



A RIVER GLORIOUS

The Story of Belgrave Heights Convention

Sally Minett 2015



A RIVER GLORIOUS: THE STORY OF THE BELGRAVE HEIGHTS CONVENTION

In Gippsland, eastern Victoria, there is a series of inland lakes fed by numerous rivers. In 2006-07 the longest running bushfires in Victoria's history, followed by torrential floods experienced only once in 100 years, resulted in the many rivers washing great quantities of ash and soil rich in nitrogen and other nutrients into the Lakes. The result was amazing: a natural phenomenon called bioluminescence lit up the water in a stunningly vivid electric blue.¹

Often God works like that – a series of events coming together through multiple channels, each a river collecting and sweeping along with it the promptings and works of the Holy Spirit, the earnest prayer of His people, the seeds of one ministry and the fruit of another, eventually depositing them in one place with staggering results. And while the Gippsland Lakes eventually returned to their normal state, in our case something eventuated that by 2018 will have outlasted a century: the Belgrave Heights Convention.

When and how did it begin? Who and what were the channels God used to bring about one of the most influential Christian gatherings in Melbourne's history?

A Different Lakes District: a Trickle Becomes a Flood

We'll begin with the diary of a fifty-five year old English vicar, written September 15th 1873.

At this moment I am feeling much inward struggle and questioning about the "higher Christian life" which is so much talked of ... I feel that I am dishonouring God and am wretched myself by living as I do, and that I must either go backwards or forwards ... God reveal to me the secret of this "more excellent way", and enable me to walk in it now and always. Amen.²

¹The stunning photos can be seen at <http://www.amusingplanet.com/2011/12/bioluminescence-in-gippsland-lakes.html>

² Irene Cleverdon, Rivers of His Grace, The Jubilee Story of Belgrave Heights, undated, p. 2

Thomas Dundas Harford-Battersby (1823-1883) the much-loved vicar of St. John's parish, in Keswick, England, was not alone in his hunger for a deeper knowledge of God. Britain and America were experiencing a climate of widespread revival. Men like William Wilberforce had fought for social reform and freedom. Sunday Schools were begun, and temperance unions, the YMCA, the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the British & Foreign Bible Society and other nondenominational Christian

Our prayer was for deep, clear, powerful teaching which would take hold of the souls of the people, and lead them to a full, definite, and all-conquering faith in Jesus.

organisations were founded. For the first time, men and women from a variety of denominations gathered together to study the scriptures and proclaim the gospel through Bible institutes, missionary societies, and evangelical outreach.

Two years after his earnest prayer, Canon Battersby was joined by 400 men and women at the first Keswick Convention, held in the beautiful Lakes District town of Keswick, England, in a tent on the lawn of St John's vicarage and under the banner 'All One in Christ Jesus.'

The second convention the following year was advertised as "meetings for the promotion of Scriptural holiness"³ setting the pattern for on-going annual conventions. Although it was not the only one of its kind,⁴ it grew to be both the largest and most prominent of them, attracting thousands of people from many parts of the world.

What was it about these Keswick Conventions that deeply impacted literally thousands of people? In Harford-Battersby's words,

our prayer was for deep, clear, powerful teaching, which would take hold of the souls of the people, and overwhelm them, and lead them to a full, definite, and all-conquering faith in Jesus.⁵

The Convention at Keswick continues today – now a three week event each year in July still attracting many thousands,⁶ still committed to the deepening of the spiritual life through the careful exposition and application of Scripture, and still meeting under the banner, *All One in Christ Jesus*.

Keswick travels to Australia

In 1878, the Rev H B Macartney, (1799-1894) – a Melbourne clergyman and son of the first Dean of Melbourne – visited Keswick⁷ and came home spiritually revived and inspired to do all he could to promote evangelical ministry in Melbourne. In 1883 he,

³ Charles Price, *Transforming Keswick*, OM Publishing, UK, 2000, p. 32

⁴ Steven Barabas, *So Great Salvation*, Marshall, Morgan and Scott, London, 1952, p. 27

⁵ Charles Price, op. cit., p. 38

⁶ The aggregate attendance over the three weeks in 2010 was 12,000. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keswick_Convention

⁷ See http://xmn.cc/xmn_wp_install/wp-content/downloads/keswick/Keswicks_Authentic_Voice.pdf to read the message he gave at that time

with other like-minded ministers representing the various evangelical denominations in Melbourne, formed the Evangelisation Society of Victoria (later Australasia, ESA).⁸

As men and women hungered for the Word of God and His touch on their lives the society began to search for a “spirit-filled evangelist” to conduct state-wide meetings.

Where the Barwon Meets the Sea: Rivers of Revival

In 1891 a Keswick evangelist, the Rev George Grubb, (1856-1940) – “a very tall man, slightly built, with decidedly clerical appearance; his demeanour and conversation characterised by much energy and precision”⁹ – visited Australia where amazing scenes were witnessed at his evangelistic services.¹⁰ Together with Rev Macartney he conducted the very first non-denominational convention ever held in Australia, in the booming coastal town of Geelong. The convention was formed for the nurture of Christians, many of whom were new converts from his enormously fruitful Australia-wide evangelistic meetings.¹¹

It was reported in the newspaper of the day that the convention was being attended by “crowded audiences of all denominations” and that on the Friday three services were held simultaneously, and at one of these a spontaneous offering of £1500 was given for further mission.

In the afternoon the town was paraded by bands of people ... headed by the clergymen of all denominations, [and] like the Salvation Army, singing hymns and delivering addresses.¹²

Even *The Times* carried a report of the missionary meeting.¹³

This was Melbourne's first taste of an inter-denominational convention, and the Geelong Conventions continued for several years.

**“My dear friends,
many may be asking,
what is this convention
at Geelong? Is it
another mission? It is in
no sense a mission but
the gathering together
of the Lord’s people of
all denominations, for
the purpose of getting
a deeper knowledge
of the spiritual life, and
of understanding
practically what the
Lord means by ‘life
more abundant.’ ...**

**Yours in the Lord,
George C. Grubb,**

August 27 1891

**‘All one in Christ Jesus’
Galatians III:28”**

⁸ See <http://revivals.arkangles.com/docs/EvangelisationSocietyofAustralasiaBook1.pdf>

⁹ See <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&d=AS18920518.2.46>

¹⁰ John Charles Pollock, *The Keswick Story: The Authorized History of the Keswick Convention* Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1964, p. 92

¹¹ *Rivers of His Grace* p. 3

¹² 21 Sep 1891 *West Australian*, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/3025002>

¹³ John Charles Pollock, *op.cit.* p. 92

Text box quote above from a letter written by George Grubb, and sent to “all classes and denominations scattered throughout Victoria and the adjacent colonies” see <https://archive.org/stream/samelordanaccou00millgoog#page/n180/mode/2up>

When People Pray: Rivers of Intercession

Around this time a friend of H B Macartney's, the Rev John MacNeil (1854-1896), gathered together a band of ministers who met regularly to pray for revival throughout Australia. Dr Edwin Orr, speaking at the 1984 Easter Belgrave Heights Convention said, "It was when men like John MacNeil decided to pray for Australia, that [this country] had a twenty-five year run of blessing with all the world looking on and saying 'What's going on in Australia?' " ¹⁴

It was not the preaching; it was not the singing; it was the prayer.

At the same time, on the other side of the world, a young evangelist in Chicago called Reuben Torrey (Moody's successor) began meeting weekly with a small group to pray for worldwide revival. The attendance grew until there were over 300 people, and for three years the prayer meetings were held for an hour every Saturday night, followed by a second, smaller prayer meeting that would continue into the early hours of the next morning. One night Torrey had a burden to pray that God would send him around the world with the Gospel. The very next Sunday two strangers from Melbourne (G.P. Barber and Dr W. Warren, sent by ESA to seek out an evangelist in whose ministry the Holy Spirit was clearly evident and who would be willing to lead outreach meetings in Melbourne) approached him to tell him they felt Torrey was the man God wanted to come to their country to reach men and women for Christ. Torrey was stunned and challenged: it seemed the years of praying were about to bear fruit.¹⁵ Realizing this was God's answer, he organised to meet the popular gospel soloist and song leader Charles Alexander in Melbourne, and in 1902 began one of the most significant evangelistic missions in Australia, the Torrey-Alexander crusades, where prayer was the priority. Torrey requested that prayer meetings be held daily:

We can expect no satisfactory or permanent results unless there is a great deal of prayer among the people. We are praying and expecting that the whole country will be moved.¹⁶

In London after the mission he reported,

You have heard a great deal about the preaching, but friends, it was not the preaching; it was not the singing; it was the prayer. And God hears prayer.¹⁷

The Hotel Manager Converted: the River of Life

The main Torrey-Alexander meetings were held in the Exhibition Building where about 10,000 attended each night and up to 5,000 more tried unsuccessfully to

¹⁴ W.F.Renshaw, *Marvellous Melbourne and Spiritual Power*, Acorn Press, Melbourne, 2014, p. 41

¹⁵ Faith Hall of Fame <http://www.eaec.org/index.htm> and <http://revivals.arkangles.com/docs/EvangelisationSocietyofAustralasiaBook1.pdf>

¹⁶ Torrey, 1902, preparing to come to Melbourne <http://revivals.arkangles.com/docs/EvangelisationSocietyofAustralasiaBook1.pdf> p. 200

¹⁷ W.F. Renshaw, op. cit., p. 63

squeeze in. Some 8,600 converts were recorded and the news of the awakening spread far and wide.¹⁸

At one of these meetings the energetic manager of the impressive Federal Hotel in Melbourne (a temperance hotel, or 'coffee palace'), Hervey Percival Smith (1869-1947) listened in amazement as Torrey gave an address on the Bible and its inspiration. "I believe the Bible from cover to cover," boomed the evangelist, and H. P. S. (as he came to be affectionately known) made the decision to start reading the Bible with an open mind. Walking home one night after hearing Torrey preach on John 3:18¹⁹ he recognized for the first time that he was condemned. Immediately he recalled John 5:24 (*I tell you the solemn truth, the one who hears My message and believes the One who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned, but has crossed over from death to life.*) and H. P. Smith was born that night into new life in Christ.

Very soon he was wholeheartedly committed to the work of the gospel. A large room at the Federal Hotel, formerly used for cards and smoke nights was now the scene of weekly gatherings organised to build up Christians in their faith.²⁰ Tirelessly he and a handful of other Christian laymen organised Bible studies, meetings for Keswick teaching, prayer meetings, tract distribution, visitation, open air street evangelism, children's ministries, texts in trams, missionary gatherings, country evangelistic teams, Saturday night rallies, and 'deeper life' meetings held at different centres around Melbourne.

"Prayer was part of his daily warfare; he could give a strong lead and follow a difficult one; he not only lived Christ, but acted for Christ. He actively prayed and planned and then partook of the work."

At the 1967-68 Convention G. H. Morling (1891-1974) spoke reverently of H. P. Smith as a man with "rock-like loyalty and tireless efficiency."²¹ In time, under his leadership this enormous variety of ministries was informally organised under the umbrella of a group of laymen collectively operating as the Melbourne Gospel Crusade (MGC), claiming as its theme, "Ruin by the Fall, Redemption by the Blood of Christ and Regeneration by the Holy Spirit."

Friends and members of the MGC began to meet for fellowship and prayer during the holiday season. From 1909 to 1912 about 50 met in a marquee at Eltham, then about 100 at Black Rock for two consecutive years. Even through the uncertainties

¹⁸ W.F. Renshaw, op. cit., p. 44

¹⁹ "The one who believes in Him is not condemned. The one who does not believe has been

condemned already, because He has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God."

²⁰ *The Keswick Quarterly*, Feb. 1948, p. 19 When the Saturday night gatherings grew too large for the hotel, they moved to the Assembly Hall in Collins Street, then later to the Protestant Hall in Exhibition Street.

Quote in text box from Len Buck, Chairman of BHC 1968-1976, speaking of H.P. Smith. *The Keswick Quarterly* Feb. 1948, p. 22

²¹ W.F.Renshaw, op. cit., p. 219

of the First World War the work and prayer went on with a gathering at Beaumaris in 1915 and with smaller gatherings meeting at homes in Vermont in 1916 and 1917.²²

The Rivers Meet: "What about Upwey?"

It was 1918, and finally the First World War was over. J.H. (Jack) Robinson and Norman Baker were prepared and eager to join the mission field in China with the China Inland Mission, but with their plans forcibly postponed by the war they had remained in Melbourne conducting evangelistic meetings with the Melbourne City Mission. On the final night of the mission in Richmond they missed the last tram home, and while Norm Baker headed back on foot, Jack decided to try for a room at the Federal Hotel where his friend, H.P. Smith, was manager.

Now Jack had, for some time, been looking for an opportunity to speak to H.P.

Smith: lately one of Melbourne's leading tea merchants, John Griffiths had been

God had been preparing His servants to meet an increasing hunger among the Lord's people for the "bread of life"

making his beautiful Upwey country estate, Forest Park, available for Bible studies (run by C. H. Nash, soon-to-be founder and principal of Melbourne Bible Institute – MBI, now MST – which began in 1920) and Jack could see in Upwey the potential for a convention. It was quiet and restful, yet still close to Melbourne. But a convention

needed the right man to lead it. When Jack was invited the next day to morning tea with his friend he grabbed the long prayed-for opportunity to speak to him about his idea,

and to ask for his help. H.P. Smith didn't take much convincing: to Robinson's delight he quickly agreed and a month later several houses were booked ready for the first Upwey Convention.²³

Arthur Pocklington (Convention Secretary 1948-1972) recalls,

Looking back to the actual commencement of the Convention there is clear evidence that God had been preparing His servants - both Bible teachers and organisers – to meet an increasing hunger among the Lord's people for the "bread of life".²⁴

The 1918 Convention at Upwey saw 57 people accommodated in houses and over 100 attend the meetings. Every day began with a "vigorous"²⁵ early morning prayer meeting and each evening open air meetings were held at the Upwey railway station. The main meetings were conducted in the Upwey Union (now Baptist) Church hall.²⁶ According to the MGC report, the first convention

We ask for prayer that we may know and do the will of the Lord.

²² W.F.Renshaw, op. cit., p. 95. Also see article in *The Age*, Jan 1 1955, quoting Mrs. Digby Lawson as she recalled those early days. Mrs. Lawson became one of the "House Mothers" at Upwey, serving faithfully every year of the Upwey Convention.

²³ *Rivers of His Grace* op. cit., p. 5

²⁴ From A. Pocklington's hand-written history of the convention

²⁵ JH Robinson quoted in *Rivers of His Grace* op. cit., p. 5

²⁶ http://www.astorehouseofknowledge.info/w/Belgrave_Heights_Convention

proved to be a season of great blessing and many, we believe, will look back to it with hearts full of praise to God. The Convention meetings in the church, the Bible Readings in the houses, the early morning prayer meetings, the open air preaching at Upwey and Belgrave, were all features that were manifestations of spiritual power ... Many have asked if the Upwey Convention is to be an annual one ... In this we ask for the prayers of the Lord's people that we may know and do the will of the Lord.²⁷

J.H. Robinson sailed for China the following month, a "devoted missionary of the Cross,"²⁸ but many others stepped in to carry on the work.

It was never initially planned to be an annual event. After the second convention H.P. Smith wrote,

Many have talked of the "Convention next Christmas" as if it were a settled matter. If this be so in the counsels of Him Whom we love and serve, then let us pray that we may know and do His will in this, as in all other things lying before us in the strenuous times that are ahead – 'til He come'.²⁹

As the numbers grew a marquee was erected behind the Union Church in Upwey. It was a tent that

rocked and leaked, the poles swaying in the wind, the kerosene lanterns flickering and shaking, and everybody wondering if the whole thing would collapse on our heads. When the rain came down, the umbrellas went up!³⁰

In the early days the little Puffing Billy train was filled with singing friends as the engine panted through the hills. Truly this movement was saturated with praise.³¹

Following God's leading, the gathering became an annual event. The local newspaper reported enthusiastically on "The Gospel Convention":

The songs of the party as they rang out on the evening air told of a desire to lead the thoughts of mankind into high and lofty realms. As the toy trains glided their way along the eager passengers listened to the gospel message as its music floated on the eventide, and listening, more rejoiced.³²

Truly this movement was saturated with praise.

Each year *The Argus* reported on the speakers, convention attendance and meetings.

The ... annual Upwey Convention will begin tomorrow (Christmas Day). It will be held in a large marquee seating about 500 persons, which has been erected just above the Upwey railway station. The convention was first held in 1920, [sic] in the Upwey Union Church, but increasing attendances each year have made larger accommodation necessary. This year a boys' camp has been added, which is under the charge of Mr. N. C. Lumsden. The convention, known as a "Victorious Life

²⁷ Extract from The Melbourne Gospel Crusade report, quoted by A. Pocklington in his handwritten history of the Convention

²⁸ W.F.Renshaw, op. cit., p. 219

²⁹ W.F.Renshaw, op. cit., p. 98

³⁰ *Rivers of His Grace* op. cit., p. 5

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 5

³² *The Mountaineer*, Jan 1921, quoted in W.F.Renshaw, op. cit., p. 98

Convention," is conducted on lines similar to those of the convention held annually at Keswick in the North of England. It extends from December 25 to January 3, special services being held on the public holidays.³³

It was decided at the 1922-23 convention that a permanent Upwey Council was needed. John Griffiths became the first Chairman, Frank Varley the Honorary Treasurer, and H. P. Smith the Honorary Secretary.

A Stream of Missionaries

From the beginning the missionary influence was very strong, and can be traced back to the early meetings at Forest Park where regular missionary meetings were held in the garden under the trees.

At that very first convention at Upwey, those who responded to God's call and went to serve on the mission field included Del Rees, Hudson and Howard Southwell, Minnie and Effie Varley, Eileen Jordan, Dora, Minnie and George Aitken and Phoebe McLean.³⁴

Only eternity will reveal the impact of those used by God to preach to the four corners of the globe.

In 1928 the Convention undertook to fully support two missionaries through the annual missionary offering: J. Howard Kitchen, and in the following year Jessie Taffs, who were known as "Upwey Missionaries". In 1940 it was decided to discontinue the practice, and thereafter the missionary fund was (and still is) used to benefit a large number of Mission Societies.

Over the years an enormous number of missionaries first responded to God's call at Upwey/Belgrave Heights Convention and only eternity will reveal the impact of those used by God to preach the good news to the four corners of the globe.

Through Depression and War

In 1930 the Convention outgrew the marquee and moved to a larger site in the same street. The five acre block purchased by the Convention Council meant a permanent auditorium could be built, large enough to seat over 1000. Designed by Alex Eggleston (the highly respected Melbourne architect and member of the Convention Council), the auditorium with its open sides, flower-covered platform and familiar banner "All One in Christ Jesus" warmly welcomed people from all denominations.

³³ *The Argus*, 24th Dec 1926

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/3828683?searchTerm=Upwey%20Convention&searchLimits=title=13> | | sortby=dateAsc

³⁴ A. Pocklington op.cit.

During the difficult Depression years the teachings of men like C. H. Nash (founder and Principal of MBI), John Ridley (well-known Australian evangelist), G. H. Morling (Principal of the Baptist Theological College in Sydney), W. P. Nicholson (famous Irish evangelist) and regular Keswick speakers like Dr Graeme Scroggie, J. Oswald Sanders, and Capt Reginald Wallis, as well as hymns such as *Full Salvation*, *Guide me O Thou Great Jehovah* and *Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine*, sustained, comforted and upheld many.³⁵

**Full salvation!
Full salvation!
Lo, the fountain
opened wide,
Streams through every
land and nation
From the Saviour's
wounded side**

Despite, or perhaps because of the hardships of the time, numbers continued to grow from year to year.

In 1933 *The Argus* reported,

The number of visitors to Upwey is a record. Every available house is taken. The 16th Upwey Convention is attracting record attendances. The large auditorium built to accommodate 1,000 persons has been enlarged during the year to seat 1,200 people and it is proving too small.³⁶

And in the following year attendance almost doubled, with up to 2000 attending the ten day convention, and 60 young men camping on the grounds. Most days the young people conducted open-air meetings in the streets of Belgrave and Upwey.³⁷

It was at this convention that the Irish evangelist William P. Nicholson ('W.P.')

ministered, and one who was there never forgot:

He was a dramatic, fiery and sometimes brusque preacher. One night because the building was packed out, some of us were seated on the edge of the platform, with the piano between us and the evangelist. We could hear him, but not see him. That night, however, we felt ... the throb of God's heart!³⁸

This year, too, a League of Youth Camp (CMS) was established on the site, led by Rev Alfred Stanway (1908-1989), who had been converted in 1928 under C.H Nash's ministry,³⁹ and who threw "all his energies ... into the task of building up [the League of Youth] members in personal holiness and vigorous evangelism."⁴⁰ He left in 1939 for Kenya, and later became Bishop of Central Tanganyika.

And so 1939, and the Second World War; the Convention continued its ministry.

Peace, perfect peace – with loved ones far away?
In Jesus' keeping we are safe, and they.⁴¹

At this Convention J Oswald Sanders was welcomed to the platform for the first time, and at the Council's request he gave a special address on missionary giving. This led

Quote in text box from *Full Salvation* by Francis Bottome, 1871, 167 in *The Keswick Hymnbook*

³⁶ *The Argus*, 30th Dec 1933

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/11725190?searchTerm=upwey%20convention&searchLimits=title=13> | | sortby=dateAsc

³⁷ <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/11003753?searchTerm=upwey%20convention&searchLimits=title=13> | | sortby=dateAsc

³⁸ Rev C Harold Nicholls, "Looking Way Back", BHC News, Winter 2000

³⁹ http://webjournals.ac.edu.au/journals/adeb/s_/stanway-alfred-1908-1989/

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Peace, Perfect Peace*, by Edward H. Bickersteth

to an immediate increase in the Missionary offering that year from £350 to £1 600, and with an average of £5000 at subsequent conventions.⁴²

As in previous years, Leonard Buck, Charles Sandland, and S. P. Waddingham held the open-air meetings at Upwey and Belgrave after the evening Convention meetings and reported,

The Upwey meetings saw some thrilling evidences of the Holy Spirit's enabling power among young Christians who testified for the first time. At Belgrave there were a number of decisions for Christ...

The report concludes that there were no "Chocolate Soldiers" to melt that night!⁴³

Christian newspaper *New Life* reported on the 1943 Convention:

The annual Upwey Convention ... was marked by a large attendance and conspicuous evidences of the working of the Holy Spirit in many lives ... Despite war difficulties the attendance at the Convention meetings was excellent, and it was considered that there was an increase on last year's attendance, particularly at the morning Bible readings. There was an exceptionally large population of young people at this year's gatherings.

The Auditorium, which seats approximately 1400 was filled for the principal meetings and over 1000 were present each evening ... 65 houses were booked by various house parties.

It was a joy to hear of the blessing at the camps and house parties, where, through personal conversation and informal meetings for devotion or testimony, there were a great many decisions made for Christ, whilst other young people were led into a deeper spiritual experience.

Speaking at the final meeting of the convention, Dr J J Kitchen [*Convention Chairman 1926-1947*] told of the constant prayer which had preceded this year's meetings. Each week members of the council had met together for intercession, and although exceptional difficulties were faced in regard to the arrangements, God had over-ruled in every instance.

At one stage it seemed almost impossible for either Mr [*J. Oswald*] Sanders or Mr [*Rev J. H.*] Deane [*the key speakers*] to be able to travel to Melbourne, yet gradually the hindrances had been removed and both were able to come to Victoria by air.

Accommodation had proved another acute problem, and item after item had to be "prayed through".

It was a joy to hear of the blessing at the camps and house parties, where there were a great many decisions made for Christ.

⁴² from Arthur Pocklington's handwritten history of the Convention

⁴³ *The Keswick Quarterly*, Feb. 1939, p. 15. A "Chocolate Soldier" was a derogatory label for a soldier who would not fight but would look good in a uniform.

Dr Kitchen remarked that Mr H. P. Smith and Mr W. L. Wright had stated that there had never been an Upwey Convention which had reached a higher mark than this convention.⁴⁴

Each week members of the council had met together for intercession

One of the distinctive and valuable features of the Convention that contributed greatly to its growth was the house party system, where local houses were leased to accommodate visitors.⁴⁵ House parties at this time included the aforementioned CMS, the Evangelical Fellowship, the "Lalla Rookh" Boys' House party, ESA, the Victorian Teachers' Christian Fellowship, and the Geelong Upwey Fellowship.⁴⁶

*The Keswick Quarterly*⁴⁷ carried encouraging reports from many of the house parties. The Postal Sunday School Movement conducted a house party at "Timaru" in Ferntree Gully, and reported on

the spontaneous prayer-fellowship enjoyed by leaders and children alike. This joy reached high-water mark when, on the second Sunday, a prayer session was held, and several who had received the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour during the first week, led in prayer for the salvation of others being served by the Movement in far-off places.⁴⁸

The impact of the War, however, reached even as far as Upwey. By 1944 house party accommodation was becoming more difficult.

Owing to the war-time acute shortage of houses everywhere, the position at Upwey has changed considerably during the last two or three years, with the result that many of the holiday houses formerly rented by the Convention friends have now been sold or let to permanent residents. This year, in addition to many old friends, a considerable number of new parties have been seeking for houses, and in some cases it has required much perseverance to secure them...

This difficult accommodation situation has revealed very clearly that the step taken by the Council a year ago to acquire extra land was very timely ... Plans are afoot for the erection of a Communal Kitchen with three or four stoves, so that some visitors can be accommodated in tents on the grounds.⁴⁹

But there were bigger changes ahead.

⁴⁴ *New Life*, 6 Jan. 1944

⁴⁵ In his hand-written memoirs of the Convention, Arthur Pocklington makes special mention of Mr and Mrs F. Digby Lawson, Mr and Mrs E. Silversmith, Miss Emmie Smith, Rev and Mrs S. Beckingham and Mrs E. Burford as among those who gave invaluable service in the service of the early house parties.

⁴⁶ *The Keswick Quarterly* 1944, p. 17-18

⁴⁷ See Appendix 4

⁴⁸ *The Keswick Quarterly*, Feb 1948, p. 29

⁴⁹ *The Keswick Quarterly* 1944, p. 16

The River Branches Out

It is worth mentioning here that during these years a significant number of associated conventions were formed in country areas around Victoria. By 1941 four of these were well established at Kerang, Warracknabeal, Shepparton and Portland.⁵⁰ (Warracknabeal continues today, with around 100 adults and 100 teenagers meeting annually.)

In 1969 it was estimated that at least 2500 people attended the Victorian country conventions.

Arthur Pocklington, (the Convention Secretary from 1948 to 1972) was also appointed Organising Secretary of what became known as the Upwey Extension Movement, and many new Conventions were held in country districts including Ballarat and Geelong. In fact, during 1948 18 different conventions were held around the state, and into South Australia and New South Wales.⁵¹

The River Makes a New Turn

Like a river glorious is God's perfect peace,
Over all victorious in its bright increase:
Perfect, yet it floweth fuller every day;
Perfect, yet it groweth deeper all the way.⁵²

In 1946 the Council was informed that the Convention site (now 7 ½ acres) would be needed for extensions to the High School next door. For two or three years the council negotiated with the Government in an effort to avoid the move, but finally it was clear that God's hand was directing them to a larger site. In 1950, 22 acres (about 9 hectares) were purchased in Belgrave Heights (formerly a golf links site) where "those attending may enjoy the twofold blessings of Christian fellowship and exquisite scenery"⁵³ and in an incredibly short time the auditorium was dismantled and reassembled, with some interior improvements, just in time for the 1950/51 Convention. As building materials and builders were still in very short supply (it was only six years since the war had ended), God's provision and undertaking were evident over and over again.

15 large properties provided camps and house parties that for many were a highlight of the convention.

The move to Belgrave Heights made possible the more permanent establishment of some of the annual house parties. Surrounding the new grounds were large areas of relatively inexpensive land available for sale. Over time organisations such as the Evangelisation Society of Australia (ESA), Church Missionary Society (CMS),

⁵⁰ A. Pocklington op.cit.

Text box: see the 1969-70 Convention Programme, p. 8

⁵¹ W. Renshaw op. cit., p. 112

⁵² *Like a River Glorious* by Frances Ridley Havergal, 213 in *The Keswick Hymnbook*

⁵³ From the 33rd Annual Upwey Convention Programme – the first convention held on the new site at Belgrave Heights

Campaigners for Christ, the Gospel and Missionary Fellowship (GMF), the Churches of Christ Evangelical Fellowship and the Diamond Valley Interdenominational Christian Fellowship (DVICF) purchased their own land and established permanent camp buildings and houses for the accommodation of members attending Convention, as did several churches, such as Kew Baptist and Ivanhoe Christian Fellowship.⁵⁴ Eventually 15 large, well-developed properties, which included the official camps of most denominations, provided accommodation and house parties that for many were a highlight of the Convention. Here meal time conversations, evening devotions, and prayerful, caring oversight by house party 'parents' gave the Holy Spirit opportunity to further challenge, bless and impact hundreds of lives, and valuable life-long Christian friendships were formed.

It also became a feature of the afternoon and evening meetings that a house party would be invited to sit together on either one (or both) sides of the platform (a conspicuous area used as an 'overflow' when more seats were needed) to sing a hymn or chorus during the meeting. Sitting in these seats was an honour, but you were always aware that 2000 eyes were upon you – so full concentration was needed at all times!

Eventually these campsites were sold or turned to other uses, and only the Ivanhoe and Diamond Valley sites remain, now owned by the Convention itself.

More Growth: Easter Convention and a Larger Auditorium

Only two years after the move to Belgrave Heights it was clear that there was a high demand for an annual Easter Convention. The first was held in 1952, and at first the morning Bible Studies were conducted in small groups, each led by a competent tutor. After only three years the increase in numbers made the Group Discussions impossible to run effectively, and the Bible Studies were conducted from the platform. Easter has continued to be extremely popular with consistently higher attendance than the Summer Conventions, at times attracting over 3500 attendees.

Around 1954 nearby Lockwood House was purchased (Belgrave Heights was originally called Lockwood until the Lockwood estate was subdivided in 1914⁵⁵) and after a few years it became affectionately known as "The Lodge", providing comfortable accommodation and warm hospitality for the speakers, leaders of the Convention, and their families.

Three of the largest attendances recorded for a single meeting at the Convention were for women speakers: Corrie ten Boom (1957), Gladys Aylward (1961) and Helen Roseveare (1980)

⁵⁴ A. Pocklington, op. cit.

⁵⁵ http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/yarraranges/result_details/115549

In 1957, only seven years after the move to Belgrave Heights, it became necessary to enlarge the Auditorium, increasing the seating capacity by 50% to 1925.⁵⁶ When the auditorium was full, people spilled out on to the grass outside, where, despite the more relaxed setting, people sat quietly expectant, their Bibles open, as the words spoken on the platform were projected through several loud speakers.

The Programmes: Preparation and Expectation

The Convention programmes (or handbooks) given out at the door at each Christmas Convention, were often kept as treasured souvenirs. (Smaller versions were printed for the Easter Conventions.) The programmes contained a list of meetings and speakers, a list of council members, information about Extension Conventions (which met at various times throughout the year), all the hymns for that Convention, the Treasurer's Report,⁵⁷ and two response slips: a call to mission service, ("God has called me to missionary service") and availability for Missionary Service ("I declare my availability to Him").

***"My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee and will look up."
Psalm 5:3***

Each year the programmes also contained a call to early prayer (reproduced below). These meetings were held every morning in the Small Hall from 7.00 to 7.50 am.

"My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up." Psalm 5:3

A fine opportunity is provided for all to unite in prayer for the speakers and hearers and all aspects of the Convention ministry, that the Holy Spirit will graciously work in the hearts of all, and cause the blessings of the Victorious Life message to abound to many. Twenty minutes each morning will be devoted to prayer for various mission fields.

REMEMBER it was at a United Prayer meeting that –

The mighty power of Pentecost was unleashed (Acts 2:1-2)

The place was shaken and boldness to speak the word of God was given (Acts 4:24, 31)

Peter's release from prison was secured (Acts 12:5-11)

The missionary enterprise had its birth (Acts 13:1-4)

⁵⁶ A. Pocklington, op. cit.

⁵⁷ For example, in 1965 the annual expenditure for the Secretary's car expenses was £153!

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.” Hebrews 4:16⁵⁸

“All Christians have what the New Testament calls ‘eternal life’ for without this one cannot be a Christian, but all Christians have not entered into the experience of the abounding life...

One may war and yet not win, may serve and yet not succeed, may try and yet not triumph, and the difference throughout is just the difference between the possession of eternal life, and the experience of abounding life.”

Each year, too, the programme outlined the following helpful suggestions for all attending Convention:

In order to receive all that God would give us during the Convention, these suggestions are made:-

Determine that nothing will keep you back from meeting with God and from hearing His Word to you. Pray continually, “Lord, speak (1 Samuel 15:22) ... Lord, search. (Psalm 139:23, 24)”

Be willing to put right anything God may show is wrong and be ready to obey Him in everything. “To obey is better than sacrifice.” (1 Samuel 15:22)

Be prepared to be much alone with God. It may be in one of the Halls or Marquees, or out among the trees, if not in your Camp or House. This may mean cutting down on social engagements or leaving your friends for a time. But it is essential.

The aim of the Convention is to deepen your Spiritual life, that you may be “filled with all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:19), that you may become “a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master’s use” (2 Timothy 2:21) and that you may be made a channel of blessing to others, at home and on the mission field (John 7:38). Be prepared to surrender all that this may be attained. You are not here on a spiritual picnic but rather in the Great Physician’s clinic to be healed, and made fit for His work and witness again.

Let us resolutely avoid controversy, especially on denominational issues, and concentrate in conversation rather on the things we hold in common. In other words, let us faithfully observe the spirit of the Convention Motto: **“All one in Christ Jesus.”**⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Taken from the 1967-1968 Convention Handbook p. 2 and reprinted in several programmes over the years

Text in box above found in the 1957-58 Convention Programme, p.6, quoting G. Scroggie

⁵⁹ Taken from the 1966-67 Programme, p. 4, and reprinted in several over the years

And finally, each year the programme would contain a summary of the Convention message. For example, in 1966-67 we are reminded

that while the Convention has inspired hundreds of evangelistic campaigns, it is not primarily an evangelistic conference; that while it is utterly loyal to the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God, it is not primarily a Bible conference; and that while it keeps in the forefront of its applied teaching the claims of the dark places of the earth, it is not primarily a missionary conference. **It is simply and solely a Convention devoted to the deepening of the spiritual life; the quickening of God's people; the exploration of our inheritance in Christ Jesus, and the appropriation of the blessing that may be ours through the fullness of the Holy Spirit.**

In 1963-64, and again in 1967-68, a verse is quoted from a hymn by Frances Ridley Havergal,⁶⁰

Holiness by faith in Jesus,
Not by effort of thine own;
Sin's dominion crushed and broken
By the power of grace alone.
God's own holiness within thee,
His own beauty on thy brow:
This shall be thy pilgrim brightness,
This thy blessed portion now.

And in the 1968-69 programme readers are reminded that

before God's people are ready to be channels of blessing to others, they must know what it is to be in living contact with the source of continuous supply themselves.

Ash Wednesday, 1983

On a 43 degree day in February, 1983, two Campaigners for Christ volunteers were working hard to put the finishing touches on the newly painted and renovated Campaigners' campsite on Mt. Morton Road.

Meanwhile bush fires across the state, including in the Dandong Ranges, were being fanned by winds of up to 110 km/h causing widespread destruction (and eventually the deaths of 47 Victorians). As smoke thickened they realised their danger, and escaped from the area just in time: a sudden and violent wind change sent the fire roaring through the property, totally destroying the campsite, and most of the nearby CMS campsite as well.

The wooden cross had not a mark on it, yet the grass that had been growing right up to its base was blackened and brittle.

On the Campaigners for Christ campsite only one thing remained miraculously untouched by the flames: the wooden cross which stood tall in the beautiful outdoor

⁶⁰ *Church of God, Beloved and Chosen*, Francis Ridley Havergal (1836-1879) 163 in the *Keswick Hymn Book*

chapel had not a mark on it, yet the grass that had been growing right up to its base was blackened and brittle.

That same morning around 1500 women were gathered in the convention auditorium for a CWCI (Christian Women's Convention International) convention. Mercifully, the convention had ended by the time the fire reached Belgrave Heights.

The Convention grounds remained untouched except for a small pocket of vacant land in the south-east corner of Convention Ave. and Lockwood Road. Were God's people praying?

Toilets and Other Important Additions

The 1990s saw the Convention Council concerned with the suitability of the Convention facilities for modern visitors, and a number of plans were drawn up for redevelopment. Improvements to the auditorium in the following decade saw the earthen floor concreted and the slope reduced, the sides pushed out further and enclosed with glass doors and full-height windows, and fans and heaters installed to compensate for the weather. No longer is there any need to come wrapped in blankets and thick coats, or sit near the open sides hoping to catch a breeze on a hot Summer's day. Gone, too, are the friendly possums who used to scurry along the rafters, often pausing just over the speaker's head long enough to temporarily draw people's gaze upward (often to the amusement of visiting overseas speakers).

Lots of toilets!

A new foyer was built on to the front of the auditorium housing display areas, a small kitchen with servery, and toilets – lots of toilets! Externally, the only reminder of the original building is the distinctive roof line, but internally the exposed timber and metal beams from Alex Eggleston's original 1930 design have been retained.⁶¹

The Programme: Setting the Course

For many years the Convention followed a sequence of teaching, used by the speakers as a general guide for the meetings. It ran for six days, but was not used on the Sunday, for which instead special programmes were arranged. The following is a summary taken from the guide given to a Convention speaker for the 1960-61 Christmas Convention:

Day 1: Sin in the Life of a Christian

Aim: That the Spirit of God shall convict of sin, in whatever form it may be lurking in the life of the Christian and thus be hindering the fulfilment of God's purpose.

⁶¹ http://www.astorehouseofknowledge.info/w/Belgrave_Heights_Convention

Day 2: Divine Provision for Cleansing

Aim: To point out the full provision which God has made for the perfect cleansing from all sin and unrighteousness of the believer.

Day 3: The Resurrection Life

"That I might know Him and the power of His resurrection." (Phil 3:10)

Day 4: Full Surrender

"Therefore ... offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God."
(Romans 12:1)

Day 5: Fullness of the Spirit

Ephesians 5, a command, a birthright, a promise, a need

Day 6: Service

"That we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies may serve Him."

(Luke 1:74)

"That we may be vessels meet for the Master's use." (2 Timothy 2:21)

In 1948 the Archbishop of Sydney, the Most Rev. H. W. K. Mowll, spoke at the Keswick Convention in England, bringing greetings from Katoomba Convention (in the Blue Mountains in NSW) and Upwey Convention. His message is as relevant to us now as it was then:

The need for the distinctive Keswick message is very great ... What is the Keswick message? What is the purpose of our meetings? They are not merely for refreshment; yet what wonderful times of spiritual refreshment many of us have had in days gone by at Keswick! Nor are they merely for spiritual fellowship; yet none who have been here in past years can come back again without thinking of those friends with whom they had such fellowship in years gone by. The purpose of these gatherings, however, is for the deepening of spiritual life, for the promotion of practical scriptural holiness ... Practical scriptural holiness: that is what Keswick came into existence to promote. Holiness, as you know, in the scriptural sense does not mean any inherent virtue, but proximity to the Holy One. Many of us in this tent tonight have heard it taught and seen it lived by many in whose spiritual debt we shall always be ... "Their sound has gone into all lands."⁶²

May God pour out on us His blessing, and continue to bring thousands to Belgrave Heights Convention year after year that we might know Him in His fullness and the fullness of His salvation, and each one be "made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work"⁶³ at home and across the globe.

⁶² The Keswick Week, 1948, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, London, 1948, pp 12-13

⁶³ 2 Timothy 2:21

He asked me, "Have you been watching, son of man?" Then he led me back along the riverbank. When I returned, I was surprised by the sight of many trees growing on both sides of the river. Then he said to me, "This river flows east through the desert into the valley of the Dead Sea. The waters of this stream will make the salty waters of the Dead Sea fresh and pure. There will be swarms of living things wherever the water of this river flows. Fish will abound in the Dead Sea, for its waters will become fresh. Life will flourish wherever this water flows...Fruit trees of all kinds will grow along both sides of the river. The leaves of these trees will never turn brown and fall, and there will always be fruit on their branches. There will be a new crop every month, for they are watered by the river flowing from the Temple. The fruit will be for food and the leaves for healing."

Ezekiel 47:6-12

"The Convention is never an end in itself; it is a means to an end. Those who attend may learn the secret of the inflow and the outflow. Before God's people are ready to be channels of blessing to others, they must know what it is to be in living contact with the source of continuous supply themselves. At Keswick thousands have tapped the springs of Living Water, and in turn have become life-giving streams for the refreshment of a parched and desolate world." ⁶⁴

Like a river, glorious
Is God's perfect peace,
Over all victorious
In its bright increase;
Perfect, yet it floweth
Fuller every day,
Perfect, yet it groweth
Deeper all the way.

Stayed upon Jehovah,
Hearts are fully blest;
Finding, as He promised,
Perfect peace and rest. ⁶⁵

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⁶⁴ Taken from the 1961-62 Convention Programme, p. 6

⁶⁵ Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879), 213 in *The Keswick Hymnbook*

Appendices

Appendix 1

Complete List of Convention Speakers

Appendix 2

Convention Chairmen

Appendix 3

Other Convention Office Bearers

Appendix 4

The Keswick Quarterly

Appendix 5

Our History at a Glance

Appendix 1 – Complete List of Convention Speakers

2015 Easter	
2014-15 Summer	John Risbridger, Canon Dr Peter Adam
2014 Easter	Dr Steve Brady, Rev Simon Manchester
2013-14 Summer	Rev Dominic Smart, Rev Rory Shiner
2013 Easter	Rev David Cook, Bishop Frank Retief
2012-13 Summer	Charles Price, Rev Andrew Reid
2012 Easter	Rev Ian Coffey, Rev Tim Meyers
2011-12 Summer	Dr Murray Capill, Dr Bruce Milne
2011 Easter	Rev Jonathan Lamb, Rev Vaughan Roberts
2010-11 Summer	Rev Dr Derek Tidball, Rev Richard Condie
2010 Easter	Canon Dr Peter Adam, Rev Dr Christopher Chia
2009-10 Summer	Rev Ian Coffey, Dr Steve Brady, Ruth Coffey, Rev Martin Pakula
2009 Easter	Rod Wilson, Rev David Cook
2008-09 Summer	Jonathan Lamb, Ian Powell, Kofi-Anane-Fenin
2008 Easter	Chris Wright, Rev Michael Raiter, Peter Riddell
2007-08 Summer	Charles Price, Rev Dr Paul Barker, Hilary Price, David Cummings
2007 Easter	Canon Dr Peter Adam, Gary Inrig
2006-07 Summer	Andrew Macrae, Rev Ian Coffey
2006 Easter	Christopher Chia, Al Stewart
2005-06 Summer	Bruce Milne, John North
2005 Easter	David Jackman, Rev David Cook
2004-05 Summer	Rev Dr Paul Barker, Rev Michael Raiter
2004 Easter	Nigel Lee, Dr Chris Wright, David Tucker
2003-04 Summer	Dr Andrew Macrae, Dr Ajith Fernando, Robert Coyle, Bishop Stephen Hale

2003 Easter	Charles Price, Dr Gary Inrig, Mrs Elizabeth Inrig
2002-03 Summer	Frank Retief, John Chapman
2002 Easter	Rev Al Stewart, Rev Bill Macrae
2001-02 Summer	Rev Christopher Chia, Dr Bruce Milne
2001 Easter	Nigel Lee, Rev Ian Coffey
2000-01 Christmas	Dr Andrew Macrae, Rev Ian Powell
2000 Easter	Rev David Jackman, Dick Dowsett
1999-00 Christmas	Dr Derek Tidball, Rev Michael Raiter
1999 Easter	Charles Price, Rev Ray Galea, Stuart McAllister
1998-99 Christmas	Rev Christopher Chia, Rev Alan Stuart, Robin Pocklington
1998 Easter	Dr Peter Adam, Rev David Coffey, Dr Phil Parshall
1997-98 Christmas	Dr Stuart Briscoe, Bishop Dudley Foord, Dr Don Richardson
1997 Easter	Nigel Lee, Rev Allan Demond
1996-97 Christmas	Bishop Reg Piper, Dr William McRae, Mrs Marilyn McRae,
1996 Easter	Rev David Jackman, Rev Simon Manchester
1995-96 Christmas	Rev David Cook, Rev Dr Bruce Milne
1995 Easter	Gary Inrig, Dick Dowsett, Patrick Johnstone
1994-95 Christmas	Canon Keith Weston, Rev David Coffey
1994 Easter	Dr William McRae, Dr Roy Clements, Dr Don Richardson
1993-94 Christmas	Dr Raymond Brown, Rev David Cook, Dr David Price
1993 Easter	Dr Howard Hendricks, Dr Andrew Macrae, Rev Ian G North
1992-93 Christmas	Rev David Jackman, Rev Graeme Smith, Dr David Price
1992 Easter	Dr Gary Inrig, Charles Price, Mrs Elizabeth Inrig
1991-92 Christmas	Rev Michael Wilcock, Rev Geoffrey Fletcher, Rev Al Whittinghill
1991 Easter	Rev Alistair Begg, Dr Stuart Briscoe, Mrs Jill Briscoe

1990-91 Christmas	Bishop John Reid, Dr Keith Price
1990 Easter	Dr G Sweeting, Dr J Balchin
1989-90 Christmas	Rev David Jackman, Dr Peter Wilkes, Dr G D James, Rev Don Churchman
1989 Easter	Dr Ronald Dunn, Bishop Dudley Foord, Robin Pocklington
1988-89 Christmas	Canon Keith Weston, Charles Price, Rev Simon Manchester, Mrs Cheryl Hutchinson
1988 Easter	Rev John A Balchin, Dr Gary Inrig, Rev Graeme Smith, Mrs Elizabeth Inrig
1987-88 Christmas	Dr Andrew MacRae, Dr Peter Wilkes, Canon John Chapman, Mrs Nora Wilkes
1987 Easter	Bishop Ken Short, Dr Robert Foster, Dr Paul Freed
1986-87 Christmas	Dr Stuart Briscoe, Rev Philip Hacking, David Cummings
1986 Easter	Canon Keith Weston, Rev Andrew Semenchuk, Rev Graham Sercombe
1985-86 Christmas	Dr J Sidlow Baxter, Dr Theodore Williams, Rev Don Churchman
1985 Easter	Rev Donald English, Rev Al Wittinghill, Professor K N Nambudripad, David Cummings, Rev John Coleman
1984-85 Christmas	Rev Dr John Balchin, Rev Phillip Jensen, Archbishop David Penman, Rev Michael Maelliau, Doug Anderson, Rev Dr J Sidlow Baxter, Dr Theodore Williams, Rev Don Churchman
1984 Easter	Gary Inrig, Dr Ronald Dunn, Bill Newman
1983-84 Christmas	Rev John Balchin, Rev Gordon Bridger, Rev Stuart Robinson, Graeme Cann, Robin Pocklington
1983 Easter	Rev Geoff Fletcher, Rev John A Coleman, Dr James H Taylor, Robert Coyle
1982-83 Christmas	Rev Philip Hacking, Bishop Ken Short, J Oswald Sanders, Rev David Innes, Rev Graeme Smith
1982 Easter	Rev Arthur Cundall, Rev John Hoover, Gary Inrig, Rev Graeme Smith
1981-82 Christmas	Rev John Balchin, Rev Don Churchman, Rev Brian Willersdorf, Rev John A Coleman, Bill Gaunson, J Eric Reid
1981 Easter	Rev Dr J. Graham Miller, Canon John Chapman, Dr Sam Kamelason, Bryan Greenwood
1980-81 Christmas	Major Ian Thomas, Rev Dr Andrew D. MacRae, Very Rev Lance R Shilton, Rev Arthur E Cundall, Capt J Stuart Rodger
1980 Easter	Rev David Stewart, Dr Helen Roseveare, Graeme Smith, Dr Colin Kruse
1979-80 Christmas	Rev Michael Baughen, Canon John Chapman, Dr E G Gibson, J Oswald Sanders
1979 Easter	Rev John Balchin, Dr Jim Ridgway, Rev P T Chandapilla, Graeme Smith, Dr David Penman
1978-79 Christmas	Rev George Duncan, Archbishop Sir Marcus L Loane, Rev Alan D. Catchpoole, Bishop Alfred Stanway, Allan Webb

1978 Easter	Dr Sheela Gupta, Alan Nite, Rev Tom Houston, Graeme Smith, Canon John Chapman
1977-78 Christmas	J Oswald Sanders, Rev Theodore Williams, Rt Rev Bishop Ken Short
1977 Easter	Prof E M Blaiklock, Rev Rory Grant, Andrew Pont, Graeme Smith
1976-77 Christmas	Rev David G Stewart, Rev John Balchin, Bishop Alfred Stanway, Rev David Penman, Rev Alan Nunn, Rev Andrew Pearce, Leonard E Buck
1976 Easter	Rev Dr Michael Griffiths, Dr J Edwin Orr, Rev Ian Hay, Rev Robert T Henry, Dr Paul Freed
1975-76 Christmas	Rev Graham Miller, Rev Francis W Dixon, Rt Rev Ken H Short, Rev Andrew Pearce, Graeme Smith
1975 Easter	Prof E M Blaiklock, Rev Geoffrey H Fletcher, Frank Farley
1974-75 Christmas	Dr Bryan Hardman, Dr Kenneth Pike, Rev Alan Catchpoole
1974 Easter	Rev Colin A Grant, Rev Chris H Byworth, Rev Geoffrey King
1973-74 Christmas	Rev David G. Stewart, Bishop Alfred Stanway, Zach Poonen
1972 Easter	Michael Griffiths, Rev David Hewetson, Rev Peter Deyneka, Graeme Smith
1971-72 Christmas	Rev David Stewart, Bishop Alfred Stanway, Rev Alan D. Catchpoole, Rev Theodore Williams, Dr Benjamin Chew
1971 Easter	Rev Neville Anderson, Rev Geoff Fletcher, Rev Dr A H Wood
1970-71 Christmas	Archdeacon John Reid, Rev Dr Alan Redpath, Rev Andrew Furuyama, Rev John Coleman, Rev Howard Knight
1970 Easter	Rev John Pritchard, Rev Mariano Di Gangi, Rev Ray Davis
1969-70 Christmas	J. Oswald Sanders, Dr Cameron Townsend, Rev David M. Hewetson, Chua Wee Hian, Graeme Smith
1969 Easter	Michael Griffiths, Rev Dudley Foord, Prof Basil Brown
1968-69 Christmas	Archbishop Marcus L. Loane, Rev John L. Bird, Major Leonard Moules, Professor Klaus Runia, Dr Lloyd Jones
1968 Easter	Rev J. Graham Miller, Rev Dr G. Noel Vose
1967-68 Christmas	Rev George Duncan, Rev Alan Redpath, Rev Dudley Foord, Rev G H Morling
1967 Easter	Rev N P Anderson, Rev Geoffrey M Fletcher, Rev Theodore H Epp
1966-67 Christmas	Rev John Pritchard, Rev John R. Reid, Rev Geoffrey C. Bingham
1966 Easter	Rev Dr J Sidlow Baxter, Rev Dr L L Morris
1965-66 Christmas	Rev J Graham Miller, J Oswald Sanders, Rev Dr John R Renshaw, Rev Lance Shilton, Rev JW Searle
1965 Easter	Rev Graham Miller, Rev Dudley Foord

1964-65 Christmas	Rev Dr A Skevington Wood, Rev John Reid, Rev G H Morling, Rev J W Searle, L E Buck
1964 Easter	Rev William Dunlap, Rev Allan Burrow, Rev Robert Page
1963-64 Christmas	Bishop Alfred Stanway, Rev John L Bird, Rev A Neville Horn, Rev Arthur Gunn
1963 Easter	Rev D W Robinson, Rev D A Kirkby, Rev Dr A H Wood
1962-63 Christmas	Bishop Marcus L Loane, Rev John Pritchard, J Oswald Sanders
1962 Easter	Rev A G Gunn, Rev Dallas Clarnette, Rev G M Fletcher
1961-62 Christmas	Rev J Graham Miller, Dr Paul S Rees, Bishop Festo Olang, John A Robinson, H A Brown
1961 Easter	Rev Dr Frank Anderson, Rev John G Ridley, Miss Gladys Aylward, Alan E Norrish
1960-61 Christmas	Dr J Sidlow Baxter, Bishop A Stanway, Rev Dr Alan Cole, Rev Dr John Renshaw, Rev Dr WH Watson
1960 Easter	Dr Theodore Epp, Robert Stokes
1959-60 Christmas	Rev J H Deane, J Oswald Sanders, Rev A Cyril Cato, Rev G M Fletcher
1959 Easter	Roy Gustafson, Rev Joseph Blinco, Dr Ralph Mitchell
1958-59 Christmas	Rev F T Cleverdon, Rev John Pritchard, Rev R V Merritt, Trevor Morris, Bishop Omari, Festo Kivengere, Dr Paul Rees, Bishop M Loane, Rev Walter Smyth
1958 Easter	Rev J. Graham Miller, Dr E G Gibson
1957-58 Christmas	Rev George Duncan, Rev J.W. Searle, Rev Dr S. Barton Babbage, Norman Burns, Rev H.H.E. Knight, Trevor Morris, J.H. Robinson, Rev A.L. Burrow, Rev G.H. Morling
1957 Easter	Dr J Edwin Orr, RH Gordon, Miss Corrie ten Boom
1956-57 Christmas	Bishop Stanway, J. Oswald Sanders, Rev H J Witney, F I Andersen, Rev E C Smith, Rev A. Cyril Cato, J O Sanders
1956 Easter	Rev H Lawrence Love, Alex Gilchrist
1955-56 Christmas	Rev Leon Morris, Rev Merritt, Rev John Pritchard, Rev Alan E Begbie, Rev John G Ridley, Rev A W Pederick, Rev James Beatty, Leonard Buck, Rev Gus Wilson
1955 Easter	Rev H Lawrence Love, Gordon Blair
1954-55 Christmas	Rev J W Searle, Captain J C Metcalfe, Major Leonard Moule, Herbert Tovey, Mrs Eva Tovey, Rev A Cyril Cato, Rev Graham R Delbridge, Rev G H Morling, Rev R H Barnes
1954 Easter	Dr Ralph Mitchell, Rev Alan Burrow
1953-54 Christmas	Rev J H Deane, Rev H J Whitney, Rev Stephen Bradley, Robert Edgar, Rev John Renshaw, J H Robinson, Rev Egerton Long
1953 Easter	Dr Paul White, Frank I Anderson

1952-53 Christmas	Rev F W Dixon, Rev C H Nash, Dr Leland Wang, Leon Morris, Rev G H Morling, Rev Ivor Powell, Rev David Clarnette, Rev J E Hull, A S Eggleston
1952 (first Easter Convention)	Rev Alan Burrow, Alex Gilchrist
1951-1952	Rev Colin Duncan, Bishop A Stanway, Rev E E Potter, Rev R V Merritt, E H Watson, J O Sanders
1950-1951 (First at B.H.)	Bishop F Houghton, Rev Dr H Guinness, Rev A Neville Horn, Rev John Ridley, J Oswald Sanders
1949-1950 (last at Upwey)	Rev J T Deane, Archdeacon H S Kidner, Rev J W Searle, Rev E H Watson, J O Sanders, Rev LJ Gomm, L E Buck, K A Macnaughton, Rev George Rees, W Guildford
1948-1949	Rev T M Bamber, Rev H M Arrowsmith, Rev John O Ridley, Rev R V Merritt, J Oswald Sanders, Rev Gus. Wilson, Rev R Mountney, Rev Adam Clarke, Rev Egerton Long, Rev G Pearson, W J Embery, J A Robinson
1947-1948	Dr F J Miles, Rev G H Morling, Rev H M Arrowsmith, Rev J Beatty, Rev H W Funnell, Rev A H Hawley, Rev E R Philip, Rev J G Ridley, Rev J H Watson, J O Sanders
1946-1947	Dr Northcote Deck, Rev J W Searle, J O Sanders, Rev H M Arrowsmith, Robert Edgar, Rev E Miller, J A Robinson, Glenn Cain, J H Kitchen, Rev L W Duff-Forbes, Rev G H Morling, Rev G W Carr, Bruce Lumsden
1945-1946	Rev G H Morling, Rev J G Ridley, A A Gilchrist, Rev J W Searle, Rev H M Arrowsmith, J H Robinson, W L Wright, L E Buck, A Pocklington
1944-1945	Rev J H Deane, Rev Marcus Loane, Rev J G Ridley, Bishop F Houghton, Rev Geo. Brown, Rev Gus Wilson, Rev L J Gomm, W L Wright, Trevor Morris, L E Buck, Captain J A Robinson
1943-1944	J O Sanders, Rev J H Deane, Dean H T Langley, Rev C I McLaren, Rev W H Hinton, Rev J Lewis Hurse, Rev D Ian Munro, Rev J W Searle, J E Thomas, Trevor M Morris, S P Waddingham, W L Wright
1942-1943	Canon T C Hammond, Rev Adam Clarke, Rev J H Coombe, Rev F A Crawshaw, Rev J Lewis Hurse, Rev J Bruce Montgomerie, Rev J E Newnham, Rev W Phillips, Rev J W Searle, Rev H F Wright, J E Thomas, George Beckett, Leonard Buck, W J Embery, Trevor Morris, Arthur Pocklington, J H Robinson, J H Ulliyatt, W L Wright, Effie Varley
1941-1942	Rev C J Tinsley, Rev G H Morling, J H Robinson, Rev J E Newnham, Bishop G A Chambers, Rev Walter Jarvis, Rev W H Hinton, Rev A H Potter, Stan Waddington, N C Lumsden, L W Wright, Rev D W Smith, J E Thomas, Rev J Bruce Montgomerie, A Pocklington, T Morris
1940-1941	Canon T C Hammond, Archdeacon H S Begbie, Rev J G Ridley
1939-1940	Rev G H Morling, Rev Hugh Paton of Sydney, J Oswald Sanders, Archdeacon G T Denham, A H Hawley, Rev J Bruce Montgomerie, Trevor Morris, Rev C H Nash, Rev J E Newnham, W L Wright
1938-1939	Captain Reginald Wallis, Rev C H Nash, John G Ridley, W Mallis, J H Robinson, Andrew Stewart, W L Wright, A Pocklington
1937-1938	Rev Dr R V Bingham, Archdeacon Begbie, Dr C J Rolls, Rev W F Betts, Rev F A Crawshaw, Rev W H Hinton, J H Robinson, G R Hutchinson
1936-1937	Rev G H Morling, Rev Hugh Paton, Rev C H Nash, Rev A H Potter, Rev A H Constable, Rev W F Betts, W L Wright
1935-1936	Dr Northcote Deck, Rev. J G Ridley, Norman Deck, Howard Kitchen, Rev C H Nash, Rev F A Crawshaw, Rev W H Hinton, R C M Long, Rev J E Newnham, D W Smith, C A Jamieson, W L Wright
1934-1935	Dr W. Grahame Scroggie, Rev W P Nicholson, Rev A D Shaw, Rev R C M Long, Rev C N Lack
1933-1934	Rev Evan R Harries, Rev Hugh Paton, Rev C H Nash, John G Ridley, Rev J E Newnham, A D Shaw

1932-1933	Rev C. H. Nash, Rev Morling, M. McCormish, Rev A. D. Shaw, Rev C. N. Lack, Rev W. H. Winton, Rev W. D. Jackson, Rev J. E. Newnham, J. E. Thomas, Rev R. Long
1931-1932	Rev Evan R. Harries, Dr. D. S. MacColl, Rev J. E. Newnham, W. Mallis, Rev A. D. Shaw, Rev W. F. Betts, Rev A. H. Constable, Rev W. T. C. Storrs, Rev. W. D. Jackson, J. E. Thomas, various missionaries
1930-1931 (new Upwey property)	C. J. Rolls, Rev C. H. Nash, Rev C. N. Lack, Rev J. E. Newnham, Rev W. P. Hodge, Rev R. C. M. Long, F. McCarthy, Rev S. Beckingham, various missionaries
1929-1930	Dr Northcote Deck, Rev Canon Begbie, Rev C H Nash, Rev C N Lack, Rev A D Shaw
1928-1929	W Mallis, Rev William Lamb, J H Robinson
1927-1928	W Mallis, Rev W J Kemp
1926-1927	Archbishop Harrington Lees, C J Rolls , C H Nash, Dr & Mrs Howard Taylor, Rev R V Bingham, E Lee Neil, H H Jenetzki, Rev W T C Storrs
1925-1926	Dr Northcote Deck, C. J. Rolls, Rev C. H. Nash, J. S. Harrison, S. Hanna, Missionaries included: Madame Yasnovsky, Miss Bennetts, Miss Grace Chapman, Miss Lock, Miss Malcom, Miss Pemberton, Miss Poppins, Miss Parsons, Miss Todd
1924-1925	Dr Northcote Deck , Rev. Paul Kanamori, C. H. Nash, S. Beckingham, J. S. Harrison , A. Jolly, W. J. T. Pay, H. F. Wright, D. Hamilton, W. J. Foster, Missionaries included: Mr & Mrs D. F. Pike, Miss Bennetts, G. Liptrott, Miss Cornish, Miss Ferguson, Miss Todd, Miss Mannett, Miss M. Searle
1923-1924	Rev C.H. Nash, Dr. G.E. Weeks, J.T. Mawson, Rev J.S. Harrison, Rev S. Beckingham, Dr D.S. MacColl, W.J. Foster, F. Varley, and other missionaries
1922-1923	Rev C. H. Nash, Rev S. Beckingham, Rev J. Campbell Robinson, Rev H. A. C. Allen, Dr Northcote Deck, D. D. S. MacColl, N. Lumsden, F. Varley, Mr & Mrs H. A. C. Allen, Mr. & Mrs. Westwood, Mr & Mrs. E. H. Carne, J. H. Coombe, Miss M. Gould, Miss S. A. Bennetts, Mr & Mrs Oliver Burgess
1921-1922	Rev C H Nash, Dr D S MacColl, Geo. T B Davis, Rev Walter Jarvis, A W Bradley, Dr Northcote, Mr & Mrs C A Jamieson, Miss Bennetts, N Lumsden, W J Foster, Frank Varley, T. Graham
1920-1921	Rev CH Nash, Dr D S MacColl, Rev Edgar Miller, Rev Carment Urquhart
1919-1920	Rev F W Buller, W T Herbert, Rev C H Nash, Dr D S MacColl, Frank Varley, Norman Lumsden
1918-1919	Rev C and Mrs Lack, Dr D S MacColl, Dr Thos. Porter, Frank Varley, W J Foster

Appendix 2 – Convention Chairmen

Mr John M. Griffiths 1920-1925

Dr J. James Kitchen 1926-1947

Mr J. Oswald Sanders 1948-1954

Mr Alfred E. Coombe 1955-1967

Mr Leonard E. Buck 1968-1976

Mr C. P. Ridley Kitchen 1977-1986

Dr John W. Williams 1987-1990

Mr Robert B. Freeman 1991-1996

Rev Dr David J. Price 1997- 2015

Rev Richard Coombs 2015 - Present

Appendix 3 – Other Convention Office Bearers

Convention Organising Secretaries

Mr John H. Robinson and Mr. H. Perceval Smith 1918-1920

Mr H. Perceval Smith 1921-1947

Mr Arthur Pocklington 1948-1972

Rev Neville E. Kellam 1973-1985

Captain J. Stuart Rodger (Hon Secretary) 1986-1991

Executive Officers

Rev William (Bill) H. Brice 1991-1995

Mr Les Smith 1995-2005

Mr Bert Guy 2005-2010

Mr Geoff Gawler 2010- present

Convention Treasurers

Mr W. L. Wright 1919-1948

Mr W.M. Pollard 1949-1955

Mr C.P.R. Kitchen 1956-1977

Mr W. F. Renshaw 1978-1987

Mr. W. (Bill) M. Amor 1988-1995

Mr Geoff Gawler 1995-2010

Mr Bruce Prescott 2010- present

Appendix 4 - The Keswick Quarterly

In February 1926, H. P. Smith (who had worked for a time on the oldest newspaper in Victoria, the *Geelong Advertiser*⁶⁶) published the first issue of *The Keswick Quarterly*. Its full title was *The Keswick Quarterly and Upwey Convention News*, and later *The Keswick Quarterly and Belgrave Heights Convention News*. Published four times a year, at no cost to its readers, *The Quarterly* reviewed past conventions, often including personal testimonies, sermons, and reports from house parties and camps, and publicised forthcoming conventions. It also published the details and locations of missionary prayer meetings, and included articles by Bible teachers, book reviews and reports from Bible Colleges interstate and in New Zealand. Addresses given at Keswick (England) were often included, and updates on the evangelistic outreaches of the MGC, the "Upwey Missionaries", and many others. Some of the earlier editions were more than 80 pages long.

After the death of H.P. Smith others continued the work, sometimes working together as joint editors. They included W.T Wright, Arthur Pocklington, J. Howard Kitchen, and J. Oswald Sanders.

The last publication appeared in November 1969.

A complete set of *The Keswick Quarterly* is now stored in the library at MST, and can be viewed by appointment.

⁶⁶ W. F. Renshaw op. cit., p 81

Appendix 5 – Our History at a Glance

1918 The first Convention is held in Upwey (in the Upwey Union Church, later in a marquee behind the church).

1922 The Upwey Convention Council is formed with J.M. Griffiths as Chairman. The first land is acquired at Upwey.

1926 New Chairman: J.J. Kitchen

1927 Howard Kitchen, the first missionary fully supported by the Convention, goes to China.

1928 The Convention sends missionary Jessie Taffs to Egypt.

1930 The Convention moves to its new 5 acre property in Upwey (now the site of Upwey High School).

1940 It is decided that the missionary fund will be distributed to a broad range of Missionary Societies, rather than support individual Convention Missionaries.

1946 The 30 acre site is purchased at Belgrave Heights.

1947 The old order changes. New Chairman J. Oswald Sanders replaces Dr J.J. Kitchen and new Secretary Arthur Pocklington replaces H.P. Smith.

1950 The Auditorium at Upwey is dismantled and enlarged and re-erected at Belgrave Heights.

1950 First Belgrave Heights Convention.

1952 First Easter Convention.

1954 The "Small Hall" is built for children's meetings, run by CSSM.

1955 New Chairman, A.E. Coombe.

1957 The Auditorium is enlarged to seat 2000. Corrie ten Boom addresses a crowd of over 3000 at Easter Convention.

1961 Over 3000 attend at Easter to hear Gladys Aylward.

1968 New Chairman: Leonard Buck.

1972 Miss Heather Muffett begins her 21 years of service running the convention crèche.

1976 Dr J Edwin Orr's invitation concluding the Easter Sunday night evangelistic meeting draws such a large crowd the Small Hall is opened to accommodate all who respond for counselling.

1977 New Chairman: Ridley Kitchen

- 1980** Over 3000 attend Easter Convention to hear Helen Roseveare.
- 1983** Ash Wednesday fires destroy the Campaigners for Christ and CMS campsites.
- 1987** First lady appointed to Convention Council, Mrs June Pearce (later missionary in Tanzania).
- 1987** New Chairman: John Williams
- 1991** New Chairman: Robert Freeman
- 1993** Peter and Margaret Rowse begin hosting the popular Festival Week at The Lodge for over 50's.
- 1997** New Chairman: David Price
- 1998** First Melbourne Men's Convention.
- 1999** First VCYC (Victorian Christian Youth Convention).
- 2000** The Lodge is upgraded.
- 2003** Property redevelopment begins resulting in concrete floor replacing long-remembered tan bark in auditorium and foyer added with new facilities.