



A very welcome gold nugget currently at Peel Street/Ballarat Central Church is their present Pastor **Tim Clark**. He could equally be called the 'Boomerang' gold nugget, because he has returned to his home Church. Tim became a Christian in 1980 through the ministry of the then Pastor at Peel Street Jim Cunningham. An American with a heart for evangelism who had a very fruitful ministry from 1979-1985.

Tim moved to NSW in 1992 to pursue the call of ministry upon his life and trained at the Churches of Christ Theological College in NSW (ACOM). He had a number of ministries in New South Wales before moving to South Australia to become the State Youth Minister for SA & NT and the Associate Pastor at the Elizabeth Church of Christ. In 2009 Tim moved back to his hometown of Ballarat to take on the role of Senior Pastor at the York St Church of Christ before coming back home to Ballarat Central Church of Christ commencing as the Pastor in March 2018.

Tim is passionate about serving God and has a deep desire to see people discover a real and active faith in Jesus Christ. Tim is very driven and very visionary. The size of the congregation has more than doubled in eighteen months. Together with a very supportive and enthusiastic team he looks forward to what God is going to do through him and the congregation as they continue to help connect people with Jesus Christ.

It is clear when you look at the Gospel and community work that a small Church like Peel Street/Ballarat Central Church of Christ has done over the years, they have punched well above their weight. A bit like the five fish and two loaves that Jesus worked a miracle with to feed the masses. May they continue to do so.

Acknowledgement and appreciation to Graham Chapman'
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'Ballarat Churches of Christ 1859-1993 - A History'.



Ballarat Central
Church of Christ

(formerly Peel Street
Church of Christ)

150TH ANNIVERSARY

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS 1869 – 2019

CONTINUING THE LEGACY

27th October, 2019



HUMAN GOLD

By Bill Sutcliffe

CELEBRATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY

OF PEEL STREET / BALLARAT CENTRAL CHURCH OF CHRIST

In 1859, Just a year after the 'Welcome' gold nugget was discovered in Ballarat, and the world's largest gold nugget, the 'Welcome Stranger', was unearthed at Moliagul Victoria, a Church of Christ couple from Melbourne Mr. and Mrs. Divers, commenced a Worship Service in their home in Peel Street. Joined by Baptists and other Christians they worshipped there for 3 years. Among the Baptists was Charles Martin. Martin had been an Age journalist in Melbourne before coming to Ballarat to be Head of the first National School. He assisted in founding a Baptist Church in Yuille Street before joining worshippers at the Peel Street House. In 1862 Henry G. Picton joined them from Prahran Church of Christ. Picton, who started work in Ballarat as a law clerk with Cuthbert's solicitors was elected Pastor and the group formally organised itself into a Church. It was then decided that they should worship in the nearby Temperance Hall.

They worshipped in the Temperance Hall for another 3 years until deciding to erect their own Church building. They purchased land in Peel Street first and then finally decided to build in Dawson Street.



Martin owned some suitable land there. The Church was completed and opened in 1865. Martin was later appointed as an Elder to work with Picton at Dawson Street. It seems Martin and Picton's personalities and agendas clashed considerably. Finally, a major theological difference between them came to a head. When the dispute appeared irresolvable, Picton decided to move back to Ballarat East and resume a Church there in 1869. Martin replaced Picton as Pastor at Dawson Street. Most of the congregation went with Picton. For four years until 1873, The new Ballarat

East Church congregation worshipped in the Temperance Hall, the Mechanics Institute, and Alfred Hall. Then finally in May 1873, Picton and his congregation moved back to Peel Street to the current site at the corner of Peel and Eastwood Streets. They had purchased a wooden Chapel from the Baptists in Sebastopol and moved it there on a jinker pulled by sixteen horses. It must have been an amazing sight.

Peel Street Church of Christ, or Ballarat Central Church of Christ, as it is named now, has had a vein of human gold running through its entire history. Remarkable people doing remarkable things and ordinary people doing extraordinary things for God and the community. Working as a Law Clerk, Pastor Picton would have seen the result of much poverty and despair go before the courts. He was instrumental at

Children's Home and Family Services for 34 years. He was the first Ballarat Cricket Association Hall of Fame member to be elevated to Legend status. As a sportsman he played A Grade cricket for railways, Mt Clear, and represented Ballarat and country Victoria. Rex also played in representative teams against West Indian, South African, and England sides. He also played football for Golden Point. Rex is a humble man. One of his Council Works Foremen once said that Rex refused to take a salary more than his.

Perhaps one of the greatest humanitarian programmes in the history of the Peel Street/Ballararat Central Church was the refugee programme throughout 2006/2007 It certainly represented the biggest influx of outsiders during a limited period. Some Twenty Sudanese families and thirteen Togolese families, all refugees from war-torn Africa were sponsored by and welcomed into the Church. And while most moved on to other Churches due to employment opportunities in their areas, only eternity will tell the value of such a work. To begin with, two refugees began training as Ministers through the Church and were on the Churches Board of Management. **James Abraham** and **Wilbert Mapombere**, as Elders and then Ministers, and Komi Dzagba and Christian Dakla as Deacons.

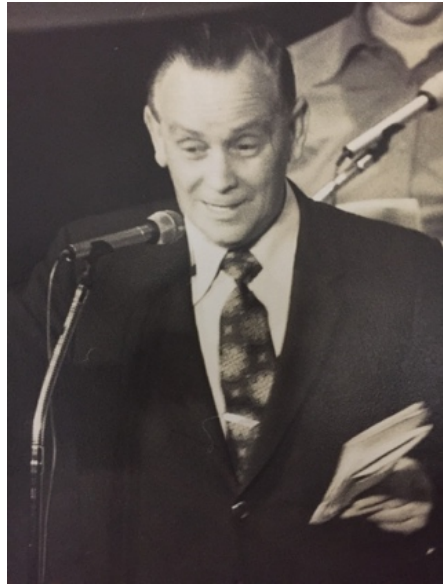


Wilbert went on to be the esteemed Minister of the Church for four years. James headed up the Bongibot Agricultural Project for Peel Street/Ballararat Central and Churches of Christ Global Mission Partners in Juba Sudan, making many trips back to represent the Church and to supervise the provision of significant aid in the form of agricultural implements, including a tractor and trailer, and water equipment. etc. Peel Street/Ballararat Central Church gave very generous financial support to the project. Not only did the project provide agricultural support, but as a

report on the project noted, 'Food, hope, and compassion was given at a time when the UNHCR was giving dire warnings of mass starvation'. Keith and Shirley Ludgater and Carl Lee were Associate Ministers at this stage, and the project was described as 'A new vision' for the Church.

Lynda Andeobu is another precious human gold nugget that the Church received. Lynda has remained in Ballarat and in Membership and attendance at the Church. She was employed part-time in the Office for a while and has not only furthered her Business Studies at the University of Ballarat, but recently completed a PhD in Business and is now a lecturer at Federation University. So many human gold nuggets.

A large and very valuable human gold nugget in the form of Wilbert Mapombere will be the guest speaker for Peel Street/Ballararat Central's 150th Anniversary on October 27. Wilbert is a remarkable gold nugget like the 'Welcome' gold nugget, and if the Church had only invested in just one human gold nugget such as Wilbert, it would have been worthwhile. Wilbert is not just a refugee from Zimbabwe, but a very prominent one. He was the second most senior Magistrate in the country, and Chief Executive Officer of the Law Society. He was caused to speak out sometimes to defend human rights against the then Mugabe Government. There were escalating attacks on human rights defenders, and many attempts were made to assassinate Wilbert. Every time he stepped into a vehicle, he feared it may have been wired to explosives. In 2003 he managed to escape on a flight to Melbourne and was granted asylum. He came to Ballarat in 2006 and joined other refugees at Peel Street/Ballararat Central where he was welcomed into membership and leadership. He operated his own legal practice for three years and then commenced lecturing in law at Deakin University where he is still lecturing.



Albert Graham served the Peel Street Church and Ballarat and the wider community for over fifty years. He was not an ordinary Pastor, he was a most entrepreneurial one, not with gimmicks but with his great gift of winsomeness in engaging people. He was Student weekend Minister at Peel Street while attending College of the Bible between 1943 and 1947 and interim Minister a number of times; responsible for coordinating many Church programmes, especially with youth; and in effect Church Administrator before the word was in vogue. Albert's most extensive and far-reaching work undoubtedly was his radio work.

He was 'Big Brother' for Sunday School of the Air on 3BA for an incredible 18 years until 1964. Then for a further 10 years with



Frank Clark he conducted the Happiness Session on 3BA also. No wonder that the Ballarat City Council honoured him by naming the Park at the Eastwood Street Leisure Centre near the Church after him.



Then **Frank Clark** himself, radio presenter

extraordinaire with 3BA for a lifetime. Teacher for the deaf. Producer and Presenter of the 'Good News' radio spots. Great muso, including continuing to play music for Ballarat Central after transferring membership to York Street Church of Christ. In 2017 Frank was honoured with an Order of Australia Award for his service to the community. Thousands of people in Ballarat and within radio range of Ballarat were reached with the Gospel through the radio ventures of Albert and Frank. Great human gold nuggets.

A terrific gold nugget came out of Albert Graham's youth work. One who is at the Church today. The inimitable Peter O'Hara. Pete had been homeless in his teens and was drawn like a magnet to Albert's ministry. Peter maintains that the reason he felt so at home in the Church was that although it was unashamedly spiritual, it didn't seem like Church,

certainly what he knew as Church. It was fun! They did musicals and pantomimes and many other fun activities and encouraged him to use his talents. For those who remember the TV show 'Hey, Hey, its Saturday', At age 18, Pete won a singing/acting segment on it with a rendition of Satchmo Armstrong's 'What a Wonderful World', painted face and all! He gave his life to the Lord, and then finished up owning a number of businesses and using much of the profit to give other homeless young people the same opportunities he had. He took many on camps, and with the assistance of Allan Hocking from Mt Clear Church, mentored them during that time. Many got off the streets and made good in life as a result of that.

Former member John Birt, renowned Lay Preacher and famous rover for Essendon Football Club has done the Church and especially the Lord proud. 'Mr Cricket', Rex Hollioake attended Peel Street for many years. He had amazing careers in work and sport. Before council amalgamation, he was Ballarat Shire Engineer, Town Planner, and Building Surveyor for almost 35 years. He was also on the Board of the Ballarat

Dawson Street, to ensure remarkably that on every fourth month, not just the customary tithe of ten percent, but the entire income of the Church should be given to support the sick. That meant to the poor mostly, because it was mostly the poor who were sick. Peel Street was there to give assistance to the needy through two world wars and two major world recessions in the 1890s and 1920s and 30s, and in a rural community, through many droughts and fires and floods since.

Jesus said, "you will always have the poor with you", and to this day Ballarat Central continues to support the poor and homeless through the support of the local Soup Bus and anywhere else they can. It became quite clear in the early 20s that Ballarat East where Peel Street was located was in a much lower socio-economic area. There was a lot of poverty. They recognised the need to establish 'a substantial fund to give adequate help'. They asked other Churches of Christ to help them with gifts of clothing or anything else'. Goods were sent to the Ballarat Railway Station. A.P.A. Burdeu coordinated the work. Burdeu, who was a great preacher of the gospel, and oscillated between Peel Street and Dawson Street with both preaching and membership, believed in 'faith with works'. He was a passionate advocate for aboriginal rights. Before he died in 1941, he was credited with the ultimate legislation for child endowment, age pension, widow's pension, and invalid pension for aborigines being passed in Parliament because of his persistent representations to politicians.

The Peel Street Church has always been committed to evangelism, that is the spreading of the good news about Jesus and how He can meet the deepest need of everyone and give eternal life and much more meaningful temporary life. Throughout their history they not only employed evangelists as Ministers but used tents and other venues to host meetings for evangelists. As well as jointly sponsoring evangelists. One such evangelist was a famous American evangelist the Reverend Doctor Thomas Demitt Talmage who they jointly sponsored to hold meetings in Alfred Hall in 1894. Present at one of those meetings was H.V. McKay, founder of the Sunshine Harvester company, a company founded by McKay in 1890 and originally named the H.V. McKay Harvesting Machine Company. It commenced in Ballarat and manufactured most of its harvesters there. At one stage it was Australia's largest manufacturing business employing some 3,000 workers and manufacturing over 2,000 harvesters a year and became the largest factory in the Southern Hemisphere. It was named the Sunshine Harvesting Company after McKay attended one of Doctor Talmage's meetings. He spoke on the topic, 'The bright side of things' and said in his talk, "My religion is sunshine and the difference between earth and Heaven is that the sunshine on earth sometimes gets clouded over".



McKay was very inspired by Talmage's talk, and as a result resolved that his life, his business, and his products, should radiate the sunshine of heaven. The suburb of Braybrook Junction where McKay had shifted his Headquarters in 1906 was renamed Sunshine in honour of him. McKay established the Sunshine Estate on 400 acres or 162 hectares for his employees. Ahead of its time, it had electric lights, recreational parks, sporting grounds, tennis courts, a bowling green, a school and library, as well as public buildings. It was considered to be a model community based around industry. McKay's contribution to manufacturing and employment and Christian witness in Ballarat was pure gold.

Another pure gold contributor to Ballarat through Peel Street in the late 1800s was Eleanor Lucas, who the new suburb of Lucas is named after. She was an incredibly brave and enterprising and very capable spiritual woman who overcame enormous obstacles to achieve what she did. She had six children by her first husband who died when she was just thirty. Two children had died previously. Without welfare benefits in those days, she was destitute. Her husband's employer at the Soapworks, the Ballarat Town and City Mission, and the Peel Street Church where she was attending, established a fund that enabled her to buy a four bedroomed house in James Street near the Church, and a sewing machine. For eight years she supported her family by making underwear and shirts on the sewing machine from material supplied by drapers in Bridge Street. Eleanor married again, and two years later her second husband was killed in a mining accident. She added two more rooms to her house and turned them into a mini factory, resumed sewing, and with her daughters, sixteen more sewing machines and sixteen other girls she employed, commenced growing one of the biggest enterprises in Ballarat. By 1910 as Lucas and Company, located near the Arch of Victory it employed 400 women. Eleanor had transferred her Church membership to Dawson Street in 1894. Significantly, her female staff had money taken out of their wages weekly to pay for the building of The Arch of Victory.

Due to the Great Depression in the late 20s and 30s, and because many of the family men were unemployed, Peel Street struggled to stay financially viable. Dawson Street assisted substantially and at one stage proposed amalgamation as one Church under Dawson Street. That was agreed to but never executed. Despite financial difficulties, Peel Street maintained and increased its programs. Although people hungered for employment and income during the Depression, they also hungered for spirituality, and Peel Street endeavoured to satisfy that. In 1931 there was a Young People's Club, a Dorcas Society, a Christian Endeavour group, a Bible School, Visitation to Prisons, and an Overseas Missions Group.



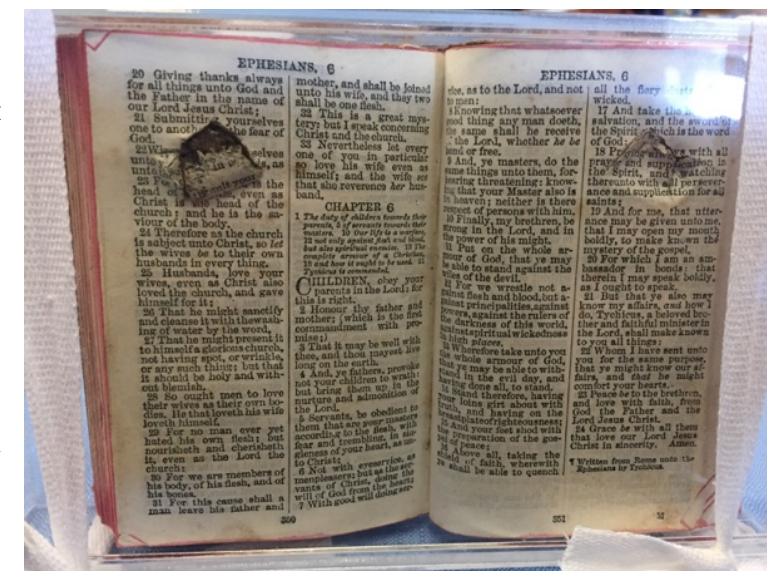
In Post WW11, as employment started to pick up, Peel Street started to pick up, and Church Services increased to morning and evening services on Sundays, and numbers of those attending programs increased. By 1947 when W.W. Saunders was appointed Pastor, Morning Service numbers were 60-70, Evening Services up to a hundred, Sunday School numbers 87, and Bible School numbers 100. Sport was

a great means of engaging young people and the unchurched generally, and Peel Street used sport very successfully. They had cricket, netball, tennis, badminton, baseball, and softball teams from the 50s through to the 1970s and 80s and further. Richard Davies, Les Clark, (Tim's Dad) and Joan Coates were heavily involved in those. Les, remarkably, is still playing badminton.



Richard Davies coached baseball and Joan Coates coached netball and tennis. Richard Davies in his 95th year, he's now 97, toured Victoria during 2017 with the Bible Society on a marvellous mission. To show as many people as possible that the Bible not only saves lives spiritually, but literally. He carried his Father's First World War New Testament with a bullet in it. Richard's Father, Lance Corporal P.J. Davies was fighting in Belgium during the war when struck in the chest by mortar fire. Taken to hospital they discovered that his New Testament had shrapnel lodged in it. The Bible had saved his life. Joan Coates, coached netball for Peel Street in the

Churches Netball Competition in the 70s. There was no Netball Association then, if you wanted to play netball you had to attend a Church and play with their team. Joan coached her team to a Premiership against Burnbank Street Methodist Church which consistently was the top team. Robyn Maher, nee Gull, was one of their stars. Going on to be a three-time Olympian in basketball for Australia and inductee into the Australian Basketball Hall of Fame. Joan was also involved in very successful after school netball clinics that Peel Street conducted in 3 Primary Schools. Eureka Street, Humffray Street, and Golden Point.



Peel Street's Max White with much assistance, conducted another long-running and very practical and successful after school programme in the 80s. It was called 'Friday Family Funfair' and ran from 4 to 6 pm weekly. It consisted of games and craft, and a Devotion, with a 2-course substantial meal. It was a very safe, fulfilling, free, child-minding provision for late-night shoppers in Ballarat's CBD and further afield. It filled a real niche. 14 attended when it started, and it built up to 120. A number of families and individuals linked up with the Church through that program.

Three very popular and fruitful Church Camps for young people were also held at Halls Gap annually. Current engaging programmes are 'Chat and Chew', a social group with a devotion, and 'Live and Learn', an art and craft group. They also facilitate AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) and NA (Narcotics Anonymous) and GROW (Mental Health Support) programmes through use of their facilities.

There is a saying in mining, 'All that glitters is not gold', but at Peel Street most things that have glittered or have stood out, have been gold. Human gold.