

CHAPTER 7 – THE DORMANT YEARS - PART TWO 1948-1978

Post 1950 Pastorates

Pastor	Started	Left	Destination	Reason
E. Jones	1951 (June)	1952 (June)	Bryndwr	Call to Honorary Pastorate
Jack Wilson	1955 (Aug)	1961 (July)	St Albans	Call
Leon Goodrich	1964 (Feb)	1966 (Feb)	Unknown	Asked to resign by Deacons. Had offended members.

The period between 1948 and 1972 is a connecting period in the history of Lincoln Baptist Church. It is when some of the most serious aspects of quiescence become evident.

In 1936 there had been some 750 people living in the town of Lincoln and its immediate vicinity, which had increased by 1945 to just under 800 people¹. After a local government reorganization the equivalent numbers from Springs and Papparua Counties in 1956 was 1,163, and in 1966 was 1385 people². In a different data series which makes the Census year 1966 comparable to 1986, the growth for Lincoln Township was from 1178 to 1872³. Compared to the post 1990 period that was not spectacular but a steady rate of growth. During the same period Lincoln Baptist Church does make spectacular growth, but it does not happen until right at the end of the period from 1980. In 1979 the membership was 12. It stood at 55 ten years later in 1988⁴.

After World War II Lincoln was still a small rural service town on the Canterbury Plains with a railway junction between the Little River and Southbridge lines, which show in one of the first aerial photographs of the town (Fig.). It must be remembered that many of Lincoln Baptist Church's members did not come from the township but the immediate vicinity and surrounding countryside as well. That was demonstrated back in the foundation period when different members came from Springston and Tai Tapu as well as the Lincoln area, in an era when transport was by horse and buggy over poorly developed roads. It was said of Deacon Osborne that getting to meetings was never an obstacle ()

The period between 1950 and 1975 is covered by a new minute book, a new constitution of the standard Baptist Union model, prolonged wrangles over the occupation of the manse and getting the current tenant to leave so a minister could be housed there. However, only ten meetings of the church were held between December 1950 and when the Walkers first attended in September 1954, some very brief and often with Auxiliary attendance and assistance. Before, after and between Pastors Jack Wilson and Goodrich the annual timetable of the church changed little. Services were often conducted by a student pastor and somewhat curtailed during the January holiday period. Harvest Festival followed usually at the end of March. Easter would follow too and then during May or June the Church's Annual/Anniversary Meeting. Later in the year were the Sunday School Picnic and Prize Giving before Christmas, when services were often combined with the Presbyterian Church, if there was no pastor at the time⁵.



39. V. C. Browne’s aerial view of Lincoln from the North in 1946. Note partial development within Fitzgerald’s original grid layout for the township, and little outside it. Lincoln Baptist Church can be seen in the top right quadrant of the grid, in the bottom left corner, at the junction of Gerald and Maurice Streets.

At the end of 1950 student pastor, Ray Falla, helped initiate a new era with the Lincoln Church moderator from Oxford Terrace Baptist Church, Reverend L. J. Bolton-Smith. Attending the meeting from Lincoln were Mr and Mrs Gillatt, Mr and Mrs Woodward (senior), Mr Banks, Mrs Wolfe, and Mr S. Knight. The purpose of the meeting was to establish the proper roll of members, and to establish a constitution “...so that the business of the church could be conducted in a legal manner.”⁶ The roll of members was determined to include Mr and Mrs Gillatt, Banks, and Woodward (senior), and Mr Knight and Mr P Rolston. A second list of potential members, where there was some uncertainty, was to be interviewed by the Pastor. The model constitution was also adopted”, so that “...any business conducted in or by the Church, should conform to the said rules⁷. Further letters were to be sent to the builder with outstanding work on the manse, that it should be finished, and to the tenants of the manse that they should leave as soon as conveniently possible. The reason given was that calling a pastor required vacant possession.



40. Lincoln Baptist Church decorated for Harvest Thanksgiving, mid 1940s.

The Auxiliary was asked again to help obtain vacant possession in the following March. Then a month later the Moderator brought news of a possible pastoral candidate from the North Island, Rev. E. Jones. The news was received very positively and the secretary was instructed to write to him. The Moderator again wrote to the tenant of the Manse asking for the property to be vacated because all the members of the church wanted it. The next meeting in the following July, the Rev. E.T. Jones was in the chair. The Rev. Jones offered to go in deputation with the Moderator to see the sitting tenant in the Manse. At the following October meeting Lincoln asked the Auxiliary to take over the oversight of the Church Manse and Church property for a time until the Church desired to resume control⁸. In response the Auxiliary agreed to send a deputation to see the tenants, and the uncompleted repairs. The following January student pastor H.R. Falla was back again and chairing the meeting and getting involved with the renovation and repainting of the Church with Mr Banks' help.

The following June (1952) a business meeting, with the Auxiliary represented by the Rev. F.G. Reddell, Messrs Brown and Jordan, was advised that the Rev E. Jones had resigned. Temporary arrangements were again to be put in place and preachers supplied. It was noted that R. Falla would finish his ordination training the following October, but no concrete proposals transpired. Another meeting did not take place until 15 July 1953, when one was necessitated by the need to replace Mr. Woodward, who had died, as a Church trustee. That role was passed to Mr Banks. A get-well letter was to be sent to Mrs

Wolfe, who was ill, as well.⁹ Those decisions had to be ratified together with changes in account signatories at the subsequent meeting in October as the July meeting was inquorate.

Ray French recalls this period:

“I was one of the few Bible Clas members from Christchurch Baptist churches who did some lay preaching at Lincoln about fifty years ago when the church could not sustain a full-time ministry. Another church on my feeble preaching round was Spreydon. Both were very small and at times the congregation scarcely reached double figures. To put up with my youthful efforts the regulars must have been very saintly, extremely patient and determined that their churches would survive despite the paucity of their Sabbath diet!

I particularly recall winter evenings at Lincoln, when it was frosty outside but inside it was warm with fellowship and the heat of the pot-bellied stove, dutifully tended by the church secretary. Just before the sermon he would leave his seat, walk over to the stove and, with much clanking of iron, throw another log on the fire. I have never been able to de-code the hidden message in that ritual. Was that worthy man saying, “Well, folks, we are in for a long night, so ew might as well be comfortable”, or was it, “We’ve got a cold fish in the pulpit but that’s no reason for us to freeze!”¹⁰

At this point Lincoln’s circumstances began to change. At the next meeting in April 1954 the on-going manse tenancy issue was further discussed. Mr Jordan from the Auxiliary asked if everything was satisfactory with regard to preachers. It was, and their contribution was praised. Further repairs were discussed and the state of the church reviewed. Attendances at church and Sunday School were thought of as ‘steady’ and:

“...and all felt the worth while of pressing on and living persistent. Be not weary in well doing. It was also a time of thankfulness that two young Christians had come forward to carry on the good work of the S School;”¹¹

Who this referred to is uncertain, but at the next meeting in the following September the long standing members were joined by Mr and Mrs W. Walker¹². Further, the business of the meeting involved consideration of the Auxiliary’s plans for renovations to manse and Church. The reaction was a request to the Auxiliary to hand back responsibility for the Church, which had been in the Auxiliary’s hands since October, 1951, when the tenancy issues at the manse had been most difficult. Mr Walker put the motion to write to the Auxiliary, seconded Mr Knight, with the letter to be sent next day.¹³ The following January he returned to the next meeting with proposals from a Mr Skiggs, a painter/decorator tradesman he had contacted about repairing, painting and decorating the Church. His proposal for £205-10-00 was accepted, with the work to be supervised by Mr Walker. The Auxiliary had suggested that the Sunday School be taken over by a Mr C. H. Dodge. His offer to use his talents was accepted and he was given three months trial, and then he was to be reviewed¹⁴.

At the following May meeting, after the usual initial worship and prayer, Messrs Walker and Gillett were chosen as delegates to the Annual Auxiliary meeting. Before the meeting a deputation (Walker, Banks and Gillett) had waited on Mr Jack Wilson, to see whether he would take over the Lincoln Church in the near future. In response Mr Wilson indicated he was willing to do so¹⁵. Also Mr Walker moved, seconded Gillett, that Mr Dodge’s Sunday School role be terminated at the end of the trial three months, which was carried. Constitutional amendments were also advanced, again by Mr Walker that membership of Lincoln Baptist Church should be open membership. That meant qualification not just by being immersed in baptism, but also by confession of faith. The change of quorum from seven to five

was also officially established in the revised constitution¹⁶. If we take into account that Mr Walker worded the required letters, his and his wife's contribution was becoming critical to the functioning of Lincoln's small Baptist Church. They were fulfilling Best's description of the best people to run churches in the Victorian era, which had clearly applied to Lincoln Baptist Church's founders in 1876, that:

“...outside the established churches, the men who were in demand to run things or who by some process of natural selection became the runners of things were the solid citizens, the pillars of the community, who could most efficiently raise funds and inspire confidence. A church not founded on rocks was all too liable to run on them”.¹⁷

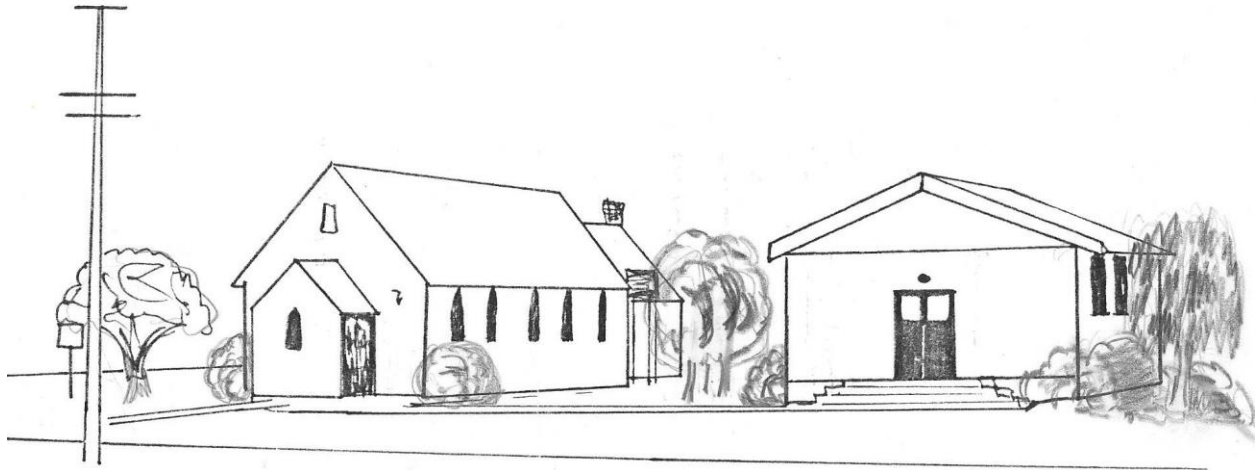
However, that positive contribution was lost when Mr Walker resigned in February 1959 as deacon after it came to light that he had not paid the Inland Revenue Department the social insurance dues for the employees of his catering business, Parrotts, based in Blandville, Springston. Whether this was deliberate or an accidental omission is unknown, but he believed it was incompatible with being a deacon of the Church¹⁸.

Pastor Jack Wilson began his pastorate in October 1955 and resigned on 24 July 1961 to take up the pastorate at St Albans Baptist Church. From the beginning he was an active pastor and the church continued its outward looking emphasis. Coverage of Lincoln events in the *Baptist* during the 1950s and 1960s is quite sporadic, while there is only one item throughout the 1970s until the call of the Reverend Alistair Mackenzie in late 1979. The Wilson pastorate is better reported than any other after 1955.

At his first meeting Mr Wilson explained the difficulties associated with the church's new open membership rule, although what they were is not specified. The church continued to be active in mission and put £5 into the 'Forward Work Appeal'. He was tasked with investigating a proposed Youth for Christ visit, and another from Miss Buchanan, a missionary¹⁹.

The Wilson/Walker years had two particularly significant outcomes for the church. The first to be initiated was for a Building Fund to be created, when a need was felt for a recreation and social activity space. Those were activities seen at the time as inappropriate for the church building, itself, as God's House. The original proposal was presented to the church meeting held on 4 September 1956, and came after a discussion about supporting a native pastor in India. The following July there was a proposal for a concrete block building of a 45 x 20 foot size, which was quoted at £1,400. So financial help was seen as necessary and an approach made to the Auxiliary. At the same meeting the church only had £610-13-6 in funds and another proposal had just been accepted to rough cast the old Victorian wooden manse for £99. By the following February Business Meeting there was a loan agreed for £300 from the Jubilee loan fund. So at the Annual Church Meeting on 26 May 1958 it was moved (Walker/Barker) and approved that the Hall be built on the section between the church and the manse. For payments for the Hall it was also agreed that any payments over £1 should be by cheque on the freshly opened church bank account with the ANZ Bank, Addington. It was also agreed that the Pastor would be paid monthly by cheque as well. In April 1959 a separate Hall Committee was established to make decisions about furnishings and the Hall Kitchen, and by the Annual meeting in the succeeding May the ANZ account was to be closed and the balance transferred to the Post Office Savings Bank.

The *Baptist*'s coverage of Lincoln really starts in 1958 with a focus on church renewal and how preaching the Word faithfully had produced real fruit – increased membership, a revived Senior Bible Class, reactivated prayer meetings with much seeking, and a restimulated Sunday School²⁰. Social activities formed an increasing part of the Marsden programme. A 'social' for Sunday School children and their parents was held in the Presbyterian Sunday School hall with all enjoying a beautiful tea. A film evening was held monthly with attendance increasing because of the special interest in Billy Graham's



41. Artist's impression of the Church buildings probably prepared for 1980s landscape work, which clearly show the concrete block Hall on the right, built in 1959-60 for 'social' activities, and the 'old' vestry at the back of the original church building. This was removed when the new manse was built. (Source: Mackenzie papers)

message. Services and Bible classes continued to grow with new seekers²¹. In the April issue, 1959, the hall was described as nearing completion and three candidates had applied for baptism. Perhaps most significantly 'Special prayer meetings were being held weekly for Dr Graham and his team and also for Rev. F. Carter'²². In 1959 the full Billy Graham team delivered major Crusades in Australia and New Zealand. The Christchurch Crusade was held at Lancaster Park and lasted eight days from 1 April. Over 133,000 attended²³.

The second significant event was the Carter Crusade to Lincoln originally proposed for Lincoln from 12-26 July 1959. F. H. Carter was the Baptist Union Evangelist for 1959-1960 and led missions all around New Zealand during those years. The coincidence with the Billy Graham Crusade appears unconnected, but should have helped to prepare the ground for Lincoln's own Crusade. The April Church meeting heard how much prayer was needed for the Carter mission in July, for God's wisdom in decision making, and for church unity. Posters were also organised and local ministers invited. Further invitations and planning for such things as catering were addressed at the June meeting. Unfortunately there is no report in the minutes as to the success of the Mission. However, there is a full description in the *Baptist*:

“THE CARTER CRUSADE

Lincoln—A Battle and a Break Through

"Apart from a tremendous move of the Holy Spirit the prospects are not encouraging." So said Mr. Carter half-way through the Lincoln Crusade. The situation was indeed gloomy. The small population were, by and large, disinterested in what was happening in the Baptist Church. Only the strong support of the Christchurch people provided the numbers on those opening nights. Only three decisions in the first week! It seemed so small a response. And then the break! It happened on the Sunday morning, the last day of the Crusade, when all barriers of opposition were broken; Christians were brought low before God; "and," says the Missioner, "one felt the very breath of God had come upon us." That night eight people responded to Christ! Some had held out against the Gospel for years. The figures to the close of the Crusade (and they can never be called final) were 13 first decisions for Christ, two re-affirmations, seven for Baptism, and eight for Church membership. Add that to the total membership of 16 and the Lincoln Mission was thrilling. How else can you explain the break other than that it was the concentrated prayers of the Baptists of New Zealand that did it? We are called to prayer now for the courageous band under the leadership of Pastor J. Wilson as they carry on the work of consolidation and follow up. At the time of writing the Rangiora Crusade is being held. There will be a report next month. And then follows Timaru from August 30 to September 13, and Greymouth from September 20 to October 4.

Will you put down a special "b a r r a g e" of prayer on these churches? Greymouth ask for special prayer as they face not just isolation but opposition.

AND PLEASE PRAY DAILY FOR THE UNION EVANGELIST, THE REV. F. H. CARTER." (September, 1959, p. 240)

A letter to the Reverend Carter was authorised thanking him for his contribution and funds approved for the payment of out-of-pocket expenses. The chief indicator that the mission was successful was that the following October five candidates were baptized and received into church membership – Mrs Joyce Greaves, Pauline Boyce, Mrs Jan R. Fraser, Mrs Hazel Eilken, Douglas Taylor and Francis Barker.

After the crusade church life continues very much as before with relatively well attended church meetings and sustained giving to missions and other worthy individuals and groups. For example there was a donation to the Leprosy Mission (22 February 1960), £2-2-0 to the Revernd Boulton-Smith, who had been so helpful to Lincoln in his role on the Auxiliary, and the fees paid by the Red Cross were returned to them as a donation and further use of the Hall was given free (31 October 1960 and 29 May 1961).

So when Mr Wilson resigned upon his call to St Albans (24 July 1961) it was accepted. He was allowed to stay in the manse until his new house was ready. Further, the same meeting heard of the need of the church to make some recognition of his contribution. His application to transfer to St Albans was immediately approved. At this point Lincoln again asks the Auxiliary to take over the responsibility for the administration and pastorate of the Lincoln Church. They accept and write that they would do everything possible "...to build the witness of Christ's Kingdom in their midst." The Reverend E. J. Jones on behalf of the Auxiliary wrote of how a similar arrangement worked at Kaiapoi. During 1962-3 the church's funds continue to improve from giving, but also renting out the manse. In March 1963 after drainage problems provision was made to join both the manse and the Hall to the public sewer. Later that year a possible pastor was considered but did not accept. Then in February 1964 Pastor L. Goodchild offered to act as Honorary Pastor, with £2 per week for his travel expenses. This Pastorate was only to last two years before he was invited to resign at the beginning of 1966.

The Minute book is not very informative about this period but a number of features need to be outlined. First, the offer appeared to come through the Auxiliary (25 February 1964). Pastor Goodchild's family all obtained their church membership at Lincoln on the basis of a 'profession of faith', rather than baptism. His wife acted as Secretary for a period and his son as Treasurer. Pastor Goodchild exhibited his contribution when he persuaded the Walkers to resume their membership after their over five year 'time out'. Another positive action was to persuade the church to pay-off the balance still owing on the Hall (8 October 1964). Then nothing was owed on any of the buildings. In November 1964 Lincoln Baptist

Church was offered the chance of a visit by the Trans Pacific Crusade. However, they declined it because they already had ‘an evangelist in their pulpit’! That evangelistic acumen was not evidenced by converts’ baptisms. None were recorded during the Goodchild pastorate. In fact there is little known about this period beyond the Church Minutes of the time, because there are no *Baptist* references to Lincoln or Goodchild between the end of Pastor Wilson’s pastorate and 1977. Meanwhile meeting numbers were gradually declining and furniture which had been bought for the Goodchild’s use of the Manse had to be sold when it was not being used (Meeting of November, 1965). Then on 26 January 1965 Pastor Goodchild was asked to resign by the deacons ‘..because he had offended some members’” No detail is offered to explain the nature of such issues but the resignations of all the Goodchilds were accepted at the February Members’ Meeting. However, church members were clearly incensed because when a letter was requested recognising Pastor Goodchild’s contribution to Lincoln Baptist Church, the request was refused outright. In effect he had no reference from his previous pastorate. The names of Mrs Goodchild, son and daughter were forwarded to the Reverend Jackson Englis at their request²⁴.

When the dust had settled after the Goodchild saga, Mr Walker proposed at a Deacons’ meeting that there should be “a leader to lead the deacons in conjunction with the secretary’. At the following Annual Church Meeting a week later Mr Walker was appointed Deacons’ leader (26 May 1966). From then on LBC seems to go into a relatively inanimate state. The same routines as for previous periods without a pastor are repeated. This time the preachers supplied by the Auxiliary are not identified save when one does something significant. A Mr Yetman volunteered for over three Sundays with the last focusing on youth. That identifies another theme that has recurred since Pastor Hobern in the 1930s. Back in 1958 Mr Wilson advised the church that students from the College had asked to take part in the evening service. In response Mr Walker had moved that they be invited but not to give the sermon (14 July 1958). There had also been repeated questions and proposals about noticeboards (e.g. 28 May 1968), both on the church and on the students noticeboards at the College. The next year Mr Wilson moved that the social hour should be resumed “...when students return from the vacation” (10 August 1959).

Another disturbing feature which becomes apparent about this time is an anti Catholic streak, which may have been more of the period then but now seems quite incongruous. In August 1968 delegates to Assembly were advised that they should be opposed to an ‘R/C Working Committee trying to be organised by NCC’. Then on 27 November 1969 a church meeting decided not to take part in a Combined Church Service for Lincoln, which was to involve the Presbyterians, Anglicans and Catholics.

As the 1970s were approached it became much harder to get students to help with the church over the summer vacation. With the declining numbers of members summer prayer meetings were suspended until the following February (1970)²⁵. In visible terms the major changes had been the removal of excess shrubbery around the church to help prevent the woodwork of the Church rotting, and the introduction of a new table for Holy Communion made by Mr. Walker. Neither were particularly spiritual developments²⁶, but missionary giving still continued. Between the Annual Church Meetings in June 1973 and October 1975 there were eight Deacons’ Meetings and no Members’ Meetings. There was no Annual Meeting in 1974. All those meetings were held at the Walker’s house in Springston, or the location was unspecified. Even the Annual Meetings were held there.

Church Centennial 1876-1976

This is the only news item about Lincoln Baptist Church to appear in *The Baptist* in the 1970s. It was a most significant event in the Church’s history and it was going to be celebrated however small the Church had become. A Special Members Meeting on 2 September 1976 established a Celebration Committee of church members. It appeared to consist of the same 5 members who attended the Member’s Meetings

(Mr. and Mrs. Walker, Mr. and Mrs. A. Woodward, and Joy Woodward). It was decided to hold an afternoon service followed by tea. The Reverend Charles Craig, President of the Canterbury and Westland Association was invited to lead the thanksgiving celebrations and be the principal speaker. Mrs. Walker volunteered to cook the anniversary cake. The celebrations went off well and her comprehensive report appears in her bold writing in the Minute Book of the period. It is quoted in full. Eighty eight people signed the attendance list. Afterwards the Pannett photo collection was lodged with the Baptist Archives.

1876-1976

Report on Centennial Thanksgiving Service 24 October 1976

On a gloriously sunny Sunday afternoon the Lincoln Church was filled to capacity (100) with 54 seated in the hall, the service was relayed by speaker from the church to the hall.

The service conducted by Rev. C. W. Craig opened by the singing 100th psalm "All people that on earth do dwell". Our Bro. George Wilson lead in a prayer of thanksgiving for the past century and for the future years, that the witness of the past generations will be an inspiration for the years that lie ahead. A welcome was extended by Mr. Walker to the Rev. and Mrs. Craig, also descendants of early members, past members, friends and all who had been associated with the fellowship over the past years. A special offering for the building fund at the Glenroy Youth Camp amounted to \$118. Peter Reynolds ably read from John 13: 1-14, 34-35. The reading was followed by a solo sung by Piet Wensten "My Heavenly Father Cares" rendered in a rich baritone voice. The Rev. Rogers of the Union Church brought greetings from sister churches, he spoke of the witness of the Fellowship in the community and extended best wishes for the future.

The second hymn was sung "Our Father by whose servants". Then followed the address by the Rev. C. W. Craig – Title:- "There am I in the midst". This was an inspiring message on the ever presence of Our Lord, not only to the many but also to the twos' and threes', placing the responsibility on each member of Our Lord's Visible Church to be a witness for His Kingdom.

The singing of the last hymn was a glorious experience, every heart bursting forth in praise to the unity of fellowship in Our Lord's service.

We were privileged to have Bill Rosewall officiate at the organ and lead the hymns of praise. After the Benediction afternoon tea was served in the hall which everyone enjoyed and an opportunity to meet old friends and by the 'Hello's, how are you?' many friendships were renewed. The Centennial Cake was cut by the youngest member of the church Joy Woodward.

There was a wonderful display of photographs from first members down through the years, those were artistically arranged by Mr. and Mrs. Stan Pannett.

Many greetings were received from Sister Churches, the Baptist Union and Brothers and Sisters in the Lord from near and far all wishing the Lincoln Baptist Church God's richest blessings in the preaching of the Gospel and growth in the years ahead.

The first Centenary of the Lincoln Baptist church is now history.

Ethel S. Walker,
Convener.

After the celebrations were over subtle changes begin to occur in the Church. The first was the appointment of Peter Reynolds as a Deacon, which leads appropriately into the 'Mackenzie Years'.

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1. Census of Population and Dwellings 1936 and 1945.
 2. Census of Population and Dwellings 1956 and 1966.
 3. Census of Population and Dwellings 1986.
 4. *LINCOLN BAPTIST – LOOKING BACKWARDS & LOOKING FORWARD* newsletter, 1988.
 5. Lincoln Baptist Church Minute book, 1950- 1972.
 6. Lincoln Baptist Church Minute book, 1950- 1972, Annual Church Meeting of 18 December 1950.
 7. *Ibid.*
 8. Church meeting, 9 October 1951.
 9. Church Meeting of 15 July 1953 (only four present).
 10. Letter from Ray French to Shirley Woodward, 24 September 2001.
 11. Church meeting of 29 April 2004.
 12. Church meeting of 27 September 1954.
 13. *Ibid.*
 14. Church meeting of 31 January 1955.
 15. Church Meeting of 9 May 1955.
 16. Church Meeting of 9 May 1955
 17. Best, Geoffrey (1979) *Mid Victorian Britain 1851-1870*. Fontana/Collins: Glasgow, p.206.
 18. Church Meeting of 16 February 1959, and telephone conversation with Alec Woodward, 29 June 2016.
 19. Church Meeting of 9 May 1955.
 20. *New Zealand Baptist*, March, 1958, p. 372.
 21. *New Zealand Baptist*, September, 1958, p. 584.
 22. *New Zealand Baptist*, April, 1959, p. 102.
 23. New Zealand History, downloaded from: <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/page/evangelist-billy-graham-arrives-11-day-crusade-on-26-july-2016>.
 24. Church Meeting of 19 May 1966..
 25. Church Meeting of 27 November 1969..
 26. *Ibid.*