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CHAPTER ELEVEN

OBEYING THE SPIRIT

Pentecostal ministry to the Aborigines (1905-1939)

From the earliest days, Pentecostals emphasised foreign missions. For them, the reason the Spirit had come was to empower them to be Christ's witnesses to 'the uttermost parts of the earth'.¹ Less than five years after the opening of Good News Hall there were Australian Pentecostal missionaries in India; before long they were in Japan, Hong Kong, China and South Africa as well.²

Nor were the Australian Aborigines neglected.³ From the earliest days, there were several remarkable pioneering efforts by a few bold individuals, although formal Aboriginal Missions were not established until the 1940s — in places like Jigalong, Western Australia, where the Apostolic Church worked for a

¹ Acts 1:8 — 'But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth' (AV)

² GN 1:5 January 1913, pp.8ff; 1:6 October 1913, p.20; 19:10 October 1928, pp.16f; 21:3 March 1930, p.16; 21:5 May 1930, p.16; July 21:7 1930, p.15; 21:11 November 1930, p.13; 22:5 May 1931, p.14. In this thesis, I have concentrated on Pentecostal activities in Australia; the subject of Pentecostal foreign missions is extensive and warrants a separate study.

³ In contemporary usage, it is usual to use the adjective *Aboriginal* as a singular noun and *Aborigines* as the plural noun. However, *Aboriginal Australian* and *Indigenous Australian* are also recommended, especially when Torres Strait Islander peoples are included. In South Eastern Australia, the term *Koori* has become common for Aboriginal people in that area. See *Style Manual* Canberra: Australian Government Printing Service, 1994, p.40; T.Rowse, 'Aboriginal nomenclature,' in Davison et al (eds), 1999, p.10.

quarter of a century (1945-1969) and Daintree, Queensland, a work established by the Assemblies of God.⁴

In this chapter, the dedicated and courageous work of Isabella Hetherington and Ernest and Euphemia Kramer will be considered. Kramer and Hetherington were immigrants who developed a profound love for their new country and who gave themselves sacrificially to Aboriginal communities. Both pioneered new works and proved to be innovative and self-reliant, often forging ahead with little or no support from either people or churches. Both were self-taught, having no formal missionary or theological training, but confident in their own knowledge of the Scriptures, their love for the people they served and the power of the Holy Spirit who had empowered them. Both worked in remote areas, well removed from obvious or easily accessible means of support.

Isabella Hetherington

The saintly Isabella Hetherington (c.1870-1946) devoted forty years of her life to ministry among Aborigines. Her compassion, dedication and determination won her respect and admiration from Christians and non-Christians alike. Initially in the southern States and in later years in Queensland, she exemplified biblical Christianity and courageous human endeavour.

A 33-year-old Irish nurse, Hetherington migrated to Australia on medical advice, after the death of both her parents. Her only brother had died through tuberculosis during her infancy. She arrived on 24 December 1903, and settled

⁴ In both of these cases, it took at least fifteen years from the founding of the movement concerned to the establishing of a formal ministry to Aborigines. Given that it was 33 years after settlement before the first Christian missionary endeavour to Aborigines took place in Australia, that the Methodist Church, for example, had no denominational Aboriginal missionary program from 1855 until 1916 and that the Churches of Christ Federal Aborigines Mission Board was only formed in 1941, this was, by comparison, a reasonably prompt response to the need for ministry among Aborigines. See Harris, 1990, p.181, 21, 801; See R.Guy, *Baptised Among Crocodiles*, unpublished paper, 1998, pp.184, 254ff, 348f; J.Easton, personal communication, 6 February 1995; interview 24 February 1995; S.Cowling, personal communication, 23 June 1992, 6 October, 1992, 17 February 1993, J.Turnbull, personal communication, June 1991; Aborigine Rescue Mission News and Prayer Letter, 1:1 10 April 1946.

in Ballarat, Victoria.⁵ Originally working as a governess for a doctor and his family,⁶ she had a deep desire ‘to go and succour others’ who suffered as her family had suffered — especially the Australian Aborigines, about whose privations she had heard while still in Ireland. She had also been told that they were ‘only Australian blacks’ and virtually beyond redemption, a view held in the days of the early nineteenth century chaplain Samuel Marsden — who described the indigenous Australians as ‘the most degraded of the human race’ and did not believe they were ready or able to receive the gospel⁷ — and still being repeated by others a century later.⁸ Indeed, this belief was seen to justify much of the abuse and slaughter of Aborigines in the nineteenth century. The compassionate Congregational missionary Lancelot Threlkeld wrote —

It was maintained by many of the colony that the blacks had no language at all but were only a race of the monkey tribe. This was a convenient assumption, for if it could be proved that the Aborigines... were only a species of wild beasts, there could be no guilt attributed to those who shot them off or poisoned them.⁹

The growing popularity of Darwinian theories only served to consolidate this view: Aborigines were plainly lower down on the evolutionary scale. It was as simple as that.¹⁰

Hetherington was determined to prove this assessment wrong. In several ways, her life echoes that of her contemporary the renowned Daisy Bates (1859-

⁵ I.Hetherington, *Aboriginal Queen of Sacred Song* Melbourne: Saxton and Buckie, 1929, p. 7. Further details are from this source unless otherwise stated. Generally, specific sources on Hetherington are limited. See also the *Australian Aborigines' Advocate* 31 January 1912, p.5.

⁶ Myrtle Jackson, personal communication, 8 May 1992.

⁷ AAA 31 January 1912, p.5f; J.Harris, *One Blood* Sutherland: Albatross, 1990, pp.22ff, 272, 488; Thompson, 1994, p.28; Piggitt, 1996, p.46; ‘Aborigines’ in G.Davison, J.W.McCarty and A.McLeary (eds), *Australians 1888*, Broadway: Fairfax, Syme and Weldon, 1987, pp.130f; compare *Sunday at Home*, London: William Clarke, December 1877, p.773 — ‘To save them from extinction, to reclaim them to any of the useful occupations of life, and even to implant in their minds the idea of a Supreme Being, is regarded as impossible.’ The article goes on to refute this view.

⁸ Harris, 1990, p.8092; Breward, 1993, p.104; R.Broome, *Aboriginal Australians* St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1994, p.91. It is of interest that the *News and Prayer Letter* of the Aborigine Rescue Mission established by the Apostolic Church in 1945 noted that while ‘the black man of Australia’ had remained in the stone age, there was ‘a growing conviction that the real character of the Aborigines’ had never been properly understood ‘nor their true merits appreciated’ (1:1 10 April 1946, p.1)

⁹ Quoted in Harris, 1990, p.25.

¹⁰ H.Reynolds, *With the White People* Ringwood: Penguin, 1990, p.127; Broome, 1994, pp.92f.

1951). Like Bates, she was born in Ireland, migrated to Australia, initially worked as a governess, had a passion to relieve the sufferings of the Aborigines and was to spend much of her life living among them.¹¹ From the beginning of European settlement, there were many generous and well-meaning attempts to relate positively to the Aborigines. Australia's first Christian clergyman, Richard Johnson, had worked hard in this area, even taking a teenage Aboriginal girl into his own home. In his address *To All the Inhabitants of Port Jackson*, he pleaded with his hearers to beware of laying stumbling blocks in the way of the 'poor, unenlightened savages' and to consider 'what may be the happy effects' of their observing godly behaviour among the Europeans and as a result seeking God's blessings for themselves.¹² Governor Arthur Phillip's instructions were to live 'in amity and kindness' with the Aborigines, which, initially, he attempted to do.¹³ It was not long, however, before cultural misunderstanding, conflict of interests, the settlers' pastoral ambitions, Aboriginal attempts to protect their lands and families, sexual abuse, misplaced Darwinian theories of white superiority and the cruel effects of imported disease and drugs built impenetrable walls between the old and new inhabitants of the land. Inevitably, the uncertain face of ignorance became the ugly face of racism. And equally inevitably, it was the Whites, not the Blacks, who got the better of it. While there were always exceptions, it was the Aborigines who were excluded from the benefits of an increasingly comfortable lifestyle.¹⁴

After two years of working on her own in 'an Aboriginal camp on the banks of the Murray,' in early 1906¹⁵, Hetherington was invited to join the Australian

¹¹ For a concise overview of Bates' life and work see Annette Hamilton's entry in Davison et al (eds), 1999, pp.63f.

¹² R.Johnson, *To All the Inhabitants and Especially to the Unhappy Prisoners and Convicts in the Colonies Established at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island* 30 October, 1792, pp.67ff..

¹³ Broome, 1994, p.27.

¹⁴ Broome, 1994, p.145.

¹⁵ Unfortunately, Hetherington is no more specific than this and so far I have been unable to ascertain the precise location of her early work.

Aborigines Mission and served for the next three years in a community located ‘beyond the rubbish tip’, seven kilometres from Wellington, NSW.¹⁶

Other Christian missions had been initiated years earlier under the leadership of such household names as Lancelot Threlkeld, Frederick Hagenauer, Carl Strehlow, Dom Rosendo Salvado, John Smithies and John Gribble.¹⁷ While much faithful, persistent, compassionate work was undertaken by people like these, they often felt their efforts were being undermined by the ungodly lifestyle and open vices of many of the white community.¹⁸ In the first decades of the twentieth century, further missions were founded at Roper River (Church Missionary Society, 1908), Mornington Island (Presbyterian, 1914), Croker Island (Methodist, 1915), Goulburn Island (Methodist, 1916), Groote Eylandt (CMS, 1921), Mount Margaret, WA (United Aborigines Mission, 1921), Milingimbi (Methodist, 1921), Elcho Island (Methodist, 1922), Lockhardt River (Australian Board of Missions, 1924) and Oenpelli (CMS, 1925).¹⁹ Hetherington was already actively serving Aboriginal people before most of these organisations were set in place. ‘There were few missionaries in those days,’ wrote Hetherington.²⁰

¹⁶ Harris, 1990, p.570. It was not uncommon for Aboriginal camps to be located ‘a mile or two out of town — beyond the cemetery, the Chinese gardens or the rubbish dump or on the other side of the river.’ See Henry Reynolds and Dawn May, ‘Queensland,’ in A.McGrath (ed), *Contested Ground* St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1995, p.181; Reynolds, 1990, p.135. The Australian Aborigines Mission was originally called the Aborigines Protection Association. In 1894, its name changed to the La Perouse Aborigines Mission Committee; five years later it became the NSW Aborigines Mission and in 1907 the Australian Aborigines Mission. There was a breakaway group which took the name Aborigines Inland Mission. Finally, in 1929, the two reunited under the name United Aborigines Mission. In the 1970’s, the church at La Perouse was transferred to the Aborigines Evangelical Fellowship. See T.Mayne, ‘La Perouse Celebrates 100 Years,’ in *Indigenous Leadership* #14 February 1998, pp.5ff. The CMS began their ministry to Aborigines at Wellington in 1832, but the work languished in 1843. See Harris, 1990, pp.56, 554f.

¹⁷ Harris, 1990, pp. 255ff; 313ff; 381ff; 458ff; Piggin, 1996, p.46; T.G.H.Strehlow, *Central Australian Religion*, Bedford Park, SA: Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1978.

¹⁸ Piggin, 1996, p.22; E.Kotlowski, *Southland of the Holy Spirit* Orange: Christian History Research Institute, 1994, pp.113ff.

¹⁹ Harris, 1990, p.689; Piggin 1996, pp.82f; Breward, 1993, p.104. Bain Attwood comments, ‘These dedicated men and women were exceptional in regarding Aborigines as fellow human beings ... and at best their missions alleviated the suffering of fringe-dwellers and saved communities from extermination by protecting Aborigines from the worst ravages of colonisation.’ See B.Attwood, ‘Aboriginal missions,’ in Davison et al (eds), 1999, p.8.

²⁰ Hetherington, 1929, p.7.

A pleasant-faced, demure and ‘extremely short-sighted’ woman with small round glasses, Hetherington looked serious and caring.²¹ During this period, she demonstrated qualities that were to characterise her life — compassion for the suffering, generosity, hard work (she cycled around the area), devotion to Christ and a willingness to serve with all denominations. Here, at the request of a dying Aboriginal ‘princess’, she adopted Nellie, her weakly three-year-old daughter, who was soon to be the only one of her family of ten still alive. Her father’s drinking, their primitive living conditions and the rampant disease that decimated the Aboriginal population in Southern Australian had taken their toll. Alcoholism and illnesses such as smallpox, measles, influenza, tuberculosis, whooping cough and even the common cold, which were deadly enough among Whites, proved murderous among Blacks.²² But young Nellie Hetherington survived and became a talented musician with both keyboard and guitar, with a gift for singing that softened many a heart. In later years, Hetherington and Nellie were to travel and minister together through many parts of Australia. Clearly, Hetherington loved children. Many of the few extant photos show her with at least one child.²³ In 1910, she took a six-year-old into her home to shield her from pneumonia.²⁴

Nevertheless, while facing a constant battle with sickness and poverty, her first concern was always ‘the spiritual side of the work.’²⁵ She was delighted to tell of ‘God’s saving and keeping power’ in the lives of some new converts and noted that the gospel was ‘the only thing that can raise these dear people to that which is pure, lovely, and of good report.’²⁶ She was also pleased to record that there were seven weddings in her first year at Wellington.²⁷ On the other hand,

²¹ Hetherington, 1929, pp.8, 26.

²² Reynolds, 1990, pp. 154, 183f; Broome, 1994, pp.58ff. Broome claims that in the nineteenth century there was a death rate of 80% among Aborigines and that the major killers were alcoholism and disease. Around Port Phillip, for example, the original population prior to contact with Europeans was around 10,000 but by 1853 had dropped to just under 2,000..

²³ For example, the first picture of her in AAA shows her with three small children — AAA 31 August, 1908, p.6.

²⁴ AAA 28 February 1910, p.8.

²⁵ AAA 31 March 1909, p.7.

²⁶ AAA 31 May 1910, pp.4,6.

²⁷ AAA 31 March 1909, p.7.

in her three years there, she ‘stood by the death beds of thirteen of these dear people.’ One of them, Maggie Bain, died with such a prayer on her lips that one who saw her observed, ‘Kings might covet such a death as that of the poor Aboriginal girl.’²⁸ The strenuous work took a toll on Hetherington’s own health and in 1910, she spent four weeks in hospital being treated for pleurisy.²⁹ In late 1910, she left Wellington and went to Sydney, NSW, to rest.³⁰ Given twelve months leave, accompanied by Nellie, she travelled through Victoria, partly to regain her health and partly to share the work of the Mission.³¹

In response to many requests to tell her story of the work ‘amongst the dark people of our land,’ this term was extended well into 1912, until she settled for a term at Manunka near Point Macleay in South Australia.³² This was a small reserve of a few acres with some 50 inhabitants which had been established in 1859.³³ The Government wanted to move the Aboriginal people to Point Macleay, but they were unwilling to go, an attitude which Hetherington supported.³⁴

By this time, the violence and bloodshed that had marked much of the previous century’s interaction with Aborigines was largely a thing of the past — although as late as 1926, there was a punitive expedition in Wyndham, WA, which resulted in at least twelve (probably many more) deaths.³⁵ However, Aborigines were by no means equal members of society. Australia’s new Constitution of 1901 barely referred to them, their right to vote in federal elections was not granted until 1962 and they were not regarded or counted as

²⁸ AAA 30 September 1910, p.8.

²⁹ AAA 30 April 1910, p.3; 30 June 1910, p.8.

³⁰ AAA 30 November 1910, p.1.

³¹ AAA 31 December 1910, p.7; 31 March 1911, p.1; 30 June 1911, p.1; 31 October 1911, p.4; 31 January, 1912, p.5..

³² AAA 30 July 1912, p.1; 30 September 1912, p.1; 31 December 1912, p. 2f. The Point Macleay Mission was originally Presbyterian and became a government station in 1916. The Aborigines’ Friends’ Association continued to supply missionaries until 1923, after which the Parkin Trust accepted responsibility for missionary appointments there. In 1943, the Salvation Army took over this role. See Harris, 1990, pp.370ff.

³³ McGrath (ed), 1995, p.223.

³⁴ AAA 30 November 1912, p.5.

³⁵ Harris, 1990, pp.514ff.

citizens of the Commonwealth until 1967.³⁶ Malnutrition, epidemic, disease and bloodshed continued to take a terrible toll. An estimated 300,000 population in 1788 had declined to around 60,000 a century and a half later.³⁷ ‘The evidence that Aboriginal people were dying out,’ claims Harris, ‘seemed irrefutable.’³⁸ Not till the 1920s did the birth rate begin to exceed the death rate, even among those of mixed blood. By the late 1930s, there were some 70,000.³⁹

Australia’s vacillation between what Reynolds calls ‘the two great themes of confrontation and collaboration’ picked its unsteady way into the twentieth century and will almost certainly continue to be evident in the twenty-first.⁴⁰ Although there were still nomadic, tribal Aborigines in the inland, many now lived in fringe camps around the cities while others were in Government reserves which had been first established in 1850 in New South Wales, in 1860 in Victoria, in 1897 in Queensland and in 1850 in South Australia, in an attempt to encourage Aborigines to settle down to agrarian pursuits, to provide basic education for their children and, often, to keep them separated from non-Aboriginals. There was also an expectation that full-blood Aborigines would remain in remote areas and eventually die out while those in the reserves or town camps would ultimately be assimilated into white culture.⁴¹

³⁶ It should be noted that during the nineteenth century, in all colonies except Queensland and Western Australia, where they were specifically excluded, Aboriginal males, as British subjects, did have the right to vote. Only in South Australia was this right actually exercised. When female voting rights were approved there in 1894, Aboriginal women were included. For example, a polling booth was set up at Pt McLeay in 1896 where there were more than one hundred Aborigines on the rolls, of whom over 70% voted. Although South Australians protested that the non-inclusion of Aborigines in the Commonwealth census would nullify the voting rights of Aborigines, the measure was passed. See P.Sretton and C.Finnimore, *How South Australian Aborigines Lost the Vote: some side effects of federation* Adelaide: Old Parliament House, November 1991, pp.2ff.

³⁷ A.Markus, ‘Under the Act,’ in Gammage and Spearritt (eds), 1987, p.47ff. Breward (1993, p.105) suggests that 20,000 of Aboriginal deaths were the result of inter-racial violence. However, the greatest cause of death and declining population was probably introduced diseases such as smallpox. See McGrath (ed), 1995, pp.124ff, 141; Broome, 1994, pp.58ff.

³⁸ Harris, 1990, p.550.

³⁹ Broome, 1994, p.174.

⁴⁰ Reynolds, 1990, pp.233ff.

⁴¹ McGrath (ed), 1995, pp. 67f, 72, 135ff, 183, 223; P.Read, ‘Aborigines,’ in Davison et al (eds), 1999, p.14. That none of these options was acceptable to many Aborigines is indicated by the request from Nellie’s mother to Isabella Hetherington, ‘Don’t let the Government get

Some were employed in rural industries as stock or harvest labourers. Frequently, wages were paid in kind — flour or clothing or blankets — rather than in coin. Discrimination was well-entrenched. Around 1915, a Presbyterian minister could still comment, ‘It would be foolish to argue that all men are equal. The black-fellow is inferior and must necessarily remain so, but he is by no means so inferior as to be unable to rise above the level of a working animal.’⁴² Not all Presbyterians were of like mind. The clergyman-anthropologist John Mathew, for example, would have strongly dissented.⁴³ But in greater or lesser degree, the opinion was still sufficiently widespread. Even the renowned ‘Flynn of the Inland’ generally ministered only to white people; the needs of Aborigines were left to others.⁴⁴ Basic rights such as full citizenship, equal education, equal job opportunities and social welfare were withheld. Insults or even physical attacks were common. White men frequently cohabited with black women, but few marriages ever resulted — and the reverse arrangement was almost unheard of.⁴⁵ By 1938, 30% of New South Wales’ Aborigines lived in 71 reserves. Here, administrators had extensive powers and the residents’ freedoms were limited. Housing was often below standard, health and dental services were inadequate, children could be separated from their parents, food and rations were often of poor quality.⁴⁶ It was to the people in or near the reserves that Hetherington gave the rest of her life.

During her ministry in Victoria, she had met Sarah Jane Lancaster who initially proffered some financial support and then herself visited the Mission. Hetherington had been looking forward to her visit and ‘for a mighty

her, and don’t send her to any home ... and don’t let her go alone to the camps. Take her now before she gets the cough.’ See Hetherington, 1929, p. 10.

⁴² Quoted in Breward, 1993, p.104.

⁴³ See M.Prentis, *Science, Race and Faith* Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1998, pp.151, 182. Prentis notes that although Mathew regarded Aborigines with the ‘customary condescension’ he had many Aboriginal friends whom he regarded with affection and respect, he gave an Aboriginal name to his youngest child and he appreciated Aboriginal religion.

⁴⁴ Breward, 1993, pp.114ff.

⁴⁵ Reynolds, 1990, pp.116ff, 179f, 204ff; Broome, 1994, pp.93, 132.

⁴⁶ Broome, 1994, pp.143ff; Markus, 1987, p.47ff; Reynolds, 1990, p.154. Note that Broome claims there were only 22 reserves in New South Wales in 1936.

outpouring of the Holy Spirit.’ As it happened, there was an outbreak of gastric illness and Lancaster joined her in ministering to the people, and then looked after her, as she, too, became ill. Hetherington recorded how ‘dear Mrs Lancaster’ personally purchased materials for a tent and dealt with government officials on her behalf.⁴⁷

Just prior to this, in November 1911, at Good News Hall, a woman speaking ‘in the Spirit’ proclaimed, ‘Kramer, the Aborigines’. Ernest Kramer (1889-1958), a flour miller, had arrived in Adelaide from Switzerland in 1889. Here he met J.E.Rieschick who introduced him to faith in Christ.⁴⁸ Kramer was baptised in the Torrens River. Around 1910, he cycled to Melbourne where he worshiped at Good News Hall. A natural talent with sign writing soon emerged and he painted signs and texts around the new building. It was here he met and married the diminutive Euphemia (Effie) Buchanan, W.A.Buchanan’s sister.⁴⁹ They were to spend many years in mission and evangelism among the Aborigines, a ministry to which the Kramer Memorial Church in Alice Springs still bears witness. To this point, Kramer had felt called to India, and actually had his passage booked. At the time, he and Effie were managing a home for aged men in Melbourne. Late in 1912, Hetherington left Manunka to go to Adelaide and then to Melbourne for the annual Mission Conference. The Kramers met her when Nellie Hetherington sang at the men’s home. That same night, ‘in a little cottage meeting,’ the Kramers offered to help in her service among the Aborigines. ‘The Lord put a deep love and yearning in the writer’s heart,’ Kramer wrote years later, ‘for the people in the bush and the aboriginals

⁴⁷ AAA 30 July 1912, p.5; 31 August, 1912, p.5; 30 September 1912, p.3; 30 November 1912, p.5; 31 December 1912, p.4.

⁴⁸ C.Pope, ‘A Brief History of Ernest E.Kramer,’ unpublished essay, Tabor College, 1986, p.1. Specific sources on Kramer’s ministry are limited and difficult to locate. For more on Rieschick see Chapter Seven.

⁴⁹ It may have been Kramer who introduced the Buchanan family to Pentecostalism. See F.Lancaster, interview, 18 December 1993. For more on the Buchanans, see Chapters Six, Nine, Twelve and Fourteen. Effie Kramer may well have been the ‘sister’ referred to in the previous incident, but as few names are used in *Good News*, and in the absence to this point of further reliable sources, this cannot be assumed.

[sic].⁵⁰ Hetherington soon reported to the Mission her delight that this young couple, who were ‘both Spirit-filled,’ were prepared to take over the work.⁵¹

By January 1913, Hetherington, now in her early 40s, was stationed at the Mission’s La Perouse base in New South Wales, where in earlier years the Baptist Retta Long (nee Dixon) had worked and there had been significant conversions.⁵² She had been spending ‘days and nights alone in prayer’ that both the Aboriginal people and the missionaries would be filled with God’s Holy Spirit.⁵³ Early in March, there was an unusual expression of God’s blessing. The resident missionary there, Miss H.Baker, reported —

The first Sunday of March will be a day ever to be remembered here.

The Christians gathered for prayer as usual at 9 o’clock, and while praying, the mighty power of God fell upon us. No church bell rang that day, but the building was filled with the sounds of praise, and this continued till 2 o’clock without a break. God has visited His people.⁵⁴

A month later, Baker was still rejoicing in the dealings of God. The power of the Spirit was ‘still manifest.’⁵⁵ Soon after this, she was granted a month’s leave, and Hetherington, who was clearly held in high esteem by the Mission, took her place.⁵⁶ It was not long before there were further evidences of God’s presence—

One of the dear native women was graciously baptised in the Spirit last Sunday morning. She was under the power of the Lord some five or six hours. I danced before the Lord one whole hour and so did she. She sang in the Spirit⁵⁷ for two or

⁵⁰ Hetherington, 1929, p.17f.; AAA 31 December 1912, p.4; E.Kramer, *Caravan Mission to Bush People and Aborigines, Journeyings in the Far North and Centre of Australia, n.d.*; *GN October 1913, p.10f*; Chant, 1984, pp.61ff.

⁵¹ AAA 31 December 1912, p.4.

⁵² Retta Long founded the Aborigines Inland Mission ((1905). See J.West, ‘The Role of the Woman Missionary,’ in *Lucas: an Evangelical History Review* #21,22, June and December 1996, p.50; Piggitt, 1996, p.67.

⁵³ Hetherington, 1929, p.3.

⁵⁴ AAA 31 March 1913, page number obscured.

⁵⁵ AAA 30 April 1913, p.7.

⁵⁶ AAA 31 May 1913, p.4.

⁵⁷ In a Pentecostal context ‘singing in the Spirit’ usually means singing a spontaneous song which has not previously been learned, either in one’s own language or in tongues, most commonly the latter. Here, it seems to mean singing a spontaneous song in English which

three hours and then the Holy Spirit gave the sign to unbelievers, speaking through her in other tongues ...

All church form was broken through. We started prayers in the morning about 8 o'clock and the meeting lasted until 11 at night. Several of the natives were under the power of God. It was a day long to be remembered ...

There was also a revival with the girls who worked in the kitchen. After a reading from Acts 2, some of them asked if they could 'have the Spirit like that.' One girl, named Vera, with her face shining, spoke in tongues. Nellie herself 'longed and thirsted for God' and as the Spirit fell on her, she began to sing aloud and to laugh for joy. She felt that she was being healed of a long-standing chest complaint.⁵⁸

Hetherington, in her own quaint fashion, recounted the astonishing story —

After tea, we went to pray in the kitchen, and immediately the Spirit of the Lord began to pray through 'this clay.' Nellie and Vera fell down under the mighty power of God. How I wish you could have seen my Nellie. At first her little face looked as though she was undergoing crucifixion, then her arms went up to God one after the other. Her hands shook severely and her whole body was lifted off the floor several times. Then her little mouth was opened ... a beautiful smile came over her face and she shouted, 'Praise Him!' and 'Yea Lord, I love Thee' and began to speak and sing in other tongues and to cast out demons. Both the girls were under God's power nearly three hours ...⁵⁹

At the end of May, Baker returned and the renewal continued. She herself had a Pentecostal experience of the Spirit. She collapsed to the floor and for some hours her whole being seemed 'to undergo crucifixion'. The next day she both spoke and sang in tongues.⁶⁰ 'The most cheering feature of the work at

later changed to tongues. Such spontaneous singing, either in tongues or English, has been a common part of Pentecostal worship since the movement's inception. For more on Pentecostal worship practices, see Chapter Fourteen.

⁵⁸ Hetherington, 1929, p.3.

⁵⁹ GN No.6, October 1913, p.10; K.Smallcombe, personal correspondence, 1 September 1994.

⁶⁰ I.Hetherington, 'God's Work in and through a Missionary to the Australian Aboriginals,' GN 1:6 October 1913, p.10.

present,' she wrote, 'is the morning prayer meeting.' These were 'times of refreshing' and regularly lasted from nine in the morning till noon.⁶¹

Inevitably, these expressions of glossolalia became too controversial for the Mission leaders.⁶² Apparently, there had already been some emergence of the phenomenon at the Mission's January Conference. Its ongoing expression now proved to be a problem. Although there was clearly benefit to some people, overall, they admitted, the result was usually confusion. Recognised biblical scholars considered it to be unscriptural. Some who originally thought what they experienced was from God later understood it to have come from the devil. The consensus of experienced missionaries and Christian workers was that a warning should be sounded. They were sorry to introduce this controversial note to the columns of their magazine and freely admitted that some testified to genuine blessing through speaking in tongues. But the entry of the movement into the Mission's ranks had brought confusion and unrest. The result of the first six months of 1913 required them to sound a warning. Their duty was to proclaim salvation through the crucified and risen Saviour. Other teachings — and the people who promoted them — were not to be welcomed to the various stations.⁶³

It is not surprising that Isabella Hetherington's name appears no more in subsequent issues of *The Australian Aborigines' Advocate*. In 1916, she and Nellie conducted short missions around Victoria. They visited the small group of believers at Freeburgh, in the Ovens Valley, led by William Sloan.⁶⁴ A young woman named Ethel Vale had been converted through this ministry and

⁶¹ AAA 30 August 1913, p.6.

⁶² The idea of a separate experience in the Spirit was not unknown to the Mission. Retta Dixon, one of their esteemed pioneers at La Perouse, inscribed seven dates in the front of her Bible, which included —

Born again — May 25 1884
 Definitely received a clean heart — Nov 9 1888
 Baptised — Nov 29 1891
 Received into church fellowship — Dec 6 1891
 Received the Holy Spirit — Jan 12 1893

See Mayne, 1998, pp.5ff. It was glossolalia which proved problematic.

⁶³ 'The Tongue's [sic] Movement,' AAA 30 August 1913, page number obscured.

⁶⁴ See Chapter Three.

was persecuted by her family as a result. In later years, she was to join Hetherington as a missionary to the Aborigines.⁶⁵

Ernest and Euphemia Kramer

Meanwhile, Ernest and Effie Kramer had begun their own unique ministry.⁶⁶ Early in 1913, with their six-weeks-old baby son Colin, they journeyed from Melbourne to the Murray River, where they ‘first found the Aborigines,’ and then on to Port Augusta, 300 kilometres north of Adelaide.⁶⁷ They travelled a further 400 kilometres in a ‘covered buggy’ pulled by four donkeys beyond Tarcoola in South Australia’s far West, following the line of the new East-West railway where they offered their services to the construction gangs and ‘many doors’ were opened to testify to their Lord. Later they turned north on the long 390 kilometre track to Oodnadatta. They did what they could for black and white alike, without prejudice. God ‘does not look at the colour of the skin,’ wrote Kramer. ‘He is no respecter of persons, and the Blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, alone can wash inbred sin from the heart.’ They covered over 3,500 kilometres all told.

From 1916 to 1921, they undertook two further missionary journeys, under the name ‘Australian Caravan Mission.’ With 21 pounds in hand, Kramer purchased a second-hand horse-drawn van, decorated it with biblical texts,⁶⁸ equipped it with harness, bedding and the like and set off from Adelaide. They were well received by the Methodist church at Port Wakefield and spent a week at Point Pearce mission where they baptised a number of Aborigines by immersion.

The Kramers were less aggressively Pentecostal than many of their associates. Their ecumenical spirit was displayed by their visiting churches of all persuasions on the journey north. On other occasions, they helped property

⁶⁵ M.Jackson, personal communication, 8 May 1992; Guy, 1998, pp.175, 187.

⁶⁶ Kramer, *Caravan Mission*, n.d. Further details of Kramer’s ministry are taken from this source unless otherwise stated. There are no page numbers in the original.

⁶⁷ Daisy Bates moved to Ooldea in South Australia’s far north in 1920.

⁶⁸ ‘Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins,’ — Matthew 1:21 (which Kramer gives as 2:21); ‘God is love’ — 1 John 4:16 and, ‘Prepare to meet thy God,’ — Amos 4:12; ‘Behold I come quickly and my reward is with me to give to every man as his work shall be’ — Revelation 22:12.

owners with their harvesting. In the far north, they were forced to exchange their horses for donkeys, reducing their travel speed from seven miles an hour to two.⁶⁹ At this snail-pace, they arrived at Leigh Creek where they visited a nearby Aboriginal camp.⁷⁰ Here they taught the children and anointed a fevered woman with oil for healing. She recovered rapidly.⁷¹ They continued on, offering their services to any who were in need. Kramer recalled —

Thus sowing beside all waters, we have many opportunities of witnessing among pastoralists and others in the great bush, and among outstations, and many have received us gladly. We seek their spiritual welfare, in return they show their appreciation by attending to our comfort and temporal needs, and oftentimes giving us a change from camping on the road.⁷²

In this way they continued their slow progress through the Outback. By September 1918, it was decided to return to Melbourne for a break to arrange for their son Colin's education. They stayed for a time with the Buchanans before returning by train in May 1919 to Quorn and thence to Oodnadatta to collect their van. They now had a small extra cart to carry their supplies. In Oodnadatta, Kramer was dismayed to see the terrible combined effects of poverty, neglect and an influenza epidemic among the Aborigines.⁷³ His compassion and deep concern for them was obviously a driving motivation for his work —

Still by God's grace, the dear remaining few Aborigines were gathered together. In a nice building? No, in their rags and bags, often amongst the rubbish of tins and bottles, and any amount of dogs; still they sat attentively and heard the Word gladly. Then just at this time the natives fell sick with influenza.

⁶⁹ A change which was viewed with wry amusement even by Kramer himself in the light of the text painted on the van, 'Behold I come quickly.' See M.Kramer, personal communication, 1986.

⁷⁰ Fifty years later, Aborigines were barred from actually living in the Leigh Creek township. See Peggy Brock, 'South Australia' in McGrath (ed), 1995, p.212.

⁷¹ James 5:14f — 'Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him' (AV).

⁷² Kramer, *Caravan Mission*.

⁷³ Aborigines were often refused treatment at public hospitals. See McGrath (ed), 1995, pp.94, 231.

Oh, such sadness and such sights I shall never forget. They were so neglected and helplessly dying like animals, but with the doctor and policeman's help we rigged up an isolation camp outside the town, and then, with four donkeys in the van, the sick were gathered into camp and cared for.

My heart was full of pain, for the sight was sad indeed. Many were carried in one day in hope, and carried out later a corpse ... Oh, how my heart cried out for help for these people in their darkness.⁷⁴

They stayed for six weeks, trying to help the sufferers and 'losing not an opportunity to teach them of the great love of Jesus.'⁷⁵

They recommenced their journey: it was fraught with difficulties. Heavy creeks, sand hills, rocks and stones, scant feed, waterless tracks, blistering heat, loneliness, a tiny van crammed with equipment, slow travel, struggling animals all combined to create enormous obstacles. 'At one time,' wrote Kramer —

We had a terrible struggle to get over thirty-five miles of heavy, sandy country, with many creeks to cross. The donkeys were two days without water; the days were so hot we could only travel very early in the morning; and then after sundown for a few hours. One morning ... a fierce north wind arose and continued for the whole day, just as though it were off a fire. We could not quench our thirst ... The temperature remained at 107 degrees in the van.

Kramer's ministry was marked by a simple trust in God for every need, characteristic of the ministry of Good News Hall. After reaching Farina, in 40 degree heat, 'the Lord gave the word, Isaiah 33:16'.⁷⁶ Encouraged by this, Kramer dug in a creek and found a steady supply of fresh water which kept them for six months. Locals, meanwhile, were paying the large sum of 2/6 for a hundred gallons. When their first daughter Mary was born in a tent in Farina in 45 degree heat, she was 'as healthy as a rosebud' and for ten months slept through each night. When repairs were needed for the wagon wheels, and they had only one penny to their names, the funds were provided. On another occasion, on a visit to town, money was wired to them just in time for them to

⁷⁴ Kramer, *Caravan Mission*.

⁷⁵ Although many at Good News Hall eschewed the use of medicine (see Chapters Six and Seven), Kramer seems to have had no such scruples.

⁷⁶ 'This is the man who will dwell on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress. His bread will be supplied, and water will not fail him.'

buy food before the store closed. When the donkeys strayed during the night, Kramer found them after praying. Once a goat fell under the wheel of the van. ‘We took our goat to Jesus in prayer, who has power over all flesh,’ wrote Kramer. A week later, in fine health, she gave birth to two kids — to the Kramers this was simply another fulfilment of Scripture.⁷⁷ After struggling for two scorching days and nights without water to cover the final leg of the arduous, punishing trip to Alice Springs, 580 kilometres north of Oodnadatta, and rain poured down flooding the Todd River, they thanked God it had not come sooner, and so cut them off from the town. Once when confronted with twelve tracks leading in different directions, they prayed for guidance, and a rainbow appeared over one of them, leading them to safety.

Kramer freely offered the gospel to any who would listen, but his major concern was for the Aborigines, who constituted a major part of the pastoral industry’s work force in the Far North.⁷⁸ He had preached to them on his first journey and now on his return, he could report that they were glad to see him again. He was delighted to meet two boys who were still standing firm in the faith and another who had been a steadfast believer for four years. Others greeted them ‘with beaming faces’ and remembered what he had told them of the love of Jesus.

Using Bible pictures and Christian songs, he preached the gospel and many heard ‘the sweet story’ for the first time. They ‘never grew tired’ of his presentation. In Alice Springs, Kramer spent many hours teaching children of mixed blood and conducting open air services.⁷⁹ People came from as far as

⁷⁷ Proverbs 27:27 — ‘And thou shalt have goats’ milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household’ (AV).

⁷⁸ ‘A typical large station might employ half a dozen White people ... one or two Aborigines of mixed descent who took superior roles such as stock-camp boss, and twenty or more Aboriginal “ringers” — Peter Read, ‘Northern Territory’ in McGrath (ed), 1995, pp.273f. Reynolds notes that there were thousands of Aborigines in the rural workforce, including some 10,000 on sheep and cattle stations, and that on average there were about 25 Aboriginal workers, both male and female, per station who did ‘practically all the work’ (1990, pp.196ff). Broome argues that without Aboriginal labour, the stations could not have survived (1994, p.127).

⁷⁹ As was the custom at the time, he referred to them as ‘half-caste’ children. Legislation passed in South Australia in 1911 ‘for the better Protection and Control of the Aboriginal and Half-caste Inhabitants’ actually enshrined this term and a subsequent (1913-1916) Royal Commission sought to distinguish between ‘full-bloods’ and ‘half-castes’. See Brock in

130 kilometres away. Their daughter Mary, now five years old, would herself gather the children and teach them songs. In one place, an Aboriginal woman who had heard Kramer once before, walked fifteen kilometres carrying a three-year-old on her back to hear the gospel again. Kramer recalled these days with affection—

When they would sight us driving along to this tree, with one donkey in our little cart, they would come running from all directions, old and young, men and women, with picannies [sic] on their backs. We have had over 50 in a gathering.

Again, it was Kramer's deep concern for the Aborigines which motivated him—

To the south-east and west lay the McDonald [sic] Ranges, in their grandeur and possibilities of cultivation; but the cry of my heart went out to the benighted tribes of the aborigines [sic], unknown to me, but not to Him, who gave His life for them. Oh, how I longed that He would prosper and enable us to reach those yet some hundred miles further east, who have never been told of the love of Jesus ...

Even those who worked on the stations were in constant need. They were rarely paid adequate wages and usually lived in squalid conditions, well removed from the more comfortable dwellings of the station owners. Usually, the only ones who saw the inside of the homesteads were women who worked as domestics or who provided sexual favours for the lonely men.⁸⁰

How well Kramer was equipped with a knowledge of Aboriginal culture is questionable. He seems to have learned as he went. He understood the power of what he called the 'Black Fellows' Bone' and saw the love of Christ as an antidote for this. Furthermore, he did not make the mistake of many nineteenth century missionaries — and even some of his own day — who believed it was necessary to civilise the people before they could accept the gospel.⁸¹ His aim, he said, was to encourage the people 'from a spiritual standpoint'. Whereas other missionaries had blamed the Aborigines for being incapable of

McGrath (ed), 1995, pp.225ff. A similar Act in Victoria in 1886 had used identical language. See Broome in McGrath (ed), 1995, p.139.

⁸⁰ Broome, 1994, pp.130ff.

⁸¹ This attitude was widespread. See Harris 1990, pp. 260, 474, 802; Reynolds, 1990, pp.90f.

understanding the Christian message,⁸² Kramer prayed that he would have the ability to make it understandable —

We do not profess to civilise them, but to show them ‘the Light of Life’ which is Jesus, the once crucified, and now risen Saviour, and soon coming King of Kings and Lord of Lords, whom we lift up, praying God to prepare the hearts of the Aborigines to receive Jesus. We seek for wisdom to make the Word plain and simple for these hearers.

Civilisation is not congenial to them, yet before God they have souls to save, which are precious ...

Towards the end of the journey, they visited the ‘Finke Mission Station,’ no doubt the Lutheran settlement at Hermannsburg, 100 kilometres south west of Alice Springs, where they were ‘heartily welcomed’ by the pastor and his wife, at that time the remarkable Carl Strehlow, whose ministry was to conclude with his death the following year.⁸³ Here, Kramer was delighted to hear Aborigines worshiping and singing in Aranda. From the earliest days, missionaries here had respected indigenous languages and had translated much of the Bible into the local dialect.⁸⁴ Kramer was overjoyed to see this willingness to reach out to the Aborigines. ‘It was beautiful,’ he recalled. ‘It made our tears flow.’

Harris refers to the great trek of the Lutheran missionaries Heidenreich, Kempe and Schwartz from Adelaide to the Finke River, from October 1875 to June 1877, with their 2 400 sheep, 44 horses, 23 cattle, five dogs, four hens and one rooster, as a journey which ‘stands alone’ in the annals of missionary endeavour.⁸⁵ There seems little reason to challenge this claim. But Erny and Effie Kramer’s much smaller, less publicised and more humble venture must also be seen as a remarkable example of pioneer missionary courage and

⁸² Harris, 1990, pp.271ff, 802. Of course, there were also many exceptions to this approach eg Harris, 1990, p.479.

⁸³ Harris, 1990, p.405; Strehlow, 1978, pp.7ff; W.F.Veit, ‘Strehlow, Carl Friedrich Theodor (1871-1922)’ in ADB Vol 12 1891-1939, pp.121f. In later years, Strehlow’s son, T.G.H.Strehlow and his wife Bertha developed a friendship with the Kramers and often stayed in their home in Alice Springs — Mary Kramer, quoted in the *Centralian Advocate* 23 July 1991, p.10.

⁸⁴ Harris, 1990, pp.392ff.

⁸⁵ Harris, 1990, p.390.

enterprise. All in all, through extreme conditions and in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties, during 1913, 1916 and 1921, they covered well over 10,000 kilometres in their patient, plodding Outback ministry.

In 1921, Good News Hall urged the Kramers to return to Melbourne and assist in the work there, which, reluctantly, they did. But their hearts were still in the Outback, and they immediately began to make plans for establishing a 'Scriptural Knowledge Institution' in Alice Springs as a shelter for orphans and a base from which to reach the Aborigines.

Smith Wigglesworth's visit encouraged them to seek support for this venture and soon Robert Davis, who was baptised in the Spirit at that time, agreed to join them, although as it happened, this did not eventuate.⁸⁶

In June 1924, *Good News* reported that Philip Adams was again building a caravan for 'a dear brother and his wife' who were, God willing, going 'to the back blocks with the full message for these last days.'⁸⁷ This was a more substantial wagon designed for horses. J.E.Rieschick provided them with all the harnessing they needed.⁸⁸ They travelled by boat to Port Augusta and thence overland to Alice Springs.

1925 saw the beginnings of the Pentecostal Church of Australia,⁸⁹ and the subsequent movement of people between the different groups, resulting in a loss of some financial support. Nevertheless, they set off, with young Colin, now eleven years old, looking after the horses, although Effie and the other children travelled by Dodge truck from Oodnadatta.⁹⁰ In Alice Springs,

⁸⁶ Davis was converted as a result of the change in his wife when she spoke in tongues after attending Good News Hall. Early one morning in 1919, he was smoking in bed when he saw a vision of Christ and the two thieves and he heard 'the sound of the drip-drip-drip of the blood of Jesus on the linoleum floor.' He was a builder and was responsible for much of the construction work at the Hall. In 1936, Davis was ordained to the ministry of the Apostolic Church. R.Davis, interview, n.d.; see also The Apostolic Church Certificate of Ordination dated 14 November 1936.

⁸⁷ This was obviously a reference to the Kramers and typical of *Good News*'s practice — admittedly irregular and inconsistent — of avoiding the use of names in reports. See GN 15:6 June 1924, p.7. Pentecostals shared the Evangelical conviction that the second coming of Christ was imminent and commonly believed there was little time left before that eschatological event. See Chapter Five and Six.

⁸⁸ Pope, 1986, p.6.

⁸⁹ See Chapter Nine.

⁹⁰ Pope, 1986, p.7. Further details are from this paper unless otherwise stated.

Kramer leased four blocks of land, where he displayed considerable ingenuity in getting established.⁹¹

He now began to use camels for his Outback travel, often being away for weeks at a time. Effie conducted services at Alice Springs for Aborigines. Around this time, Kramer became increasingly inter-denominational in his approach, and gave less emphasis to issues such as glossolalia. The Aborigines' Friends' Association offered some support for his ministry.⁹² He was also learning greater flexibility — agreeing, for example, to the cooking of certain foods on Sundays because they would not keep in the hot weather if prepared the day before.

Kramer was able to purchase the land on which he had built, but a decade later, weary and suffering in health from his Outback travel, he sold the property and returned to Melbourne in 1934, where he became a representative for the Bible Society. He died in 1958 of leukemia. His wife continued to attend a Pentecostal church until her death in 1971. In April 1984, the Australian Missionary Society built an interdenominational building in Alice Springs and named it the Kramer Memorial Church, in honour of Ernest Kramer and his 21 years of ministry.⁹³

⁹¹ According to his family, the house was built of pines from Pine Gap, which were termite-resistant, and bricks hand-made from lime and sand. Kramer designed a system of reticulated water to the house, reputedly the first in Alice Springs, and included netting-covered vents at both ground and ceiling level for air circulation. He also constructed a tennis court from crushed ant hills. In 1924, the Ebenezer Tabernacle was erected, the first concrete building in Alice Springs. See Pope 1986, pp.8ff. See also Jose Petrick, 'Spreading the Gospel,' *Centralian Advocate* 8 October 198..

⁹² The Aborigines' Friends' Association was formed in South Australia in 1857 by a group of people concerned for the welfare of Aborigines. It continued to fulfil this aim for many decades. See Harris 1990, p.356.

⁹³ 'Four Children of Missionary Here for Opening,' *Centralian Advocate*, 1977 (specific date not recorded). Prior to the opening, Sir Douglas Nicholls, himself an Aborigine and then Governor of South Australia, wrote to Kramer's daughter Mary: 'Your father's name was widely respected for the great work he did as a missionary.' See Helen Innes, 'Ernest Kramer One of God's People in Oz,' *On Being*, August 1978, p.44. A photo taken of the church in 1991 shows a 'wayside pulpit' sign which reads, 'GROG is EVIL it will NOT make you happy; the HOLY SPIRIT will make you HAPPY indeed; JESUS CHRIST gives the HOLY SPIRIT to ALL who follow Him.' There may be some echoes of Kramer's teaching here.

Ernie Kramer's brother Fritz also had a heart for the Aborigines. He and his wife, who was a school teacher, worked with them at Redfern, Katoomba and Rolands Plains, NSW.⁹⁴

North Queensland

Meanwhile, in the early 1920s, Isabella Hetherington attempted to purchase some land in Melbourne on which to erect bark huts for dwellings. This enterprise failed, but over a period of several years, a hundred Aborigines were 'instructed in the way of righteousness.'⁹⁵ By now, it was 1925, and Nellie found herself singing over a period of three months at the Sunshine Mission Hall and then in the Prahran Town Hall, during the ministry of A.C.Valdez.⁹⁶

Nellie suffered an attack of pneumonia, and on medical advice, Hetherington took her to the warmer climes of Brisbane, where they stayed for five months, and then on to Maryborough in 1928, where Nellie played and sang for Pastor George Burns of the newly-formed Christian Mission.⁹⁷

Not long afterwards, Hetherington was pioneering Pentecostal mission work among the Aborigines at Mossman, about 80 kilometres north of Cairns, in North Queensland.⁹⁸ Her long black dress particularly struck the scantily clothed northern Queenslanders.⁹⁹ Later Ethel Vale was to claim that there had never been a missionary at Mossman before.¹⁰⁰ She seems to have been misinformed here. In North Queensland, the non-denominational Queensland Kanaka Mission had been established in 1886 by the renowned evangelical missionary Florence Young.¹⁰¹ Based in Bundaberg, the Mission soon

⁹⁴ F.Lancaster, interview, 18 December 1993; E.Vale in Guy, 1998, pp.265f. In 1948, he visited Mossman and took over the mission for a time. Years later, a mural which he painted bore tribute to his work there.

⁹⁵ Hetherington, 1929, p.20.

⁹⁶ For the story of Valdez and the 'Sunshine Revival' see Chapter Nine.

⁹⁷ See Chapter Nine.

⁹⁸ AE 7:11 October 1941, p.9. There was a significant Aboriginal population in this area. See the map in McGrath (ed), 1995, pp.xxv.

⁹⁹ W.Walker, quoted in Guy, 1998, p.176.

¹⁰⁰ E.Vale, quoted in Guy, 1998, p.188.

¹⁰¹ F.Young, *Pearls from the Pacific* London and Edinburgh: Marshall Brothers, n.d. See also relevant articles in ADEB, ADB. The Young family are still prominent in evangelical work today.

established branches in other places, including Cairns and Mossman. In 1905, there was a revival of prayer during which people fell on their knees and variously cried and laughed for joy. The movement spread until in places as far removed as Bundaberg and Mossman, there were extensive prayer meetings being held during which missionaries and ‘boys’ alike cried out for an infilling of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰² To what extent there were Pentecostal manifestations at these meetings is unclear, but one Cairns inhabitant claimed that her grandfather, a South Sea Islander, attended ‘Pentecostal’ meetings at cane-cutters community camps in and around Cairns in 1904. George Malla Kulla was a recognised leader of these groups.¹⁰³ By the time Hetherington arrived 25 years later, most of the South Sea Islanders had been repatriated. But memories of the 1905 revival were still to be found.

In 1897, in an endeavour to counteract the continuing violence and exploitation of Aborigines and their ongoing decimation through alcoholism, opium addiction, poverty and disease, the Queensland Aborigines Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act had been passed requiring Aborigines to relocate to Government missions ‘for their own protection’.¹⁰⁴ Although there were many restrictions — Aborigines on reserves were forbidden to take alcohol or opium, they could not vote and authorities had the right to search their dwellings and belongings at any time, to read their mail, to remove their children, to prohibit traditional practices, to confiscate their property — Hetherington believed the Act had been introduced for the Aborigines’ benefit and that it would offer relief from their sorrows.¹⁰⁵ So she herself, now in her mid-fifties, moved to the Gorge Reserve to set up a ‘Faith Mission’ where she and Ethel Vale laboured together.¹⁰⁶ It was not easy. Initially, they lived in a humpy. The two women manually cleared dense jungle scrub and planted a variety of tropical fruits and shrubbery. They established a school and tried to provide medicine for the children. Hetherington personally milked the cow and

¹⁰² Young, *Pearls*, pp.160ff.

¹⁰³ Esther Noble Frost, personal communication, 1 September 1994.

¹⁰⁴ This Act became the model for similar Acts in four other States.

¹⁰⁵ Broome, 1994, pp.97ff.

¹⁰⁶ Wilma Walker, quoted in Guy, 1998, p.235. There was an understanding that missionaries could work on Government missions. See Harris, 1990, p.765.

attended to other menial tasks.¹⁰⁷ She was often without funds but trusted God to supply her needs.¹⁰⁸ She taught, conducted funerals, and cared for the children. She tended to the sick and washed the feet of Aboriginal brothers and sisters.¹⁰⁹ On occasion, she intervened to prevent spear fights between the men. ‘She would run right out into the middle of the fight area and stop them,’ recalled one woman. ‘No one game to throw spear when she out there.’¹¹⁰ Over one hundred new believers were baptised in water during the thirties, some of them in crocodile-infested streams. Hetherington was not afraid; she just trusted God.¹¹¹ She would often pray, ‘Lord, send the fire down!’ and, to those present, even the leaves on the big milk tree quivered.¹¹² Together with Nellie, she held meetings in the local Mossman ‘sample shed.’ Nellie played the piano and sang with ‘a beautiful soprano voice’ while Hetherington preached.¹¹³ Ultimately, a house was built for her at Kubirri. Kathleen Bogle paid tribute to Hetherington—

Sister Hetherington was just like a mother to the Aboriginal people. She’d get a dish of water and wash their feet and tend to them when they were sick. She ... would go to their camps, give them a wash and take care of them. Make soup and feed them. She was an angel in disguise.¹¹⁴

On 10 and 17 March, 1932, she was presented as ‘our pioneer and veteran missionary’ at the ‘Canvas Cathedral’ in Brisbane, where she spoke of her work at Mossman and Nellie sang among others a song entitled, ‘The Hope of the Aborigines.’¹¹⁵ The journey would not have been easy. For a start, there was no road from Cairns, and either a boat trip or a train ride to Kurunda offered the only possibilities. At least one person was so challenged by her

¹⁰⁷ E.MacNamara quoted in Guy, 1998, p.182. One of the few surviving photos shows her sitting on a stool milking a cow surrounded by dense thickets of tropical trees.

¹⁰⁸ K.Bogle quoted in Guy, 1998, p.187.

¹⁰⁹ K.Bogle quoted in Guy, 1998, p.191.

¹¹⁰ E.MacNamara quoted in Guy, 1998, p.182.

¹¹¹ AE 5:8 July 1939, p.9; J.Done quoted in Guy, 1998, p.180.

¹¹² K.Bogle quoted in Guy, 1998, p.187.

¹¹³ E.Jenkins quoted in Guy, 1998, 186.

¹¹⁴ Guy, 1998, p.191.

¹¹⁵ ‘Cooee 6’, 13 March 1932.

message he decided to become a Daintree missionary.¹¹⁶ In that same year, she addressed the Queensland Assemblies of God conference, with the result that a year later she became recognised as their missionary to the Aborigines.¹¹⁷ On occasion, Hetherington visited the Pentecostal church at Cairns. A photo taken around 1935, when Maxwell Armstrong was pastor, shows her standing with a group of the church people.¹¹⁸ She was a slight, diminutive, white-haired woman. She was also said to be hard-working, set in her ways and on fire for God. Around this time, Hetherington declared that the Mayor of Mossman, who had assisted the work of the Mission in many ways, would not die before he turned to the Lord. Years later, after Hetherington's death, this came to pass.¹¹⁹

In 1938, the Aborigines' Progressive Association, under the leadership of William Ferguson, proclaimed 26 January as a Day of Mourning for Aborigines and campaigned widely for justice and equality, actions which resulted in the passing of the New South Wales Aborigines Welfare Act (1940).¹²⁰ In the same year, Albert Namatjira held his first exhibition in Melbourne.¹²¹ Of much less import, but sufficient for those involved, after a decade of meetings in tents and sheds, was the opening, in 1938, by Isabella Hetherington, with the assistance of people from Brisbane, of a small building which served both as a Sunday meeting place and a school for the children. People came for miles around to the dedication service. The church was nicely

¹¹⁶ This was Jack Easton who was converted in a Salvation Army rally in Brisbane in November 1930, then began to attend Booth-Clibborn's Canvas Cathedral. After four years in the army, and a time of life-threatening illness, he became Superintendent of the Daintree Mission from 1945 to 1950, before going with his wife to Papua New Guinea as a missionary, where he was to serve for the next 26 years. See Guy, 1998, pp.184, 254ff, 348f; J.Easton, personal communication, 6 February 1995; interview 24 February 1995.

¹¹⁷ S.Hunt, *The Assemblies of God Queensland Conference: A Story of its Formation and Mission*, Assemblies of God, n.d., p.21.

¹¹⁸ This church at Cairns also conducted some outreach work with Aborigines in places such as Skeleton Creek, where there were, at times, significant changes in community life as a result. See GN 18:2, February 1927, p.10; R.Dyer, Len Cook Jr, D.Parker, personal interviews, 28-31 January 1994, and T.Hallop, personal interview, 15 April 1993. In 1935, Charles Enticknap baptised some Aborigines in Innisfail, where he ministered to both Black and White people — see Chapter Thirteen.

¹¹⁹ M.Jackson, personal communication, 8 May 1992.

¹²⁰ Broome, 1994, pp.166ff; Goodall, in McGrath (ed), 1995, p.87; Davison et al (eds), 1998, p.250.

¹²¹ Broome, 1994, p.169.

filled, reported Charles Enticknap, and ‘dedicated to the glory of God for the salvation of the native sons of Australia.’¹²² For Hetherington, this was an achievement to be proud of; she was content to leave political activism to others.

On 27 July 1941, Henry Wiggins, the Chairman of the Assemblies of God in Australia, officially opened a new Mission at nearby Daintree, under the leadership of Hugh Davidson.¹²³ En route, he visited the Gorge at Mossman where, he wrote, ‘nestles Sister Hetherington’s Mission for Aboriginals.’ The Gorge was ‘more lovely than ever’ but Hetherington was ‘frailer than in past days.’¹²⁴

Four years later, the new Assemblies of God National Chairman, Pastor Philip Duncan, described her as an ‘aged worker of 76 summers, bent with age’ who wept when they prayed together. ‘She lives with the coloured folk,’ he wrote, ‘and she will die with them, for whom she left and gave her all.’ When the Government policy of removing children with a non-Aboriginal father from their families accelerated in the 1930s, she opposed the idea.¹²⁵ She was devoted to God and ‘passionately in love’ with the people she served and on whose behalf she had invested so much.¹²⁶ Robert Missenden, a newly-ordained Methodist minister, conducted Hetherington’s funeral. Before she died, he said—

I was supposed to pray for her but she prayed for me ... She sat up in bed and said, ‘Lord Jesus, I am coming.’ Then she lay back and was gone.¹²⁷

¹²² AE 5:8 July 1939, p.9.

¹²³ AE October 1941 quoted in Guy, 1998, pp.223ff. Davidson was Will Enticknap’s son-in-law, having married Agnes Enticknap (b.4 September 1907) on 26 October, 1929. See A.Davidson, personal interview, 20 November 1990. Hetherington spoke at the opening of the new Mission, recalling her early days of pioneering at Mossman.

¹²⁴ AE 5:8 July 1939, p.9; AE 7:11 October 1941, p.2.

¹²⁵ K.Bogle quoted in Guy, 1998, p.234. The Queensland State Children’s Act of 1911 was the third piece of legislation in Australia to give Government officials the right to remove Aboriginal children from their parents and place them in an institution. See Broome, 1994, p.134. It became standard practice for children to be separated from their parents on Government settlements and missions. See Reynolds and May in McGrath (ed) 1995, p.195.

¹²⁶ P.Duncan, ‘Daintree Walkabout’ in AE 11:11 November 1945, p.3.

¹²⁷ Hunt, *Conference* p.21.

One man, moved to tears as he spoke, claimed that the night Hetherington died people saw angels fly from her house to the church, where they heard them singing.¹²⁸

Isabella Hetherington's love for God, her yearning, joyful mysticism and her commitment to His work come through strongly in these words —

I am not worthy of the crumbs that drop from my Master's table, but I am finding out that it is not according to my merits or demerits that He blesses me but according to His riches in glory ... My King has conferred his highest honour upon me, even me, by pouring out His Holy Spirit upon me. I cannot understand this mystery of mysteries but oh! Who else but God could have produced such a rapturous height of holy delight as possessed my body ... Is it presumptuous to say that I was filled with the fullness of God? ... Oh that I could get entirely out of self and into God, indeed I hunger and thirst after the living God ...¹²⁹

The spirit of Pentecost could hardly be more finely expressed.

Hetherington's dedication to her calling is simply portrayed in a few lines she penned for Nellie to sing —

May I do it to Thy glory,
 Whatso'er the work may be;
 May each duty tell to others
 That it is not I, but Thee.

And if Satan should applaud me
 For the work that Thou dost do
 In and through an empty vessel,
 Thou canst hide me from his view.

In the secret of Thy presence
 I am lost to all beside,
 Knowing not of fame or glory,
 But of Christ the Crucified

When the evening twilight cometh,
 'Ere I lay this body down,

¹²⁸ This was 31 August 1946. Hetherington was buried in an unmarked grave on which a stone was erected by Arthur Westbrook exactly 49 years to the day after her death. A. Westbrook, interview, 8 April 1997; M. Jackson, personal communication, 8 May 1992.

May my reckonings be found faithful,
So that no man take my crown.¹³⁰

Compared with other Christian work among Aborigines, Pentecostal endeavours in the pre-war years were modest, to say the least. Nevertheless, given the small size of the fledgling movement and viewed in the light of the activities of older denominations in their first half-century of existence, the work was not insignificant. It reflected the passion ignited by their experience in the Spirit and their deep conviction that the Spirit was given to empower them for witness and evangelism.

A half-century later, beginning in the late 1970s, there was a widespread and significant charismatic revival among Aborigines at Arnhem Land and Elcho Island in the Northern Territory and at the Warburton Ranges in Central Australia, where hundreds were converted, many rescued from alcoholism and violence and Pentecostal manifestations common. Aboriginal preachers and musicians addressed crowded gatherings. Whole communities were changed.¹³¹ Isabella Hetherington and Erny and Effie Kramer would have rejoiced to see this — it was the kind of growth of the faith they had dreamed of.

I am not aware of any direct connection between their work and this later revival. In some ways they were very different. The recent work has largely been led by Aborigines with comparatively little input from non-Aboriginal people. Nevertheless, in a general sense, the foundation of Christian faith and

¹²⁹ GN No 6 October 1913, p.10.

¹³⁰ Hetherington, 1929, p.32. Hetherington seems to have written several poems. See A.Davidson quoted in R.Guy, 1998, p.250. Most of these may now have perished. There is a poem of some 40 lines entitled, 'In Loving Remembrance of Dear Little FORD,' a three-year-old who died prematurely. I have been told that this was written by Isabella Hetherington. The work itself is attributed to 'J.Hetherington.' It was given to me by Mrs Edna Faulkner, April 1992. Part of it reads —

Then the Bridegroom embraced still one more of His bride,
Who had braved death's dark river, so deep and wide,
To sit at the banquet and be the King's guest.
What felicitous joy! What a haven of rest!

Yes, safe, oh, so safe, in that home of the blest,
Where no evil thing cometh, and the weary find rest.
He is waiting, dear parents, for you over there,
When the Lord shall descend with his saints in the air.

¹³¹ The Aboriginal revival has been well documented in J.Blacket, *Fire in the Outback* Sutherland, NSW: Albatross, 1997.

belief laid down by pioneers like Hetherington and the Kramers — and scores of other Christian missionaries — has plainly been a determining factor.

Isabella Hetherington and Erny and Effie Kramer provide fine models of Australian Pentecostal ministry. Hetherington and Erny Kramer were both immigrants who unreservedly made Australia their home. They were innovative and resourceful. They understood better than many the need to identify with the people they served. They did not try to impose an inflexible Anglo-Saxon ‘civilised’ model of Christianity on the Aborigines. They were prepared to work with or without denominational or organisational support. Their philosophy of ministry was defined by their understanding of God and the impartation of His Spirit. They clearly felt compassion for the Aborigines; they knew by personal experience the power of the Holy Spirit; they believed they were led by God to venture out as they did; they trusted God to meet their needs when no human aid was at hand. They worked hard; they sacrificed material comforts for the work of the ministry; they openly declared their love for God; they believed it was not unreasonable to ask God for the impossible. They demonstrated, perhaps better than anyone, the spirit of Pentecost.