



# Roland Lesley Barnes

14th July, 1921—24th August, 2010

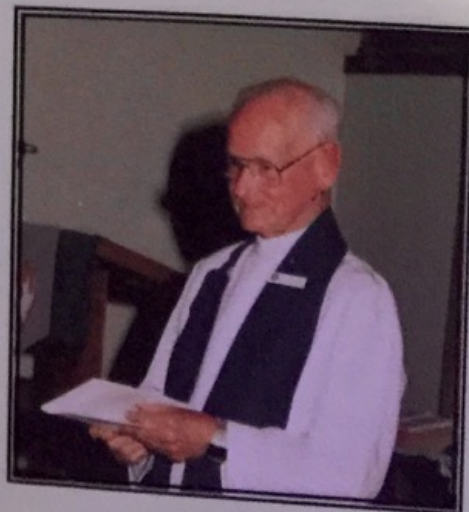


## MEMORIAL SERVICE

Monday, 30th August, 2010

2:00 pm

Maleny Uniting Church



## *Roland's Life*

Roland was born in Toowoomba on 14 July 1921, the eldest son of Les and Mabel who were dairy farmers at Anduramba near Crows Nest in southern Queensland. He was the eldest of four children including Gordon, Keith and Norma.

He attended Anduramba State School and then boarded for a year at Toowoomba Grammar before returning home to work on the farm after his father's wartime leg injury recurred. Here he learnt a range of skills with machinery, tools and livestock that were very useful in his later career.

Roland's grandfather, Joe Barnes, was a Methodist lay preacher and Roland early became active in the church. At 15 he commenced the path to the two great commitments of his life. He made a public declaration of faith, and at a friend's birthday party met Miriam Vandersee. At seventeen, he was accepted as a lay preacher. In late 1939 he commenced training as a Methodist Home Missionary and in December 1940 at nineteen was appointed as the Home Missionary at Canungra. After sixteen months there, he was accepted for training for the ministry but served as a home missionary in Bundaberg for twelve more months before entering Kings College in Brisbane for four years of theological training.

In 1946, Roland learnt that most missionaries from New Britain and New Ireland in New Guinea had died in 1942 when the *Montevideo Maru* was torpedoed by an American submarine when en route to Japan. He volunteered to serve in their place and in 1947 went to New Britain. In January 1949 he returned to Australia and finally married Miriam. After some months in Sydney studying anthropology and tropical medicine, Roland and Miriam went to Kimadan in New Ireland where Malcom was born in January 1951. In October 1951, the family moved to the new mission station at Mendi in the southern highlands of the New Guinea mainland. A year later, Roland opened the new mission station in the Tari valley, which had only been discovered by the Papuan administration in 1935. Tari, the home of the Huli

wigmen, remained the family home until 1961. During this period in the Highlands, Graham and Brenda were born in Australia, and Paul in Tari. At Tari, Roland led a team to learn the Huli language and culture and to build houses, schools, an airstrip, a maternity hospital and a leper centre. All of this was combined with preaching the gospel to a people literally emerging from the Stone Age in a region still being explored and brought under government control.

In early 1961 Roland suffered a severe unknown illness which required an extended convalescence in Australia. He was subsequently advised that he should not return to New Guinea. Roland and Miriam did return to Tari for short visits in 1970, 1990 and 2001.

The third part of Roland's career with the Methodist Church began later in 1961. He served in the Bundaberg parish for three years, followed by five years in Mackay and then at Nundah in Brisbane. While at Nundah, Roland completed a course at the Institute of Clinical Pastoral Education and undertook new responsibilities in marriage counselling. In 1975 Roland took charge of the Maryborough parish and also became Director of Lifeline, a role that Miriam also later performed. Leadership of the Lifeline team brought responsibility to provide a 24 hour telephone counselling service and an extension of the Lifeline phone was installed in the family home. Roland was also director of Blue Nursing in both Mackay and Maryborough. With the establishment of the Uniting Church, Roland was elected secretary of the Mary Burnett presbytery, and in 1979 was appointed the presbytery's "Executive Officer", a role he filled until his retirement in 1987. In 1988 Roland and Miriam moved to Maleny, where he continued to preach for some years and they both enjoyed retirement and community life. Roland was a member of Rotary for many years from Mackay to Maleny.

**Miriam and her family wish to thank you  
for your presence with them today and for all your  
expressions of sympathy and support.**