our number. We grew. We felt the need for somewhere where we could worship, meet and use for the various functions that became necessary as we grew.

We looked at many church buildings, all with incredible price tags. Finally, we heard that *Annerley Gospel Hall* might sell. They wanted to move. The price was half of the next cheapest building we had looked at. But, would the bank lend money to a small group with no real track record?

God made sure they would.



So, on December 16, 1994 we met in our new church for the first time. For the first time we had Sunday morning services rather than Sunday afternoon services.



This was in the morning tea area on our first morning in the new church and that was most of our people.





This was the church office, photocopy room and storeroom. It was infested with ants, it was hot and it leaked so bad.



This was our church kitchen.



This was our church library and crèche. If needed you could pull those great soundproof curtains across.



This was the main church. It seated about 80 or 100 if everyone got really cosy.

Then in 1996, I was woken by the phone ringing at 2.00am in the middle of winter. I staggered out of bed.

“Hello”

“Is this Craig Lloyd.”

“Yes.”

“Craig, I know you don’t know me, but my name is Ken Fuller. I am with a group called *The Believers Foundation* and we would like to send David D’Amour out there to Australia to set up a Bible Institute. So, what do you think?”

God brought Dave and Leanne to Australia.

We soon outgrew this facility.

We spent twelve months looking around. We tried to buy land only to be told the council would not let us build a church.

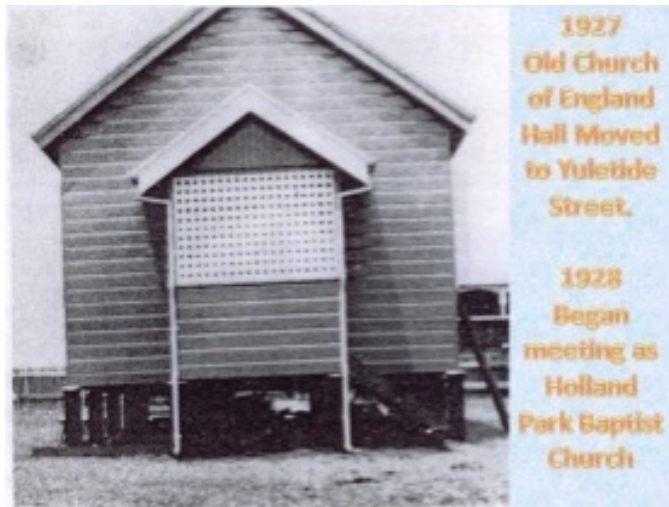
Finally we went to an auction for a church in Rochedale. We never got close in the bidding – but the winners were the Chinese Christian Church of Brisbane. We asked them what they were going to do with their property in Holland Park.

They called on a Friday and said if we would sign a contract by Monday – we could have the property or else it would go on the open market.

We had to move fast.

In 1927, Rev. E.V. Keith, the Pastor of *Dunellan Baptist Church*, (which today is known as *Greenslopes Baptist Church*), bought an old Church of England hall for the sum of

12 pounds 10 shillings. This building was moved to land purchased in Yuletide Street, Holland Park.



In January 1928 – *Holland Park Baptist Church* began to meet in the relocated hall.

The church slowly grew until it became necessary to increase the size of the facilities and it was decided to add a church hall behind the existing building.



On June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1952 – the new hall was formally opened.

By the late 1960's – it became apparent that the facilities were again too small – so plans were made to build a larger church building. The house and land next door were purchased.





Original church building moved to rear – what is now  
Our creche and kitchen. Church services conducted in the hall

Then, what had been the original church building was moved to the rear of the property. If you look at this picture, you can see that what had once been an Anglican Church hall and then the original Holland Park Baptist Church – is now our crèche and kitchen area. So when you sit in that crèche realise that by 1927 – that had already been an old Anglican hall that had outgrown its usefulness.

And while building was going on – the church services were moved to the hall.

In late 1969 – construction began on a new church building.



1969

This was to be a steel framed brick building significantly larger than the old church.



On the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 1970, the building was finished and services were commenced.

In the early 1980's more room was needed so a wall was knocked down, an annex added and more seating was made available.

In 1985 – *Holland Park Baptist Church* moved out of the premises at Yuletide Street. In 1989 the facilities were sold to the *Chinese Christian Church*.

In 1999 – the *Chinese Christian Church* moved to Rochedale and we were given an option to purchase the facility.

Let me put this in perspective. Friday they told us – sign by Monday.

On Sunday after church we came over here to look at the property.

Let's just say it was not in pristine condition.

When we toured this facility on that Sunday afternoon – many in the church just saw a huge amount of work. Others saw the potential.

We signed the contract on the Monday and moved in a couple of months later.

The Lord has blessed us mightily. And we pray that He will continue to do so in the days and years ahead.