



State Funeral Service

for

The Honourable SIR JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN KCMG

13 January 1911 – 23 April 2005

Premier of Queensland from 8 August 1968 – 1 December 1987;

Treasurer from 19 August 1983 – 1987;

Minister for Works and Housing from 26 September 1963 – 8 October 1968;

State Member for Nanango from 3 May 1947 and Member for Barambah from 29 April 1950;

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Country Party from January – August 1968;

Parliamentary Leader, Country (subsequently National) Party from August 1968.

Town Hall, Civic Centre, Kingaroy

3 May 2005

Conducted by

Reverend Lou Pfeiffer – Pastor, Kingaroy Lutheran Parish

With the assistance of

Reverend Ken Schmidt and Reverend Noel Noack



Queensland
Government

The Honourable Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen KCMG



Johannes (Joh) Bjelke-Petersen was born on 13 January 1911 at Dannevirke, New Zealand. He was the child of Reverend Carl Bjelke-Petersen and Maren Bjelke-Petersen, nee Poulsen. His father was a Pastor of the Danish Lutheran Church on the North Island of New Zealand. At two years of age, Joh relocated with his family to Australia, choosing to settle in the Kingaroy district. This area was where his mother Maren's family resided. Joh had an elder brother, Christian, who passed away in 1929. He also had a younger sister, Agnete, who passed away in 2001.

The family lived in very humble circumstances. Joh's father was forced into premature retirement due to ill-health. The family was supported by the generosity of members of Maren's family. They were pioneers of the Kingaroy area. Supported by Maren's family, the Bjelke-Petersens settled onto a scrub block the family called Bethany, which was to be Joh's 'anchor point' for the rest of his life.

Prior to attending school, Joh's first language was Danish. He learned English and attended Taabinga Village State School. He was fluently bilingual all his

life. The poverty of his early years left him with a life-long ambition to escape its cruel grasp. He knew he could only escape through hard work.

Hard work was essential because of his father's ill-health and Joh was the primary help to his mother with the farm tasks from his earliest years. His contribution to the family was essential. He told many stories of his early years, particularly about bringing cows in for milking before dawn and of trying in vain to harness the team of large draught horses to plough the fields to plant crops.

At the age of 12 Joh contracted polio. He attributed his eventual recovery to the determination and commitment of his mother. Through faithful daily application of the methods pioneered by Sister Kenny and other medical procedures based on electrical stimulation, Joh regained his health - though he always bore traces of the disease. He was forever grateful to his mother and retained a life-long interest in non-traditional medical practices.

Hard manual work was the order of the day. Long hours were spent behind horse and plough and many lonely years were spent clearing a property that the family acquired at Inverlaw, just outside Kingaroy. This type of work proved to be the fertile soil for inventiveness. Joh was always looking for an easier way to do things. Horses gave way to tractors. Joh was the first to put a generator and lights on his tractor so he could then work long into the evenings.

Joh also built one of the first peanut thrashers and made his name as a contractor rather than a peanut grower. Later he pioneered bulldozer contracting, scrub pulling and, later still, was the first in Queensland to do aerial crop spraying.

Through his contracting days, he developed a strong network of people who knew the young energetic Joh. They respected and trusted him. It was a bridge to politics. For a brief period he entered local government and shortly after, in 1947, became the member for the State seat of Nanango (later to become Barambah). He held the seat for 41 years.

Every detail of his career cannot be contained in this brief summary. He was both honoured and humbled to be elected to the position of Premier of Queensland; a position that he held for a record period from 8 August 1968 to 1 December 1987, making him Queensland's longest serving Premier. During this period, the National Party experienced strong growth. Also during this time the Nationals won government in Queensland in their own right. Accolades included a Knighthood by the Queen at Buckingham Palace for services to Queensland, and an honorary doctorate from the University of Queensland.

During Joh's tenure as Premier, many people moved to Queensland - attracted by the State's wonderful climate, and also by the elimination of death duties. He was very proud of Queensland and took every opportunity to promote the State.

Joh's time as Premier also saw him travel widely across the State he loved. Outside politics and his family, flying was his passion. He combined this love of flying with his interest in people and projects to visit locations all across the State. If an aircraft could land, he would be there. It was his way of 'keeping in touch'.

Joh was an accomplished pilot obtaining numerous endorsements on his licence, including multi-engine turbo prop aircraft. His proudest moment was obtaining his helicopter pilot licence at the age of 71 years. He maintained a current fixed wing and helicopter pilot's licence until the age of 78 years.

It was his foresight and vision that won Expo '88 for Queensland.

When he determined a course of action that he believed to be correct he would follow it through and was only very rarely swayed from it. He abolished death duties. He was a pioneer in the development of Queensland, changing it from a rural backwater into a mining and economic powerhouse with the beginnings of electrified rail and port systems. Under his leadership Queensland became a leading State on the Australian landscape. He was a political force to be reckoned with. His influence extended beyond the borders of Queensland and he became a national political figure.

His closest and most faithful supporter was his wife Florence (Flo). Joh married late in life on 31 May 1952 at the age of 41 years. That relationship was true and strong—built on genuine love

and respect and a common interest in people and politics. The marriage was blessed with four children. It was a home where love was generous, the Christian faith was celebrated and hard work encouraged.

The guiding light of Joh's life was his strong Christian faith. He grew up in a pious Christian home. That faith sustained him in all aspects of his life.

From young years Joh was a Sunday School teacher. He was involved in Lutheran young peoples' activities. Debating was his forté. His skills flourished with the support of his sister Agnete. Such activities led to lay preaching. He was elected to both the state and federal Councils of the Lutheran Church. He was a member of the Hopevale Board of the Lutheran Church and initiated the return of the displaced Aboriginal people to their home country at Hopevale, North of Cooktown. Joh was also a founding member of the St Peters Lutheran College Council.

Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen is predeceased by his parents, his brother Christian, his sister Agnete and her husband, Norman Stiller.

He is mourned by his wife of 52 years, Florence; his children Margaret (Meg), John, Helen and Ruth and their spouses Noel, Karyn, Lester and John; his 13 grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

He will be buried on the family property, Bethany.

May he rest in the peace of his Saviour.

Order of Service

for

The Honourable
SIR JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN KCMG

13 January 1911 – 23 April 2005

Conducted by

Reverend Lou Pfeiffer – Pastor, Kingaroy Lutheran Parish

With the assistance of

Reverend Ken Schmidt

Reverend Noel Noack

Medal Bearer

Christian Bjelke-Petersen

Memorabilia Bearers

Joshua Bjelke-Petersen

Grant Cummins

Pall Bearers

John Bjelke-Petersen and Justin Noack

John Cummins and Matthew Cummins

Lester Folker and David Folker

PRELUDE: Prelude Music - St Peters Chorale

WELCOME:

God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Amen

We are here today to give thanks for the life of Johannes Bjelke-Petersen, to mourn and honour him, and to affirm our Christian conviction that, while death is the end of our earthly life, it marks a new beginning in our eternal life.

“I am the resurrection and the life” says the Lord, “Those who live and believe in me, even though they die, yet will they live”. John 11.25

INVOCATION:

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

St Paul comforts us with these words: Don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may have a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

Let us pray:

Eternal God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as you raised your dear Son from the grave, keep us always faithful to him, so that not even death itself will snatch us out of your hand or separate us from your love through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

HYMN: To God be the Glory

**To God be the glory, great things He has done;
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,
And opened the life gate that all may go in.**

Refrain

*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory, great things He has done.*

**O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
To every believer the promise of God;
The vilest offender who truly believes,
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.**

Refrain

**Great things He has taught us, great things He has done,
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
But purer, and higher, and greater will be
Our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see.**

Refrain

OBITUARY: Read by John Bjelke-Petersen

TRIBUTES: The Honourable Peter Beattie MP
Premier of Queensland and Minister for Trade

The Honourable John Howard MP
Prime Minister of Australia

Mr Lawrence Springborg MP
Leader of the Queensland Opposition

HYMN: Because He Lives

**God sent His son, they called Him Jesus
He came to love, heal, and forgive.
He lived and died to buy my pardon,
An empty grave is there to prove my Saviour lives.**

Chorus

*Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.
Because He lives, All fear is gone.
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living just because He lives.*

**How sweet to hold a newborn baby,
And feel the pride and joy he gives.
But greater still the calm assurance,
This child can face uncertain days because He lives.**

Chorus

**And then one day I'll cross the river,
I'll fight life's final war with pain.
And then as death gives way to victory,
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He lives.**

Chorus

© William and Gloria Gaither
Used by permission CCL Lic 695

THE SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Psalm 121: Read by Peter Larsen

I lift up my eyes to the hills –
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot slip –
he who watches over you will not slumber;
indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

The LORD watches over you –
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;
the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.

The LORD will keep you from all harm –
he will watch over your life;
the LORD will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.

Romans 8: 31-38 Read by Lester Rosendale

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

THE CHOIR: *In Paradisum from Requiem* – Gabriel Fauré – St Peters Chorale

The Gospel Lesson

John 14:1-6: read by Reverend Noel Noack

Jesus said: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

THE APOSTLE’S CREED:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell, the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

ADDRESS: Reverend Ken Schmidt

PRAYERS: Reverend Noel Noack

Lord God, our creator and redeemer, before whom the generations come and go on earth: We thank you for all your people who have lived on earth before us, have served you faithfully, and now live eternally with you. We thank you for Joh, for the gift of life and your grace to him, for his faithfulness to you and his service to others. Above all we thank you that you have brought Joh through the valley of the shadow of death and have taken him from us to yourself.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our Prayer

God of all mercy and giver of all comfort, look graciously, we pray, on those who mourn, especially Florence, Meg and Noel, John and Karyn, Helen and Lester and Ruth and John, their children and grandchildren, that casting all their cares upon you, that they may know the consolation of your love.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our Prayer

Support us, O Lord, through all our life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, the busy world is hushed and our work is done. Then Lord, in your mercy grant us safe lodging, a holy rest, and peace at last; through Jesus Christ, our Risen Saviour.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER: Sung by Kamahl AM

HYMN: How Great Thou Art

**0 Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the worlds thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
thy power throughout the universe displayed:**

**Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
How great thou art! How great thou art!**

**When through the woods and forest glades I wander,
I hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze:**

**But when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
that on the cross my burden gladly bearing
he bled and died to take away my sin:**

**When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation,
and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration
and there proclaim: 'My God, how great thou art!**

Carl Boberg 1859 – 1940

Tr. Stuart K. Hine 1899 -

THE BLESSING: St Peters Chorale

The God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, equip you by the blood of the eternal covenant with everything good, so that you may do his will, working in you what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory now and forever. **Amen.**

The God of love and peace be with you.
Amen.

The remains of the departed will be laid to rest in a family ceremony at Bethany later this afternoon. Members of the public and the press are asked to respect the privacy of this occasion.

DISMISSAL:

Christ has risen.

He has risen indeed.

Go in the peace of the Lord. Amen.

RECESSION: *As Evening Shadows Fall* - Clement Scholefield arr. Larry Nickel –
St Peters Chorale

FAREWELL: (outside by the Hearse)

Heavenly Father, you have said, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and even our imagination cannot conceive what you have prepared for those who love you.”

Heavenly Father, your Son, Jesus Christ commended his spirit into your hands at his last hour. Into those same hands we now commend the spirit of your servant, Johannes Bjelke-Petersen in the sure knowledge that death for Sir Joh is but the gate to eternal life. Go forward, Sir Joh, on your pilgrim journey in the name of the Father, who created you; in the name of Jesus Christ, who died and rose for you; and in the name of the Holy Spirit who strengthened and preserved you. Amen.

We have entrusted Sir Joh into your hands O Lord. We now commit his body to its final resting place, in the sure and certain hope of his resurrection to life eternal.

Choir: St Peters Chorale (The Choir of St Peters Lutheran College)
Directed by Graeme Morton
Organist: Dr Ralph Morton

In lieu of floral tributes, mourners are encouraged to support the placement of bibles through Gideons International (Australia) or Blue Care. Envelopes to receive donations have been distributed. There are also collectors located around the venue.

Acknowledgements

Liturgical resources are derived from Church Rites – Lutheran Church of Australia © Openbook Publishers 1994 used by permission.

Texts are from the Holy Bible, New International Version

©1984 by International Bible Society.

