

CONSTITUTION

HISTORY

PRINCIPLES

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## Part 3. Principles of Westminster Presbyterian Church

CONSTITUTION and RULES of  
WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BUDERIM  
QUEENSLAND

December 1990

I. THE NAME

The name of this church shall be "Westminster Presbyterian Church, Buderim, Queensland (Inc.)" hereinafter called "this church".

II. OBJECTS

This church is established to bring glory to God and to enjoy Him through the assembly of His people. God is glorified when His people devote themselves wholeheartedly to serving Him.

This church seeks God's enablement

- to prepare His people for works of service.
- to proclaim worldwide God's saving grace expressed in the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- to promote godly worship.
- to encourage godliness in living.
- to defend the faith "once for all delivered to the saints"
- to discover, develop and employ the gifts given to each member of Christ's church.
- to minister to the whole man, spiritually, emotionally, physically and socially.
- to help the needy near and far.

III. DOCTRINE

This church shall adhere to a belief in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inerrant infallible Word of God in their original writings and as the only rule of faith and life, and subordinate to these Scriptures this church shall adhere to the system of doctrine expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

IV. POWERS

The powers and responsibilities of this church are:

- A. To take over the funds and other assets and the liabilities of the present unincorporated association known as the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Buderim, Queensland.
- B. To purchase real or personal property as such is needed for the accomplishment of the purposes of this church.

- C. To receive gifts, devises, bequests and grants of real estate or personal property for missionary purposes connected with this church for the benefits of church institutions.
- D. To sell, mortgage, lease and otherwise use and dispose of the property of this church in such a manner as this church deems most conducive to the prosperity of this church.
- E. Full power and authority to borrow money on behalf of this church and to incur indebtedness on its behalf.
- F. To invest any of the monies of this church not immediately required for any of its objects in such manner, as it from time to time determines.

#### V. MEMBERSHIP

- A. Membership of this church shall consist of persons who apply for, and are received into membership by the Management Committee of this church (hereinafter called The Session) and
  - 1. who make a profession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and whose Christian profession is not contradicted by flagrant sin or false doctrine.
  - 2. who have been baptised in obedience to Christ's command.
  - 3. who are willing to submit themselves to the government of this church.
  - 4. who have received proper instruction as determined by the Session in the doctrinal standards of this church.
  - 5. who have been examined by the Session to assure itself so far as possible, that the applicant possesses the doctrinal knowledge requisite for active faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, relies for salvation on the merits of Christ alone and is determined by the grace of God to lead a Christian life.
- 6. on the occasion of a public profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can answer in the affirmative to the following four or equivalent questions:
  - a) Do you believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and its doctrine of salvation to be the perfect and only true doctrine of salvation?
  - b) Do you confess that because of your sinfulness you abhor and humble yourself before God, and that you trust for salvation not in yourself but in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, and do you now accept yourself as God does, as holy and blameless,

not because of your deeds, but because of Christ's righteousness, which you receive by faith in Him?

- c) Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your sovereign Lord and do you promise in reliance on the grace of God to serve him with all that is in you, to forsake the world, to mortify your sinful nature, and to lead a godly life?
  - d) Do you agree to submit in the Lord to the government of this church and, in case you should be found delinquent in doctrine or life, to heed its discipline?
- B. Members are expected to strive conscientiously to live according to the light given to them through God's Word and to support wholeheartedly the service and the activities of this church.
- C. A member shall be publicly recognised at the next communion service following his reception by the Session. The names of all communicant members will be entered in a record entitled the Communicant Members Roll of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Buderim, Queensland (Inc.). This record will be kept by the Session Clerk.
- D. The membership of this church shall consist of regular members and associate members. Associate members shall meet the same requirements for membership as regular members, and shall exercise the same privileges and responsibilities, except that associate members shall not vote or hold office as described herein. Membership shall in all cases be regular membership unless associate membership has been requested by the applicant for membership. The number of the members shall be unlimited and there shall be no membership fees.
- E. The Session may, by a majority decision reject an application made for membership by any person if the requirements stated in V(A.) are not satisfied in the judgment of the Session. The Secretary shall forthwith give the applicant notice in writing of such rejection.
- F. The Session may remove from membership any member who in the opinion of the Session has for a significant period of time shown himself indifferent or opposed, to the life and work of this church or its doctrinal standards. Any such member whose whereabouts are known to the Session shall be notified of a time and place at which he may appear before the Session in person or by Counsel to state his case. The name of any person removed from the membership roll shall be reported at the next regularly convened church meeting and such person shall also be notified in writing. The person removed from the membership roll may appeal in writing to Session, and if unsuccessful may further appeal by letter to Presbytery in accordance with Section VII (B) 7. below.
- G. A person whose application for membership has been rejected by the Session may appeal by letter to Presbytery in accordance with

Section VII (B) 7. below. Subsequent application for membership may be made to the Session at a later date, not earlier than three months from the receipt of the notice of rejection from the Session.

- H. All communicant members in good standing of this church, aged 16 years and older, shall be eligible to vote and to hold office.

## VI. GOVERNMENT

- A. In the exercise of government this church will follow these Scriptural principles:

1. Jesus Christ alone is the ruler of His church and the source of its authority.
2. Jesus Christ exercises His authority by the Holy Spirit who is everywhere operative in the Church and by His Word, the Bible, which is His will for the regulation of the affairs of His church.
3. Jesus Christ also gives to His Church gifted men who are responsible to Him for leading and guarding His people.
4. In each congregation a number of elders fulfill their ministry in submission to one another.
5. Elders commence their ministry in response to a call by the congregation and are ordained by other elders.
6. Elders may represent their congregation in larger assemblies of Christ's Church (e.g., presbyteries and synods).

- B. In accordance with scriptural principles of church government, the government of this church is placed in the hands of the Session which shall form the Management Committee of this church.

1. The Session shall consist of the ruling elders elected by the members of the congregation and the pastor called (elected) by the members, or the moderator appointed in the absence of the pastor.
2. The Session shall be divided into three classes. One class shall be elected each year, in addition to the election by members of the congregation of other elders to fill unexpired terms or vacancies caused by death, resignation or discipline. In this way, at least a third of the Session will be elected or re-elected annually.
3. There may be a maximum of three ruling elders actively serving on the Session when the church has a roll of communicant members not exceeding forty communicant members. When the congregation exceeds forty communicant members the number of

additional ruling elders actively serving on the Session is determined at the ratio of one additional ruling elder for every additional ~~twenty~~<sup>10</sup> communicant members.

4. The pastor shall act as Moderator and one elder active on the Session will be elected by the Session as Secretary (hereinafter called the "Clerk of Session").
- C. The Session shall have the following duties and powers:
1. It shall have general oversight of the spiritual affairs, regular services and the administration of the sacraments of this church.
  2. It shall carry out the ordination and installation of ruling elders and deacons.
  3. It may exercise all the powers of this church.
  4. It shall appoint trustees of this church if required.
  5. It may make by-laws for this church provided such by-laws are not inconsistent with this constitution, and to amend or revoke such by-laws to take effect at least one week subsequent to their enactment.
  6. It shall provide for the safe custody of books, documents, instruments of title and securities of this church.
  7. It shall cause a Membership Roll to be kept in which shall be entered the names and residential addresses of all persons admitted to membership of this church and it shall review the roll annually.
  8. It shall appoint an auditor.
  9. It shall appoint one of its number to be the Clerk of Session.
  10. The Session may from time to time make, amend or repeal bylaws, not inconsistent with these Rules, for the internal management of this church and any by-law may be set aside by a general meeting of members of the congregation.
  11. Except as otherwise provided by these Rules and subject to resolutions of the members of the congregation carried at any general meeting the Session
    - a) shall have the general control and management of the administration of the affairs, property and funds of this church; and
    - b) shall have authority to interpret the meaning of these Rules and any matter relating to this church on which these Rules are silent.

c) may exercise all the powers of this church

- i) to borrow or raise or secure the payment of money in such manner as the members of this church may think fit and secure the same or the payment or performance of any debt, liability, contract, guarantee or other engagement incurred or to be entered into by this church in any way and in particular by the issue of debentures, perpetual or otherwise, charged upon all or any of this church's property, both present and future, and to purchase, redeem or pay off any such securities;
- ii) to borrow money from members at a rate of interest not exceeding interest at the rate for the time being charged by bankers in Brisbane for overdrawn accounts of money lent, whether the term of the loan be short or long, and to mortgage or charge its property or any part thereof and to issue debentures and other securities, whether outright or as security for any debt, liability or obligation of this church, and to provide and pay off any such securities; and
- iii) to invest in such manner as the members of the congregation of this church may from time to time determine.

D. Any member of Session may resign from membership of Session at any time by giving notice in writing to the Clerk of Session, but such resignation shall take effect only after the next regular Session meeting at which the letter has been received.

## VII. OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

### A. The Pastor

1. The Pastor (teaching elder) shall give evidence of God's calling to the ministry, together with evidence of gifts and abilities suitable to the discharge of this office as prescribed in the Scriptures (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9). He shall also have satisfactorily completed a course of theological studies at a theological institution acceptable to the membership of this church and its Presbytery. Special provision shall be made for a Pastor of mature age provided he satisfies the requirements of Presbytery.
2. The call of the congregation to the Pastor shall issue from a proper meeting of this church in which 70% of all members eligible to vote support the call. The vote shall be taken by secret ballot.
3. The Pastor shall be an ex officio member of all committees of this church and its organisations, act as moderator at the meetings of the Session and of the congregation of this church



and shall conscientiously perform such duties as may be directed by the Session. If at any time his personal belief, preaching, teaching or living be not in full accord with the doctrine and standards of this church, it shall be the duty of this church to request that his service be terminated as soon as possible.

4. The Pastor shall serve until he accepts a call elsewhere, resigns or this church requests his resignation in accordance with the preceding clause. A pastor shall give at least ninety days notice of his intention to resign and in the case of a request by this church the pastor shall be entitled to receive a at least thirty days salary calculated from the day of the request and any other entitlements due.

## 8. Ruling Elders

1. A Ruling Elder shall be nominated from the regular membership of this church. Nominations shall be received at a proper meeting of this church and shall contain the signatures of an elder, two members and the nominee. The nomination of elders shall be followed by a period of not less than three months in which the nominees, under the direction of the Session, shall undergo appropriate training.
2. Before a man is ordained to the ruling eldership the Session shall examine him in the following subjects: Scriptures, Westminster Confession of Faith, church sacraments and elementary apologetics. He must also have demonstrated his ability to teach and exhort in sound doctrine and that his personal life is in conformity with the Scriptural pattern for elders (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9).
3. Ruling elders shall be elected at a proper meeting of this church at which two thirds of the members present at the meeting give their support. The vote shall be by secret ballot.
4. This church shall have the power to determine the number of elders who shall serve on the Session.
5. Although ordination to the office is for life, ruling elders shall be elected to a three year term of active service on the Session, upon completion of which they may stand for re-election for another term. No ruling elder shall serve on the Session for an aggregate of more than six years consecutively. He may be re-elected to Session after a lapse of at least one Sabbatical year.
6. Ruling Elders must reaffirm annually in writing and before the congregation their commitment to this church's standards of doctrine and life.

7. When it becomes apparent that an elder is not fulfilling the functions of his office in accordance with the doctrine and standards of this church, and after spiritual steps to discipline him have failed, it is the responsibility and duty of the Session to ensure he is removed from office as soon as shall be possible. Appeal may be made in writing to the Presbytery of the Westminster Presbyterian Church by the disciplined Session member.
8. In accordance with historical Presbyterian church government, until this congregation has its own qualified elders who meet the standards of spiritual, doctrinal, and Christian character development consistent with its Confession (see Section III) and who are properly elected in accordance with this Constitution, Presbytery may appoint a provisional Session comprised of elders borrowed from within the presbytery.

### C. The Board of Deacons

1. The Board of Deacons is a separate committee from the Session under the direction of and accountable to the authority of the Session.
2. The Board of Deacons shall consist of the pastor and deacons elected by this church. This church shall determine from time to time the number of deacons to be elected. Deacons shall evidence the qualifications for the office that are prescribed in Scripture (I Tim. 3:8-10; Acts 6:3-6). The procedure of nomination to the office of deacon will be the same as that of the ruling elder.
3. The terms of office in which a deacon shall serve actively shall be three years, although ordination is for life. The Board shall be divided, if sufficient in number, into three classes with one class retiring each year. No deacon shall serve for more than six consecutive years. He may be re-elected to the the Board after a lapse of at least one year. Should a place on the board become vacant for any reason, a meeting of this church shall be called to elect a deacon, if available, to complete the term of office of the vacant seat.
4. The Board of Deacons shall be responsible for provision of assistance to those of the congregation in financial need, for visitation of the sick, oversight of the preparation of the elements for Communion, care of the physical needs concurrent with the worship services, and to other administrative and charitable duties as may be encouraged by the Session and the congregation.
5. When it becomes apparent that a deacon is not fulfilling the function of his office in accordance with the doctrines and standards of this church, should the deacon show no repentance, the Session shall ensure that he is removed from office. Appeal may be made as in VII (B) 7.

## VIII. MEETINGS

- A. There shall be two regular meetings of this church held each year. The first shall be held in the month of February when nominations for elders and deacons may be received. The second shall be the annual general meeting held in accordance with paragraph 9 of this section at which time election of elders and deacons will take place. Other business properly coming before a duly constituted church meeting may also be transacted at these meetings.
- B. All church meetings shall be announced for two consecutive Sundays prior to the date of meeting.
- C. All regular members of this church who have attained the age of eighteen shall be eligible to vote in any meeting of this church. There will be no voting by proxy.
- D. The Pastor or a Moderator appointed in accordance with this clause shall be the Moderator of all meetings of this church. When the church is without a Pastor, or the Pastor cannot preside at the meeting, Presbytery will be asked to provide a Moderator.
- E. A special meeting of this church may be called at the written request of ten eligible members, no two from the same immediate family, or two elders or the pastor.
- F. A quorum of this church's meetings shall be one third of the members eligible to vote. At any church meeting motions shall be passed by a two thirds majority, except in the case of calling a pastor, or where a special resolution is required under the provisions of the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 necessitating a three quarter majority vote to pass a motion.
- G. Bona fide absentee votes by members will be accepted subject to the approval of Session.
- H. The Clerk of Session shall cause full and accurate minutes of all questions, matters, resolutions and other proceedings of every meeting of Session and of this church to be entered into a book to be open for inspection at all reasonable times by any member who previously applies to the Clerk of Session for that inspection. For the purpose of ensuring the accuracy of the recording of such minutes the minutes of every meeting of Session shall be signed by the Chairman of that meeting or the Chairman of the next succeeding Session meeting. The minutes of any regular meeting or special meeting shall be signed by the Chairman of that meeting or the Chairman of the next succeeding regular church meeting.
- I. The annual general meeting shall be held within three months of the close of the financial year. The business to be transacted at every annual general meeting shall be:
  - 1. the receiving of the Session's report and the statement of income and expenditure, assets and liabilities and mortgages,

charges and securities affecting the property of this church for the preceding financial year;

2. the receiving of the auditor's report upon the books and accounts for the preceding financial year;
  3. the election of members of the Session; and
  4. the appointment of an auditor.
- J. The Session shall meet at least once every calendar month to exercise its functions.
1. A special meeting of the Session shall be convened by the moderator on the requisition of not less than two of the members of the Session, which requisition shall clearly state the reasons why such special meeting is being convened and the nature of the business to be transacted thereat.
  2. At every meeting of the Session a simple majority of a number equal to the number of members elected and/or appointed to the Session as at the close of the last general meeting of the members, shall constitute a quorum.
  3. Subject as previously provided in this rule, the Session may meet together and regulate its proceedings as it thinks fit: Provided that questions arising at any meeting of the Session shall be decided by a majority of votes and, in the case of equality of votes the question shall be deemed to be decided in the negative.
  4. A member of the Management Committee shall not vote in respect of any contract or proposed contract with this church in which he is interested, or any matter arising thereout, and if he does so vote his vote shall not be counted.
  5. Any special meeting of the Session may be called at regular (stated) worship services of the congregation of this church. Regular (stated) worship services shall be conducted at times determined by the Session.
  6. The Pastor as Moderator shall preside as Chairman at every meeting of the Session, or if there is no Moderator, or if at any meeting he is not present within ten minutes after the time appointed for holding the meeting, or if the Moderator is not present at the meeting then the members of the Session may choose one of their number to be Chairman of the meeting.
  7. If within half an hour from the time appointed for the commencement of a Session meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting, if convened upon the requisition of members of the Session, shall lapse. In any other case it shall stand adjourned to the same day in the next week at the same time and place, or to such other day and at such other time and place as

the Session may determine, and if at the adjourned meeting a quorum is not present within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting, the meeting shall lapse.

K. Unless otherwise provided by these Rules, at every general meeting

1. the Moderator shall preside as Chairman, or if there is no Moderator, or if he is not present within fifteen minutes after the time appointed for the holding of the meeting or is unwilling to act, the Clerk of Session shall be the Chairman or if the Clerk of Session is not present or is unwilling to act then the members present shall elect one of the members of Session to be Chairman of the meeting;
2. the Chairman shall maintain order and conduct the meeting in a proper and orderly manner;
3. every member present shall be entitled to one vote; and
4. voting shall be by show of hands or a division of members, unless not less than one-fifth of the members present demand a ballot, in which event there shall be a secret ballot. The Chairman shall appoint two members to conduct the secret ballot in such manner as he shall determine and the result of the ballot as declared by the Chairman shall be deemed to be the resolution of the meeting at which the ballot was demanded.

## IX. FINANCE

- A. The income and property of this church wheresoever derived shall be used and applied solely towards promotion of the objects of this church as herein set forth and in the exercise of its power and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend bonuses or otherwise however by way of profit to any member of this church provided that nothing herein contained shall prevent the payment in good faith of remuneration to any offices or servants of this church in return for any services actually rendered to this church nor the payment to any member for occasional services.
- B. The fiscal year of this church shall end on the thirtieth day of June each year.
- C. The treasurer shall be elected annually in the August church meeting.
- D. The treasurer shall be responsible for the keeping and maintaining of proper books and accounts in the English language showing correctly the financial affairs of this church and the particulars usually shown in books of like nature.
- E. The funds of this church shall be banked in the name of this church in such bank as the Session may from time to time direct

and all monies shall be banked as soon as possible after receipt thereof.

- F. All amounts of twenty dollars or over shall be paid by cheque. Cheque signatories shall be the treasurer, elected elders and deacons. Any two may sign.
- G. Cheques shall be crossed "not negotiable" except those in payment of wages, allowances or petty cash recoupments which may be open.
- H. As soon as practicable after the end of each financial year the treasurer shall cause to be prepared a statement containing particulars of:
  - 1. the income and expenditure for the financial year just ended and
  - 2. the assets and liabilities and of all mortgages, charges and securities affecting the property of this church at the close of that year.
- I. All such statements shall be examined by the auditor who shall present his report upon such audit to the Clerk of Session prior to the holding of the church meeting next following the financial year in respect of which such audit was made.

#### X. BRANCHES AND AMALGAMATIONS

This church shall have power

- A. To establish branches and to regulate and discontinue the same.
- B. To continue affiliation with the Westminster Presbyterian Church, in a voluntary relationship. While the church is so affiliated to the Westminster Presbyterian Church the Book of Church Order of that denomination is operative at the local level.
- C. To withdraw from this relationship at any time for reasons which seem to it sufficient by orderly ballot at a duly constituted meeting of this church, by a resolution carried by two thirds of all the members of this church eligible to vote and with such notices and sanctions as are hereinafter provided for in the case of amendments to this constitution to amalgamate or unite this church with any other church or churches or religious body having any object in whole or part the same as the objects of this church and having a doctrinal standard in harmony with that contained in Section III hereof PROVIDED HOWEVER that no such amalgamation or union shall be effective to remove or hinder the absolute title and control of the property both real and personal of this church from the hands of its members and Session.

## XI. COMMON SEAL

This church shall have a common seal which shall be in the custody of any one of the three sealholders to be appointed from time to time as required by deeds, instruments and other documents or writings required to be executed by this church shall be signed by or executed by the Common Seal being affixed thereon by at least two of the sealholders who shall also countersign thereon.

## XII. DISSOLUTION

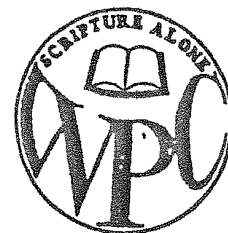
A. The organisation shall be dissolved

1. if the membership is less than three persons or
2. if a resolution to that effect is carried by a vote of a three fourths majority of the communicant members present at a general meeting convened to consider the question.

B. The property and other assets of the organisation remaining after the payment of all expenses and other liabilities shall be handed over to some other organisation or organisations (having similar objects or in part similar objects) gifts to which are allowable deductions under the provisions of section 7b(1) (a) of the Income Tax Assessment Act as the majority of members present at such general meeting, by resolution, may decide.

## XIII. AMENDMENTS

Subject to the provisions of the Association Incorporation Act 1981 this constitution may be amended, rescinded or added to from time to time by special resolution carried at any regular general or special meeting of this church by three quarters of the members eligible to vote such vote to be expressed by written ballot. Provided the proposed amendment has been read to the congregation or presented in such form that each member may read it, at each regular church service for each of the four Sundays immediately preceding such meeting, and provided also that an exact copy of the proposed amendment has been conspicuously posted in the church on such four Sundays. Provided also that no such amendment rescission or addition shall be valid unless the same shall have been previously submitted to and approved by the Under Secretary, Department of Justice.



# THE HISTORY of WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The first congregation of what was to become Westminster Presbyterian Church began in Western Australia on December 6, 1970, under Rev. David Cross, a missionary pastor sent to W.A. by World Presbyterian Missions, the missions arm of the U.S. based Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. Mr Cross, with his wife and family, had arrived in Perth in February 1970 following many years of correspondence between Miss Mary Jones of Brookton, W.A., and men in those U.S. churches known as the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and later the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod.

## Mary Jones and the Presbyterian Church in W.A.

Mary Jones worked amongst Aboriginal people in several country towns within a few hours drive of Perth. The daughter of a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, she did not serve as a missionary of that church, but in an independent setting.

## Mary Jones and the "Westminster Fellowship"

In the 1960's small numbers of Presbyterians in a few of the Australian states formed loose associations bearing names such as "Westminster Fellowship" or "Westminster Society". One of these existed in W.A. About a dozen people maintained regular attendance, endeavouring to study the Westminster Standards and apply them to church life.

## Westminster Presbyterian Church

In 1964 and 1965 Rev. Dan Cannon and the Rev. William Mahlow carried out surveys of Mary Jones' Aboriginal work in Brookton and nearby areas. W.P.M. involvement was recommended and an Australian "holding committee", Evangelical Presbyterian Mission (U.S.A.) was formed. The function of the holding committee was to assist Miss Jones until a missionary pastor from W.P.M. could be appointed.

From 1965 E.P.M. kept in touch with W.P.M. usually by letters that pleaded for a missionary. Rev. Warren Myers was the first person organised by W.P.M. to help Miss Jones at Brookton. Warren Myers arrived at Brookton in September 1967 after the Lord closed his work in Jordan during the June war of the same year. Also serving at the Brookton Church at that time was Miss Norma Henderson, a missionary sent by the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Sutherland N.S.W. Warren lived in a small room at the rear of the Brookton Church until his return to the U.S.A. in May 1968.



As already noted, David Cross and family arrived in February 1970 and began work in Brookton. Before the close of 1970, however, it was agreed by E.P.M. that the Crosses move to the Perth metropolitan area and begin a congregation there. It had been Mary Jones' wish for some years to have in the metropolitan area a congregation which could support the Brookton mission, so David Cross, by starting a church in Perth and by regular weekly visits to Brookton, considerably enlarged the scope of the work in which he was engaged.

The Perth church took the name "Westminster Presbyterian Church". The name "Westminster" was taken from the Westminster Confession of Faith, the church's doctrinal standard, subordinate to Scripture. Only two or three Australian families attended the first service, but the church grew rapidly and soon was self supporting. From 1973 to 1977 Rev. Warren Myers became the Pastor of the church at Caversham that David Cross had begun in 1970. In the years which followed, four more congregations were planted in the Perth area, the Aboriginal congregation at Brookton continued, a presbytery began to function, a bookshop ministry developed into quite large proportions, a pastoral training programme commenced; and, in the Eastern states, congregations appeared in Queensland, New South Wales and the A.C.T. All but one of the new churches were planted by pastors from World Presbyterian Missions - now known as "Mission To The World" (M.T.W.).

#### Westminster Presbyterian Church and Other Churches

David Cross and some Australian elders made several attempts to link the new congregations with established Presbyterian churches. At least four road crossings of Australia were made for such a purpose, but David Cross and the men associated with him judged that people in the emerging W.P.C. congregations would not be well served by union at this stage with any of the churches investigated. Accordingly, W.P.C. set itself to becoming a national church, fully recognising that it would be viewed askance by older churches, but hoping that instead of becoming just one more Australian church it could, by a vigorous and gracious Gospel ministry, be an effective voice for Christ, a catalyst for greater unity.

#### Westminster Presbyterian Church and Mission To The World

The decision of W.P.C. to locate in the Eastern states as well as in W.A. was not simply the result of the failed attempt to join other churches. The biggest population centres are in the East. Moreover, Australian church history suggests that a church which confines itself to a limited area of the continent does not attract enquiries from men looking for a denomination in which to exercise a life ministry. If W.P.C. were to become effective and attractive at a national level it would have to establish churches in the East.

Such expansion required resources not possessed by W.P.C. It had to look to W.P.M. and then M.T.W. for more organising pastors. Denominational growth in Australia has depended heavily on overseas aid, from colonial days. Since World War II very substantial resources from Britain, Europe, and the U.S.A. have enabled the building of newer denominations. Nor have older denominations been

without help. W.P.C.'s looking to North America for resources is not an un-Australian phenomenon. W.P.C. congregations are far less reflective of overseas parent influences than some other Presbyterian and Reformed churches in Australia.

#### Westminster Presbyterian Church in Queensland

Providentially, as W.P.C. began to think about becoming a national church, developments occurred which enabled Rev. Oliver Claassen to go to Queensland in mid-1980 to commence church planting in Brisbane. By 1981 a congregation had been begun in the western suburb of Redbank Plains. When Rev. Larry Billiter and his family returned to Australia following furlough in the U.S., they joined the Claassens and began a second congregation in Centenary Suburbs, about 15 minutes drive from Redbank Plains. Rev. Sam Larsen and family arrived under M.T.W. from the U.S. in late 1982 and in 1984 began pastoring the W.P.C. preaching point at Buderim; begun in 1983. After the calling of Rev. Warren Myers to the position of full-time pastor at Redbank Plains, the Larsens moved to Buderim to concentrate on that ministry full time. The Claassens left Queensland in mid-1983 on furlough and returned to Australia in January 1985 to begin the new work at Cranebrook in N.S.W. By mid-1984 the Billiter family had returned to the U.S. and in late 1984 the Dan Rowton family arrived in Brisbane under M.T.W. and had taken oversight of the Centenary congregation while awaiting the arrival of Rev. David Kiewiet and his family. Because of a delay in obtaining entry visas the Kiewiets did not arrive until April 1986. In 1989 W.P.C., in association with full-time Scripture Union worker Rev. Michael Bennett, began a new work at Annerley. Later that year the Centenary Suburbs work amalgamated with a new W.P.C. work at nearby Indooroopilly. In 1990 W.P.C. Indooroopilly began a new evening service outreach on the campus of Queensland University.

Men desiring full-time pastoral ministry with W.P.C. are being trained through the Queensland annexe of Westminster Theological College. Lecturers at W.T.C. (QLD) include men from W.P.C., M.T.W. and like-minded denominations, and the training is supplemented by lecturing visits by world-class theologians from the U.S. and other countries. Other internationally recognised lecturers are brought into the classroom via the media of audio and video recordings.

#### Westminster Presbyterian Church Buderim

The Buderim congregation of W.P.C. first met on March 13, 1983, at the Buderim C.W.A. rooms. In March 1985, the congregation began meeting in the newly opened Buderim State School Hall. In August 1986, the congregation elected its first elders and deacon. In 1988 when the Larsens returned to the U.S., the Buderim church called from within its own congregation Bob Burnett, its first non-M.T.W. pastor. The Buderim Church has been fully self-supporting ever since. August 1989 saw the last of the S.I.M.A. (Servants in Missions Abroad) workers return to the U.S. The assistance of M.T.W. and S.I.M.A. had proven to be of great benefit in building the Buderim congregation during the previous five years.

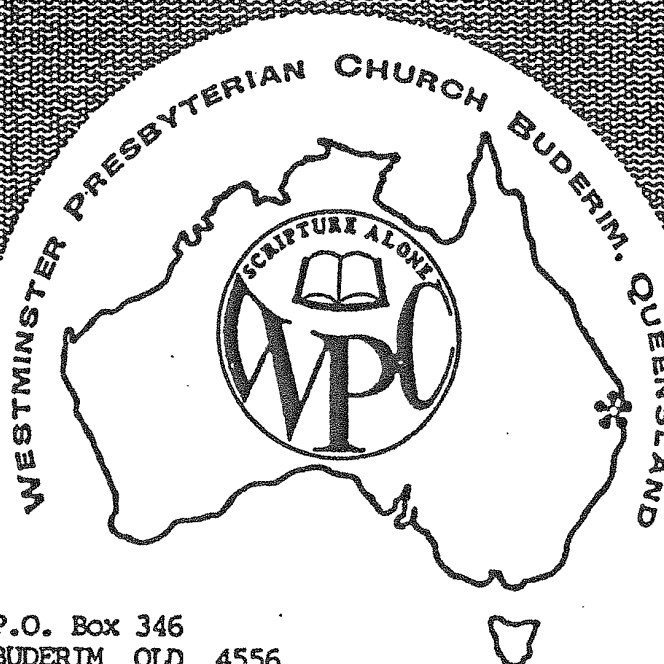
Westminster Presbyterian Church and the Future

From a human standpoint, W.P.C. probably would not have been born without support from W.P.M. and would not have grown so rapidly without the resources of W.P.M./M.T.W. It is with praise to God and thanks to our brothers and sisters in the U.S. that the growth of the denomination is acknowledged. Though developed with assistance from the U.S., W.P.C. has developed an Australian ethos - Reformed in doctrine, oriented towards evangelism and missions, and strongly committed to church planting.

It is appropriate that Westminster Presbyterian Church traces its roots to an Aboriginal congregation, and, from there, reached out to the other cultural groups which make up the nation of Australia.

revised - December 1990

# The Westminster Presbyterian Church



P.O. Box 346  
BUDERIM QLD 4556

ORIGINS	✱
DOCTRINE	✱
MEMBERSHIP	✱
OFFICERS	✱
MINISTRY	✱
SACRAMENTS	✱
GOVERNMENT	✱
CHRISTIAN UNITY	✱

## ORIGINS

Westminster Presbyterian Church came into being, by the Grace of God, in 1970 through members of the Christian community who saw a need for the establishment of a Presbyterian Church firmly committed to a biblical position.

## DOCTRINE

- \* The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16). They are the supreme and only inerrant, infallible rule of faith and life.
- \* The church holds to the Westminster Confession of Faith as its subordinate standard, embodying the system of doctrine taught in Scripture and always subject to Scripture.

## MEMBERSHIP

Those who profess faith in Christ and whose profession is not contradicted by belief or life indicative of disobedience to Christ are eligible for membership.

## OFFICERS

- \* The officers of the church must be converted men who know and believe the Scriptures and assent to the church's doctrine and practice.
- \* Elders and deacons are chosen by the congregations in which they are to serve.

## MINISTRY

\* In common with all true churches, Westminster Presbyterian endeavours to glorify God by obeying His Word, the Bible.

\* The church's obedience to God involves it in:

### Worship

Adoring and praising God, especially on the Lord's Day.

### Evangelism

Making Christ known in and beyond Australia.

### Edification

Building up believers in faith, life and understanding.

### Apologetics

Intellectually defending and justifying the Christian Faith and asserting the truth of the biblical revelation.

## SACRAMENTS

### The Lord's Supper

Those who profess faith in Christ and whose profession is not contradicted by belief or life indicative of disobedience to Christ are eligible to share in the Lord's Supper.

### Baptism

We baptise those who profess faith and their children. We do not baptise children indiscriminately. We see baptism as the initiatory sign of the Covenant of Grace. Baptism does not save or regenerate the child or the adult. We regard pouring and sprinkling as symbolic of the baptising work of the poured out Holy Spirit.