

Bill and Doyla Bramblet

Our Service History

1978-1982

Doyla and I attended PCBBC. I was there from 1972 to 1974. That was where we met and then married in 1974. I worked at Oxnard Baptist Temple from 1973 to 1978. Stephen and Philip were born during that time. God called us to missions and Australia, and we started deputation in September of 1978. We arrived in Australia September 1979. Our support at that time was \$1,350 per month which translated to \$1,150 Australian dollars. We began working with Sam and Karen Keller at Calvary Baptist Church, Perth Western Australia. Among other things we started a choir, worked with the youth, worked on the new building, and did lots of visitation. Sunday, April 27, 1980, at 6:30 am our daughter Karen was born. It was interesting times for our young family in our new country. A quote from a prayer letter May 1980 - "A boy down the street taught Stephen and Philip some dirty words. Naturally our boys got in trouble for saying them. When I was praying with Stephen he said, 'Dear God, please help me not to say _____'. I guess God hears all kinds of prayers."

Because of health problems the Kellers left Australia. I became the interim Pastor of the work for about a year until Jim Valentine returned from Bible College in the USA. We had started a Sunday School building that was finished under his leadership. It was a short first term, but the local church was strengthened and turned over to an Australian. Souls were saved and we learned how to work in Australia. Calvary Baptist Church continues to this day.

We took a furlough in 1982. One difficulty we faced was that originally we had been sent out by Oxnard Baptist Temple, but while we were on our first term they had changed their stand and become Faith Community Church. As a result, while on furlough, we changed our sending church to Tabernacle Baptist Church, Concord, California. While on furlough we had to raise additional support, put our boys in school and seek God's leading on what we would do on our return to Australia. His answer was far different than we expected!

Bramblets 1983-1988

On our 2nd term we had thought we would start a church in Bunbury, several hours south of Perth. But as we visited there that didn't seem to be God's plan for us. We decided to start a church in the eastern part of Perth and moved to Morely. A fellow missionary asked us to look after his work while he went on furlough.... Just a couple of months until another missionary arrived. It was about 30 minutes north of us in Wanneroo. We were glad to be of help. THEN, just before he left, he told me two things: 1. the other missionary was not coming 2. he would not be returning to Australia. I had given my word and was now the Pastor of Central Community Baptist Church. It was an interesting church of new Christians, included aboriginal folks, and met in a factory unit. That same year another Independent Baptist Church nearby had its Australian pastor resign and leave the ministry. They approached us about merging. So, now instead of a church plant in Morley, I became the pastor of 2 churches in Wanneroo that we merged under the name Gospel Baptist Church. **Much different than we expected!** By the way, we moved house from Morley, where we expected to work, to Wanneroo, where God put us. Definitely God's will! I remember looking around after a year or so and noting that we had 1/3 from each church and 1/3 new people. We saw souls saved and a continuing work for Christ. One teen that got saved, David Winter, would later become a pastor! God blessed and we were able to buy property. This was one of our most fruitful ministries with many young couples and an Awana program. I was also involved with a jail ministry and was part of the Bible College. After about 4 years I resigned as their pastor, and they called Larry Nelson. One memory is that our goal was to have 50 in prayer meeting. We reached that goal 1 week after I resigned! Under brother Nelson's leadership over the next 30 years they built and prospered. We took a furlough at the end of 1987 into 1988. Our original sending church had been supporting us \$300 per month but stopped as a result of their change in beliefs and practices. That made our furlough more difficult as we had to raise more support. Our children attended school at North Valley Baptist Church in Santa Clara CA. I mainly traveled alone to report to churches as we prepared for whatever God had next.

Bramblets 1988-1993

Mid 1988 we returned to Australia. I remember we brought close to 700 pounds of luggage! The school year in Australia runs from January to December, so our children had missed half the year and we decided to home school. Things were more expensive as the cost of living had doubled since we had first arrived in 1979. The next 5 years were our most difficult financially. It built our faith to see how God provided.

While considering where to start, we looked after Victory Baptist Church, while missionary Mike Rigney was on furlough. That was a blessing and we saw folks saved. It was a very busy time as I often spoke 8 times a week: Men's study, youth group, 2 Bible College classes, and 4 regular church meetings.

We considered starting a church in downtown Perth. But God directed us just south of Perth to Rockingham. We moved there in 1989 and Faith Baptist Church began in March of 1990. We had 20 attend the first Sunday! The church began to grow and God sent an Australian couple, Ray and Jan Corlson, to work with us. Our family was growing up with our 2 boys in high school. One Sunday Karen had her appendix out. I played "senior" basketball. We knocked on thousands of doors. Doyla taught reading classes. We saw lots of folks saved and baptized (in the local pool). At the end of 1992 the church voted to call Ray Corlson as pastor. He had been saved under Sam Keller's ministry at the first church where we worked together. He was one of the first men I met in Australia. Under his leadership the church bought land and built. Faith Baptist Church continues to this day.

We took a furlough in 1993 and the family lived in San Jose. The children again attended school at North Valley Baptist Church. Stephen broke his leg playing soccer. Both boys got their drivers licenses. We particularly took a longer furlough so the children could get used to the USA before going to Bible College. When we left for Australia, Doyla and Steve stayed in the USA to register him at Pensacola Christian College.

Bramblets 1994-2002

Philip, Karen and I set up house in Fremantle, Western Australia and Doyla arrived a month later. That was an interesting time. While there Karen and Philip took the train each day to a Christian school about an hour away. Philip graduated at the end of 1994, worked for awhile and then went to Marantha Baptist in 1995.

We started the work in Fremantle October 23, 1994, with 13 in attendance. We did a LOT of door-knocking! One lady answered the door and said, "Come in, I've been wanting to know." That was unusual! Later that day Doyla led her to Christ. Lee continues to follow the Lord and is a part of the church there. The Rigneys helped us for awhile in 1995 before they left for New Zealand. We moved home in December of 1995. As the boys went off to Bible College, we would sometimes see them at Christmas. Most summers they lived with relatives in the USA. Our family has been a great blessing.

Karen graduated from high school and worked at a local grocery store. She also learned to drive (at my insistence) in preparation for going to Bible College in the fall of 1998. Philip worked at Roswell Baptist Temple the summer of 1997.

Stan and Jean Sparkhall got saved. I had visited Jean's mum in a nursing home every week for some time. When she died, I did the funeral. The Sparkhall's attended church the next week as a "courtesy". God had other plans!

Bill and Angie Long came to look after the church while we went to Stephen's graduation. Karen started at Pensacola Christian College that same year.

David Winter graduated from our Bible College in Perth and came to work with us in 1999. Philip finished Bible College in 1999. We went back for his graduation and marriage. The Longs looked after the church again while we were gone. Philip and Rachel came to help in September 2001 and stayed for over two years.

Matthew and Daniel were born during that time. The church called David Winter as pastor in October 2001. Doyla and I took a furlough in 2002. In 2002 Karen graduated from PCC; I got my master's degree from Louisiana Baptist College; and our first grandchild was born in Perth, Western Australia

This work, Lighthouse Baptist Church in Fremantle, eventually merged with Faith Baptist Church in Rockingham with David Winter as Pastor.

Bramblets 2003-2008

Upon returning from furlough, we moved to Eden Hill in the Perth area to start a church. I received my first dog bite in April 2003 from a 3-legged Dalmation. I was given a 1974 Toyota Corona with mushrooms growing in it. Our second grandson was born in January 2004.

We really struggled with this work, Grace Baptist Church. We continued until mid-2005. We put in lots of hard work but saw few results. In June of 2005 we had our last meeting. We pray God will use the seed sown. This was probably the lowest point of our ministry. We spent a few weeks of early 2006 with Doyla's parents. Doyla stayed behind while I returned. We believe God was in the timing of this as her father went to Heaven in March of 2006. On her return to Australia, we moved to Melbourne to look after International Baptist Church. It was mainly made up of Arabic speaking Lebanese people. This was a wonderful recovery time for us. Those folks were such a blessing! We spent 10 months in Melbourne as I pastored that church. We felt blessed of the Lord to have been part of that ministry. We drove back to Perth and then flew to the USA while we decided what to do next. Two grandsons were born 4 days apart in 2007. Our daughter married in 2008. Back in Australia we put out word that we would like to help an established church. Many were without pastors. 10 churches contacted us. After much prayer we decided to move to Brisbane and Fellowship Baptist Church. We packed everything into a sea container, sold our car, and flew to Brisbane almost 3,000 miles away. They had been without a pastor about 2 years.

We arrived in June of 2008. We didn't know then that we would spend 15 years with this church and that it would be our last ministry in Australia. Looking back, we see God's hand in it all. In September 2010 I had a cancer operation. Then in December of 2010 I had bypass surgery. I had never spent time in a hospital before and now 2 major operations! God blessed this ministry. We had many different people we were reaching. At one service we counted 14 different countries represented!

Bramblets 2008-2023

When we first came to Fellowship Baptist Church there was a small core of faithful folks and a church building. There was one child in Sunday School and 1 in the youth group. As we began to visit things grew. We began to reach the children of the neighbourhood, many of them aboriginal. Over the years we have seen folks saved and the Sunday school, youth group and attendance in general growing. The main problem physically is the small size of the building.

Many things happened during these years. Our son Stephen and his family moved to Brisbane (from Kentucky) in 2013. My mother went to Heaven in 2013; followed closely by my father in 2014. We had hoped to have a special celebration of my father's 90th birthday, but instead had a memorial service. The Munsons filled in for us so we could attend that memorial service. Doyla also went to the USA for each new grandchild.

About 2014 a Korean Pastor's wife walked by our church and then came along that Sunday, even though she spoke hardly any English. As a result, her son and his wife began to come - Nick and June. He professed to be a Christian and she soon gave her heart to Christ. They were a welcome part of our church. She gave birth to daughters in 2015 and 2017 and then was diagnosed with stomach cancer and died. Nick somehow ended up in prison. After a few months we were given foster care of the girls, then aged 2 and 4. We had them for almost 2 years and what a blessing! Nick was eventually able to take them home again, but we sure love them and miss them! Nick's brother, a pastor, also moved to Brisbane. He and his family have been attending the church and been a great blessing.

In 2022 we visited Doyla's mother and believed that God would have us be the solution for her. We decided to move to Roswell, New Mexico to look after her.

In 2023 God gave Fellowship Baptist Church a new pastor one month before we were to leave. Pastor Agatep is a young Australian pastor with good experience. He is a soul-winner and a godly man. What an answer to prayer! We have seen God work over many years. I note one request in a 2000 prayer letter for the salvation of John Fumo has been answered in 2024 when he got saved.

Someone in Australia said, "You must be excited about going home." Our reply was, we are not going home, we are leaving home. Australia has been our "home" for 45 years. But we have learned that really, Heaven is our home. We look forward to serving while we can wherever God puts us. God is faithful.