

175 Years and Still Going

In early October 1839, two Travelling Preachers, Charles Wilson and Charles Robertson, arrived in Sydney from the United Kingdom, sent out here by John Wroe of the Christian Israelite Church. Other preachers soon joined these two men, both from overseas and local, who helped spread the message of the Christian Israelite Church around Australia. Travelling Preachers with the Christian Israelite Church were in Maitland by early 1840 and a body was soon formed there, followed by many others throughout NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. Within twenty years more than twenty congregations had been formed across the country. The Church held a significant presence in common society of the time, and many people now researching Family History find that they have ancestors who were members of the Church.

To celebrate the 175th Anniversary of these first preachers arriving in Australia, the Church is holding celebrations over the 18th and 19th October, at Singleton. (See advertisement this issue.) There will be a Variety Concert on Saturday night which will feature musical items and other light entertainment, with an emphasis on providing an opportunity for young performers to present in public, as well as featuring the Church Brass Band and Choir. Sunday afternoon will feature presentations covering the beginning and growth of the Christian Israelite Church in Australia - an afternoon of History, Heritage and Hindsight. This will be followed by afternoon tea and an opportunity for networking and discussions for those who have any questions about their family history, or the Church.

The Message started in England, and John Wroe took it firstly to the Religious and Civil leaders in both England and parts of Europe, and while some gave him support and encouragement, others opposed his "new concepts" and had him hindered and imprisoned. He had the vision to commission preachers, who felt inspired by this particular understanding of the Scriptures, to travel and preach and proclaim the message of the Church.

The Church teachings are based on the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, with a focus on renewing people's appreciation of God's Laws and Commands so that a generation could be prepared for the return of Jesus Christ to this Earth - with a hope of being eye-witnesses of this event, being preserved alive in spirit and soul and body until He returns.

John Wroe again sent out seven preachers from Sydney Church in 1854 - the same Church that is still in use today - including a Female Preacher, Hannah Giddy, whose name is familiar to many local historical groups across New South Wales. These Preachers taught that in the "Last Days" there will be a regathering of a remnant of the descendants of the Biblical Children of Israel who will seek to show a standard of true obedience to God's commandments. This does not in any way detract from the commonly held Christian belief that salvation is gained through faith, but seeks to go on and prove this faith by a life of obedience to the lifestyle set out in the whole Bible, through love for God and His word.

An invitation is given to all to attend the weekend functions, especially those whose ancestors names might be in the early naming, signing, and marriage records of the Church.