

*THE
EVANGELISATION
SOCIETY
Of
AUSTRALASIA.*

*THE SECOND PERIOD:
1919 TO 1945.*

by

Robert Evans.

This book is a project of Research in Evangelical Revivals.

Cover picture: Jean-Francois Millet. “The Sower.”

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Walter J. Beasley’s chart comparing geology to Genesis One was supplied by the Australian Institute of Archaeology. The views expressed in it are not necessarily those of the Institute. The chart also appears on the endpapers of Beasley’s book *Creation’s Amazing Architect*.

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PREFACE

Less than twelve months since the publication and launch (in January 2011) of 'The Evangelisation Society of Australia: The first 35 years – 1883-1918' by Robert Evans and Darrell Paproth, the second book (1919-1945) has arrived.

That this has occurred so quickly is a testament to the passion and commitment of Bob Evans. These two works will prove to be an enormous blessing to workers, volunteers and supporters of ESA Country Ministries (ESA) both present and past.

The first volume was an inspiring one, recording the incredible adventures of men and women who took the gospel of Jesus Christ into isolated and rugged parts of country Victoria and the other states of Australia.

The name may have changed at times: Evangelisation Society of Victoria to Evangelisation Society of Australasia and even incorporating the Australian Christian Colportage Association. Essentially however, what is now known as ESA Country Ministries has been a vehicle by which God has taken the truths of the gospel into rural Victoria and beyond for close to 130 years.

In our comfortable armchair Christianity of 2011 it is humbling and inspiring to read of how a visit to Emerald, Victoria by a lone evangelist 100 years ago should have been accomplished with so many barriers.

A beautiful Melbourne town now, at one time Emerald could only be reached through muddy isolated tracks over the mountains. Such was their isolation that the townsfolk were excited that at last they had a visitor. More than that, dozen responded to the gospel when it was presented. This is the story repeated over and over in the first volume and one that continues through the second and into the present day -

although technology and transport advances enable ESA workers to reach even the most isolated communities within hours. Nevertheless, the power of the gospel still penetrates many hearts annually as God's Holy Spirit uses His Word spoken at camps, church meetings, and adventure activities conducted by the staff of ESA.

Although several evangelistic groups have shared a similar type of ministry to that of ESA over the years, ESA now presents as quite unique in its vision to reach rural Victoria as it Equips, Serves and Assists Country churches.

Today the community centered around Donald in the Wimmera - Mallee, the families around Colac in South-Western Victoria and generations of Children around Ballarat are the recipients of the faithful service rendered by ESA's field workers in those areas. They continue to share faithfully the saving message of the grace found in Jesus Christ in schools, homes and the wider community. They have a heritage of over a hundred years to base their ministry upon.

Over many years Gippsland - in Victoria's east - has been the focus of outreach to the lost too. Through the presentation of the gospel at children's and youth camps, in family groups and churches and even in prisons, ESA's men and women reach the hearts of the isolated and spiritually needy working out of Traralgon and Maffra.

For 30 years ESA's administrative hub and Conference Centre was at Marysville, north-east of Melbourne. The Black Saturday fires of 2009, effectively curtailed the work there and yet even now Alexandra (in the same region) is the centre of ESA's Adventure camping ministry - a tool which has seen many people young and old impacted for God through canoeing, fishing, rock-climbing, bushwalking and through the agency of school chaplaincy and church-planting.

How thrilling to think that the work of evangelism has been carried out unabated since 1883 (with the possible exception being during periods of economic downturn and war) by dozens of ESA workers and volunteers and that we in 2012 can be a part of carrying on with that work.

The ESA Board of which I am a member is grateful that Robert Evans has chronicled the remarkable history of this organisation. The Board is honoured to be a small part of the continuing heritage of preaching Christ to country Victoria.

As one who has been involved in ESA Country Ministries for some 35 years, I feel a part of that heritage of ESA work commenced and continued by its pioneers - Rev. A.J. Clark, Hon. James Balfour, James Griffiths, through to George Fuhrmeister (who it seems led my father to Christ whilst chatting over a pigsty fence in Western Victoria), Bob Pocklington and 'Aunty' Myrtle Payne.

With the completion of this second volume - 'Evangelisation Society of Australasia: 1919 to 1945' - countless supporters and volunteers will enjoy reading of the organisation and of the Godly men and women who served between the two world wars.

And of course ESA will continue, but this generation of believers will need to supply the next generation of field staff - evangelists. Maybe they will come from the current fledgling 'intern' program flourishing in Gippsland, or maybe it will be you - the one reading this volume who will be the next E.S.A. field-worker or volunteer - sharing Jesus Christ with country Victoria.

Stephen Kilpatrick.
ESA Country Ministries.

INTRODUCTION

In the year 1983, the Evangelisation Society of Australia marked its Centenary. This was a considerable landmark in its history, because at several points in its story the Society had ceased to function, and indeed, ceased to exist as more than a technicality. Yet, here it was, definitely and strongly involved in the soul-saving ministry of the Church, just as it had been through most of its history since it began in 1883.

The task of writing its Centenary History was handed to one of the Society's workers, Mr. Donald Prout, who must have wondered what he had done to deserve being given this task. He said that, with the request to do this job, he was presented with a large handful of papers to use as his resources.

Donald did the best that he could, and, eventually the Centenary book for the Evangelisation Society of Australia was published.¹ From browsing through this book we can see what "the large handful of papers" contained, and also we can perhaps guess at what was not there.

Firstly, his book presented a copy of the advertisement which appeared in several papers in 1883 to announce the formation of the Society. There were a few reports about early missions conducted by the first evangelist employed by the Society, the Rev. A. J. Clarke. There was information about a visit to Melbourne by Mr. George Muller of Bristol, with a photo, who was invited to Victoria by one of the Open Brethren leaders linked to the Society. After that, Donald had some news, and a photo, about a visiting English evangelist brought out by the Society to lead evangelistic meetings in various parts

¹ Donald Prout. *Going Where the Need is Greater*. The E.S.A. Story. 1983.

of Victoria. This was Mr. George Clarke, who was a world-famous athlete who openly declared his faith in Jesus Christ.

After these details ending in 1888, Donald's file seems to have contained almost no more information about the Society's activities until 1926, for which year he had the Minutes of one of the Society's business meetings. His next information was the annual meeting report for 1932. After that, the information improved slowly, until, by the end of the Second World War, he was able to present a fairly good coverage of events and people.

Overall, his difficulty really was that the Society had never taken care to keep the Minutes books of their business meetings, or their correspondence. There were no Society archives. With these he could have written a much better history of the Society. On top of that, he did not know, and there was nobody else who knew where to look for the information which would have allowed him to fill in the gaps, which covered most of the first fifty years of the Society's story.

Since I retired from parish responsibilities about thirteen years ago, I have written and published privately about six books on the history of evangelism in Australia covering the period before the First World War. During the research for these books I came across quite a deal of information about the early years of the Evangelisation Society. At first it was called the **Evangelisation Society of Victoria**. In 1897 its name was changed to the **Evangelisation Society of Australasia**, because the Society started receiving many requests for the services of their evangelists from other Australian colonies, and from New Zealand.

By this means, a good deal of useful material already existed in my files, so I thought it would not be too difficult to

assemble a history of the Society, at least covering the years to 1918. At that time I knew very little about what came after that date. That was the reason for ending at 1918.

The Rev. Dr. Darrell Paproth, well qualified historian, and lecturer at the Bible College of Victoria, had already written a paper about the missions led by Mr. George Clarke, the Christian athlete, in 1888. Dr. Paproth gladly agreed to become a co-author of the new book, not only allowing his paper on 1888 to be republished, but also writing a new chapter especially on the events which led up to the formation of the Evangelisation Society.

The leaders of the E. S. A. Country Ministries, which is the current incarnation of the old Evangelisation Society of Australasia, were very happy to welcome the appearance of this history book about their early years, and Dr. Paproth and I were very pleased with the welcome that they all gave us at their staff conference on Saturday, 22 January, 2011, when we launched the new book.²

This present book is a sequel to the first one. It is an extension of the history of the Evangelisation Society of Australasia, and its new incarnations, through to about 1945.

An obvious feature of this present book is the relative lack of information about E.S.A. life up from 1919 through until 1926. Indeed, the poverty of information exists from about 1910 onwards to 1926. Donald Prout already knew about this difficulty, of course, and he called it “The Silent Years” of the E.S.A.

² Robert Evans and Darrell Paproth. *The Evangelisation Society of Australasia: the First Thirty-five Years. 1883 to 1918.* Hazelbrook, N.S.W. Published by Robert Evans. 2010. Copies are available from E.S.A. Country Ministries.

In my experience, for the period before 1910, the main source of information was a Christian weekly newspaper called *The Southern Cross*, produced by the Rev. W. H. Fitchett, Methodist minister and first Principal of the Methodist Ladies College in Melbourne. The issues of this paper published from about 1880 contain a great deal of evangelical church news about Melbourne, and many other parts as well. They represent an enormously valuable source of information. But after about 1910, this source slowly dried up, as it included increasingly less local news. *The Southern Cross* went out of production in 1928 soon after the death of Dr. Fitchett. The *Australian Christian World* claimed to have absorbed the *Southern Cross* after 1928. The A.C.W. had first appeared around 1888. For most of its life it was published primarily in Sydney. A South Australian edition was published for many years, although for most of the time the editor lived in Sydney, so there may not be a lot of difference between the Adelaide and Sydney papers. Only very early issues up to 1892 are available on microfilm. From 1892 to 1953, hard copies can be seen in the Mitchell Library in Sydney. Copies of many of the South Australian papers are held in the Mortlock Library, Adelaide. The National Library of Australia has the microfilms, and hard copies from about 1948 to 1953 only.

A new excellent resource for information has become available in the last few years. This is *the TROVE website*, created by the National Library of Australia, which made early issues of the main secular newspapers available and searchable through the web. Indeed, an increasing number of provincial newspapers are also coming on line in this way. This source can be amazingly useful, and I have had to rely upon it almost exclusively for parts of this new book.

After 1926, and up to about 1937, my information has depended very largely upon the kindness of Mr. Will Renshaw,

who possesses an almost complete set of the *Keswick Quarterly and Upwey Convention News*. He very kindly photocopied for me all of the pages in his copies which related to the history of the Evangelisation Society. I was able to fill in a couple of holes in his supply at the Library of the Melbourne School of Theology. But there are still a few holes in the coverage which I have not been able to cover so far. For some reason, this periodical is not available at the State Library of Victoria, and the only complete set I have been able to discover belongs to Mr. Robin Pocklington. At the time of writing, I have not seen his copies, but hope to make copies of his whole set for the use of researchers in history in the near future. I expect this will open up for me many other aspects of evangelical history in Melbourne through those years.

The other main source of information after 1938 has been through the Victorian evangelical weekly newspaper *New Life*. Microfilms of this paper can be purchased through the State Library of Victoria.

As this new book is a sequel to the first volume covering the history of the Evangelisation Society up to 1918, this Introduction provides me with an opportunity to confess my sins committed in the former book.

The main mistake is that I created confusion between the roles played in the leadership of the Society by Mr. John M. Griffiths, and by his brother Mr. James Griffiths. I was not careful enough to distinguish between what each of these men did. Particularly in the later period from 1905 to 1918, it was Mr. John M. Griffiths who provided the main leadership for the Society, and this may also have been true in earlier years. Mr. James Griffiths, however, did play a strong and generous role in a number of ways up until his death in a railway level crossing accident in 1925. The accident also involved the death of his wife, and of Miss Elizabeth Morton, who also figured in one of

the chapters of the first book, plus another young Christian lady.

Another mistake occurred in relation to the events leading up to the arrival of Mr. George Clarke in Australia in 1888 in Dr. Paproth's chapter. We thank Dr. Elisabeth Wilson of Tasmania for pointing it out. I may have been slow in realising the impact of what she said. But "the penny dropped" for me after the book was printed, so we were unable to make any correction.

Acknowledgements

There are many people to thank. Firstly, my main thanks must go to Mr. Will Renshaw, for supplying the photocopies from the *Keswick Quarterly*. I could hardly have made a start on this book without them. So the whole project has depended upon these photocopies.

I thank also Gloria Moore of the Bible Society offices in Melbourne, Lee Campbell of the Gateway Baptist Church in Launceston, Gordon Griffiths of the S.S.E.M., fellow history worker Travis McHarg, the Rev. Dr. Ian Breward of the Uniting Church Archives in Elsternwick, Baptist historian the Rev. Dr. Ken Manley, Laurie Rowston the Baptist historian from Tasmania, Ron Robb of the N.S.W. Baptist archives, Daryl Lightfoot and Sue Pacey, both from the Presbyterian archives in Sydney, and Christopher Davey who is Director of the Australian Institute of Archaeology, still independent, but more associated with La Trobe University.

Institutions which have contributed substantially to this work are the National Library of Australia, the State Library of Victoria, and the Mitchell Library in Sydney, as well as the archives linked to the people mentioned above. The library of the Melbourne School of Theology was also helpful.

CHAPTER ONE

EVANGELISATION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALASIA.

1919 to 1945

BASIC TIMELINE.

One of the main features of the work of the Evangelisation Society of Australasia during its first 35 years, which were chronicled in the first book in this series, is the fact that the Society enjoyed having several capable evangelists who worked for the Society for long periods.³

Even the first two evangelists, the Rev. A. J. Clarke and Mr. Arthur Eustace, both worked for the Society for four years, from mid-1883 to 1887, which provided a stable beginning. But the main strength of the Society's manpower in this period came from three men:- Mr. Robert Robertson, who worked for the Society as an evangelist from 1887 to 1901; Mr. William H. Scurr, who was an evangelist from 1889 to 1902; and the Rev. Joseph T. Piercey, who was an evangelist for the Society from 1906 to 1918. There were other evangelists also who worked for the Society strongly for good periods of time. These men

³ Robert Evans and Darrell Paproth. *The Evangelisation Society of Australasia: the First Thirty-five Years. 1883 to 1918.* Hazelbrook. N.S.W. published by the authors. 2010. Copies are available from E.S.A Country Ministries.

together provided the strength of manpower for the Society during its first 35 years.

In this second volume, covering the years from 1919 to 1945, there are two periods in which the Society's available manpower collapsed. In the first instance, from 1919 to 1925, the Executive had to struggle continually to find evangelists to carry out the work that churches asked it to do. In the second instance, from 1935 to 1944, the work achieved by the Society declined to that of hospital visitation only, and for some of the period the work of the Society disappeared totally, so that the Society basically ceased to function, so far as outreach was concerned. The middle years, from 1925 to 1935, provide the only period when the staff of evangelists was in any way sufficient, and showed the needed stability and substance.

Apart from manpower, the work of the Society was naturally affected by the economic situation, which became especially critical after 1929, through the years of the Great Depression.

During the First World War, in addition to the evangelists who are mentioned in the previous book, a great deal of additional work was done in military camps. Some of this was done by Joseph Piercey, who also conducted church-based missions for the Society where he could. Mr. Frank Varley also joined the staff of the Evangelisation Society in 1916 in order to work amongst the soldiers, and then changed quickly to join the Y.M.C.A. work amongst soldiers so that he could continue this work overseas, closer to the actual theatres of the War.⁴

After the War, Frank Varley joined the Melbourne Gospel Crusade.

⁴ *Argus*. Wednesday, 17 May, 1916. page 8.

The previous book mentions that the Society employed a young man named Mr. John H. Robinson, B.A., who planned to go to China as a C.I.M. missionary. While almost no information is available about what he did during these missions, he worked in this way probably for about twelve months before he departed to China in 1918.

The First Period of Difficulties with Manpower – 1919 to 1925.

During the years from 1919 through to 1925, the Society managed to arrange a number of missions each year without the name of the evangelist appearing in print, so that we do not know who led these meetings.

For example, the following statement appeared in relation to some missions arranged in 1921:- “The Committee of the above [E.S.A.] met on Monday afternoon, 3rd inst., in the Bible House, Flinders Lane, Melbourne, when the chairman, Mr. J. M. Griffiths, presided. Reports of missions held in country towns were received. The results among the young people are very gratifying, and give cause for praise.

Final arrangements were made for the Tasmanian mission. It was reported that united prayer meetings were being held, and already there was a fine spirit of expectancy. A progress report was presented relative to the St. Kilda proposal. The committee is now awaiting word, as its being able to procure a certain suitable place for conducting work on Sundays, as it is not possible to do anything in the open air owing to the Council’s restrictions. For various reasons it was decided to alter the closing date of the Society’s year from September 30 to December 31, so that friends will not get their reports till early next year.”⁵

⁵ *Southern Cross*. Friday, 14 October, 1921. page 645.

1919.

At the beginning of 1919, the following advertisement appeared under a black heading giving the name of the Society. It provides us with a list of the Executive members of the Society at that time

The Evangelisation Society of Australasia.

“President:- J. M. Griffiths, Vice-Presidents, Dr. J. J. Kitchen and W. Howat.

Committee: Revs, J. Barton, W. Borland, J. Robertson, W. H. Scurr, W. Pearse. Messrs. T. C. Camm, J. M. Griffiths, W. Howat, Jas. Lewis, W. T. Wallis, J. Birtchnell, Dr. J. J. Kitchen. Acting Hon. Treasurer, H. Webster, “Sunning Hill,” Cotham Road, Kew. Secretary, Mr. Charles Carter. 12 Brinsley Road, East Camberwell. Committee of Reference: Mr. Jas. Griffiths, David Beath, J.P., and H. Berry, J.P. Collector – Miss Tait, 39 Walpole St. Kew. The Society sends evangelists at the invitation of, and in co-operation with all Christian Churches. Send for an application form to Secretary. Donations and subscriptions much needed.”⁶

An event of importance in the story of the Society occurred in April or early May, 1919. This was the death of the Rev. Edward Isaac, Baptist minister, and also minister of the Reed Memorial Church, Launceston from 1905 for several years. He worked as an evangelist for the Society on quite a number of occasions. A memoir of his life was published in the *Southern Cross*.⁷

Another event which marked a serious milestone in the history of the Society came in July with the resignation of the

⁶ *Southern Cross*. 24 January, 1919. page 24.

⁷ *Southern Cross*. 9 May, 1919. page 291. See also Evans and Paproth.

long-standing Secretary, Mr. Charles Carter. A letter to the editor announced this sad situation.

“To the Editor,

Sir,- You will regret to hear that Mr. Charles Carter has, owing to ill health, resigned the position of secretary of the Evangelisation Society of Australasia, after giving thirty-two years of faithful and successful service to the Society. My Committee would be grateful if you would kindly insert in the “Southern Cross” the enclosed copy of the minute adopted by the Committee at its last meeting. Will you also please add that Mr. D. P. Robinson has been appointed Honorary Secretary in succession. Would you also kindly notify that the Rev. John Complin, of New South Wales, has been appointed Evangelist to the Society, and will take up his duties as such from July 30. Immediate applications from town and country churches for Evangelistic Missions will be gladly received by the Honorary Secretary, 130 Flinders Street. Thanking you for your help at all times, -

Yours sincerely, J. M. GRIFFITHS, President.”

The Minute of Appreciation went as follows:-

“The Committee of the Evangelisation Society of Australasia accepts with deep reluctance the resignation of its secretary, Mr. Charles Carter, and sorrowfully regrets that his state of health makes this necessary.

For over thirty-five years, ever since the date of the formation of the Society in the year 1883, Mr. Carter has acted as secretary, and it is difficult to adequately express in words how much its success owes under God to his labours. His warm, large-hearted sympathy, his genial optimism, his winsome yet manly personality, combined with his devotion to the Lord and his love for men, have endeared him to multitudes

of Christian people, including ministers of all denominations. His ability as an organiser was manifested in the great missions held by Dr. Torrey, Dr. Chapman, and other evangelists, which owed much of their success to his enthusiasm.

Mr. Carter not only possessed the esteem of his Committee, but in a signal manner gained the confidence of the many evangelists who have laboured for the Society.

The Committee rejoices that during the period of his secretariat many thousands have been led from darkness to light, and to trust in Christ Jesus as Saviour.

Finally, the Committee expresses its gratitude to Almighty God for having granted them such happy years of fellowship in the Gospel with His servant, and prays that when the call to the higher service comes to him he may receive an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”⁸

We do not know how many missions occurred in the early part of the year, or who it was who led them. But the Society did not have enough staff to carry out the work through the main months of the winter. As mentioned in the President’s letter above, they called upon a Baptist minister from New South Wales who was between appointments. This was the **Rev. John Complin**. Again, a letter to the Editor announced this fact.

“The Evangelisation Society of Australasia.

Sir, - The Rev. John Complin has arrived in Melbourne from New South Wales, and is now conducting Evangelistic Missions in connection with the work of the Evangelisation Society. His services are available to both town and country

⁸ *Southern Cross*. Friday, 11 July, 1919. page 438.

churches for mission work, and applications may be made to the honorary secretary, 130 Flinders Street. Yours sincerely, D. P. Robinson. – Honorary Secretary.”⁹

John Complin worked for the Society from August through to near the end of the year, although very little information is available about his work during this time. A separate chapter in this book has been prepared about his life and work.

1920.

Advertisements which appeared regularly in the *Southern Cross* in 1920 under the name of the Society gave the following information:-

“President: Mr. J. M. Griffiths.

Vice-Presidents: Dr. J. J. Kitchen and Mr. W. Howat.

The object of the Evangelisation Society is to conduct Evangelistic Missions throughout the States in co-operation with the Christian Churches and Organisations, and to send forth Evangelists into country towns and remote districts. The work is inter-denominational, and is supported by voluntary contributions and thank-offerings received at Missions held.

Applications for Missions are invited from Town and Country Churches, and may be made to the Honorary Secretary, Mr. D. P. Robinson. 130 Flinders Street, Melbourne.”¹⁰

Again, for this year, we do not know what other missions were arranged, or who conducted them. But there seems little doubt that the Society had great problems with manpower. Their efforts to overcome this difficulty led to the appointment of the **Rev. Philip E. Shepherd** as an evangelist,

⁹ *Southern Cross*. Friday, 22 August. 1919. page 534.

¹⁰ *Southern Cross*. For example - Friday, 16 January, 1920. page 46.

commencing probably in April. He was a Presbyterian minister. A separate chapter in this book has been prepared about Shepherd's life and work.

1921.

Frankly, there is no information showing how the Society did any of its work in 1921. Copies of the *Australian Christian World* that I tried to consult for 1921 had pages which were so brittle that I could not proceed with any search of them.

However, we must remember the quotation given earlier, but in which no evangelists' names are mentioned.

“The Committee of the above [E.S.A.] met on Monday afternoon, 3rd inst., in the Bible House, Flinders Lane, Melbourne, when the chairman, Mr. J. M. Griffiths, presided. Reports of missions held in country towns were received. The results among the young people are very gratifying, and give cause for praise. Final arrangements were made for the Tasmanian mission. It was reported that united prayer meetings were being held, and already there was a fine spirit of expectancy. A progress report was presented relative to the St. Kilda proposal.”¹¹

1922.

Ex-Chief Stoker Reg. Stephens was loaned to the Evangelisation Society for nine months of 1922, commencing probably in April. Stephens spent 22 years in the British navy, and had spent the years through the First World War as stoker on H.M.A.S. Australia. From 1919 he had been working for the Y.M.C.A. in many parts of Australia, especially working as someone with a message to men and boys, and emphasizing the manliness which is required in following Christ. A strong form

¹¹ *Southern Cross*. Friday, 14 October, 1921. page 645.

of “muscular” evangelical Christianity was very much in vogue at that time.

From mid-1921, the Y.M.C.A leaders began making Stephens available to speak at churches and fellowships as part of his overall agenda.

During 1922, there is only a small amount of information about his work for the Society from April through to December, although it seems he was very popular as a speaker. A separate chapter in this book has been prepared about his life and work, as much as was possible.

The other person with whom the Society made an arrangement to conduct evangelistic missions for part of 1922 was the **Rev. Charles Chenery**. Basically he was a Congregational minister, although for several years he was minister at the Reed Memorial Church in Launceston, starting later in 1922, following which for a short time he was minister at the Baptist Church in Perth, not far from Launceston. But he returned to Congregationalism in his last years. A separate chapter has been prepared in this book about his life and work.

1923.

Once again, there is precious little information of any kind about how the Evangelisation Society carried on its work through the year 1923. No doubt there were missions conducted in various places, but we do not know the names of those who led these missions.

However, the **Rev. D. H. Moore** conducted some of their missions during the year. Moore arrived in Australia early in March, 1922. He was on a world preaching tour to promote the vision of revival, and to promote the interests of the Russian Missionary Society which had been founded by Pastor William Fetler. He travelled to many parts of Australia and New

Zealand on this tour during 1922. In 1923, it seems that he agreed to work for the Evangelisation Society.

The following entry in the *Southern Cross* appeared very early in January, 1924, and probably applies to a meeting which occurred very late in 1923.

“The Evangelisation Society of Australasia.

At the last meeting of the committee of the Evangelisation Society of Australasia, held at the headquarters of the China Inland Mission, Melbourne, very encouraging reports were received of missions conducted by Evangelist D. H. Moore in the various States, also of missions conducted by Evangelist Oliver Burgess in Victoria. Evangelist Moore will work two months in Tasmania before commencing a three months’ campaign in New Zealand. In June, he will be free for work in Victoria, and the Society will welcome the request for united efforts in any centre.

The Poster Text Campaign was reported on, and a letter was received from an anonymous friend offering further financial help if it was possible to develop the scheme along certain lines. There is still a quantity of the four sheet posters on hand, and the secretary will be glad to hear from persons who can effectively use them. These are displayed on all the change railway stations in Victoria, and on hoardings in all the suburbs of Melbourne. A cheque for 431 pounds, representing a legacy from the estate of J. M. Steer, has been received, which relieves the Society of its bank overdraft. The committee is, naturally, very thankful to have this generous help from the executors of the late J. M. Steer’s estate to make it possible to close the books at the end of the year, and show a credit balance for the new year’s work.”¹²

¹² *Southern Cross*. Friday, 11 January, 1924. page 19.

This letter mentions also **Mr. Oliver Burgess** as an evangelist working for the Society. Burgess was a Victorian who was one of the very first men to volunteer to go as a missionary to China following the visit to Australia of the founder of the China Inland Mission, Hudson Taylor, in 1890. He left that year, and spent nearly thirty years in China, excluding periods of furlough, when a good deal of deputation work was done in Australia and New Zealand. His travels in China included some time spent living near the border of Tibet, and perhaps visiting Tibet, and he reported back “home” a number of times about the periods of persecution of Christians, major famines, and outbreaks of Civil War and banditry which he saw first hand, or which occurred in other parts of China while he was there. A small number of his reports from China, and descriptions of his deputation meetings, were published in Australian secular newspapers from time to time.¹³

From very limited information, it seems that Oliver Burgess spent much of 1923 and 1924 working for the Evangelisation Society in Victoria. However, he returned to China before 1926. This return did not last long, as he is listed as being on the Committee of the Northern Tasmanian Evangelisation Society in 1928, and as chairing one of the gatherings at their Annual Meeting in November that year.¹⁴

1924.

It looked like the Society hoped D. H. Moore would continue working for the Society through 1924 as well. But this hope evaporated very quickly, by the end of February, when

¹³ For example, *Sydney Morning Herald*. 7 October, 1909, page 6, and 30 June, 1930. page 12.

¹⁴ *Examiner*. 13 November, 1928. page 11.

Moore took temporary pastoral work with the Collins Street Baptist congregation in central Melbourne.

After the arrangement with the Collins Street people came to an end, Moore continued his evangelistic activities, although it is not clear whether his work at this point was related at all to the Evangelisation Society. In the following quotation we see a report on a mission he conducted at Moonee Ponds.

“The Rev. D. H. Moore and Mrs. Moore, of London, conducted a ten days’ evangelistic mission at the Moonee Ponds Baptist Church from August 24 to September 2. The meetings were attended with great blessing. On the first Sunday, when the missionary spoke to the Sunday School,, a number of the scholars accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, over forty of the number being from the Intermediate School. The second Sunday evening several of the young men and women, and one or two older folk, made the great decision, and on the following evening four others registered their vows for Christ. Both Mr. and Mrs. Moore gave themselves unsparingly to this campaign, and their messages were a source of great blessing to the Christian folk as well. The pastor and people are rejoicing through this great ingathering. Mr. Moore is at present engaged in a campaign at Aberdeen Street Church, Geelong. H. M.”¹⁵

A separate chapter in this book has been prepared about the life and work of the Rev. D. H. Moore, in so far as that was possible.

¹⁵ *Southern Cross*. Friday, 12 September, 1924. page 583.

The Amalgamation of the E.S.A. and the V.O.A.M. - 1925.

The manpower shortage being suffered by the Evangelisation Society was highlighted in 1925. No information exists about missions or other activities run by the Society in the first half of the year, but in the middle of the year the Society amalgamated with the Victorian Open Air Mission (V.O.A.M.).

The V.O.A.M. had commenced operations in Melbourne in 1895, under the inspiration of the redoubtable Mr. Charles Carter, who became its first president. Scattered information appeared sometimes about its activities in the *Southern Cross*, and even less often in the secular newspapers. The president of the V.O.A.M. from about 1910 onwards was Mr. H. B. Denniston. A brief and inadequate chapter about the V.O.A.M. appears later in this book.

The new organization was to be known as the Evangelisation Society of Australasia, possibly because the E.S.A. was older and better known in many parts of Victoria. So the V.O.A.M. lost its identity in this union.¹⁶

In the 1920s the V.O.A.M. had steadily developed a strong team of evangelists – so different from what the E.S.A. had managed to build in those years. By 1925, they had at least four evangelists to bring into the union. These were Messrs. Norman Lumsden, F. W. George Hall, Eric Clarkson and W. Dickason. Another evangelist, Mr. Herbert H. Janetzki had worked for the V.O.A.M. in the early 1920s, and also came into the E.S.A. a year or so after the union took place. So far as I can see, he was not working with the V.O.A.M. in 1925.

Mr. W. A. Allen was a song leader in the last days of the V.O.A.M., and who had gone with Eric Clarkson on his first evangelizing tour to Bright in a horse-drawn Griffiths' Tea

¹⁶ *Argus*. Friday, 31 July, 1925. page 4.

carriage. Andrew W. Smith, also was part of the new team, joining the Evangelisation Society about the time of the amalgamation.

So, this union provided a tremendous stimulus to the work of the Evangelisation Society. Separate chapters have been provided here about the lives and work of Lumsden, Hall, Smith and Clarkson.

Fresh Sources of Information – Starting in 1926.

February, 1926, marked the birth of a most worthwhile evangelical newsheet in Victoria entitled *The Keswick Quarterly and Upwey Convention News*, called the “KQ” for easy reference. Each issue of the KQ contained between fifty and seventy pages, containing a significant amount of advertising, spiritual messages which had been given at the Upwey Convention, or which came from some other suitable source, news segments from various “faith” mission organizations which were supported by the Upwey leaders, and news segments from various interdenominational evangelistic organizations around Melbourne. Obviously there would also be news about Upwey Convention activities of all kinds, including youth camps associated with the main convention, and work on developing subsidiary conventions in main country centres.

The vast advantage of having this source of information is evident immediately upon viewing the first issue. The Evangelisation Society of Australasia, for example, had the benefit of just over three and a half pages of print. It contained reports from three of their most active evangelists, Norman Lumsden, George Hall and Eric Clarkson.

Lumsden’s report described how he had led a mission in the little township of St. James, with the help of Andrew W. Smith as song leader. Hall had been doing open air work

around Melbourne in railway workshops, on the beaches, and through large meetings on Sunday evening in major suburbs or in the city. Clarkson reported on missions he had conducted through January and February in Childers, Thorpdale and Moe, and asked for prayer support for his future missions in Willow Grove and Narracan. Lumsden's report especially contained details of personal work and conversions.¹⁷

The second issue in May contained only one page of news about the Evangelisation Society. This was a report from Lumsden and Smith, firstly about their mission at St. James, and then at Ararat. After that, they had both left for missions in Tasmania, working under the auspices of the Tasmanian Open Air Mission. An Easter Convention had been conducted in Hobart, followed by a mission in Collinsdale. Future plans were for missions at Longford, Hagley and Glenorchy, and they would be back "home" by the first of June.¹⁸

The third issue in August devoted nearly three and a half pages to the E.S.A. About half of this came from Lumsden and Smith, telling of the remainder of their Tasmanian visit, and of their subsequent meetings at the Queensberry Street Mission Hall, and then at the Bentleigh Methodist Church. Clarkson had half a page of space, and told how he had been joined by Andrew Smith in his meetings around Moe. Hall had started his own department within the E.S.A. which he called the Open Air, Factories and Workshops Department. Within a few years this section of the E.S.A. became a separate organization.¹⁹

The fourth issue for 1926 contained a report about the "Annual Meeting" of the E.S.A., covering about half a page, at which all the evangelists were present. There were also reports from Lumsden and Smith covering over a page about their

¹⁷ *Keswick Quarterly*. Vol.1. No.1. February, 1926. pages 13 – 15.

¹⁸ *K.Q.* Vol.1. No.2. May, 1926. page 13.

¹⁹ *K.Q.* Vol.1. No.3. August, 1926. pages 19 – 21.

work, and half of a page from Clarkson about his visit to Moulamein in N.S.W., and also the beginnings of his longer visit to Orbost, and the area around, in eastern Gippsland.²⁰

The Annual Meeting took place on 23 September in the Conference Hall opposite Camberwell railway station, and included three sessions and a tea.

The morning session allowed all of the evangelists to give some reporting about their activities for the year. Andrew Smith not only spoke of his own work, but led the singing as well. The other speakers in the morning were Norman Lumsden and Eric Clarkson, with Dr. D. S. MacColl giving the final message

“The afternoon session was probably the best, when Evangelist George Hall gave a striking message on the opportunities for service in the city, and the reception he and his co-workers had been getting.” The main speaker, however, was the Rev. T. C. Hammond of Dublin, Superintendent of the Irish Church Missions, who spoke of times when the opposition to Gospel preaching in Ireland was so severe that he had known of a cordon of police three deep surrounding the preacher. Mr. C. H. Dyer led the singing in the afternoon.

The evening gathering was chaired by the President of the Society, Mr. H. B. Denniston, and messages were given by Lumsden and Dr. MacColl, with musical items being provided by the male quartet.²¹

1927.

At the 43rd Annual Meeting of the Evangelisation Society, which was held on 22 September, 1927, the line-up of

²⁰ *K.Q.* Vol.1. No.4. November, 1926. pages 17 – 19.

²¹ *K.Q.* Vol.1. No.4. November, 1926. page 17, and *Argus*. Friday, 24 September, 1926. page 9.

the Society's evangelists included Norman Lumsden, Eric Clarkson, George Hall, Herbert Janetzki and Andrew W. Smith.

The secretary of the Society, Mr. Thomas Grogan, stated that fifty-nine evangelistic missions had been held in churches or halls throughout Victoria and Tasmania during the previous twelve months. In addition, 15,000 men had been reached in Government workshops, 15,000 children in State schools had received religious instruction, and 5,000 factory hands had been addressed. In all, about 2,000 meetings had been held, and the aggregate attendance had been about 100,000.

The finances were generally in very good shape. Two excellently equipped motor vans and a large marquee had been donated to the Society, and donations had totalled about 1,600 pounds. However, even greater resources would be needed in the coming year.

The Society apparently had some volunteer workers trying to reach out to men on the wharves. This team was joined in 1927 by Miss Mitchell, who had a great deal of experience in working amongst sailors in Tasmania, and in Gibraltar.

George Hall and Andrew Smith both provided written reports about their work in different parts of Melbourne and surroundings which were duly published.²²

The later months of 1927 were marked by the resignation from the Society of Norman Lumsden, who was their most experienced evangelist, and, many thought, the most effective evangelist to work in Victoria in recent times. Lumsden had worked with the V.O.A.M since 1913, and continued with the E.S.A. after the amalgamation until 1927.

He said:- "After fourteen years of most happy fellowship... I have been led to resign, with very much regret.

²² *K.Q.* Vol.2. No.4. November, 1927. pages 39 – 42.

There were two outstanding reasons for this step: Firstly, because for some time I had been conscious of physical weariness, and felt that the strain of preaching night after night continuously was becoming too great a tax; secondly, the large number of [male] students in the M.B.I. Hostel and the increasing burden there upon my wife made my repeated and lengthy absences from home on evangelistic missions most undesirable. After quiet waiting upon the Lord and deep consideration, this momentous step was taken with much peace and assurance of His will. I am now looking to Him for other Christian service that will not entail absence from home, and which will be less strenuous.”²³

1928.

The Annual Meeting of the Society for 1928 took the same format as those beforehand in the Conference Hall at Camberwell. “...satisfaction was expressed at the work done in the year. Open-air work on the beaches at Hampton, Sandringham, Mordialloc, Frankston, and Cowes (Phillip Island) had been carried out successfully in the Christmas vacation last year, and, it was said, would be repeated in the coming holiday period. Successful midday meetings in factories and workshops, and on the wharves, had been continued regularly, two bands going out each day. More than 7,000 copies of the Gospels had been given away in personal work, and a large number of tracts had been distributed. A new departure had been made during the year by the appointment of Mr. J. Neilsen as hospital and sick visitor. Many letters of thanks had been received from persons who had benefited by the work of the Society. Reports from the four evangelists of the Society, Messrs. G. Hall, H. H. Janetzki, Eric Clarkson and

²³ *K.Q.* *ibid.* page 39.

Andrew W. Smith indicated that good work had been done in various parts of Victoria. The women's auxiliary reported also that in the Melbourne suburbs many successful meetings had been held.

The balance-sheet showed that receipts for the year ended July 31, 1928, had been 1,918 pounds, 9 shillings and nine pence, and the expenditure 1,908 pounds 14 shillings and eleven pence, leaving a credit balance of nine pounds fourteen shillings and ten pence.

The officers of the Society are:- Mr. H. B. Dennison - President; vice-presidents – Mr. W. D. Flatman, Mr. J. M. Griffiths, and Dr. J. J. Kitchen; treasurer – Mr. W. J. Beasley; secretary - Mr. Thomas Grogan, 493 Flinders Street; committee – Messrs, G. L. Aitken, C. H. Dyer, A. Westwood, F. C. Wright, and Rev. J. F. Anderson.²⁴

From this Annual Report we see the introduction of hospital visitation as a major part of the Society's work. Mr. Jack Neilsen had been doing this kind of work beforehand, reference to which had appeared in a previous *Keswick Quarterly*, and in the *Southern Cross*. He was joined in this work by Mr. G. L. Aitken, and a small team of others. A separate short chapter about Jack Neilsen appears later in this book.

We see also the appearance of the wealthy businessman, Mr. Walter J. Beasley as treasurer of the Society. This may not have been the first year he was treasurer, but Beasley figured in a major way in later parts of the Society's history. A short chapter appears later in this book about Beasley's life and work.

²⁴ *Argus*. Friday, 28 September, 1928. page 5.

1929.

Information about the Annual Meeting in 1929 appeared in the *Keswick Quarterly*. Again the pattern of the event occurred in three sessions through the day on 26 September. The morning session was led by the Rev. J. F. Anderson, who presented a devotional message. Jack Neilsen gave a report on his hospital visitation, saying that over two hundred conversions had been recorded through this work during the year.

In the afternoon, C. H. Dyer led a song session and addresses were given by Evangelist Janetzki and by the Rev. W. D. Jackson. The chairman for the afternoon was Dr. J. J. Kitchen.

The evening meeting was presided over by the President, Mr. H. B. Dennison. The speakers were Eric Clarkson and the Rev. C. N. Lack, recently returned from China. "An excellently fine spirit pervaded the whole of the meetings, and the presence of God was felt at each one. The annual report shows that the income of the Society was greater than in previous years, and that two members of the first committee, formed forty-five years ago, are still members of the Society."²⁵

The year 1929 also marked the beginning of the Great Depression, which would have affected substantially the financial backing of the Society, its ability to get needed equipment, and to pay the travel costs of its agents.

1930 – 1931.

Although it does not seem to have been recorded anywhere until the end of the year, it appears that Evangelist F. W. George Hall set up his own evangelistic organization at some time during 1930. He called it the Open Air and Factories

²⁵ K. Q. Vol.4. No.16. November, 1929. page 24.

Evangelistic Movement.²⁶ As a result, he was no longer one of the evangelists working for the Evangelisation Society. He continued this organisation for several years, taking several initiatives which had strategic impacts upon the spiritual life of Victoria. A short chapter will appear later in this book about Hall's life and work.

During 1930, an extra dimension was added to the Society's evangelistic work. This was to provide the staff for a spiritual life Convention which Eric Clarkson organized at Nullawarre, near Warrnambool, during the King's Birthday weekend. The speakers at this gathering were the Rev. Cyril Cato, M.A., Mr. T. Graham and Mr. W. J. Beasley. The musical side of the meetings was provided by Mr. C. G. Sandland, and three ladies, Misses Sandland, Kempton and Freeman.²⁷

While the November issue of *Keswick Quarterly* gave a good overall description of the Society's work being done by Janetzki, Clarkson and Neilsen, and of some illustrated lectures on prophecy being given by the President, it does not describe the Annual Meeting for 1930 at all.

Eric Clarkson was sick for the later part of 1930, and also through the winter months of 1931, and had to go home and rest. This threw extra work onto the other Society workers and their helpers to keep up at least some of the country work that Clarkson had been doing. Especially this fell to H. Janetzki. Cyril Cato also helped where he could, but he was then a Methodist theological student in Queens College. During 1932 and 1933 he took a circuit appointment, before he went as a missionary to Fiji.

²⁶ *K. Q.* Vol.5. No.20. November, 1930. page 31.

²⁷ *K. Q.* Vo.5. No.19. August, 1930. page 23.

1932 to 1934.

The work of the Society progressed on a fairly even keel through these three years, depending very much upon the work of the two full-time evangelists, Clarkson and Janetzki, at times well supported by their wives. They also had the help of small teams of helpers. And there was also the hospital visitation team, led by Jack Neilsen and G. L. Aitken. More than half of the reports which appeared in the *K.Q.* through this period came from the pen of Neilsen, and described his work in some detail.

Andrew W. Smith's name no longer appears in any of the Society's reports. He became an organizing evangelist for the Baptist Union in Victoria. George Hall's name continued to appear under a heading in the *Keswick Quarterly* relating to his own activities.

Donald Prout quotes from some business minutes of the E.S.A. Council in 1932 to which he apparently had access, which says that Eric Clarkson was willing to continue to work for the Society despite the fact that they could not pay him any salary, because of the overall economic condition of the country. He comments, "That's the kind of stuff of which E.S.A. workers are made!"²⁸

This kind of economic situation and inability to pay any salary, had occurred before, late in the 19th Century.

It is probably for reasons largely related to the financial situation that the real difficulties began to arise for the Society in the coming year.

1935.

This brings us to the period when the wheels began to fall off the Evangelisation Society's chariot. Eric Clarkson left the Society and began work for the Methodist Church, doing

²⁸ Donald Prout. *Going Where the Need is Greater*. The E.S.A. Story. 1983. page 13.

basically the same work that he had been doing for the Society, and using a vehicle which had belonged to the Society. Herbert H. Janetzki left Victoria for other parts of Australia, and his name appears soon afterwards doing evangelistic work in Queensland.²⁹ Jack Neilsen's hospital ministry, with his helpers, continued unabated. The regular intercessory ministry of Society members had been reinforced during these years, and the Ladies Auxiliary was still very active.

Apparently the Executive ceased to meet around this time, and as a result further progress became very difficult.

There are, however, strange and unexplained sides to this story. For example, Mr. Walter J. Beasley was still the treasurer of the Society, and Mr. John M. Griffiths was still a supporter, had been President, and was still on the Committee. Mr. H. B. Denniston was President. These men were three amongst a list of wealthy Christian businessmen in Victoria at that time, although Mr. J. M. Griffiths was quite an old man by then. The men on this list were all strong supporters of missionary work and evangelism. They were enterprising people, with a lot of energy, with many ideas and many contacts, and were used to being driving forces in the operations in which they were involved. I find it hard to believe that Walter Beasley simply allowed the Society to die in the way it did in these years. It may well be true that he had many other irons in the fire, and that his enthusiasm led him off in other directions. I am inclined to believe this was the case. Some of his other objects of interest are mentioned in the chapter about his life and work which can be found later in this book. Perhaps he thought that the Evangelisation Society was not quite at the top of his list of priorities in these difficult years.

²⁹ *Rockhampton Morning Bulletin*. Saturday, 22 October, 1938. page 12.

The Effective Demise of the Evangelisation Society. 1936, and After.

Through 1936, Jack Neilsen's team continued to report to the public about their work through the *Keswick Quarterly* under the name of the Evangelisation Society. But as time passed, even this changed. Some time in 1937 or early 1938 Jack Neilsen died, and his team members carried on his work of visiting the sick. By 1939 they were reporting on their work under the name of the **United Christian Workers' Mission to the Sick**. The spokesperson was Mr. G. L. Aitken, of 37 Brunei Road, East Malvern.³⁰ Some of the team members came from other Societies. So, in the minds of these, the last workers for the Evangelisation Society of Australasia, the Society no longer existed in any effective form.

This represented the complete end of the work which had begun in 1883, and which had enjoyed some wonderfully successful periods. The manpower behind the Society had collapsed and disappeared. It was the end of an era.

Perhaps symbolizing the ending of this period, Mr. Henry Britain Denniston died on 31 August, 1938. He had been the President of the E.S.A. since 1925, and had been President of the Victorian Open Air Mission for some years before 1925. Mr. H. B. Denniston died in a private hospital, aged 64 years.

Mr. Denniston was born at sea on the s.s. Great Britain, off the Cape of Good Hope, on his way to Australia. He was educated at Bains High School in Ballarat, and he worked for a while for the Bank of New South Wales. In 1896, with his brother, Mr. C. E. Denniston, he founded the firm of Denniston and Co. Pty. Ltd.

³⁰ *Keswick Quarterly*. May, 1940. page 55.

For many years he was the chairman of the Egypt General Mission.³¹ He had been a successful businessman, and had been very generous, in money, time and effort, in his support of evangelism and foreign missions for many years

The Australian Christian Colportage Association (A.C.C.A.).

This Association was the brainchild of Mr. Walter J. Beasley, and came into existence in the first month or so of 1939. It should here be emphasized that it was a new organization, and was not an attempt to resurrect anything from the past.³²

The inspiration for the new effort was apparently provided by the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Seventh Day Adventists, and other cults, who had taken a lot of trouble to spread their literature into country areas, and where at that time there seemed to be not enough presence of evangelical literature available either to purchase or to borrow, or to be available freely.

Just as in the eyes of Saint Paul, the entry of the gentiles into the scheme of salvation was meant to make the Jews jealous, and thus to stimulate them into recognizing that Jesus Christ was after all their Messiah, so in this case, the zealous work of the cults provided a reproof and stimulus in the minds of Walter Beasley and his friends, so that they acted to provide good literature supplies to many country areas.

Mr. Alf. Reid was an evangelist. He had been a jockey in a previous life before his conversion. He had recently made a tour around Australia conducting evangelistic meetings. He wrote to Mr. Beasley, telling him of sad situations, from an evangelical viewpoint. He stated that he had found the

³¹ *Argus*. Thursday, 1 September, 1938. page 11.

³² *New Life*. 3 March, 1939, page 3.

publications of the cults in some of the most remote towns. For example, he visited Carnarvon (which the printer spelled incorrectly), in Western Australia. There Reid had visited the Public Library, “and found sixteen volumes by Judge Rutherford upon the shelves. He was able to inform the librarian of the nature of these books, and was instrumental in having them removed, but such an incident illustrates the manner in which these cults have ‘evangelised’ the country districts of Australia.”³³

It was known that cult members used the coastal tramp steamers to visit every settlement along the coastlines, do their visiting and evangelizing, and then get back on the boat and go to the next town. “Facts such as these have inspired the formation of the Colportage Association.” It was also an indication of spiritual hunger which existed in many people.

Reid said that a Pastor in Western Australia travelled over a hundred miles in order to take four services on a Sunday. The Pastor thought he was only able to impart “the barest elements of the Christian faith in the short time at his disposal.” Often churches go for a month without a service, and in some places even this did not impart anything that was worth delivering. So, well written and strongly evangelical literature was needed in order to carry out a missionary work in the outback, but also in many country places.

Beasley received immediate support from many directions, after he announced his new venture. By the middle of May, over one thousand books had been assembled, including many of the publications of the English publishers, Marshall, Morgan and Scott.

A Gospel van was secured, and the help of a team of students from Melbourne Bible Institute was arranged. Mr.

³³ *New Life*. 3 March, 1939. page 5.

Robert Pocklington would be leader, and Messrs. Ron Teale, Preston Walker, and Alan Lock were arranged to leave in it for Yarra Junction and other places, following a dedication service on Friday 12 May. The service was led by the Rev. C. H. Nash, Principal of the Institute. Alf. Reid led one of the prayers, and Walter Beasley gave an address on the aims of the Association.³⁴

In Yarra Junction they visited 360 homes, only six of which refused to accept Gospels. About 600 Gospels were distributed altogether, and 275 copies of *The Reason Why*, 250 copies of *The Way of Salvation*, and numerous tracts.

The students found strong evidence that cult members had been very active already, and in many cases they had to explain themselves first before people would accept them as not being cult members. The cult people had been well received in some cases.

From Yarra Junction they spread out to Three Bridges, Powelltown. Final meetings were arranged in Yarra Junction, with a gathering addressed by Walter Beasley, using illustrations about Arab life, and a Sunday service at which C. H. Nash was the preacher.

But Pocklington and the others were students, and had to return to the Institute to continue their studies when the holidays were over. So, more permanent arrangements had to be made to use the van to advantage. Two brothers were chosen to make a tour in the van. These were Geoffrey and Harold Malins. Geoffrey was preparing to go to China as a missionary, and left the next year. Harold was a Gospel singer who had a good deal of experience working with Norman Lumsden, John G. Ridley, and others.

³⁴ *New Life*. 12 and 19 May, both page 1.

The Malins brothers planned to take the van and make brief visits to Winchelsea, Camperdown, Warrnambool, Portland, Heywood, Hamilton, Horsham, Dimboola, Warracknabeal, Jeparit, Rainbow, Hopetoun, Woomelang, Sea Lake, Nyah, Swan Hill, Kerang, Barham, Cohuna, Echuca, Shepparton, and the Goulburn Valley.

By this time a number of small libraries had been established in country places, including as far north as Mackay in Queensland. Beasley himself visited Port Campbell, giving illustrated lectures on the archaeological excavations in Jericho.³⁵

Alf. Reid became a colporteur with the Association for a while, travelling to South Australia on another tour. He continued this link until November.

In September, 1939, another aspect of the work of the A.C.C.A. was opened when Miss Una Dods joined the team. She did not work with the men, but did colportage work and personal evangelism in the Prahran district, especially at the markets and in house to house visiting.³⁶ On many occasions after that, she provided glimpses of her work in little articles which appeared in *New Life*, under the heading "Leaves from a Colporteur's Diary."

This glimpse gives a little view of the early days of the Association. It continued to develop, especially as the new year came, and Robert Pocklington became more completely involved. He travelled to many places in the van by himself. By the end of September, 1940, he was joined by George Fuhrmeister, and they worked together for several years.

The tenor of the work slowly changed, however, and became much closer to what the Evangelisation Society had done in the previous years. The emphasis became much more

³⁵ *New Life*. 23 June, 1939. page 1.

³⁶ *New Life*. 22 September, 1939. page 3. and following.

upon direct evangelism and less upon providing literature and creating country district libraries, although both aims could be achieved. Beach mission work soon followed during the Christmas vacations.

The Evangelisation Society of Australasia Back from the Dead - Briefly.

In May, 1942, an explanation appeared, along with the announcement of a new initiative, written by Dr. J. J. Kitchen.

It had come to light that two legacies had been left to the Evangelisation Society, but questions had arisen as to whether or not anyone could claim the legacies, because the Society no longer existed.

“This had to be decided by the Supreme Court, where it took five barristers, aided by a small army of solicitors, to discuss before the learned Judge as to whether the Evangelisation Society might be considered to be still in existence. After the pros and cons had been carefully argued, the Judge decided from the evidence produced that the Society had every right to claim the legacies. This has been done, so that an opportunity has been given for a move forward.

One member of the Committee, Mr. G. Aitken, has continued the valuable work of the late Mr. Neilsen, in visiting the various hospitals and institutions, and he will continue to do so.”

The initiative was this. Arthur Pocklington was Robert Pocklington’s older brother, and had many leisure days during the winter months. So he was approached to conduct three months of evangelism in the city and country, as openings occurred. The older Pocklington had been a missionary in

China, and was the assistant secretary of the Upwey Convention. He was a widely respected speaker.³⁷

New Life provided reports on most of the missions which were led by Arthur Pocklington through those months.

For example, Arthur Pocklington held a mission at Dartmoor Presbyterian Church, where the minister was the Rev. D. Ian Munro. He wrote:

“As Minister of the Church, and on behalf of the office-bearers, we heartily thank Mr. Pocklington, and the faithful prayer supporters who upheld him in his earnest and strenuous evangelism. In eleven days he spoke at forty-four meetings of various kinds. Quite often we had two meetings at the timber mills, a children’s meeting, open-air and Gospel meeting, in the one day. Mr. Pocklington proved himself a capable and gifted evangelist amongst mill hands, children, and in the Church. He used to advantage his experiences and pictures of China and Tibet.

The Children’s meetings were the most encouraging, and although no adults decided for Christ, we praise God for some eighteen children who made the great decision at Dartmoor, and two other places visited. We would value prayer for the young converts, and heartily recommend Mr. Pocklington to all who are interested in this great work of evangelism.”³⁸

Despite the resurrection, a second death soon occurred. Just over a year later, on Monday, 8 March, 1943, a meeting of the Committee of the Evangelisation Society of Victoria (sic) was held in Melbourne, and a resolution was passed handing over to the A.C.C.A. all the assets and work of the Society. On

³⁷ *New Life*. Volume 4. Number 41, Friday, 15 May, 1942.

³⁸ *New Life*. Friday, 10 July, 1942. page 3.

their part, the A.C.C.A. said they would incorporate the name of the Evangelisation Society with its own.³⁹

For perhaps a year, both names were used on the masthead of the A.C.C.A., being unclear whether the Society was the Evangelisation Society of Victoria, of Australia, of Australasia, or of somewhere else.

In April, 1943, two more men joined the A.C.C.A. team. These were Arthur Barnes and Bill Merriweather. The team arrangements could change, however. For example, in June, Fuhrmeister and Barnes worked in Northern Victoria at a construction camp, where 2,400 men were working, and the only Christian witness was through two Salvation Army lasses. At the same time, Pocklington and Merriweather worked in the Cressy district.⁴⁰

By the end of July, Pocklington and Merriweather went to join the others at the construction camp, and George Hall was seconded to the A.C.C.A. from Campaigners for Christ to join them as well.⁴¹

By the end of September, Pocklington and Merriweather were leading a mission in the northern N.S.W. town of Lismore. Fuhrmeister and Barnes had gone to the Boweya district.⁴²

The Birth, at last, of the Evangelisation Society of Australia.

It was not until 2 March, 1944, that it was announced that the A.C.C.A. would drop its name, and adopt instead the name of the Evangelisation Society of Australia, in order to avoid confusion which had existed in the previous months.⁴³

³⁹ *New Life*. 11 March, 1943. page 8.

⁴⁰ *New Life*, 24 June, 1943. page 8, and 1 July, 1943, page 8.

⁴¹ *New Life*. 29 July, 1943. page 8.

⁴² *New Life*. 23 September, 1943. page 8.

⁴³ *New Life*. 2 March, 1944. page 8.

Thus the short but very active life of the Australian Christian Colportage Association came to an end.

The new E.S.A. rapidly changed, not in name, but in drive, leadership, and range of activities.

More students from the Melbourne Bible Institute joined, but also a new leader came, from South Australia. This was the **Rev. George R. Brown**, who had been the organizing evangelist of the Evangelisation Society of South Australia for 21 years.

The Leadership of the Rev. George R. Brown.

He led the new E.S.A for five years. He watched it grow. He led it into joint evangelistic activities with other like-minded organizations, such as the Campaigners for Christ, and the Mildmay Movement. By about 1947 the E.S.A. had officially affiliated with the Mildmay Movement. And then in 1949, Brown resigned from the E.S.A. in order to become the organizing evangelist throughout Australia for the Mildmay Movement in this part of the world. A chapter about the Rev. George R. Brown's ministry, especially before 1944, appears at a later stage in this book.

If it was my purpose here to continue and write an entire history of the E.S.A., then this section about Brown's work in Victoria would be a very important part, with more to come. But it is not. My story closes with the end of the year 1944.

Mr. Donald Prout's book gives us a good coverage from this date onwards, up to the time when he wrote his little book, in 1983.

After the Second World War, Bill Merriweather followed his calling from God, and went to Papua with the Unevangelised Fields Mission. The present author met many of these U.F.M. missionaries in the early 1950s.

According to Mr. Donald Prout, George Fuhrmeister later became an Anglican minister. Arthur Barnes became a Methodist minister, and Robert Pocklington joined the Baptist ministry.⁴⁴

In 1946, Mr. Aitken retired from the hospital visitation work. But from this year, a steady stream of new talent started to join the E. S. A. team.

In 1947, Robert Pocklington and Miss Una Dods resigned from their work with the Evangelisation Society of Australia. Somewhere in my readings I noticed that Una Dods continued her Christian work in Hobart, which was probably her home town anyway.

As mentioned above, in 1949, the Rev. G. R. Brown also resigned to become a Mildmay evangelist.

By 1950, the membership of the E.S.A. team was completely different from five years earlier. This team developed and provided a new manpower stability of members who worked with the Society for a number of years.

⁴⁴ Prout. D., *Going Where the Need is Greater.* page 15.

CHAPTER TWO

THE REV. JOHN COMPLIN

E. S. A. Evangelist in 1919.

In 1919, the Evangelisation Society of Australasia was short of an experienced evangelist to lead the missions for which the Society had received requests.

For part of the year, they were able to borrow from New South Wales the help of a Baptist minister who was between pastoral settlements, but who also had good experience as an evangelist. This was the Rev. John Complin.

We have some details of his early years from an account he gave of himself when he arrived in Queensland in mid-1906 to commence work as an organiser and lecturer for the Queensland Temperance Alliance. He was interviewed by a reporter from the *Brisbane Courier*, who prepared an article. From his earliest years John Complin had been linked to the witness of the churches near his home. As a young person he had formed a Band of Hope in a Norfolk country village, and was preparing to enter the Methodist ministry. He used to go out into the highways and by-ways witnessing for Christ, and was thrilled with the ambition of working for Christ. By apparent accident, he found himself one day at a Salvation Army meeting, where two brave young Salvationist girls were surrounded by a "crowd of roughs." He went to their aid, as best he could, but this little event changed his life and for the next 21 years he worked for the Salvation Army.

Salvation Army Days.

One of his first tasks for the Salvation Army was to take twelve young men out in a van, rather like a gipsy's van, and train them for Army work. Amongst these twelve men was one named Winter, who in 1906 was Brigadier in charge of all the Salvation Army work in Queensland. Another, named George Barber, in 1906 represented the Bundaberg electorate in the Queensland State Parliament.

Mr. Complin occupied several Divisional Commands in England, and then spent some time in Canada, first as general secretary to Commander Herbert Booth, and then as editor of Salvation Army publications there.

Mr. Complin visited Australia about 1892 as secretary to Commissioner Coombs, which included a visit to Queensland. After returning to England, Complin was given charge of the Training Home in Clapham, "the historic head-quarters of Army work." Afterwards he was Brigadier in charge of all Sunday School and Youth Work in Scotland, based in Glasgow. All this was strenuous work, and it had an effect on his health, because he had given himself to this work without reservation.

So, after 21 years of working for the Salvation Army, in 1906, he resigned, carrying a letter of recommendation from General Bramwell Booth, and he accepted the job with the Queensland Temperance Alliance. His health was already transformed by the sea voyage to Australia.

Temperance Alliance Work.

The Alliance was a confederation of Temperance bodies, such as the Rechabites, the Independent Order of Good Templars, and many of the Churches. For some time the Alliance had been looking for a lecturer, to further their extensive work throughout Queensland, and they were very pleased to welcome Mr. Complin. The Salvation Army was,

after all, firmly in favour of “Prohibition,” so he already had much experience combating the drink traffic.⁴⁵

He was immediately introduced to, and initiated into the Rechabites, at the fortnightly meeting of Pioneer Tent, Number 1, and his first tour of speaking commitments was arranged. The first visit was to be made to Charters Towers, which at that time was about the third largest centre of population in the State. This was to be followed by visits to Hughenden, Winton, Cairns, Ravenswood, Townsville, and other places. But first, on the following Monday, a public welcome would be accorded him in the Temperance Hall.⁴⁶

Upon his return to Brisbane, a short report appeared about a meeting he addressed, organised by the Beacon Light Lodge of the I.O.G.T., held in the Wynnum South Presbyterian Church. After an entertaining programme, Complin “spoke eloquently of the progress of the temperance cause, and urged all present to join the Order. A collection realised two pounds.”⁴⁷

In 1907, amongst his many commitments, John Complin addressed the half-yearly session of the Baptist Association of Queensland, on behalf of the Temperance Alliance, and visited Rockhampton in June, although his health was not good at that time.⁴⁸

He was still working in Queensland during 1908, because there was a report of his work addressing a temperance rally which had been organised by the Good Templars in the

⁴⁵ *Brisbane Courier*. Friday, 29 June, 1906. page 5.

⁴⁶ *Brisbane Courier*. Saturday, 30 June, 1906. page 4, and Monday, 2 July. 1906. page 4.

⁴⁷ *Brisbane Courier*. Thursday, 4 October, 1906. page 5.

⁴⁸ *Brisbane Courier*. Friday, 29 March, 1907. page 5, and the Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin* for Wednesday, 26 June, 1907. page 4.

suburb of Laidley. Five new members were initiated after the rally.⁴⁹

But a year later it seems he was working for the Temperance Alliance in New South Wales as secretary. One reference in the *Sydney Morning Herald* indicates he was holding a debate with a representative of the Licensed Victuallers' Defence Association in Newcastle, on behalf of the Northern Branch of the Temperance Alliance.⁵⁰

In February, 1912, we find that Complin had been in Newcastle again, and that he was just leaving for a tour in the Cootamundra district. But there is more information about a visit that he made to Broken Hill in October for an extensive campaign.⁵¹

These glimpses represent a mere smattering of the many things that John Complin did in this period, or indeed in his life so far.

Baptist Home Missions and Pastoral Work.

In December, 1912, he resigned from his job with the New South Wales Alliance. "After three years of strenuous and successful service as lecturer and organiser throughout New South Wales, Mr. Complin now resigns for the purpose of taking up evangelistic work for his church. The Alliance will still have the benefit of his experience in the field, also his experience as far as possible in the coming campaign for no license, as he will retain his seat as a member of the State Council."⁵²

⁴⁹ *Brisbane Courier*. Thursday, 19 March, 1908. page 2.

⁵⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*. Tuesday, 31 August, 1909. page 8.

⁵¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*. 12 February, 1912, page 5, and *Barrier Miner*, Monday, 28 October, 1912. page 5, and Wednesday, 8 November, 1912. page 5.

⁵² *Brisbane Courier*. Friday, 29 December, 1912. page 7.

His new work was with the New South Wales Baptist Home Missions. His work consisted of conducting evangelistic campaigns, and in spending time establishing new churches or strengthening weak ones.

For example, in 1914, he spent time with the newly formed Baptist congregation at Lismore. Pastor Morrison had spent three months getting the Baptist people in Lismore together, but then he left to be the Baptist minister at Hornsby. Complin left a similar work at Katoomba, and went to Lismore. This arrangement lasted from the end of May through to the end of December. A minister was called by the Lismore congregation to start a pastorate in January, 1915. Complin saw a church building approaching completion, costing 1,000 pounds for building and land. About 135 pounds came from local sources. Most of the money for the land had been donated by two wealthy men in Sydney – Mr. Hugh Dixson and Mr. William Buckingham. Baptist loan funds provided the rest. The church services were being held across the road from the unfinished church, in the local picture theatre.⁵³

A very brief report in 1915 says that Complin is now called the Baptist State evangelist, and that he had been conducting a mission in the suburb of Marrickville.⁵⁴

Later in 1915, we discover that John Complin was working as the Baptist minister in the town of Leeton. A letter to the editor was published under the heading “Alcohol and the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Areas.” It rotated around the questions then existing about local option of people to have a say about how many hotels were to exist in their areas. The local member, Mr. McGarry, had made a statement a few weeks earlier to the effect that the Government was going to allow two

⁵³ *Sydney Morning Herald*. 9 May, 1914, page 6, and 23 May, page 4. Also *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*. Tuesday, 29 December, 1914, page 2.

⁵⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*. Saturday, 15 May, 1915, page 8.

hotels to be built in the Irrigation Area, one each in Griffith and Leeton. The letter of protest was signed by three of the local ministers – Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist, and by a man representing the local Rechabites.⁵⁵

It seems that John Complin continued this kind of work until 1916. From 1916 until April, 1919, he was the pastor of the Baptist Church in Newcastle.⁵⁶

He seems to have resigned from this position at the end of April, 1919, and he supplied the pulpit of the Bathurst Street Baptist Church, Sydney for two months, namely June and July, 1919. During this brief time at Bathurst Street, according to the direction of the President of the Baptist Union, Complin read the King's Proclamation "acknowledging thanks to Almighty God for the victory" at the end of World War One. "The preacher said the nation had every reason to thank God, not only for the victory, but also for the Christian men raised up to take charge of the vital affairs of the nation, and of the Navy and the Army during those terrible years of crisis – statesmen and admirals and generals who had a living faith in a living God. Commenting on the peace terms, he said they were not vindictive but preventive."⁵⁷

The Evangelisation Society of Australasia.

Despite being pressed to stay longer, John Complin left the Bathurst Street church at the end of July, and began to

⁵⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*. Saturday, 18 October, 1915. page 18.

⁵⁶ W. Higlett, A.J. Waldock and A.L. Leeder (eds.) *A History of the Baptists of New South Wales*. (unpublished typed document). Authorised by the Executive Committee of the Baptist Union of N.S.W. before the publication of Alan Prior's book.

⁵⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*. Monday, 7 July, 1919. page 10.

conduct evangelistic missions for the Evangelisation Society of Australasia, in Victoria and Tasmania, for the rest of the year.⁵⁸

There are two references which provide small amounts of information about his work for the Evangelisation Society through this period. The first appeared in *Southern Cross* early in August in the form of a letter from the secretary of the Society.

“Sir, - The Rev. John Complin has arrived in Melbourne from New South Wales, and is now conducting Evangelistic Missions in connection with the work of the Evangelisation Society. His services are available to both town and country churches for mission work, and applications may be made to the honorary secretary,

Yours sincerely, D. P. Robinson.

Honorary Secretary.

130 Flinders Street.”⁵⁹

Later in the year, one of his other missions was in Ballarat. This was followed by a mission in the Union Chapel in Hobart, although his helper came from Sydney. The welcome accorded to Mr. Complin occurred on Thursday evening, 20 November. The report of the welcome commented that “the missioner makes a great feature of the present world crisis having been accurately forecasted by the Scriptures, and his addresses will deal largely with the prophecy relating to the second coming of Christ.”⁶⁰

⁵⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*. Friday, 1 August, 1919. page 6.

⁵⁹ *Southern Cross*. Friday, 22 August, 1919. Page 534.

⁶⁰ *Hobart Mercury*. Friday, 21 November, 1919. page 8.

Pastor of the Bathurst Street Baptist Church, Sydney.

His work as permanent pastor of this church began on the first Sunday of January, 1920.⁶¹ The Bathurst Street church had originally been part of a smaller Baptist denomination which had been stronger in Australia's earlier days of white settlement – this was the Particular Baptist denomination – an older English denomination. As time passed, many of the Particular Baptists had joined with the other Baptists to form the various Baptist Unions, such as the Baptist Union of New South Wales.

According to Dr. Ken Manley, it was a suggestion of the Rev. C. J. Tinsley that John Complin should be asked to take charge of the Bathurst Street pulpit for one year. He preached for nine Sunday mornings on Psalm 23, “but presumably in the evenings preached the Gospel with vigour and acceptance.”⁶²

A city church, such as the Bathurst Street Baptist Church, had inherent problems. Many of these problems arose because of the growth of the city, and changes in the demographic makeup of the population which lived near the church. Many of the members, and most of the population, lived some distance away, and closer to other suburban churches which were much easier to attend. John Complin had the task of coping with this problem, and providing a basis for the congregation to grow.

Early in his ministry in Bathurst Street, a strategic step was taken in building his evangelistic work. Two returned soldiers, Rev. Charles Rixon and Lieutenant Jack Ridley, M.C., “entered into a covenant of intercession” with the new minister. They met in the church twice a week for private prayer “and they paid no attention to the clock.” This prayer was claimed to

⁶¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*. Saturday, 11 October, 1919. page 7.

⁶² Ken R. Manley. *In the Heart of the City*. Central Baptist Church, 1836 to 1986. 1987. pages 63-66.

be the basis of his successful ministry in the city. Eventually, John Ridley became one of Australia's leading evangelists for many years. He also instituted the practice of having deacons to help in running the church, which apparently was a new move there. Many other details about Complin's time at Bathurst Street are provided by Dr. Ken Manley.⁶³

In 1924, however, his task was made much harder because his wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Complin, died on Sunday, 11 May, 1924. The announcement said, "Mrs. Complin was a devoted Christian worker, and it was while she was presiding at the organ during a mission held in the Bathurst Street Baptist Church recently that she was taken ill suddenly. Mrs. Complin was a daughter of the late Mr. [William] Tyas, bookseller, of George Street. She leaves two daughters – Mrs. Robert Curry, of Hamilton, near Newcastle, and Miss Grace Complin."⁶⁴

So, his successful efforts at Bathurst Street were built around concentrated intercessory prayer amongst a small group of leaders, and then on direct evangelism. According to Dr. Ken Manley's main publication on the history of Australian Baptists, one of John Complin's converts at Bathurst Street was Jack Prince, a former communist and IWW campaigner, who became a deacon in Complin's congregation and an active open air Gospel preacher.⁶⁵

Eventually the Bathurst Street building was sold and demolished, and a George Street property became known as the Central Baptist Church instead.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*. Wednesday, 14 May, 1924. page 10. One of the histories of the Bathurst Street Church – *The Story of the Bathurst Street Church, 1836 – 1937*. page 21, - mistakenly says that Mrs. Complin's death occurred in April, 1921.

⁶⁵ Ken R. Manley. *From Woolloomooloo to 'Eternity.'* A History of Australian Baptists. Volume two. Paternoster press. Pages 438 and 467.

He resigned from this pastoral position at the beginning of 1930.⁶⁶

After a brief period, he sailed to England but toured through the Holy Land, and some other countries on the way. Before long he became the pastor of the Bristol Road Baptist Church in the town of Weston-Super-Mare. After two years in this position, he resigned, and sailed for Australia.

He died on the voyage on Sunday, 16 October, 1932, and was buried at sea.⁶⁷

Memorial services were conducted in Sydney.

⁶⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*. Wednesday, 15 January, 1930. page 14.

⁶⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*. Saturday, 22 October. 1932. page 14.

CHAPTER THREE

REV. PHILIP E. SHEPHERD

E.S.A. Evangelist in 1920.

The Rev. Philip Edward Shepherd was a Presbyterian minister who led some missions for the Evangelisation Society in Victoria in the second half of 1920.

He was born in Yorkshire, England, probably in 1870, and came to Australia when he was twelve years of age. His parents were John and Elizabeth Shepherd, who, after their arrival in Australia, lived for many years in the Northern Tasmanian town of Lefroy. Their home was called "The Glen." There were five sons in the family and one daughter:- George, Philip, Joe, Jack and Jim, and Nellie – not necessarily in that order of seniority.⁶⁸

The outline of his life given here is gleaned from various newspapers which were published at the time. He joined the service of the Presbyterian Home Missions in New South Wales in 1907, and was stationed briefly in Kurri Kurri in 1908 and for part of 1909. In June, 1909, he was transferred to Grafton parish, but only stayed there until the end of the year.⁶⁹

Early in 1910, he moved to South Australia, in order to travel around the State promoting the religious newspaper the *Australian Christian World* (ACW). He seems to have

⁶⁸ *Hobart Mercury*. Saturday, 30 July, 1932. page 1.

⁶⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*. Friday, 4 June, 1909. page 4.

maintained a connection with this paper, as promoter, contributor, traveling and/or contributing editor, and eventually as associate editor, for most of the rest of his life.

One notice about his coming to Adelaide made the mistake of calling him the “Rev. Dr. P. E. Shepherd.” Another notice added some of his personal opinions on certain matters. “He expects to remain here between four and five months, and in the course of his peregrinations will conduct services in many Protestant churches.” He said that he was very impressed by the quality of religious life in South Australia, with the eagerness shown in such public institutions as the libraries, and with the “superiority” of those aborigines in South Australia who had come under Mission influence as children. He said that in New South Wales there had been less good results with helping aborigines because they had been approached as adults, rather than as children.⁷⁰

A part of this tour involved him in speaking on the temperance-related subject of “local option” for a week at Naracoorte through the middle of March.⁷¹

This tour of South Australia eventually lasted into the month of October, 1910. Included in this tour was a trip through the Yorke Peninsula as far north as Port Augusta, and concluded with a few Sundays spent in Adelaide churches.⁷²

Some time after this tour promoting the newspaper, he accepted a Presbyterian Home Missions appointment at Cobden in Victoria, in a parish which included several other nearby small towns. He took part in pulpit exchanges with other

⁷⁰ *The Advertiser* (Adelaide). Saturday, 12 February, 1910. page 16, and *The Register*, same date, page 5..

⁷¹ *The Register*. Saturday, 12 March, 1910. page 5.

⁷² *The Register*. Saturday, 24 September, 1910. page 8.

Protestant denominations in order to promote a federation of the Free Churches in the district.⁷³

A series of interdenominational meetings were held in which the various ministers contributed papers on matters which were aimed at promoting the spiritual life of all of the churches. Papers were given on such subjects as “Fellowship and Foreign Missions,” “Fellowship and Home Missions,” and “Fellowship and the Sunday School.” The gatherings were increased as good social occasions by well chosen musical segments.⁷⁴

In 1917, a very sad occasion for the family was marked by a newspaper advertisement which announced the anniversary of the death of the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Shepherd, who had been killed at Gallipoli. Their address was – the Manse, Campbellfield.⁷⁵ Mr. Shepherd was ordained that year.

In 1918, Philip Shepherd received a call from the Murray Bridge Presbyterian Church to become their pastor – a call which was sustained by the Presbytery. He declined this call, but, instead, decided to supply the pulpit at Port Adelaide church for several Sundays.⁷⁶

These glimpses of details in the life of this minister are only possible for us because they are mentioned in newspapers which can now be searched on line. No doubt much more information about him and his doings has been lost.

It seems that in 1919, and for a small part of 1920, he was minister at St. John’s Presbyterian Church in Ballarat East. We know that he resigned from this position in March, 1920.⁷⁷

⁷³ *Camperdown Chronicle*. Thursday, 8 March, 1913. page 3.

⁷⁴ *Camperdown Chronicle*. Thursday, 25 September, 1913. page 8.

⁷⁵ *Argus*. (Melbourne.) Thursday, 29 November, 1917. page 1.

⁷⁶ *The Mail*. (Adelaide.) Saturday, 9 February, 1918, page 7, and 16 March, page 18.

⁷⁷ *Argus*. Wednesday, 10 March, 1920. page 8.

The Evangelisation Society of Australasia.

Almost immediately, he was conducting evangelistic missions for the Evangelisation Society of Australasia. He conducted an evangelistic mission in the City Mission Hall, Collingwood, which concluded late in April, and was then due to start another mission in the Ararat Presbyterian Church, on Sunday, 2 May.⁷⁸

These were followed by missions at the Ballarat City Mission, and at Woomelang. His work in this area apparently also included missions at Lascelles and Banyan. The report said that spiritual indifference was very strong in parts of the Mallee, but Shepherd saw twelve young people decide for Christ, and many Christians were quickened.⁷⁹

These were followed by missions at Berriwillock and Culgoa.

At Heywood, the mission was an United Evangelistic Mission including the Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians and the Salvation Army.

A secular newspaper reported:- “The Rev. P. E. Shepherd, a Presbyterian minister, working at present under the Evangelisation Society of Australasia, was the missionary, and he did splendid service, his address being forceful and inspiring expositions of the Gospel. The mission was preceded by united preparatory meetings in the various churches alternately. These were of an encouraging and helpful character, and were followed by a sustained interest and good attendances throughout the Mission. Severe wintry weather during the second week thinned the attendance somewhat, but it was nevertheless good. We believe that good work has been accomplished, and the featuring of the spirit of unity among the

⁷⁸ *Argus*. Wednesday, 28 April, 1920. page 13.

⁷⁹ *Australian Christian World*. 30 April, 1920. page 15. and 30 July, 1920. page 15.

various churches is of itself sufficient justification for the Mission.”⁸⁰

Shepherd himself said, “The conditions for missioning at Heywood, Vic., were ideal. The four churches, with ministers, united and the services were held in the public hall. Rev. Baxter (C of E) soloed and also Captain Smith (S.A.). Rev. Darling (Pres.) played the violin beautifully, and Rev. Laphorne was business manager and host to the missioner. Hymn sheets were used to great advantage and the singing was delightful. The children’s meetings were a triumph and search text prize-winners broke the record in my missions to date. The Misses Best and Cundy also sang most sweetly, and musically. Two meetings for men only were held. Afternoon Bible readings were a feature and were much appreciated. Tabulated results were a little disappointing. Thirty decision cards were however taken. Casterton is next on the list and Miss Best (contralto) will assist.”⁸¹

The final missions for the year were held in Tasmania, firstly in Hobart, then in other places in the Island.⁸²

By mid-December, Philip Shepherd was back in Ballarat East, and was riding his bicycle along Wilde Street. A dog colliding with the bike caused him to fall, and he was taken to hospital. He suffered from abrasions and shock, but was not seriously injured.⁸³

Pastoral Work at Moss Vale.

For a little over two years he was the Presbyterian minister in the New South Wales country town of Moss Vale.

⁸⁰ *Portland Guardian*. Monday, 23 August, 1920. page 3.

⁸¹ *Australian Christian World*. 10 September, 1920, page 15.

⁸² *Australian Christian World*. 24 December, 1920. page 18.

⁸³ *Argus*. Thursday, 18 December, 1920. page 8.

An assembly of friends took place in the Soldiers' Memorial Rooms to farewell him, his wife and their daughter.⁸⁴

The exact dates of this appointment are given by C. A. White, from the Presbytery records. He was inducted into the charge on 30 August, 1922, and he resigned on 30 November, 1924.⁸⁵

A Wandering Correspondent and Supply Minister.

It seems that through the future years he toured to various parts of Australia, carrying out supply ministry in a number of churches, promoting the *Australian Christian World*, and also working as an official promoter of the Presbyterian newspapers. In the course of this work, he traveled to Western Australia in 1930, to attend the Presbyterian Assembly. He stayed with his brother George Shepherd, at Quarry Street, Fremantle. However, he spent nine months in all, touring parts of the State, preaching wherever he had opportunity, and promoting the *Australian Christian World*. After the nine months, he wrote to the editor of the *West Australian*. The point of the letter was to emphasise the vast ignorance which he thought existed amongst people in the West about some of the good things that were happening in New South Wales, especially in regard to relief work in underprivileged areas of Sydney.⁸⁶

As events transpired, this visit to the West provided him some very good time with his older brother, because, as we noticed earlier, his brother George died in July, 1932.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*. Tuesday, 9 December, 1924. page 10.

⁸⁵ C. A. White. *The Challenge of the Years*. Sydney. Angus and Robertson. Page 293.

⁸⁶ *Sunday Times*. (Perth). Sunday 15 June, 1930. page 1, and *West Australian*. Friday, 13 March, 1931. page 18.

⁸⁷ See reference number (1.).

We get a glimpse of another of his tours in 1937, when he spent some months in Tasmania. He was described as an old Launceston boy, when he preached in St. Andrew's Church, Launceston, on 21st November, 1937. He preached at the 11am service, and in the evening, and at Hagley in the afternoon. A little reminiscing occurred in the newspaper report, mentioning that he had been employed as a telegraph boy, and that he remembered delivering telegrams to the *Examiner* office in 1884 and 1887. By 1937, Shepherd had become associate editor of the *Australian Christian World*, especially after this paper had combined with the *Southern Cross*, formerly edited by Dr. W. H. Fitchett for many years until his death in 1928. In November, he planned to spend only a few weeks in Tasmania.⁸⁸

But the several weeks became several months. In January, a comment appeared that he had spent the previous few months visiting the North and North-west of Tasmania, and hoped to spend the next few weeks in the South, preaching wherever opportunity arose.⁸⁹

A year later, he came again, making his "second official visit" to Tasmania in the interests of the *Australian Christian World*. "He has visited the West Coast and the East Coast, as well as Hobart, and will be in Launceston and the neighbourhood until February, returning to Melbourne, from Burnie, about the end of the month."⁹⁰

In 1948, Philip Shepherd applied to be given a seat in Presbytery and the Assembly as a Minister Emeritus. The "prayer" stated that he had served the Church in New South

⁸⁸ *Launceston Examiner*. Monday, 22 November, 1937, page 9.

⁸⁹ *Mercury* (Hobart). Monday, 3 January, 1938. page 3.

⁹⁰ *Launceston Examiner*. Tuesday, 10 January, 1938. page 6.

Wales and Victoria for 41 years, because he had started in 1907. The petition was granted.⁹¹

He had also tried to foster the spread and circulation of the Presbyterian papers wherever he went, as well as the ACW, and had acted for this purpose on the relevant Presbyterian committees.⁹²

Philip Shepherd died fairly suddenly in November, 1952, after collapsing in the street near St. Stephen's Church, Macquarie Street, Sydney, where he had been an active member, and from where his funeral proceeded. He was in his 83rd year.

An obituary in the *New South Wales Presbyterian* says that he was always spiritually minded, and was an "energetic and restless spirit." His restlessness can be seen in the fact that he did not live in any one place for more than a few years, and seems to have spent most of his life traveling around the country and preaching in many places, often only for a few weeks.

The obituary also said that during his days at Kurri Kurri he had joined the Salvation Army, apparently before becoming a Presbyterian, and then had transferred to Victoria, and continued his training under Professor Rentoul and others. In Victoria he had served at Maribyrnong, Fitzroy (Erskine) and Cobden, before he was ordained. After his ordination, he had served at Campbellfield, and then at St. John's, Ballarat.⁹³ This obituary was written many years after these early events.

An obituary in the *Blue Book* for 1953 said that "The Rev. Philip E. Shepherd devoted his long life to religious interests. He joined the Home Mission Staff of New South Wales in 1907, and was ordained in 1916. He worked in

⁹¹ *Blue Book*. 1948. page 214.

⁹² *Blue Book*. 1927. page 191.

⁹³ *New South Wales Presbyterian*. 12 December, 1952. page 15.

various parts of the State, but held only one Parish, Moss Vale, of which he was minister from August 20th, 1922 until November 30th, 1924. He was engaged for many years as a representative of *The Australian Christian World*. He entered into rest on November 27th, 1952.”⁹⁴

His Work for the *Australian Christian World*.

From as early as 1910, we see Mr. Shepherd touring in the interests of the *Australian Christian World*, and another paper called the *Australian Young Folk*, “to report on church movements generally.”⁹⁵

The Australian Christian World was commenced in Brisbane in 1884, as described by the Rev. W. Osborne Lilley.

“About May, 1884, the Rev. J. D. Hennessey, who has since gained some distinction as an Australian novelist, approached me respecting the establishment of another weekly paper. He was then dissatisfied with his position as a minister of the Methodist Church, and had strong leanings towards journalism. He had started a monthly paper called *The Christian Messenger*, and he had decided to issue it as a weekly, and he asked me to join him in the enterprise. I consented to do this, and left the staff of *The Evangelical Standard* for the purpose. The weekly issue was started in July, and very soon, under the energetic business management of Mr. Hennessey, who associated with it a book concern, it was well circulated throughout the State. We worked very fraternally together, but, as the paper prospered, Mr. Hennessey’s ambition grew, and early in 1885 a branch office was established in Sydney, and the paper was called *The Intercolonial Christian Messenger*. In 1886 the name was changed to *The Australian*

⁹⁴ *Blue Book*. 1953. pages 24 – 25. *The Index of Presbyterian Ministers in Victoria 1859 – 1977*, says he was ordained in 1917.

⁹⁵ *The Register*. Saturday, 12 February, 1910. page 5.

Christian World, and was printed in Sydney, and it became one of the most widely-known religious papers in Australia. It is still one of the chief religious papers in the Commonwealth, though Mr. Hennessey has long ceased his connection with it. At the beginning, my literary work for the paper was very extensive, and with the exception of a few months, I have represented the religious interests of Queensland in it ever since. I was able in it to further the reforms I was attempting.”⁹⁶

An examination of the issues of this paper for 1910, when Mr. Shepherd became associated with it, reveal that each issue contained 24 pages of about A2 size, and several extra blue pages which might simply be called “the cover, with advertising.”

While there was a reasonable amount of advertising right through the paper, the first half of the paper was composed of a very wide range of articles and news reports from local sources and around the world, with the author’s name provided.

There were two main sections for Australian news. The first was called “What Our Correspondents Say.” Here someone from each of the Australian States would supply short paragraphs on matters of current interest in their State. Naturally Queensland came first and was present more frequently. For example, the issue for 25 February, 1910, contains a contribution from South Australia and Western Australia. The next issue, for 4 March, contains a contribution from Victoria and another from Western Australia. This section from the Correspondents might cover a page or two, but there is no indication as to who the correspondents are.

The other section containing Australian news was called “What the Churches Are Doing,” and subtitled “The

⁹⁶ W. Osborne Lilley. *Reminiscences of Life in Brisbane, and Reflections and Sayings*. Brisbane. W. R. Smith and Paterson. 1913. pages 21 – 22.

most Comprehensive Compilation of Religious News published in the Commonwealth.” This section could cover three or four pages of very small print, with divisions headed – Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, Baptist, Lutheran, Churches of Christ, Y.M.C.A. news, Interdenominational, Christian Endeavour. There could be casual headings for many other organizations, such as the NSW Alliance, W.C.T.U. news, Y.W.C.A. news, Bible in State Schools – Brisbane, and any major evangelistic mission which might be approaching or happening. In February, 1910, this was the approaching mission proposed by Dr. J. Q. A. Henry and Professor P. P. Bilhorn, which was supposed to start in New Zealand in July. The section entitled “Interdenominational,” could contain all sorts of information about a wide range of societies or evangelistic activities.

Particularly this second section contained an enormous number of details and bits of information about a vast number of people. Clearly, the paper needed to have helpful contact people in each State of Australia, to provide information regularly every week for these two large sections.

We do not know whether Philip Shepherd was paid a regular wage or honorarium for doing this work, or whether he was paid for what he did, and could draw some income from other preaching, pastoral or supply work that he might do.

He could also have continued doing this work of contributing to the ACW while he studied for the ministry, while he worked in Presbyterian pastoral settlements, and in 1920 while he preached for the Evangelisation Society.

In the 1930s especially, he seemed to be recognized as a major contributor, being called an “associate editor,” more than simply a “correspondent” and promoter for the paper.

Philip Shepherd’s death is not mentioned in the A.C.W..

CHAPTER FOUR

CHIEF STOKER REG. STEPHENS.

On Loan to the E. S. A. – 1922.

Reg. Stephens was in the British Navy for 22 years, including four years through the First World War when he was chief stoker on H.M.A.S. *Australia*.

The *Australia* was a battle cruiser displacing 18,800 tons, completed in 1913 in Portsmouth, and was the first flagship of the newly formed Royal Australian Navy, which included also the light cruisers, *Sydney* and *Encounter*, and the destroyers, *Warrego*, *Yarra* and *Parramatta*. The fleet arrived in Sydney Harbour on 4 October, 1913, and made a very impressive sight. Two submarines came a little later.

Stephens was openly a Christian, with good speaking abilities and a charismatic personality. He was seen as someone with a special message and Christian witness to men and boys.

During the War, the Y.M.C.A. had been heavily and extensively involved in ministering to all the servicemen, in Australia and overseas, offering both social support in various ways, and also presenting the Gospel to as many of them as possible, and with good effect. Soon after the conclusion of the War Stephens became a spokesman for the Y.M.C.A. in Australia, with a special responsibility to sailors and seamen. Activities such as this after the War were an extension of the Wartime work, which had been so greatly appreciated.

His work with the Y.M.C.A began early in 1919, and it was quickly found that he could draw large crowds to listen to

the graphic stories that he could tell about his war-time experiences on H.M.A.S. *Australia*.

His earliest campaign occurred in Brisbane in late April and early May, 1919, although he had to spend some time in the quarantine camp in Wallangarra. In Brisbane he addressed meetings of the organisations, church-related or secular, which had done so many things to support the war effort at home, and preached in the various churches. For example, on Sunday 11 May, 1919, he was announced to preach in the Baptist Tabernacle in the morning, and in the afternoon to a meeting of men in the courtyard of the Y.M.C.A. in Edward Street, in which the Rev. Hugh Paton and Miss Lily Paton were to take part. One series of addresses during this visit to Brisbane was for the benefit of the Home League, and his final meeting in this series was chaired by the Governor.⁹⁷

There was widespread reporting of his story about the collision between H.M.A.S. *Australia* and H.M.S. *New Zealand*, during a fog in the North Sea in 1916.⁹⁸

A few weeks later Stephens was in Sydney conducting similar meetings. For example, in an open air meeting in the Corso, Manly, he delivered his lecture entitled, "Four Years with the Grand Fleet in the North Sea." In this he was working for the Y.M.C.A. demobilisation appeal.⁹⁹

By the end of July he was travelling through parts of Victoria, and advertising for his meetings appeared, for example, in the *Gippsland Times*.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ *Brisbane Courier*. Friday 9 May, 1919. page 11, and 30 April, 1919. page 3.

⁹⁸ *Hobart Mercury*, Tuesday, 22 April, 1919. page 3, and *Cairns Post*, Monday, 28 April, 1919. page 8.

⁹⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*. Friday, 20 June, 1919. page 11.

¹⁰⁰ *Gippsland Times*. Thursday, 31 July, 1919. page 3.

By early the next year he was travelling in Tasmania, and lectured about “With the British Navy in War Time,” in the Hobart Town Hall. A month later he was speaking in Launceston, although sometimes the advertisement appeared under the heading of “Amusements.”¹⁰¹

From there he returned to Victoria, and spoke at meetings arranged, this time, by the Y.W.C.A. for women.¹⁰²

While no other information about his activities appeared during the rest of 1920, he seems to have continued a stream of activities similar to what he had been doing for the Y.M.C.A. earlier.

Early in 1921, he was speaking again in Brisbane under the auspices of the Y.M.C.A., at times especially directed towards sailors like himself. On this occasion his tour was openly announced as an evangelistic tour.¹⁰³

This was followed by a quick trip to Western Australia, by train. One of Stephens’s ploys was to use stories or events out of the Bible and to make a strange kind of parallel out of it with something in the modern world, and we see the first published instance of this in relation to one of his W. A. meetings. “Someone once remarked that there was nothing new under the sun. When I glanced round and saw the aeroplane and other ultra-modern inventions I was disinclined to believe that. However, all things are found in the Bible, and when I came to think, the aeroplane is mentioned in the Book. We have all heard of Elijah’s chariot of fire – surely that was the first flying machine? Then take the submarine – the literal meaning of that is under the water. Jonah certainly lived under

¹⁰¹ *Mercury*. Saturday, 17 January, 1920. page 8, and *Examiner*, 17 February, 1920 page 5, and 23 February, 1920, page 3.

¹⁰² *Argus*. Thursday, 25 March, 1920. page 7.

¹⁰³ *Brisbane Courier*. Saturday 19 February, 1921. page 6, and 22 February, 1921. page 6.

the water – could the whale make claim to kinship with the submarine? And what is prayer but wireless?” This kind of illustration was something which Stephens used again and again.

The Western Australian visit, however, ended quickly because he spent Anzac Day as a passenger on the Commonwealth East-West railway. A leading W.A. soldier was on the train, so an arrangement was made to have a short service for the passengers, in which Stephens was glad to join.¹⁰⁴

He visited Port Pirie briefly, and on Tuesday, 3 May, Stephens arrived in Broken Hill having been announced as the “national naval secretary of the Y.M.C.A.” His first address was on the subject of “Superb Heroism,” at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, which was described as an “appeal for men to be men.” This was followed by a lecture on “God’s Wireless” in the Blende Street church the following night. He also addressed over 300 girls and boys from the High School on the motto, “As for me, I will serve the Lord.”¹⁰⁵

On the third evening the address was on his experiences with the Fleet in the North Sea, and was “frequently applauded.” The Y.M.C.A. building was taxed to contain the crowd. Mothers’ Day was celebrated on the Sunday with morning church services and two demonstrations at the Y.M.C.A., one held at Pictureland, and the other in the Town Hall.

At this last meeting, “Chief Stoker Stephens prefaced his remarks with the story of a debate he had heard in Melbourne as to whether Christ was a great orator. He went on to say that it had been decided that whether Christ had been an

¹⁰⁴ *Western Mail*. Thursday, 21 April, 1921. pages 20 – 21. and *Adelaide Register*, 27 April, page 6.

¹⁰⁵ Various references, *Barrier Miner*, 21 April, 1921 to 6 May, 1921.

orator or not 'none ever spake like this Man.' Man's speech, said Stoker Stephens, was often a guide as to his character. Christ by His speech had shown that He possessed originality, simplicity, authority, courage and tenderness. Speaking of the simplicity of Christ's teaching, Chief Stoker Stephens told the story of Naaman the leper, who had refused to bathe in the Jordan because it seemed to simple a remedy, and also because of the fact that he had rivers in his own country. He said that it was not the dipping that Naaman feared, but the stripping. So it was with a lot of church people. They did not mind going to church but they objected to testifying to Christ. If they had to pay for salvation many would willingly buy. Christ had been simple in all things. He had heard it said that during the strike the leaders had had full and plenty, while the rank and file had not known which way to turn. They could not say that of Christ, for in His simplicity He had not a place to lay His head. The salvation of the world could be brought about only by the loving of 'our neighbours as ourselves.' If that state of affairs came about the working man would love his boss, and give a fair day's work for a fair day's wages. The boss would also trust his man and not a machine, and also refrain from filling up his coffers with wealth. Speaking of Christ's authority, Chief Stoker Stephens said that they had it on Christ's word that all that believed in Him should have everlasting life. In Christ they would get life, and have it more abundantly. Referring to Christ's courage the speaker said that all who followed Christ were courageous men and not milksops, as claimed by some. It might be easy to follow Christ in some places, but in an ungodly environment a man had to prove that he had courage. Life to him had been a stadium. He had been down and almost counted out on many occasions by the unseen hand, but through Christ's example of courage he had always mastered. In his closing remarks the speaker told of Christ's tenderness, and

made an appeal for all to take up the work of God. He asked them to make a full surrender. It was shown clearly by the congregations that night that Broken Hill was not a God-forsaken place. They had assembled to hear the Word of God. If they all accepted Christ Broken Hill would soon be what it should be.”¹⁰⁶

He arrived back in Adelaide on the following Wednesday. The following Sunday, preparations were made in the Pirie Street Methodist Church for a monster youth meeting to be addressed by the Rev. J. Grenfell Jenkins, and Stephens was then to address a meeting after church at the Y.M.C.A.¹⁰⁷

By October that year, Stephens was campaigning again in Hobart to strengthen the Y.M.C.A. work.¹⁰⁸

After July, 1921, the Y.M.C.A. began the policy of making Stephens available to speak at Churches, brotherhoods, etc., especially to speak to meetings of men and boys.

One Year Loaned to the Evangelisation Society.

The Evangelisation Society of Australasia had continual difficulties employing an evangelist for more than short periods since the retirement of the Rev. Joseph Piercey in 1918. By the end of 1921, it was very clear that Stoker Reg. Stephens had some real abilities as an evangelist, although his work for the Y.M.C.A. often had a more varied flavour to it. It did seem, however, that his speaking always had at least an evangelistic thrust as one of its motivating aims.

So it was announced at the beginning of January, 1922, that the Evangelisation Society had obtained the services of two men to be their evangelists for the coming year. These were

¹⁰⁶ *Barrier Miner*. Monday, 9 May, 1921 page 3.

¹⁰⁷ *Register*. Saturday, 14 May, 1921. page 6.

¹⁰⁸ *Mercury*. Thursday, 6 October. 1921. page 4.

Chief Stoker Reg. Stephens, commencing in March, and also the Rev. Charles Chenery, who had experience as an evangelist in England.¹⁰⁹

The evangelistic work in April began in the Y.M.C.A., Brisbane. Stephens was reported to have given a brief address on “God so loved the world,” and was declared to be a very forceful speaker and an effective soloist.¹¹⁰

The Evangelisation Society published a “very encouraging” report in mid-May describing the progress which was being made through the missions conducted by Stephens and Chenery.

Regarding Stephens, it said, “In three of the Melbourne City Mission centres Evangelist Reg. Stephens has conducted efforts yielding interesting results. Letters relating to how lives had been changed by the power of the Gospel had been received. The mission conducted at Punt Road Methodist Church, South Yarra, had not been without results. From each centre a thank-offering was received. The evangelist has just returned from Queensland, and New South Wales, where, under the auspices of the National Committee of the Y.M.C.A., he conducted good meetings for men and boys. He is now conducting. He is now conducting a mission in the Sandringham Presbyterian Church, to be followed by other missions in Melbourne, Ballarat, and Geelong. Places requiring the help of Evangelist Stephens this year should make early application, but there are no free dates until the end of September.”¹¹¹

The Evangelisation Society’s Executive Committee met in July and received reports about missions conducted by Stephens at Sandringham, Brunswick, Sunbury, Collingwood,

¹⁰⁹ *Argus*. Monday, 2 January, 1922. page 6.

¹¹⁰ *Brisbane Courier*. Friday, 7 April, 1922. page 10.

¹¹¹ *Southern Cross*. Friday, 19 May, 1922. page 419.

Carlton and Burwood. The Burwood mission enjoyed excellent preparations, and there had been a hundred professed conversions. 250 decision cards had been handed in altogether in the missions on this list.¹¹²

In early September, the Society reported, "a great work of grace had taken place at each centre visited. At Warrnambool where he spent a fortnight prior to the Geelong mission, large crowds attended both the Sunday and weeknight meetings, and fifty percent of the crowd were men. The meetings grew in intent and numbers as the mission progressed and the Town Hall was packed with enthusiastic audiences, many coming from the country and travelling as far as twenty-five miles to hear this fearless exponent of the Gospel, who talks out of an experience which carries conviction. The children's service was spoken as unique in the history of Warrnambool, while the oldest residents of the town and district say they have never seen such intent manifested in meetings of a religious character. The halls were not only crowded, but many sat on the window-sills or crowded the doors. Large numbers were unable to gain admission. At some of the meetings a large number professed their faith in Christ for the first time. The preparation work was excellent.

The Geelong mission which followed was equally successful. The Rev. J. Rentoul told the [E.S.A.] secretary who was in Geelong on Friday, that the Church people had never seen such crowds. The effect there was too short, and the people were urging that the Evangelist remain at least one more Sunday, but he was booked for Carisbrook where he is now conducting a mission.

The evangelist's programme is full for this year, and already requests for missions are being received for next winter.

¹¹² *Southern Cross*, 28 July, 1922. page 660.

Mr. Woodcraft will be glad to hear from centres where it is desired to conduct united efforts next year. The committee hope that all his missions next winter will be united ones.”¹¹³

Published Articles Written by Stephens in 1922.

During 1922, two articles appeared in the *Southern Cross*, one of which had been provided by Stephens. The first of these appeared in March, before he started working for the E.S.A. It appeared in a special section of the paper called the “Young Manhood” Department, which appeared in several of the issues, but was not a permanent fixture. In this case, a photo of Stephens was also included.

GOD AND OUR PROBLEMS.

Contributed by ex-Chief Stoker Reg. Stephens, of H.M.A.S. “Australia.”

Remember that God thinks so much of you that Jesus thought it worth while dying for you.

If we build up our character, so as to be more worthy of this great love, let us follow His Word. Phil. iv: 6,7,8. Be careful for nothing, but in everything, not only in joys and sorrows, not only in trials and tribulation, not only in spiritual matters but in temporal matters, everything, to put our trust in God.

I remember once after my conversion, I was met with a very great difficulty in the form of an examination. I left school at the age of eleven, and never had I done a fractional sum in my life. Mensuration I had never heard of, and the passing of this exam. meant more to me than you could imagine. I realized that God was my father, and that He delighted in the prosperity of His sons, so I stood on His promise “never to

¹¹³ *Southern Cross*. 8 September, 1922, page 813.

leave me nor forsake me,” and went to Him in prayer. On reading my Bible after prayer I turned to the first chapter of James and the 5th and 8th verses I read this promise: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

A friend of mine, when I told him I was standing on that promise, of God to help me through the exam, said: “Oh, that refers to spiritual matters.” I replied, “Yes, and temporal ones, too.” At the end of three months schooling I came out nearly top of the class.

Oh, praise God, He will never let us down. Let us be men of a single mind. Paul, in writing to the Philippians, said, “Finally, my brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, think on these things.”

Many of us are in doubt sometimes as to what to do and which way to go, but if we obey the voice of God and persistently follow the path of duty, cultivating thoughts which are pure and holy, we shall know the way and all our problems will be solved.¹¹⁴

The other article was contributed by someone using the nom-de-plume “ex-chaplain,” and refers to what happened at some meetings Stephens was leading.

¹¹⁴ *Southern Cross*. Friday, 3 March, 1922. page 158.

“From the deck of a British warship, with an audacity and boldness reminding one of Apostolic days, and with an edge to his speech keener than the east wind, and yet with pathos and humour pouring forth from a sailor’s warm heart, Reg. Stephens, today, stands behind the sacred desk, and from platform and pulpit and with something of that colossal strength which was so characteristic of the British Fleet in war time, he preaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Stephens has perhaps no rival today in Australia. He has been through the storm and has himself won the harbour peace. I have met few so audacious. A Sunday or two ago he faced a crowded church in my own city, over six hundred packed into an old-fashioned building, sixty-five percent of them being men. With the firm touch of a chief stoker, tending his nicely adjusted furnaces, he paid his grip upon the crowd. More than once the building convulsed with laughter, the next moment, under the power of an illustration, men with eager faces were gripping the chairs upon which they sat to keep back the tears. And with the sure hand of a master worker, he flung aside the obstacles of doubt, swept into the citadel of soul, and men sat back with a thankful sigh. He had won.

Stephens faced a difficult situation a few hours later. A meeting in one of the provincial halls of the city, a hall to hold over a thousand people, tested the man and his methods. The night was bitter with driving sleet. The hall was like a vault with about three hundred people crowding together near the platform. Stephens got to work. He took as his subject Christ and the Gadarene. His chief points were (1) Stripped by Satan; (2) Bound by Society; (3) Set free by Jesus Christ. With an artist’s restraint he pictured the Galilean Lake, the desolation of Gadara, the mysterious figure whom no man could tame, flitting amongst the tombs. Then down the channels of thought and by parable and vivid up-to-date story he drove home with a

boldness unparalleled the lessons for Australia. I never saw a crowd under such unfavourable circumstances so speedily changed. For a time the atmosphere was electric, men were strangely moved. He had stepped from the deck of a British warship to his place behind the sacred desk, but had brought with him the invincible courage, the dogged persistence, the keen humor and the mysterious pathos of the sea.

This is the man who is known as ex-chief stoker Reg. Stephens, and who is at present working under the auspices of the Victorian Evangelisation Society.

Yours sincerely, Ex-chaplain.¹¹⁵

At the end of 1922, Stephens returned to his Y.M.C.A. work, and travelled to Hobart where the Australian Fleet was to visit the city on 20 January, 1923. The Y.M.C.A. was asked to find accommodation for 600 men per night for the visit, and to do much of the catering. The officer in charge of this invited Stephens to come across and mount an evangelistic campaign during this visit, "and his services will also be used in the way of entertaining the men and looking after their welfare generally."¹¹⁶

Following this, Stephens led a united mission for the Churches, and as part of the preparations, addressed a preliminary meeting of the Congregational Churches of Hobart in the Memorial Hall.¹¹⁷

He visited Broken Hill again, arriving on 26 October, and remaining there for a week. Generally, he worked for two weeks in turn with each Y.M.C.A. branch.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ *Southern Cross*. 25 August, 1922. page 749.

¹¹⁶ *Mercury*. Saturday, 13 January, 1923. page 5.

¹¹⁷ *Mercury*. Wednesday, 7 March, 1923. page 4.

¹¹⁸ *Barrier Miner*. Tuesday, 16 October, 1923. page 2. and 26 October, page 1.

This visit to Broken Hill coincided with the 17th anniversary meetings for that branch of the Y.M.C.A. on Thursday, 1 November. Some brief details of some of his addresses in Broken Hill were provided in the newspaper.

He was expected to be in Western Australia for meetings through November. For example, he spoke in Perth from 7 to 26 November, under the auspices of the Y.M.C.A.¹¹⁹

One of his meetings in Perth was a lunch-hour gathering where a local minister spoke on the subject of “Obstacles to Faith” in connection with the World-Wide Week of Intercession. Stephens acted as chairman of this meeting.¹²⁰

In March, 1924, the citizens of Melbourne were hosts to the officers and men of the British Special Service Squadron. The Y.M.C.A. team again was heavily involved in finding accommodation for those sailors who wanted to enjoy shore leave, and to provide other needs where necessary. The Squadron presented Stephens with a silver cup in appreciation of his work.¹²¹

A few weeks later, in Hobart, the Royal Naval Christian Union and the Y.M.C.A. combined to arrange a naval service in the Helping Hand Hall, Bathurst Street. Stephens was slated to speak and sing.¹²²

In May, Stephens was in Brisbane, and helped to celebrate the formation of the Boys’ Club at the Eagle Junction Congregational Church. The formation of this club occurred as a result of his previous visit eleven months earlier.¹²³

¹¹⁹ *West Australian*. Friday, 24 August, 1923. page 7.

¹²⁰ *West Australian*. Friday, 16 November, 1923. page 13.

¹²¹ *Argus*. Friday, 14 March. 1924. page 11. Also *Mercury*, 11 May, 1925. page 3.

¹²² *Mercury*. Saturday, 29 March, 1924. page 12.

¹²³ *Brisbane Courier*. Saturday, 17 May, 1924. page 5.

But this was quickly followed by him speaking in the Sydney Town Hall early in June, addressing several factory meetings in conjunction with the Open Air Campaigners, and then addressing the trainees on the H.M.A.S. training ship Tingira.¹²⁴

In May, 1925, the American Fleet visited Australia, and Stephens was invited to join the American Fleet for the duration of the visit. It seems that a small deputation of Y.M.C.A. men left with the U.S. Navy to visit the American Navy in Pearl Harbour, Honolulu. This group included Stephens, and J. T. Massey, who was at that time the General Secretary of the Adelaide Y.M.C.A.¹²⁵

In August, 1926, Stephens preached in Wesley Church, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. He was introduced by the minister, the Rev. C. Irving Benson, who explained that Stephens was now a member of the staff of the Wesley Church Mission, having accepted an appointment as representative of the Mission Boys' farm. As part of this work of developing the Tally-Ho Boys Home, for example, he conducted evangelistic meetings in the town of Portland, and openly sought support for the Tally-Ho Homes, where 86 boys were housed, and where it cost forty pounds per week to feed the boys.¹²⁶

Whether he worked for the Y.M.C.A., Wesley Church, or independently, his evangelistic work continued unabated. For example, a number of the churches at Moonee Ponds closed their evening services in order to support a united campaign being held in the Ascot Picture Theatre.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*. Saturday 31 May, 1924. page 11.

¹²⁵ *Register*. Tuesday, 14 July, 1925. page 10.

¹²⁶ *Portland Guardian*. Monday, 1 November, 1926. page 2.

¹²⁷ *Argus*. Saturday, 4 November, 1939. page 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE REV. CHARLES CHENERY

E. S. A. Evangelist in 1922.

The Rev. Charles Chenery was an English Congregational minister who conducted evangelistic missions for the Evangelisation Society of Australasia, mainly in 1922, but possibly also in 1914 briefly.

Charles Chenery was born in Ipswich, England, probably in the year of the great revival, 1859. His father was Henry William Chenery of Ipswich.¹²⁸

He married Miss Alice Whittle in the St. Clement's Congregational Church, Ipswich, on 10 July, 1881. The minister was the Rev. Morgan David Morgan. Alice was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Abram Whittle.¹²⁹

He trained for the Congregational ministry in London, and was duly ordained in Brighton. He worked as an evangelist for an organisation called the Gospel Union, and also for the Evangelization Society, based in London. I have not discovered anything about the Gospel Union, but the Evangelization Society was a non-denominational organisation for sending out men (usually laymen), to conduct evangelistic missions in churches or halls wherever they were asked, and where the converts were directed back to the churches involved. The missions were conducted in villages and localities large and

¹²⁸ *Hobart Mercury*. Friday, 10 July, 1931. page 1.

¹²⁹ *Launceston Examiner*. Friday 17 July, 1931. page 10.

small, regardless of the ability of the local churches to pay the preacher. This style of itinerant preaching allowed Chenery to travel to many parts of England, and in the process he met some of the notable personalities and preachers of the time, including C.H. Spurgeon, Peter Mackenzie, and Alexander Maclaren. He kept in touch with some of them.

For ten years, starting around 1904, he worked at the non-denominational Mission and Social Welfare Centre in Reading, where there were many opportunities for service.¹³⁰

Up to the beginning of the First World War, the Chenery family consisted of four daughters and two sons. The family moved to Australia before hostilities commenced in 1914, although some details in the death notices of both Alice and Charles suggest that they may not have arrived until 1915.¹³¹ The earlier date is probably correct, or else the next details probably could not have happened. We should note, therefore, that Charles Chenery was about fifty-five years of age when he came to Australia. He was no longer a young man.

In 1914, after his arrival in Australia, there are suggestions that he became linked to the Congregational Church in Prahran.¹³² It is also possible that for a brief period in 1914 Charles conducted some missions for the Evangelisation Society of Australasia. No reports of missions led by him were published in *Southern Cross*, or in newspapers, for that year.

¹³⁰ *Launceston Examiner*. Saturday, 20 July, 1940. page 11.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, for the suggestion that they arrived before hostilities commenced in 1914. For the later date, the death notice for Alice said she had been in Australia for 21 years at the time of her death in 1936, (*Hobart Mercury*, Monday, May 11, 1936, page 4). A similar notice in 1940 said that Charles had been in Australia for 25 years. (*Hobart Mercury*. Monday, 15 July, 1940, page 5.)

¹³² *Hobart Mercury*. Monday, 15 July, 1940, page 5.

His Work for the Bible Society During the War.

We know that well before May, 1915, he had begun work full time for the British and Foreign Bible Society, with the task of distributing khaki-covered New Testaments to the troops preparing to go to the War. With another much younger Bible Society worker named Cloudsdale, Chenery lived in a tent at Broadmeadows Camp, was dressed in a uniform rather like a soldier's uniform, made personal contact with many of the soldiers, and distributed New Testaments as widely as possible.¹³³

In a very short time, the Bible Society bought a small house or building which was placed on the Camp site, where Chenery and Cloudsdale could do their work, live and sleep. They expected that the Camp would soon be moved to Seymour, and the building could be moved there in sections as required.¹³⁴

This kind of evangelistic work was potentially very fruitful, from a spiritual point of view, and one which Chenery enjoyed greatly. The offered Testaments were hardly ever rejected by soldiers, and in many cases, men who were not Bible readers, or believers to any extent, made sure that they did not miss out on obtaining a copy. In some cases, such men promised to read the Testament regularly. So, it was a great way to reach many men who would never have been reached in normal church work, or by normal opportunities for evangelistic preaching.

Within a month or so, Chenery was also involved in visiting soldiers in the hospitals. By September, Cloudsdale had moved to Camps at Seymour and at Ballarat, and Chenery was on his own at Broadmeadows, although he was soon joined by others.

¹³³ Bible Society *Notes of the Month*. 1 May, 1915, front page.

¹³⁴ *Notes of the Month*. 1 June, 1915. front page.

His October report included the following:- “On entering one tent, a man said: ‘So glad to see you, sir. I wanted to tell what the Testament you gave me three months ago has done for me. I have read it through six times, and am going through it again.’ ‘Well,’ I said, ‘If you have read it that much you must have got some of it into your head. I hope you have got it into your heart.’ ‘Yes, sir,’ he said, ‘I want to tell you it has changed my life.’ As the testimony was given in the presence of his tent mates, I have no reason to doubt his word.”

One man called at the depot and said, “I have lost my Testament; I can’t tell you how, but I do miss it. I never used to read the Bible before, but I read it regularly now, and it does me good. I wonder whether you would give me another?” From further conversation there was no doubt that the Testament was doing its work.¹³⁵

This kind of Bible Society work spread rapidly into many other Camps, and worked alongside that of many other Christian activities benefiting the soldiers. Naturally there was a struggle to fund everything that was given freely for the soldiers. The November publication said that, “on Wednesday, 20th October, the general secretary, accompanied by the assistant secretary, paid a visit to the Camps at the Show Ground, Broadmeadows, and Royal Park, and found the work of distributing the Scriptures (the Khaki New Testaments) proceeding most satisfactorily. In each of these camps the workers (Messrs. Chenery, Cloudsdale and Lucas) visit the men in their tents and get into personal touch with them, and are meeting with every encouragement. In many cases the men are showing great eagerness to obtain their copy, and will upon meeting either of the distributors make a request for the book, which is instantly complied with. We are most grateful to the

¹³⁵ *Notes of the Month.* 1 October, 1915.

commanding officers and their subordinates for granting us all the facilities, so that the work can be carried on expeditiously and thoroughly.”¹³⁶

Charles was a very experienced preacher and evangelist, so it was no surprise that the Bible Society used him at times to address Branch meetings of the Society. In one case, he spoke at a meeting of the Toorak Branch, in St. John’s Parish Hall, on Tuesday afternoon, 30th November. The audience was mainly composed of ladies. After the preliminaries, there “followed an address on ‘The Soldiers and the New Testament’ by Mr. C. Chenery, one of the Society’s representatives at the Broadmeadows Camp, which was listened to with great attention.” Boys from Toorak Grammar School, and “young ladies” from Toorak College were also present, and helped serve the afternoon tea. The offering amounted to 17 pounds, 3 shillings and four pence, with a five pounds cheque being handed in the next day.¹³⁷

The previous Sunday, Chenery had preached at Echuca, “and delivered a number of addresses in the churches and Sunday schools. In the morning Mr. Chenery preached to a large congregation in the Presbyterian Church. In the afternoon Mr. Chenery spoke to the children of Christ Church and the Methodist Church Sunday schools, and in the evening preached in the Methodist Church. After the church service Mr. Chenery addressed a public meeting in the Christ Church parish Hall... Mr. Chenery spoke on four subjects: ‘Is there a need for this work? Does the Bible Society meet the need? What are the results of this work? Will you help the work?’ Mr. Chenery said that as the Society had been at the front in other wars so today, it was doing useful work among the soldiers. There were men in the Broadmeadows Camp drawn from all classes of

¹³⁶ *Notes of the Month*. 1 November, 1915. front page.

¹³⁷ *Notes of the Month*. 1 December, 1915. page 78.

society. The Bible Society did not wait for the men to come to them, but went to the men... The eagerness of the men to receive the Book was because of the prayers of the Church and the Society. Deep down in the men's hearts there was an eagerness for instruction on the eve of going to the front to risk their lives. In tent after tent the men gathered to read the Bible. In the camp there were thousands of men who had never read the Bible before. Many had entered into a league to do so. Hundreds had accepted the truth as contained in the Word. He told of many instances of the good results of the Society's work in the Camps. God was blessing his truth, and leading the men to give themselves to Him. How could they help? They could pray, and they could help with their money. The work was a great expense to the Society. Let them give, and pray, even though their giving was a sacrifice. When the men could go to the fight with prayer in their hearts, prepared for living or dying, they could face the foe undaunted."¹³⁸

Charles Chenery continued this work steadily through until the end of the war. For example, in March, 1916, the *Notes of the Month* said: "Mr. Chenery has been working a great part of his time in the Melbourne Camps, and at the Base Hospital, where valuable help has been rendered him by some of the officers. Some of the patients had lost their New Testaments in Gallipoli, and were most grateful for another copy. One man, who had the Testament sailing at the commencement of the war, said he would not take fifty pounds for his New Testament, which had been of great blessing to him.

In Royal Park Camp, one man greeted Mr. Chenery with 'That's just what I've been wanting. I have heard about some of the chaps reading and discussing the book before they blow

¹³⁸ Ibid. page 82.

out the lights. Some of them have given up the “booze,” and now we’ll discuss it and see what we can get from it.’

There is much earnestness among the men, and their diligent searching of the Scriptures will be the means of fortifying them with the sword of the Spirit.”¹³⁹

“A young fellow, writing a letter said: ‘I am able to send my mother word that her prayers for me are answered; this little Book has made a new man of me. When I came into the camp, I thought of nothing but drinking and gambling, but I’ve done with all that, and with God’s help, I am living a Christian life.’

Another said: ‘Since I have been reading God’s Word I am happy and fearless. Before I commenced this kind of life I always had a shadow on my path, knowing if I got shot I was unprepared to die; but now I don’t mind what I face. If I die, I shall go to God. If I live, I’ll serve Him.’” By April, 1916, 62,000 copies of the Khaki New Testament had been circulated among the troops in the Victorian camps.¹⁴⁰

In another report, Chenery wrote:- “The eagerness of the men to possess a copy of the Scriptures is an emphatic answer to the question sometimes asked, ‘Is Christianity played out?’ A strapping fellow called me to his tent, saying, ‘I want to tell you something.’ He then said, ‘Some weeks ago you gave me a Testament; I promised to read it; I kept my promise, with the result that I am now a sound man. How do I know it? I’ll tell you. I was a drunkard, and the Book says, “No drunkard shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven,” so I prayed for forgiveness and for help to give up the drink and all other evils I was addicted to. God answered my prayer. I know Christ is my Saviour, and I am a sober man.’

Another man in the same tent said: ‘Twelve months ago you gave me a Testament; I did not trouble much about it when

¹³⁹ *Notes of the Month.* 1 March, 1916. page 11.

¹⁴⁰ *Notes of the Month.* 1 April, 1916. page 23.

in camp, but on Gallipoli I saw enough to make me think, so I read my book there, and, like Bill here, I learned to pray, and soon got saved.”¹⁴¹

The war had also been a deeply sad time for the Chenery family, because one of their sons, Harold, was killed on active service.¹⁴²

With the end of the War, the end of sending soldiers overseas, and the closing down of some of the camps, Charles Chenery’s work changed much more to the visiting of wounded and shell-shocked soldiers in the Hospitals.

By December, 1918, it was reported that “The actual distribution of the New Testaments in the camps has now practically ceased, but still there are splendid opportunities for working among those fine fellows who are in the hospitals. Mr. Chenery has been able to distribute a large number among the patients at Caulfield, Mont Park, and Langwarrin where the O.C.s gave them every encouragement. Many of the men were most grateful and expressed their thanks, promising to read the book and to endeavour to follow its teaching. In the last-mentioned camp he met with many sad cases where there is now a change of heart, and where the book given will be a means of correction and instruction.”¹⁴³

A Country Congregational Minister.

Charles Chenery finished his work for the Bible Society fairly early in 1919. He seems then to have moved for a few years to northern Victoria to look after a number of small Congregational churches in the Gunbower district.¹⁴⁴ During his time in this area, one of his sermons was published as a little

¹⁴¹ *Notes of the Month*. Date and page unknown, but mid-1916.

¹⁴² *Launceston Examiner*. Saturday, 20 July, 1940. page 11.

¹⁴³ *Notes of the Month*. 1 December, 1918. page 240.

¹⁴⁴ *New Life*. Friday, 23 August, 1940. page 4.

booklet – the subject – “Heaven or Hell – Which?” The cover of this little book tells us that the Manse residence was in the village of Leitchville, near the Murray River.

Lindsay Lockley gives a sketch outline of the beginnings of the Congregational denomination in this area, and it would be interesting to explore it further than appears in his book. In 1873, the Victorian Congregational Union sent a student newly out of College, Mr. A.G. Fry, to Albury, to found a Congregational church. A church was founded in Yarrawonga in 1877 by Mr. F.J. Pitman. “Preaching stations appeared at Bundalong, South Yarrawonga, Wilby and Burramine. The chain of centres from Beechworth through Rutherglen, Eldorado, Yackandandah, Albury and Yarrawonga was further extended down the Murray when, in 1878, J. Barber was brought to Gunbower from South Australia. Preaching stations were immediately set up at Cullen and Box Creek. Churches were erected at Gunbower, Echuca, and Cohuna, in 1883, and at Box Creek in 1890. Between the Yarrawonga and Eldorado regions another mission, based on Lake Rowan, was inaugurated in 1880, under the Rev. D. Morris. Morris remained for seven months only, using schools at Lake Rowan and South Peeluebla for worship, and erecting a bark structure at Sandy Creek. He was succeeded by J. Barber. Peechelba and Boweya were added in 1877.” His sources of information were, generally, the New South Wales and Victorian Congregational newspapers of the time.¹⁴⁵

So it was in some of these churches and preaching locations that Charles Chenery travelled and preached in these few years.

¹⁴⁵ G. Lindsay Lockley. *Congregationalism in Australia.*, edited by Bruce Upham. Melbourne. Uniting Church Press. 2001. page 198.

The Evangelisation Society of Australasia.

For some months in 1922, he worked for the Evangelisation Society of Australasia, and several of these missions were reported upon in the *Southern Cross*. We do not know exactly when this period of evangelistic work started, but it came to an end suddenly in August. The first published report of his work for the E.S.A. concerned his visit to the Morwell Electrical Works. This work was of a different character from the usual style followed by E.S.A. preachers because there were no regular meetings. Wherever or whenever he met anyone there was an opportunity to do some personal evangelism. These personal contacts led to small cottage meetings where the conversation and discussion was on subjects directly related to personal salvation and eternal spiritual issues. The local Church of England minister wrote to the Society sending a thank-offering, and saying “Your evangelist’s work will continue.” This visit could possibly have taken several months, as in the 1880s and 1890s periods visits to agricultural areas like this had been done by E.S.A. workers amongst Gippsland farm workers lasting several months. It could have occurred through February, March and/or April, 1922. On returning to Melbourne, Chenery led missions in Sunshine, and at Yarck before he went to Avoca.¹⁴⁶

The second published report appeared about two months later, and said that, after going to these places, he also preached at Gobour, Kanumbra and Merton, before he went to Tasmania. The Tasmanian visit was only supposed to last for six weeks, and the E.S.A. used the report to advertise for other churches which might like to avail themselves of Chenery’s services for evangelistic work.¹⁴⁷ However, while he was in Tasmania, he received an invitation to become the pastor of the Reed

¹⁴⁶ *Southern Cross*. Friday, 19 May, 1922. page 419.

¹⁴⁷ *Southern Cross*. Friday, 22 July, 1922. page 660.

Memorial Church, in Wellington Street, Launceston, which he accepted. So, his return to Melbourne was for the purpose of collecting his wife and remaining daughters, and taking them back to Launceston. The call to Charles Chenery was issued by the Reed Memorial Church on 8 August, 1922, and a welcome tea for them was held on 15 August.¹⁴⁸

Ministerial Work in Tasmania.

The organisational structure of the Reed Memorial Church at that time was certainly more “Congregational” in style than any other style, and would have suited what Chenery was accustomed to. It was also a church which practised believer’s baptism, but it did not become a part of the Baptist denomination until 1936.

Despite the fact that he was still very active and enthusiastic, we must remember that he was nearly sixty-five years of age – rather late in life to be taking on a new job like being pastor of a church like that. But in fact it was still some years before he actually retired, and even then he did not stop.

More than 30 years before Charles’s time in Launceston, the Memorial Church had sent out one of its members as a missionary with the South African Baptist Missionary Society – the Rev. J. W. Joyce – and had supported him over the years. In 1924, Joyce was back home on furlough, and gave a series of addresses at the Church about his work one weekend. One feature of the South African work was with “natives” who were illiterate, but who were being taught to read, and taught to become evangelists amongst their own people. This work required much travelling to serve a scattered population, and more recruits were needed. Churches were being formed in many places. A senior elder, Mr. Farmilo, was in charge of

¹⁴⁸ *Reed Memorial Church Officers (Elders) Minute Book*. Pages not numbered.

missionary funds at the Church, and urged the young people in the congregation to a greater missionary enterprise.¹⁴⁹

Several names seem to have been used almost interchangeably for the Reed Memorial Church before 1937. From earliest years it was called the Christian Mission Church, because Henry Reed did not want it to be identified with an existing denomination. It is now called the Gateway Baptist Church.

After about three and a half years as pastor of the Reed Memorial Church, he handed in his resignation on 10 November, 1925. His letter of resignation explained that there was no friction, trouble or discord between himself and the Officers, or any members of the Church, and he assured the Officers that he and his wife still enjoyed happy fellowship with everyone, as they had over the years of his pastoral relation. However, he felt that this move was the will of God at that time.¹⁵⁰

In early April, 1926, he received a unanimous call to the pastorate of the Perth Baptist Church, just south of Launceston. It was dated 1 April, 1926. He was offered a stipend of 225 pounds per annum, and the use of a partly furnished Manse. All rates and taxes would be paid, apart from the water rates. He already had conducted meetings for this church in the past, so he already knew what the Manse was like. This call was accepted, and Charles, Alice and the fourth daughter, Olive, all moved to Perth. Naturally he became listed as a Baptist minister during his time at Perth.¹⁵¹

The only bit of news about Chenery which appeared in the *Launceston Examiner* during this Perth period was about his

¹⁴⁹ *Launceston Examiner*. Saturday, 15 March, 1924. page 10.

¹⁵⁰ Correspondence in the *Reed Memorial Officers Minute Book*.

¹⁵¹ This original letter from Perth Baptist Church to Charles Chenery is also in the *Reed Memorial Church Officers Minute Book*.

share in an annual Sunday School anniversary in the Perth Methodist Church. Visiting ministers preached at the three Sunday gatherings, and Charles Chenery preached at the special Monday evening meeting.¹⁵²

After two and a half years of satisfying work in Perth, Chenery resigned from this position at Perth Baptist Church.¹⁵³ He renewed his links with the Tasmanian Congregational Union. Always willing to help, he accepted a fill-in position as the supply pastor at the Taranna Congregational Church on the Tasman Peninsula, looking after several congregations there. During the Taranna period several events were reported in the papers. One involved a major fund-raising social event, a sale of gifts, and supper in which the whole community shared.¹⁵⁴

Shortly afterwards a double fatality occurred involving two local men. Charles Chenery preached at a memorial service on the theme "The Mourners at the Cross." "He said that two of the best husbands, best fathers, best neighbours, had passed away. Why should they be called away so suddenly, and in their young manhood? The only place to get the answer was by standing at the Cross, and it was there they would get God's answer to all the problems of life. When death invaded homes people were often for the time being stunned and unnerved. Mr. Chenery instanced the death of his own son, killed in the Great European War; also his father, and several who had recently been called away. Special mention was made of the late Mrs. Freeman, whose death had likewise brought darkness and sorrow to their little township. He said that it was in the dark hours they often learned their best lessons, and received their best blessings. It was not wrong to weep. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus. A tempest without rain was dangerous,

¹⁵² *Launceston Examiner*. Friday, 17 December, 1926. page 7.

¹⁵³ *Launceston Examiner*. Saturday, 15 December, 1928. page 8.

¹⁵⁴ *Hobart Mercury*. Monday, 8 July, 1929, page 7.

but people were not to keep on weeping. Men were so constituted that their wounds did not remain open for ever. One of the great lessons of the Cross was thought for others; a true spirit of brotherhood. He had been touched by the spirit of love displayed by fellow workers in the scheme arranged to help the one left lonely and without support through the tragic happenings, which had rendered them all idle for the time being.”¹⁵⁵

The Chenerys were all away from home from 13 November to 18 December, 1931, and during that time their home was broken into. The burglars, a man and his wife, were arrested and tried. The papers naturally followed this court case, as they followed any such event.¹⁵⁶

Earlier in 1931 a great family event had occurred. This was Charles and Alice’s Golden Wedding anniversary on 10 July, 1931. A great family gathering took place in Taranna. Numerous telegrams and letters of congratulations were received, including one from the Hon. Charles Grimwade, Mayor of Ipswich, England.¹⁵⁷

This Taranna work situation continued from early 1929 through to the middle of 1932. In June, 1932, a pastor was located in Taranna, having moved from Devonport, and Chenery accepted a supply situation at the Devonport Congregational Church for about a year.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ *Hobart Mercury*. Thursday, 22 August, 1929. page 5.

¹⁵⁶ For example, *Launceston Examiner*. Thursday, 24 December, 1931. page 9.

¹⁵⁷ *Launceston Examiner*. Friday, 17 July, 1931. page 10.

¹⁵⁸ *Launceston Examiner*. Thursday, 23 June, 1932, page 5, and Tuesday, 12 July, 1932. page 5.

Retirement.

In 1933, Charles Chenery retired from the Devonport situation, and with his wife and daughter, moved to their residence at 19 Lord Street, Launceston. The house was called “Barina.”

In July, 1935, Charles and Alice were able to enjoy the Jubilee of the Reed Memorial Church. The minister of the Reed Memorial Church at that time was the Rev. E. J. Plenderleith. All the local ministers were on the platform. Greetings were brought by two former ministers – Charles Chenery and Malcolm McOmish, by Miss McOmish, and by Mrs. Mary Fysh of Melbourne, one of Henry Reed’s daughters. Several original members of the Church were also present. “There was a large jubilee cake with fifty candles, which were blown out by Mrs. J.T. Farmilo, an original member and widow of the contractor” who built the church.¹⁵⁹

The eldest Chenery daughter married some years earlier (Mrs. A. Butler) and lived in Prahran, Victoria. The second daughter was married (Mrs. C. Garnett), and lived on the Tasman Peninsula. The third daughter also married (Mrs H. Murfett) and lived in Yolla, Tasmania. The remaining son, Charles, moved to Sydney, and lived in the suburb of Mosman. The youngest daughter, Olive, lived and moved with her parents, and spent the remainder of her life in Launceston.¹⁶⁰

Alice Chenery died at their residence, and was buried in the Carr Villa Cemetery, Launceston, on Tuesday, 12 May, 1936. The funeral was strongly supported by friends from Christ Church (Congregational), and from the “Memorial Baptist Church.” Six pall-bearers were provided, three men from each of the two churches. The two ministers, the Rev. H. Watts Grimmett and the Rev. E. J. Plenderleith, led short

¹⁵⁹ *Launceston Examiner*. Monday, 15 July, 1935. page 6.

¹⁶⁰ *Hobart Mercury*. Monday 15 July, 1940. page 5.

services at the home, and at the graveside. “Floral tributes were received from Lawrence Vale Methodist Sunday school, the Memorial Church’s Y.P.S.C.E., from the pastor and members of the congregation of the Memorial Church, the Launceston Ministers’ Fraternal, and from the directors and staff of Messrs. Foot and Playsted.”¹⁶¹ This last may have been the place where Olive worked.

The Rev. Charles Chenery died suddenly at his home on 14 July, 1940, in his 82nd year. He had been engaged in Christian work for over 63 years, and was ordained for 46 years. Again there was a family gathering, as there had been in 1936. The funeral service was again shared by the ministers of the two churches: the Rev. Dr. G. E. Moore of Christ Church, and the Rev. A. C. Prior, of the Memorial Baptist Church, who held short services at the home, and at the graveside in the Carr Villa Cemetery. Members of the two churches attended, and there were many floral tributes.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ *Launceston Examiner*. Wednesday, 13 May, 1936. page 6.

¹⁶² *Launceston Examiner*. Wednesday, 17 July, 1940. page 4, *Hobart Mercury*. 17 July, 1940. page 2. Also, *Launceston Examiner*. Saturday, 20 July, 1940. page 11, for a good biographical outline.

CHAPTER SIX

THE REV. D. H. MOORE

E. S. A. Evangelist in 1923.

Two British Baptist ministers arrived in Fremantle, Western Australia, on the *Mantua*, on or about 8 March, 1922. The leader was the Rev. D. H. Moore, who had been the minister of the Vernon Baptist Chapel in London for twenty-five years. The other was the Rev. Frank H. Smith of Ilford. They had visited India, and came to Australia on a self-appointed mission, which, at first, was described as “telling the story of the recent revival in the eastern counties of England, and bringing a Pentecostal message to Australia.”¹⁶³

Before entering the Baptist ministry he had been in the British navy for seven years, and he had spent five years in the London Fire Brigade. It was after that he worked at the Vernon Baptist Church.¹⁶⁴

Moore had resigned from the very busy London pastorate, and wanted to spread the message of revival in the churches. The word “Pentecostal” in the above quotation does not refer to modern Pentecostalism in any way, but refers to revivals which had happened recently, or were in progress in several parts of the world.

Moore and Smith had apparently taken a very keen interest in a revival which had occurred shortly beforehand in

¹⁶³ *West Australian*. Wednesday, 8 March, 1922. page 6.

¹⁶⁴ *Argus*. Saturday 3 March, 1923. page 32.

the seaside fishing towns of Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth, and also in coastal fishing villages in Scotland. The minister who had been most involved in the English aspect of this revival had been a Baptist minister, the Rev. A. Douglas Brown. The English part of the revival became known as the East Anglia Revival, although in many ways it had spread from Scotland. The main part of the movement had occurred through 1921. Douglas Brown also addressed meetings at the Keswick Convention, describing what had happened, and delivering what many considered to be profoundly challenging messages around the theme of “Revival.” Moore and Smith saw it as their calling to spread the message of revival flowing from this movement.

Moore was also greatly interested in a revival movement which had occurred in 1921 in Ulster, under the ministry of the evangelist, the Rev. W. P. Nicholson. Moore was even more interested in another more notable revival which was active at that time in the Soviet Union, and which seemed to emanate from a church in Riga, Latvia, where the Pastor was the Rev. William Fetler. Pastor Fetler had founded the Russian Missionary Society, and the number of conversions resulting in Russia had climbed steeply, despite growing persecution as the Russian Communist leaders struggled to gain greater control. In later years, in the 1930s, a great many Christians lost their lives, or simply disappeared, at the orders of Joseph Stalin, including many missionaries from this Society. Moore came to Australia with the official status of Australasian Commissioner for the Russian Missionary Society, and spoke often about the work of this Mission and its associated revival movement.¹⁶⁵

One of his later meetings in Perth was reported as follows:- “Russia and Revival.- The Rev. D. H. Moore told the remarkable story of his life to a crowded audience in the

¹⁶⁵ A list of literature about these three revival movements can be found as part of the Bibliography.

Museum-street Baptist Church last night. As he and the Rev. Frank Smith leave for Adelaide tomorrow, Mr. Moore has consented to lecture tonight in the same church on "Revolution or Christ for Russia." He will tell how the most wonderful religious revival in the world is now taking place in that country, in spite of its awful economic and social condition. There will be no charge for admission, and no collection."¹⁶⁶

They were in Adelaide for less than a week, before going to Hobart. One of his South Australian meetings was in the North Adelaide Baptist Church, and a heading was used much like the ones we have seen that he used in Perth. But he also told the story of his son's missionary work in Delhi, India, and the needs being faced there. There were manpower shortages in all of the mission fields. Moore said that he had tried several times to become a missionary, but had always failed, and now he spent his time urging others to go as missionaries.

"In Russia, it was either the case of introducing the true preaching of the work of Christ to the people, or a revolution. The teaching of the Gospel was a difficult matter in that unhappy country. The Soviet had issued a proclamation forbidding, under pain of imprisonment, the teaching of any form of religion to persons under the age of 18 years. That meant that no Sunday schools could be conducted. Offenders were sometimes sentenced to death. In Petrograd, however, there were faithful workers who carried on the teaching of the Gospel in secret, and in defiance of the authorities; but the fact remained that there were millions of people in Russia who needed salvation. Russia was, as it had been looked upon, a religious country, but there was no real evidence of spiritual power in evidence there. The majority of the people were in a

¹⁶⁶ *West Australian*. Thursday 16 March. 1922. page 6.

state of starvation, and in some localities even cannibalism existed. Concluding, Mr. Moore said there were bands of workers in England who periodically forwarded consignments of clothing and soap to the needy people in Russia, but missionaries were needed most.”¹⁶⁷

It was the lectures about Russia again that were reported at length in Hobart, probably because Russia was well in the news at that time. The stay in Hobart was also only for a few days, and one of the meetings, moderately attended, was held in the Elizabeth Street Baptist Church. The *Hobart Mercury* had published that morning that Russia needed a big loan from foreign countries in order to avoid economic collapse and reconstruction. “Russia was not a Christian country, as 90 percent of the people were illiterate, and it was only in recent years that any except the upper classes received any education. “The census for 1910 disclosed that there were 180,000,000 people in Russia. Regarding the current famine, Moore read pieces from H. G. Wells’ latest book, *Russia in the Shadows*, and other sources.

Moore appealed to the Tasmanians to support the appeal for food for Russia. He said that 20,000,000 people knew nothing of Christ. While relief was being sent from England and America, thousands would die before anything arrived.

“From Siberia right down to Eastern Europe there was a great revival, in which God was being glorified. Never before in Russia had there been such a sweeping revival as in the past two years. So many people were being converted that one writer had said that 100 preachers would not be able to baptise all the converts offering in one centre. They were not only sending out missionaries, but had formed a fund to raise a million shillings to send out Bibles. While clothing and food

¹⁶⁷ *Register*. Thursday 23 March, 1922. page 9.

were urgently needed, there was also the need for men and women to teach the Word of God.”¹⁶⁸

By 1 May, they were in Sydney giving Bible-readings in the Bathurst Street Baptist Church. On Thursday, 4 May, Moore was to give a lecture in the Chapter House, St. Andrew’s Cathedral, entitled “Russia, Christ or Revolution.”¹⁶⁹

By 13 May, they were in Brisbane. Moore was announced to present Bible readings and lectures in the City Tabernacle, where the minister was the Rev. W. G. Pope. Before presenting his lectures on Russia, he led a “Victorious Life Campaign” for several days during the week. One of his subjects was “Loyalty to God.” One of the Bible readings was on the subject of “Prayer.” The Campaign allowed him to emphasise his theme of spiritual revival, which was one of his main purposes in making the preaching tour. Following that he introduced his messages on missionary work, and the need especially of Russia, for a few days.

Reports and news of his meetings in Brisbane appeared in the secular papers daily, and sometimes twice in the one issue.¹⁷⁰

Moore and Smith were in New Zealand for over two months, from June to early August. At the end of June Moore was in Auckland.

“Poland and Russia might be good place to go to if the rent of a house was the only thing to be considered. Speaking at the Baptist Tabernacle in Auckland (states the Herald), the Rev. D. H. Moore, commissioner for the Russian Missionary society, told how one of the Society’s workers rented a five-room flat in Warsaw for 50,000 marks a year. ‘When I tell

¹⁶⁸ *Mercury*. Tuesday, 25 April, 1922. page 6.

¹⁶⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*. Monday, 1 May, 1922. page 10.

¹⁷⁰ For example, *Brisbane Courier*. Wednesday, 17 May. 1922. page 8, and 22 May, page 4.

you,’ said the speaker, ‘that the English equivalent to that sum is three pounds you will see that that is a good place to go for a holiday.’”¹⁷¹

Over a month later we read that Moore “has had great meetings in Dunedin, Ashburton, and Christchurch, and he will lecture in the Vivian Street Baptist Church tomorrow evening on ‘Revolution and Religion in Russia Today.’ Mr. Moore will leave for Australia on Thursday.”¹⁷²

By mid-October, 1922, he was back in Western Australia for the Baptist Union Assembly, where he took part in it a number of times.¹⁷³

After the end of 1922, the name of the Rev. Frank Smith no longer appears in the story in Australia. Perhaps he went back home.

The Evangelisation Society of Australasia.

The newspaper trail then jumped to 1923, where we find that he was based in Melbourne, and was working for the Evangelisation Society of Australasia. He began at the beginning of March with an evangelistic effort in the city working with the Rev. C. H. Nash. The meetings were held in the Albert Street Baptist Church, and the series was entitled the “Secret of Victorious Living.” Publicity for these meetings included a photograph of Mr. Moore. All the students from Melbourne Bible Institute came with their Principal to the meetings, and the whole team of the Melbourne Gospel Crusade also joined in.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ *Hawera and Normanby Star*. 28 June, 1922. page 4.

¹⁷² *Evening Post*. 8 August, 1922. page 8. advertisement on page 2.

¹⁷³ *West Australian*. Thursday, 12 October, 1922. pages 9 and 10.

¹⁷⁴ *Argus*. Saturday, 3 March, 1923. page 32.

The *Argus* also published a reasonable outline of one of Moore's addresses during this campaign.¹⁷⁵

Although the Evangelisation Society of Australasia worked very largely in Victoria, it seems to have supported the work that the Rev. D. H. Moore carried out in 1923 in almost all of the Australian States. Many of his addresses were, again, about the work and needs of the Russian Missionary Society. But he worked for the whole year under the auspices of the E.S.A.

On Anzac Day, 1923, he was speaking in the country town of Bathurst, New South Wales, appealing for the distressed people of Russia. The chairman was Bishop Long.¹⁷⁶

By October he was in Brisbane again, and getting a good coverage from the press, like had happened beforehand. As a result, we learn a bit more about the background information compared to what was reported elsewhere.

“The Russian Missionary Society sprang from the action of a few godly men in London connected with the pioneer mission, who secured support for Pastor William Fetler, then a Russian subject, who was going out to preach the Gospel to his own people after having finished his training in Spurgeon's College. Great success attended his ministry in Russia, but enmity grew among the authorities, many of whom were adherents of the Greek Church. The law was set in motion against Mr. Fetler, and he was banished from Russia. [This happened during the reign of the last Czar, before the Communist revolution]. He went to America, and there he formed the Russian Missionary Society. On his return to England a British section of the society was formed, and now

¹⁷⁵ *Argus*. Monday, 26 March, 1923. page 7.

¹⁷⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*. Thursday, 26 April, 1923. page 5.

there were sections in Chicago, London, Berlin and Warsaw, while 150 missionaries were attached to the society.”¹⁷⁷

At one of his meetings in Brisbane, Moore provided the *Courier* with sections of letters he had received from Russia describing conditions there. One quotation described an instance of a man trading in parts of human bodies to eat, where he had first killed and buried the men who were being eaten.

Another example described some of the social conditions. “...the desecration of places of worship, the wholesale assassination of those suspected of antipathy to Soviet rule, the confiscation of wealth, the virtual abolition of public trial, constant pillage, refined cruelty to prisoners, midnight tribunals, elaborate espionage, incessant arrests and requisitions, and the characterless compositions of the extraordinary councils of the Tribunal.”¹⁷⁸

Several meetings were held in the Wharf Street Congregational Church. In one of these gatherings, Moore told about William Fetler’s brother, Robert. After the revolution, Robert had gone to preach in Petrograd, but had been arrested and sent to Siberia. He continued to carry on the good work in Siberia, and had been assisted by four missionaries sent out by the Society. He ultimately had as many as nine workers assisting him. Recently, their hall had been seized, despite the fact that it was registered, and Robert had been compelled to leave Russia, and get into China.

Evangelistic work was carried on during the [First World] War among the Russian prisoners, who numbered some 2,000,000 men in Germany and Austria. Many were converted, and through them the Gospel had since been spread in Russia. Unable to get into Soviet Russia the society was doing magnificent work in Poland among the refugees. They were

¹⁷⁷ *Brisbane Courier*. Saturday, 20 October, 1923. page 6.

¹⁷⁸ *Brisbane Courier*. Ibid.

also sending Bibles and religious propaganda into Russia to assist those who were preaching the Gospel. The Soviet Government was bitterly opposed to religion, and prevented religious instruction by edict until citizens were 18 years of age. In spite of all difficulties the good work was going on. Fifty missionaries were now working in Russia and adjoining lands, and the society aimed to increase the number to 500.¹⁷⁹

In some of his meetings he addressed Sunday schools and young people's Christian Endeavour groups.

On Christmas Day, 1923, Moore was in Tasmania again, and on Christmas Day evening he addressed a large congregation in Oatlands Town Hall. The topic, as on many of the other occasions, was "The Romance of Spiritual Revival under Bolshevism in Russia."

"In dealing with the conditions in Russia, the speaker said that the war, and consequent famine and revolution, had reduced the population from 182,000,000 in 1910 to 140,000,000 at the present time. This was a tremendous death roll – equal to nearly eight times the population of Australia – and it was impossible for those blessed by having this peaceable country for a habitation to realise the suffering, trial and sorrow through which Russia was passing. The society, he said, had 150 workers in that stricken country relieving distress and spreading the Gospel, and he made an appeal for prayers and monetary support for the development of the work. The Russians were a decent, peaceable people, and were not a crowd of cut-throats, as some people imagined.

Thousands were being converted, and there were cases where they walked 60 miles to hear the Bible read. Owing to the deflation of the currency in Poland, Bibles could be printed for one shilling each, and a million shilling fund had been

¹⁷⁹ *Brisbane Courier*. Thursday, 25 October, 1923. page 12.

commenced, with a view to the distribution of a million Bibles among those who were so eager to read them.”¹⁸⁰

What must have been Moore’s last mission under the auspices of the Evangelisation Society of Australasia, was conducted by him in the Tasmanian town of Burnie, late in February, 1924. “Under the auspices of the Evangelisation Society of Australia (sic), the Rev. D. H. Moore is conducting an eight-day mission at Burnie in the Baptist Church. The evangelist gave a thrilling account of the great spiritual revival in Russia under Bolshevism early in the campaign, which has earned large audiences each night. Mr. Moore is a most convincing speaker, and by his earnest appeals has done much towards the spiritual life of his hearers.”¹⁸¹

From the beginning of March, 1924, the Rev. D. H. Moore took pastoral responsibilities with the Collins Street Baptist congregation, as a temporary plan to help them through a difficult period.

“The Rev. D. H. Moore’s Ministry.

After assisting to tide the church over one of the most difficult periods in its more recent history (writes the secretary of the Collins Street Baptist Church), the Rev. D. H. Moore closed his five months’ ministry amongst us on Sunday, July 27. Following a brief period of rest, he will conduct united missions in Warrnambool from August 9 to 20, in Moonee Ponds from August 23 to September 2, and in Geelong from September 6 to 22. Later in the year Mr. and Mrs. Moore may direct their steps towards America. An official letter of thanks and appreciation has been sent to Mr. Moore from the Church’s secretariat on behalf of the executive.

¹⁸⁰ *Mercury*. Saturday, 29 December, 1923. page 10.

¹⁸¹ *Launceston Examiner*. Saturday, 1 March, 1924. page 10.

The following ministers will occupy the Collins Street Baptist pulpit during August and September: August 10, Rev. Joshua Robertson, of Canterbury; Rev. H. Estcourt Hughes, of Adelaide; August 24, Rev. S. A. McDonald, of Elsternwick; August 31, Rev. H. G. Scholefield, of Shepparton; September 7, Rev. Robt Goodman, of Essendon; September 14, Rev. W. H. Hinton, of Geelong; September 21, Rev G. P. Rees, of Box Hill; September 28, Rev. H. G. Hackworthy, M.C. M.A., South Yarra.”¹⁸²

We have seen in another chapter that the Rev. D. H. Moore and his wife continued leading missions in Australia after the pastoral work at Collins Street terminated, at least for a short time. For example, they led a mission in the Moonee Ponds Baptist Church. But it is at this point that our ability to trail them, and to reconstruct their story, comes to an end.

¹⁸² *Southern Cross*. Friday, 8 August, 1924. page 499.

CHAPTER SEVEN

VICTORIAN OPEN AIR MISSION.

1895 to 1925.

Mr. Charles Carter was the indefatigable secretary of the Evangelisation Society of Victoria from around 1883, when the Society began.¹⁸³

Around 1895 and 1896 this Society began to get requests from other Australian colonies (as they were then) for the Society to send evangelists to conduct evangelistic missions for them. By 1896 there were calls from New Zealand as well. So the Society changed its name in order to reflect this new situation. It became the Evangelisation Society of Australasia. The original E.S.A., however, had a major concern for evangelism to occur in the country areas of Victoria, especially in the more remote areas, where the population would not have been able to afford to pay for good quality evangelistic work to be done. Carter continued as secretary of the E.S.A. for another 25 years.

While I cannot prove this, I can guess that Charles Carter began to think that there was a very great need for evangelism in the city of Melbourne and its suburbs, even though it was a matter of great rejoicing that the Society's

¹⁸³ Robert Evans and Darrell Paproth. *The Evangelisation Society of Australasia: The First Thirty-five Years. 1883 to 1918.* Hazelbrook. Published by the Authors. 2010.

evangelistic efforts should have widened so wonderfully as to include all of Australia and New Zealand.

So Carter organized a new thing, which became known as the Victorian Open Air Mission. Carter had been an enthusiastic open air preacher since his days as a young Christian in England. He used to preach at the horse races. He appreciated the great opportunities which then existed for open air work in the city. The V.O.A.M. operated out of Carter's office at the Y.M.C.A., and Carter was the first President.

The V.O.A.M. had little or no equipment and no money. It operated on a shoe-string budget. It was not until 1901 that enough money was on hand to buy a marquee in which to hold meetings.

“The Victorian Open Air Gospel Mission, whose headquarters is at the Y.M.C.A. offices, had their new tent erected close to the South Melbourne tram terminus from Christmas Day to New Year's Day, and under the leadership of Mr. [James] Robertson, of the Evangelisation Society, meetings were held, with good results, and the attendance was fairly good during the day, while at night, in spite of the opposition of a merry-go-round, which had to shut up, on next block, excellent audiences faced the speakers, Messrs. Robertson, Scurr, Watson, Oliver, Rev. Eagar, and others, who unfolded the plan of salvation in a plain, earnest manner. The great need of the mission is now seats; having none of their own, they had to borrow from the churches and Sunday-schools, and on Sundays these wanted them for their own use. The mission workers are praying that the God Who, in answer to prayer, sent the money for the splendid marquee, will put it into some of His stewards' hearts to send the twenty pounds needed to procure seats, as hundreds left for want of seating accommodation.”¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ *Southern Cross*. Friday, 4 January, 1901. page 19.

The reference to “Rev. Eagar” probably refers to the Rev. Alexander R. Edgar, who was superintendent of the Central Methodist Mission at Wesley Church, and a warm supporter of evangelistic work of this, or any, kind.

A month later, a letter appeared from a supporter regarding the tent.

“A correspondent writes:- ‘It had long been the desire of the Victorian Open-Air Mission to possess a tent. This desire has at last been realized, and while ecclesiastical leaders are agitating themselves about how to get the masses to church, this movable canvass church is being taken to the masses. It was pitched for the first time at the South Melbourne tram terminus, near the beach, and on Boxing Day the campaign began, continuing for about three weeks. Mr. James Robertson, of the Evangelisation Society, was appointed header of the mission, and he was assisted by Mr. Scurr, of the same society; the Rev. Mr. Eagar, members of the V.O.A.M., and others. We thank God for sending the tent to South Melbourne. It was a time of blessing, and the power of God was present. Although we cannot report large numbers of conversions, we are sure that the results of these tent meetings are recorded on high; and we shall hear of them when the Books are opened. Thanks are due to the Christian brother who lent the land on which the tent was pitched, free of charge; as also to the Mayor of South Melbourne and the Albert Park Wesleyan friends, who lent the forms. Mrs. Jarvis presided at the organ, and was a great help. We would earnestly pray that as the tent goes from place to place it may be followed by the blessing of God and made the birthplace of many precious souls.’¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ *Southern Cross*. Friday, 8 February, 1901. page 162.

On rare occasions, a note appeared about one of the V.O.A.M.'s monthly meetings. We can see from this piece that Carter was still the President. It also shows us something about the extent of the work at that time.

“The monthly meeting of the Victorian Open Air Mission was held on Friday, 1st inst., at the Y.M.C.A. rooms, Russell Street, the vice-president, Mr. R. L. Mason, presiding. Reports were received of the work in the following districts: Auburn, Armadale, Albert Park, North Brighton, and North Melbourne. It was decided to hold special meetings for open-air workers during the winter months, and an effort is to be made to secure the services of leading ministers to give addresses on outdoor work at each meeting of the Mission. These are held on the first Friday of the month, at 7.45 p.m. in the Y.M.C.A. rooms, Russell Street. All open-air workers are cordially invited. The Mission will be glad to receive any donations of booklets, tracts, etc., suitable for distribution at open-air gatherings, which may be addressed to Mr. C. Carter, president, or Mr. C. H. Burley, gen. hon. sec., Y.M.C.A. rooms, Russell Street.”¹⁸⁶

By 1904, the Presidency of the V.O.A.M. had changed. An Easter Chautauqua was being held in Healesville. One of the gatherings, the United Evangelistic meeting at 8.30 p.m. on the Sunday, was conducted by Mr. Ernest Pearson, President of the Victorian Open Air Mission.¹⁸⁷

Mr. H. B. Denniston was the President of the Victorian Open Air Mission after about 1910, and remained so until 1925.

To the despair of all historians, often enough, an announcement would appear that a Mission was to be led somewhere, but no name was given as to who the missionary

¹⁸⁶ *Southern Cross*. Friday, 8 May, 1903. page 449.

¹⁸⁷ *Healesville and Yarra Glen Guardian*. Saturday, 26 March, 1904. page 2.

might have been. So it was that, at a place named Garfield, we are told that the V.O.A.M. had just concluded a very successful four days' mission. About thirty members of the Society gathered with the aim of reaching the outlying areas.¹⁸⁸

The Arrival of Norman Lumsden.

In 1913, Norman Lumsden returned from his time in the Solomon Islands and entered into evangelistic work in Victoria with the V.O.A.M. He already was personally acquainted with Mr. Denniston through the S.S.E.M. work..

The Presbytery of Mortlake urged congregations to support a Bible and Mission Study School being held at Koroit by the Victorian Open-air Mission from 8th to 12th March, 1915, but, again, no indication is given as to the name of the person running the school.¹⁸⁹

In Tasmania, there was a report about "one of the most successful missions ever held in this district was conducted last week by Mr. C. G. B. Sands, a Victorian Open-air missionary." There had been between 20 and 30 conversions. The people thought the mission was far too short. Sands moved on to conduct another mission in the village of Paradise on the next Sunday.¹⁹⁰ Mr. Sands is another of the V.O.A.M workers about whom it has been very difficult to learn anything else.

A notice of the Annual Rally of the Victorian Open Air Mission shows that it was held on Monday, 26th September, 1920, in the Independent Hall, Collins Street. Several gatherings occurred, but the evening meeting took place at 7.45 p.m. The chairman was the President, Mr. H. B. Denniston, and

¹⁸⁸ *Argus*. Wednesday, 30 March, 1910. page 8.

¹⁸⁹ *Camperdown Chronicle*. Saturday, 17 April, 1915. page 2.

¹⁹⁰ *North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times*. Thursday 25 February, 1915. page 2.

the speakers were the Rev. L. C. M. Donaldson, and Mr. Lumsden. Soloists were Messrs. Godfrey and Dyer.¹⁹¹

The Rev. L. C. M. Donaldson.

This gentleman has left behind himself a sufficient paper trail to make him well traceable. Leo Crawford Manning Donaldson was a Presbyterian minister in Tasmania, possibly beginning as a home missionary or probationer of some kind in 1900. Two of the marriages he celebrated in Queenstown were mentioned in the newspapers.¹⁹²

After that he spent sixteen months as the minister in Apsley and Kempton, and in the Bothwell district. One wedding he celebrated there was noted in the press, and also the farewell gathering when he left.¹⁹³

From there he became the assistant minister at Chalmers Church in Launceston. This appointment lasted for at least four years, despite him being recorded as visiting Devonport, Zeehan and Longford at different times.¹⁹⁴

He was minister at Beaconsfield in 1908, and at the Erskine Presbyterian Church, Carlton, in 1913.¹⁹⁵ One of the Beaconsfield references reveals Donaldson to have been a competent organist. The *North Western Advocate* says that he had just been registered as an officiating minister of the

¹⁹¹ *Argus*. Saturday, 18 September, 1920. page 18.

¹⁹² *Examiner*. Tuesday, 31 July, 1900. page 1, and Friday, 27 October, 1900. page 12.

¹⁹³ *Mercury*. Tuesday, 2 December, 1902. page 1., and Friday, 9 January, 1903. page 2.

¹⁹⁴ *North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times*. 27 August, 1904. also *Examiner*, 27 February, 1905. page 6; 21 April, 1906. page 9; 6 June, 1906, page 6; 5 December, 1906. page 5.

¹⁹⁵ *Examiner*. 17 September, 1908. page 6; and *North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times*, 13 October, 1908. page 3. Also *Camperdown Chronicle*, 30 September, 1913. page 3.

Presbyterian Church. Perhaps this is a reference to his ordination, because he had already celebrated marriages, as we have seen.

In 1914, Donaldson went on a voyage to England and America for health reasons, but he returned to the pastorate of the Erskine church afterwards.¹⁹⁶

It is not at all clear how long Donaldson worked for the V.O.A.M. It may have been a very short time. Certainly we saw him speak at the Annual Rally in September, 1920, and in April, 1921, the V.O.A.M. loaned him to the Evangelisation Society of New South Wales for three months (although he never came back). In the middle, in January, 1921, he was in Launceston, chairing a meeting in the Albert Hall, at which Ambassador Booth was the speaker. How did that relate to V.O.A.M. work?¹⁹⁷

In any case, he went to New South Wales to lead some missions. He stayed longer than three months, went up the North Coast, and led a mission in Coffs Harbour, amongst other places.¹⁹⁸ While he was in New South Wales, he was asked to accept the pastorate at the Hunter Baillie Presbyterian Church, Annandale.¹⁹⁹ This call was accepted, and he was duly inducted into this charge on 19 September, 1922. He entered into the normal swing of things, speaking at an A.N.C.M. service and marrying people, apart from his ordinary parish work.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ *Argus*. Monday, 2 March, 1914. page 9, and 30 March, 1917. page 6.

¹⁹⁷ *Examiner*. Thursday, 27 January, 1921. page 6. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 April, 1921. page 7.

¹⁹⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*. 3 December, 1921. page 14.

¹⁹⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*. 5 August, 1922. page 7.

²⁰⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*. 28 October, 1922. page 7. *Brisbane Courier*, 22 March, 1923. page 6.

Very wide notice was taken of the fact that, little more than a year later, Donaldson suddenly resigned from the Presbyterian ministry, and became a Baptist minister. The crux of his problem was that he could not with conscience baptize the children of people who were not active church members. The Presbytery tried to soften his sudden move, and negotiate a little.²⁰¹

After discussion between Donaldson and a Presbytery committee, it was found that his problem had hardened, and that he could no longer baptize any child. So his resignation was accepted.

Almost immediately, however, he was inducted into the pastorate at the North Sydney Baptist Church.²⁰² But he did attend the induction of the new minister at Hunter Baillie on 16 June, 1924. In 1926 he sailed for England again. He was back in Launceston again in 1928 to speak at a special Boys' Week.

In July, 1929, he sailed for England again, and even was reported passing through Fremantle on 8 August. But something must have changed, because, by 22 October, 1929, he was back in Sydney, taking part in a large funeral for the Rev. G. A. Craike. In 1935 he supplied the pulpit in Armidale during January, and preached the Union Sermon at the half-yearly Baptist assembly in Brisbane, in April, 1936.

Janetzki and Cameron.

Herbert Janetzki's name appears at a number of points in our story. At this point, however, there is a published reference to his work, accompanied by the song leader Hugh Cameron.

²⁰¹ Many sources. For example; *Sydney Morning Herald*. 9 January, 1924. page 12. Also in *Barrier Miner, Brisbane Courier and Adelaide Advertiser*.

²⁰² *Register*. 16 February, 1924. page 6.

“Two agents of the Victorian Open-air Mission, Messrs. Cameron and Janetzki, conducted a ten days’ mission in Portland during February, the use of our Hall being granted to them for their indoor meetings. Great earnestness marked their appeals, and we believe good was done. We desire to contradict a rumour that these men were Russellites. It is quite untrue.”²⁰³

Hugh Cameron often went touring with Norman Lumsden. Cameron worked hard for the Society until his premature death on 20 November, 1923.²⁰⁴

Malcolm McOmish.

This evangelist worked for the Victorian Open Air Mission during 1922, and possibly a little longer.

McOmish already had a record of evangelizing in different parts of Australia when he was asked to become the Pastor of the Reed Memorial Church in Wellington Street, Launceston. He commenced this work in 1916, and remained the Pastor until the middle of 1922, which was a long period when one compares it with the length of years spent by others in this job before him.

He decided to resign from the pastorate in 1922, in order to take up work with the Victorian Open Air Mission in Melbourne. His first task was to be the main preacher at a convention for the deepening of the Spiritual Life, being held in Hobart. Several other advertisements appeared in the *Mercury* about these meetings.

It seems that McOmish particularly had in mind the fact that a number of revival movements were progressing in different parts of the world in 1921 and 1922. Perhaps he felt that being a full-time evangelist would give him a better

²⁰³ *Portland Guardian*. Monday 4 April, 1921. page 3.

²⁰⁴ *Argus*. Wednesday, 2 November, 1923. page 13.

opportunity to be used as part of this revival scene than if he stayed in the pastorate.²⁰⁵

Another chapter in this present book, about the Rev. D. H. Moore, introduces this aspect of hoping for, and expecting revival, as Moore was especially aiming to spread the news about these revivals as he toured Australia in 1922.

McOmish left Victoria before 1924 in order to become a leader of the Open Air Campaigners in Sydney, and worked there for a number of years.²⁰⁶

Another very active layman who worked with the V.O.A.M. in this period and about whom very little appeared in the papers was Mr. A. B. Miller. His death notice in 1922 said that he was the head of Messrs. A. Joyce and Co. Pty. Ltd., and in private life had been a leading figure as vice-president of the Victorian Open Air Mission for many years. He was similarly involved in the Methodist Local Preachers' Association, the Council of Churches and the Laymen's Missionary Movement.²⁰⁷

F. W. George Hall.

The first appearance of George Hall's name occurs as part of V.O.A.M. activities in 1924. He had trained as an architect in England, fought in the First World War, worked in Canada, and then trained at the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. "Cairo" Bradley had pulled some strings to get Hall to come to Australia, and he seems to have arrived in 1924.²⁰⁸ A separate chapter about Hall appears elsewhere in this book.

²⁰⁵ *Mercury*. Monday, 26 June, 1922. page 2.

²⁰⁶ For example, *Sydney Morning Herald*. Saturday, 10 May, 1924. page 21. Also W. R. Angus, *Truceless Warfare*. The Story of the N.S.W. Open Air Campaigners. Chapter 12.

²⁰⁷ *Argus*. Saturday, 5 August, 1922. page 20.

²⁰⁸ *Argus*. Tuesday, 23 September, 1924. page 23.

A report was published about a mission conducted by Norman Lumsden for the V.O.A.M. in April, 1925. A news piece appeared about a one-day spiritual convention which was being held on a Saturday. It was part of a two weeks' mission that Lumsden was leading. Tasmania had its own open air mission organisation, and it was often under the auspices of this society that V.O.A.M. men would come to Tasmania to preach. Members and friends of the Tasmanian society travelled by train or car to the Claremont meetings. The morning address at this one day convention was on the subject of open air preaching, and was delivered by Lumsden. In the afternoon, Miss Campbell spoke on the way the power of the Gospel had transformed lives and homes at the aboriginal station where she worked for the Aborigines Inland Mission. "At night the hall was filled, when Mr. Lumsden gave an address. The singing was led by Mr. W. Dickason, of Claremont."²⁰⁹

A Mission such as this one in Claremont, however, was usually not an isolated event, but would be part of a series of missions organised by the Tasmanian Society, in order to get the most value out of a tour by an evangelist from the mainland. Thus we find that an advertisement appeared a few days later about another Saturday convention in the Swan Street Church, beginning at 3 p.m. Lumsden preached in the afternoon, there was a tea, a prayer meeting, a Song Service led by Mr. W. Dickason, and then Lumsden preached again at night. The Church Anniversary occurred the following night as part of Lumsden's mission.²¹⁰

The Amalgamation of the E.S.A. and the V.O.A.M. - 1925.

The manpower shortage being suffered by the Evangelisation Society was highlighted in 1925. In the middle

²⁰⁹ *Hobart Mercury*. Monday 27 April, 1925. page 2.

²¹⁰ *Mercury*. Saturday 2 May, 1925. page 3.

of the year the Society amalgamated with the Victorian Open Air Mission (V.O.A.M.).

The V.O.A.M. had commenced operations in Melbourne in 1895, under the inspiration of the redoubtable Mr. Charles Carter, who became its first president. Scattered information appeared sometimes about its activities in the *Southern Cross*, and even less often in the secular newspapers.

The new organization was to be known as the Evangelisation Society of Australasia, possibly because the E.S.A. was older and better known in many parts of Victoria. So the V.O.A.M. lost its identity in this union.²¹¹

In the 1920s the V.O.A.M. had steadily developed a strong team of evangelists – so different from the manpower strengths of the E.S.A. By 1925, the V.O.A.M. had at least four evangelists to bring into the union. These were Messrs. Norman Lumsden, F. W. George Hall, Eric Clarkson and W. Dickason. Another evangelist, Mr. Herbert H. Janetzki had worked for the V.O.A.M. in the early 1920s, and also came into the E.S.A. a year or so after the union took place. So far as I can see, he was not working with the V.O.A.M. in 1925.

Also, there was Mr. W. A. Allen, who was a song leader in the last days of the V.O.A.M., and who had gone with Eric Clarkson on his first evangelizing tour to Bright in a horse-drawn Griffiths' Tea carriage.²¹² Andrew W. Smith also was part of the new team, joining the Evangelisation Society about the time of the amalgamation.

So, this union provided a tremendous stimulus to the work of the Evangelisation Society. Separate chapters have been provided here about the lives and work of Lumsden, Janetzki, Hall, Smith and Clarkson.

²¹¹ *Argus*. Friday, 31 July, 1925. page 4.

²¹² Personal papers of Mr. David Clarkson.

CHAPTER EIGHT

NORMAN C. LUMSDEN

Missionary, Evangelist, Convention Speaker.

Norman Clyde Lumsden worked for the Evangelisation Society of Australasia for over two years after the Society amalgamated with the Victorian Open Air Mission in 1925, until he resigned from the Society in 1927. However he may have conducted missions occasionally for the Society by special request after that date. He was considered by his friends to be the best known and the most competent and effective evangelist in Australia during the period between the two World Wars.

There are several good outline statements available which describe the pattern of his life. Two of these statements appeared as obituary notices in the *Keswick Quarterly and Upwey Convention News*, and in *New Life*.²¹³ Building up a fuller biographical statement, and trying to spell out what this meant towards a history of the Evangelisation Society, consists largely in developing certain parts of these published articles. Information in this paper generally comes from these articles, unless otherwise indicated.

Norman Lumsden was born in Kempton, Tasmania, probably in 1879, and was converted to Christ at the age of 17 years, through reading a tract which had been given to him by his mother. He read the tract on a train journey, and the tract

²¹³ *Keswick Quarterly*. February 1944, pages 29 – 30, and *New Life*. Thursday, 10 February, 1944.

was “Faith, Fact and Feeling,” by the Rev. F. B. Meyer. He often spoke about being converted whilst making a train trip, and often encouraged others not only to read on trains, but to use such occasions for personal evangelism.

Two years after his conversion he began his service for God by giving his time to personal evangelism amongst members of the police force. A lady named Mrs. John Dowling was involved in this, and he stayed at her home, and joined in this work, seeking by personal witness and by other means to lead them to a decision for Christ. A little later he came under the influence of Mr. Theo. Kitchen, one of the strong Brethren leaders of his day, and this led Norman to have a concern for the spiritual welfare of the Kanakas on the sugar plantations in Northern Queensland. In pursuing this concern he spent his twenty-first birthday in Queensland, and began to be involved in the work of the Queensland Kanaka Mission.

The Queensland Kanaka Mission.

The Annual Reports of this Mission organisation reveal that in 1900 Norman was on probation, and was stationed at Gin Gin in Queensland. “Another centre has been opened at Gin Gin on the Mount Perry line. A school to hold 150 was built this year, where Mr. Lumsden gathers the boys from this somewhat scattered district on Sundays.”²¹⁴

After June, however, the senior missionary at Gin Gin and Bingera left, and Norman had to be responsible for a whole range of classes on Sunday, and every day of the week. 22 “teacher boys” helped take 1,582 classes, through the year, with an aggregate attendance of 26,310.²¹⁵

For 1901 he was moved to Mosman, and remained there for 1902. At Mosman, the previous teacher had been a

²¹⁴ *Not in Vain*. No.14. 1899 – 1900. page 6.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.* page 17.

converted Kanaka known as Charlie Aurora, who had made an excellent impression, and done very good work. Norman arrived in Mosman in November, 1900, as the first “white” missionary in that area. In January, seven Kanakas were baptised by the area superintendent, Mr. Thomas. These were the first fruits of the work in Mosman. Charlie Aurora left in March. Norman provided a long article describing his work in that area, especially during the wet season, and how the prayers of the Christians, including his prayers, had been answered. Norman conducted 481 classes through the year, with an average weekly attendance of 634.²¹⁶

In 1902, “Mr. Lumsden went to Melbourne for his furlough early in the year, and our thanks are due to Mr. Muntz and the Rev. W. H. Sanders, who during his absence assisted the Boys to carry on the classes.

Since Mr. Lumsden’s return his enthusiasm has made itself felt, the classes showing a decided improvement in attendance. He writes- ‘I am much pleased with the new building, it looks very homelike and comfortable The church is a great joy to the Boys, and it is doubly precious as an answer to prayer after long waiting. A great number of Boys left for the islands in February, but sixty-five new chums have just arrived by the *Coquette*, many of whom have come to Queensland expressly to attend school.

One young lad from Aoba said:- “I no come for money or clothes, but one thing I come for – school”

When I came to Mosman eighteen months ago an old Marratta man was much opposed. There were a number of younger Boys who wanted to come to school, but fear of the old man deterred them. One who did come was thrashed the next day, and threatened with death if he came again. Week after

²¹⁶ *Not in Vain*. 15th Annual Report. Pages 16 – 17, and 24.

week this old man was prayed for by name, yet there seemed no change. He would curse and swear at the missionary when visited, or else lock himself in his house and refuse either to open the door or speak. A few weeks ago he was taken ill, and said to a Christian Boy who visited him, "oh, mate, me sorry too much now, before me no want school, now Master (God) He show me. Oh! me sorry; you all Christian man pray for me. Suppose me all right me come along school, me bring him altogether countrymen belong me." Since then I have visited the old man, and his smile of welcome is very different to the former "clear out, clear out!"²¹⁷

In 1903 and 1904 Norman Lumsden worked as the sole missionary at Herbert River. Average weekly attendance at the classes there was 532. He had eleven teacher Boys to help him, and these Boys took 1,214 classes during 1904. The total of classes for the year was 1,994. The aggregate attendance at classes for the year was 20,696. Thirty people were baptised at Herbert River during the year. The total for the whole Mission was 142.²¹⁸

The Years of the Revival.

The events in Victoria in 1902 connected with the famous evangelistic campaign led by the Rev. R. A. Torrey and Mr. Charles M. Alexander were considered by many people in Australia, and many others around the world, to constitute a revival. Touches of revival had occurred in other parts of Australia that year, and the next, especially in relation to the tent missions which the Methodists led in the country towns of New South Wales. Two evangelists who had worked for the Evangelisation Society of Australasia for many years had been involved in some of these movements. These men were Robert

²¹⁷ *Not in Vain.* 1902. page 16.

²¹⁸ *Not in Vain.* 1904. page 23.

Robertson and William H. Scurr, both lay evangelists. Christian work in many parts of Australia was approached with more expectancy as a result. But it was the staggering news of the beginnings of the Welsh Revival in December, 1904, and more news from other parts of the world, which created the idea that revival was blazing forth all around, and that it could appear even here in the Kanaka country of Queensland.

This news affected Norman Lumsden at Herbert River greatly, and all of the Boys working with him. His letter, which was published in *Not in Vain* for 1905, began with the theme of revival.

He wrote:- “‘O Lord revive Thy work,’ is the cry everywhere. Here in Queensland God has blessed! It is a joy to go from Bundaberg to Mosman and see in every station what God has wrought. But Revival means more than blessing; the Boys are learning this, and we hear the cry, ‘O Lord bend us to prayer; bend us to Thy power; bend us by Thy Holy Spirit.’ The question is, are we willing to be bent, made pliable in Him in every detail and corner of our lives? It will cost, yes, it will cost more than we at present know, but with our eyes on Calvary, shall we not gladly pay the price, and for His sake go forward?”

He then gave illustrations from his experience in Mission work showing how some of the Boys had learned to pay the price. The first example rotated around the question of full surrender. Other examples involved the way the whole work of God should be based in prevailing prayer, and not on human effort. The number of baptisms that had taken place at Herbert River that year was 26. The total for the whole mission was 138.²¹⁹

²¹⁹ *Not in Vain*. 1905, pages 24 – 25.

But 1905 was also the year when the Government took the decision to close down the practice of using Kanaka labour on the sugar cane farms in northern Queensland. So the Mission had slowly to close down its work in mainland Australia, and transfer it all to the Solomon Islands. The transition took several years to complete.

In 1906, when the watershed was really taking place, the number of baptisms at Herbert River was 44 in eleven months, before the work there actually closed, and 212 for the whole mission.

His last report from Herbert River said:- “The Boys are very eager for news of the Revival, and nothing moves them so much as some fresh account of the work of the Spirit of God. At Ingham there was real power, the Lord searching many hearts, and much prayer at the close. Joseph Pentecost utterly breaking down and sobbing unable to pray; others much moved...

Two outstanding features this past year have been – First.- A deeper spirit of prayer. “O Lord, give us fire from heaven. We hear the cry of our people along South Sea, but we must have Thy *fire* burning in our hearts before we go home. Lord, send us the fire.” Again, another prayed, “Lord, let us company (share) with Thee in Thy Cross. Thou hast gone all the way to Calvary for us, oh let us go all the way with Thee.” Then prayer for the missionaries and teachers in Queensland and in the Islands, name after name brought before the Lord – those who ‘work with God in the dark.’

Second.- A boldness in testimony. One Saturday night our open air meeting was interrupted by a white man under the influence of drink. Every time the name of the Lord was spoken, he cried out, ‘You’re wrong, it’s not Jesus, it’s God, etc.’ At last one young Christian turned to the man, ‘Yes, you say you believe in God, but might you never leave your sin,

might you all same one lame man outside the Beautiful Gate of the temple. Peter say to him, “In the name of Jesus Christ... rise up and walk.” No other name, my friend, only in this Name there is power, power, so we rise up from our sins and walk in new life – in the Name of Jesus.’ The words repeated went home in the power of the Spirit, and the adversary was silenced.”²²⁰

South Seas Evangelical Mission.

With the change of location of the work from Queensland to the Solomon Islands, the name of the Mission was also changed from the Queensland Kanaka Mission to the South Seas Evangelical Mission (S.S.E.M.)

The “annual” reports now tended to cover six months each of two years – 1906 and 1907. A long section described what was happening at the end of Kanaka work. Mrs. Eustace, widow of Arthur Eustace, went to the Brisbane City Mission to be well situated in helping the Boys as they passed through Brisbane on the way home. The report on this aspect contained the only photo of Mrs. Eustace that I found in all my researching on the E.S.A. Two missionaries – Lumsden and Lancaster – stayed in Bundaberg to help the Boys who were in transit there. Lumsden also started to do evangelistic work amongst the white cane farmers, and other local people.

The report contained a list of all those who had worked with the Mission up to the end of the use of Kanakas in Queensland in 1906. It includes also a list of all the baptisms which had occurred in Queensland, and which islands the men had come from. – totals for each island.

²²⁰ *Not in Vain.* 1906 page 32.

In the report for 1907 – 1908, Lumsden’s name does not appear on the list of Missionaries in the Islands. There is no mention of any SSEM work in Queensland.

The Annual Report for 1910 – 1911 contains the following about Norman Lumsden:- “God has graciously sent us reinforcements this year, but the work is growing so fast that we are still hard pressed for workers.

Mr. Norman Lumsden was for many years a member of the Queensland Kanaka Mission. He was first at Bundaberg, then at Mosman, and later at the Herbert River, and is well known to a great many Boys. In October, 1910, he went to the Islands for a six months visit. He took several journeys in the “Evangel,” and then relieved Mr. Cronau at One Pusu, stayed on, and has now offered to join the Mission after a short visit to Australia.”²²¹

Norman Lumsden’s name first appears on the list of missionaries in the Solomon Islands in 1911, with the comment after it – “pro tem.” There was no information about where he lived or what he did, apart from the previous comment.

The letter for May, 1911, says:- “To-day around Malayta runs a chain of schools, with here and there a break. The longest gap, perhaps, is south of One Pusu. From here to Uhu is no school; the people are the wildest and most cannibals.

The vast bulk of the people live upon the mountains, and are the ‘wani-tolo,’ or the bushmen; while here and there around the shores on fringing islands the ‘wani-assi,’ or salt water men are found.

Most of the converts are amongst the bushmen, the ranks of the salt water men remain almost unbroken. We have four more important centres in Malayta, One Pusu, the old headquarters of the mission, from which the stores were

²²¹ *Not in Vain*. 1910 – 1911. page 6.

shipped, and where there is a boys' school one hundred strong. At present Mr. Lumsden is in charge, with Nurse Swain and Miss Waterston."

His name does appear on the list of missionaries in a letter issued in February, 1912. The issue for February, 1913, contains a group photograph including Lumsden, and he happened to be standing next to the young lady who subsequently became his wife. Miss Jessie Searle had recently arrived as a recruit from New Zealand.

The next issue of the missionary letter had no date on it, but it contained the following information:- "All who know Mr. N. C. Lumsden and Miss Jessie Searle will be interested to hear of their engagement. Please pray for God's richest blessing on their union. Mr. Lumsden has taken charge of the Boys' School at Baunani during Mr. Cronau's furlough. He came from Malu a little run down with fever, but this time at Baunani has quite set him up. Miss Searle has been a year in the Islands, and has proved herself a valued helper both at Baunani and One Pusu." This time the letter was written by Florence Young, and not by Northcote Deck, as the others had been.

The letter for August, 1913 listed Miss Searle as a missionary, but Norman Lumsden's name was gone. In fact, Jessie stayed on the mission field until the end of 1913, when she joined Norman in Melbourne, and they were soon married.

The Victorian Open Air Mission.

Mr. H. B. Denniston had been a strong supporter of the S.S.E.M., and had even visited the Islands, and Lumsden had got to know him. He was also at that time the President of the Victorian Open Air Mission, and so it was probably natural that Lumsden should gravitate into the work of the person he already knew well. In any case, Lumsden became an evangelist with this Mission, and this continued until 1925, when the

V.O.A.M. combined forces with the Evangelisation Society of Australasia. Denniston became the President of that organization also, and Lumsden continued in the same work, until he resigned two years later, in 1927.

Sadly, very little information has been found about Lumsden's work with the V.O.A.M., nor do we know much about many of the people who provided the front line of action for this Society. A few characters can be explored more fully, but most are now largely or completely unknown.

For example, the Presbytery of Mortlake urged congregations to support a Bible and Mission Study School being held at Koroit by the Victorian Open-air Mission from 8th to 12th March, 1915, but no indication is given as to the name of the person running the school.²²²

In Tasmania, there was a report that "one of the most successful missions ever held in this district was conducted last week by Mr. C. G. B. Sands, a Victorian Open-air missionary." There had been between 20 and 30 conversions. The people thought the mission was far too short, but it could not be lengthened. Sands moved on to conduct another mission in the village of Paradise on the next Sunday.²²³

A notice of the Annual Rally of the Victorian Open Air Mission shows that it was held on Monday, 26th September, 1920, in the Independent Hall, Collins Street. Several gatherings occurred, but the evening meeting took place at 7.45 p.m. The chairman was the President, Mr. H. B. Denniston, and the speakers were the Rev. L. C. M. Donaldson, and Mr. Lumsden. Soloists were Messrs. Godfrey and Dyer.

Two of the evangelists who worked for the V.O.A.M. in the first half of the Twentieth Century, and about whom modest

²²² *Camperdown Chronicle*. Saturday, 17 April, 1915. page 2.

²²³ *North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times*. Thursday 25 February, 1915. page 2.

biographical outlines can be drawn up, were the Rev. L. C. M. Donaldson, mentioned above, and also Pastor Malcolm McOmish. Donaldson was a Presbyterian minister, but, who, at a certain point, resigned from the denomination and became a Baptist minister in New South Wales. McOmish was basically an open air evangelist, although for several years he was Pastor of the Reed Memorial Church in Launceston. Short sections about these two men appear in another chapter.

The 1944 obituary in *New Life* said that, during the years that Lumsden worked for the V.O.A.M., he often conducted evangelistic missions with the help of Mr. Hugh Cameron as song leader and soloist. This working arrangement was sadly broken on 20 November, 1923, when Hugh Cameron died, at the age of 35 years. The death notice in the *Argus* described him as the dearly loved son of Mrs. S. E. Cameron of 34 Grenville Street, Hampton, and of the late Allan Cameron, and brother of Elsie.²²⁴

The only other information I could find about Norman Lumsden through the years that he worked for the V.O.A.M., concerned a mission that he conducted in Claremont, Tasmania, in April, 1925. A news piece appeared about a one-day spiritual convention which was being held on a Saturday. It was part of a two weeks' mission that Lumsden was leading. Tasmania had its own open air mission organisation, and it was often under the auspices of this society that V.O.A.M. men would come to Tasmania to preach. Members and friends of the Tasmanian society travelled by train or car to the Claremont meetings. The morning address at this one day convention was on the subject of open air preaching, and was delivered by Lumsden. In the afternoon, Miss Campbell spoke on the way the power of the Gospel had transformed lives and homes at the

²²⁴ *Argus*. Wednesday, 21 November, 1923. page 13. For the Obituary, see the end of this chapter.

aboriginal station where she worked for the Aborigines Inland Mission. “At night the hall was filled, when Mr. Lumsden gave an address. The singing was led by Mr. W. Dickason, of Claremont.”²²⁵

We do not know who else travelled with Lumsden as song leader after the death of Hugh Cameron, but we can surmise that this contact with Mr. Will Dickason of Claremont by Lumsden led eventually to Dickason becoming one of the workers with the Evangelisation Society of Australasia, as the V.O.A.M. became just a few months later. We see his name appearing several times later in the story, accompanying one or other of the evangelists.

A Mission such as this one in Claremont, however, was usually not an isolated event, but would be part of a series of missions organised by the Tasmanian Society, in order to get the most value out of a tour by an evangelist from the mainland. Thus we find that an advertisement appeared a few days later about another Saturday convention in the Swan Street Church, beginning at 3 p.m. Lumsden preached in the afternoon, there was a tea, a prayer meeting, a Song Service led by Mr. W. Dickason, and then Lumsden preached again at night. The Church Anniversary occurred the following night as part of Lumsden’s mission.²²⁶

The Evangelisation Society of Australasia.

As mentioned elsewhere, the V.O.A.M. amalgamated with the Evangelisation Society in July, 1925. In this way a much stronger team was created, which could lead to greater activities in the future.²²⁷

²²⁵ *Hobart Mercury*. Monday 27 April, 1925. page 2.

²²⁶ *Mercury*. Saturday 2 May, 1925. page 3.

²²⁷ *Argus*. Friday, 31 July, 1925. page 4.

The key to the telling of this story, however, arises from the fact that a new evangelical Journal began publication early in 1926, which provided a great deal of information about activities after that date which had not been available beforehand. This Journal was the *Keswick Quarterly and Upwey Convention News*.

As 1926 began, Lumsden went on tour with a new song leader, Mr. Andrew W. Smith.

The first published report about missions conducted by Lumsden and Smith concerned a mission in the township and district of St. James. The text of this report, in so far as it applied to Andrew W. Smith, is reproduced in full in the chapter about Smith's work with the E.S.A. However, Lumsden also told another story in this report which applies to a Mission he conducted before Andrew Smith became his partner. This story went as follows:-

“I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely.” – Hosea 14:4.

A few months ago the writer was conducting a Mission in a small township not many miles out of Melbourne. Amongst those who gathered night after night was a short, thick-set man, with keen bright eyes. His head was not bowed when prayer was offered, and when an appeal was made to the unsaved to come to Christ there was a cynical, amused smile upon his face.

Others had been spoken with personally, but I was not led to this man till towards the close of the Mission.

‘I presume you are not a Christian,’ I said.

‘No, I am not, and I don't believe in what you are preaching. I am a Rationalist, and have been for the last 20 years. It pleases my wife and daughter to come to your meetings, and, as our road is dark and lonely, I will not permit them to come alone, so I accompany them. I once held the

same theory as you do, but let me tell you it is only a theory; there's nothing in it.'

The preacher gave him a few straight Gospel texts, but he only laughed carelessly, saying, 'You are wasting your breath on me. I would advise you to speak to someone else.'

He continues to attend the meetings until the Saturday evening, when we were in another church a couple of miles away. To our surprise that night he and his wife walked in. Not having spoken to him since the night he had rebuffed us. I felt I must at least shake hands with him, lest it should seem that he had offended me. So, as he walked down the aisle at the close of the service, I gripped his hand, and received a warm clasp in return, and, with tears beginning to flow, he said, 'It is well with me.'

'Well with your soul?' I asked.

'Yes, well with my soul,' and with emotion which he could not restrain, he hurried out of the church. There were others to be spoken to in the church, and some time elapsed ere we were free to start for home. As we drove along we overtook this dear fellow and his wife trudging along with a lantern, and again we marvelled.

One day he told us the story. He could not tell in those first wonderful days after God had met him, the tears would flow too copiously. Nothing had happened the day after the night when he had rejected the preacher's attempt to help him till in the evening, about six o'clock, when he was driving his cart home. It was his custom to sing on the way home sometimes late at night to keep himself awake. 'Why are you not singing?' he asked himself this night. 'What shall I sing?' And against his will the words came –

'What a wonderful change in my heart has been wrought

Since Jesus came into my heart;

I have light in my soul which for long I had sought

Since Jesus came into my heart.’

He broke off in his song, and tried something else, but back again came the familiar words –

‘Floods of joy o’er my soul like the sea billows roll

Since Jesus came into my heart.’

Then and there the Lord revealed Himself to this poor prodigal as surely as to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, and he now preaches the faith which he once denied. On the plan of the Methodist Church of that District he is now a regular preacher, and every Sunday afternoon, with two or three other earnest men, he is found in the local park preaching the Gospel to the residents with whom he once fraternised and to the visitors who gather there. His wife tells the story of the changed home life, and of the joy and peace now dwelling there. ‘It is the Lord’s doing, and is marvellous in our eyes.’”²²⁸

Lumsden’s other reports in the *Keswick Quarterly* up till he resigned from the E.S.A. can be seen in the chapter about Andrew W. Smith, who was his song leader and soloist for that period.

The Annual Meeting, 23rd September, 1926, report includes:-

Evangelist A. W. Smith led the morning prayer and praise meeting, and Evangelists Norman Lumsden and Eric Clarkson were among the speakers. Dr. MacColl gave the closing message. The best feature of the evening meeting was perhaps, the striking testimonies by four recent converts.

²²⁸ *Keswick Quarterly*. Vol.1. No.1. February, 1926. pages 13 – 14.

Perhaps we should include in this chapter about Norman Lumsden at least one of his reports about the work he did jointly with Andrew W. Smith.

“Among those who professed conversion in the Mission held in the Erskine Presbyterian Church, Carlton, is one young man who afterwards spent a week-end with us in the country. He is very real, and has now commenced to study for the ministry of his own church. From Carlton we went to the Methodist churches in Healesville, Badger, and Dixon’s Creek. Here we saw the Lord’s hand working in the conversion of a few sinners and the establishment of the saints. This is the story of one man’s conversion. It was a very hot Sunday. There was no morning service, and, as it was the first day of the Mission, we felt that it was well to visit from house to house as far as we were able. At one little home we found the husband alone in the back yard. After listening to the tale of his woes – years of ill-health caused by contracting rheumatism while working in the bush in wet weather, money spent on doctor’s bills, etc. – we could tell him of the One who came to be the Friend and Saviour. It was so easy to lead this dear man to Him that we doubted the reality of his professed acceptance of the Lord Jesus. Lack of suitable clothing kept him from the Mission services, for, with a wife and five little children, it has been a great struggle even to provide food during these years of sickness. One can never forget the hour spent in that little home a week later. The joyful testimony of the Lord’s saving grace and power, his evident emotion when he thanked us for coming and dealing with him. “Nobody has ever before asked me to come to Christ.” That day the wife and eldest boy also turned to the Lord, and the letter that has since come tells of the changed and happy home.

Our final Mission before the Xmas season was in the Baptist Hall, Croxton. The Lord blessed His own Word here

also, and there were quite a number who professed conversion. One Sunday night there were eight or nine in the inquiry room, amongst them a sad faced woman who, when asked if she would accept Christ as her Saviour, refused point-blank, and said, "No." One was surprised, but afterwards she told us that while her husband was away from God she could not take her stand. She was keen for us to visit her home and speak with her husband. Next day we were there just before he returned from work. As he approached the house one of the children ran out to tell him "there was a man wanted to see him." The wife was afraid he would not come in, but he greeted me pleasantly as I went through into the kitchen to meet him, and before long the great subject of his souls' salvation was opened. After half an hour's earnest conversation we got on our knees, and he could say, "Tis done, the great transaction's done." Husband and wife the next night together stood and confessed Christ in the Mission Hall, and there was joy on earth and "joy in the presence of the angels of God."

Our work has commenced this year [1927] at Bentleigh, where a United Mission is being held in a large tent near the station. Much prayer has been made, and already in these first days there is evidence of the working of the Spirit of God. To Him be all the praise "Who only doeth wondrous things."²²⁹

Annual Meeting, 1927. includes:-

Some remarkable stories were told by the society's evangelists, Messrs N. C. Lumsden, George Hall, H. H. Janetzki, Eric Clarkson, and A. W. Smith.²³⁰

²²⁹ K. Q. February, 1927. page 25.

²³⁰ K. Q. November, 1927. page 39.

His resignation from the E.S.A.

The later months of 1927 were marked by the resignation from the Society of Norman Lumsden, who was their most experienced evangelist, and, many thought, the most effective one to work in Victoria in recent times. Lumsden had worked with the V.O.A.M since 1913, and continued with the E.S.A. after the amalgamation.

He said:- “After fourteen years of most happy fellowship... I have been led to resign, with very much regret. There were two outstanding reasons for this step: Firstly, because for some time I had been conscious of physical weariness, and felt that the strain of preaching night after night continuously was becoming too great a tax; secondly, the large number of [male] students in the M.B.I. Hostel and the increasing burden there upon my wife made my repeated and lengthy absences from home on evangelistic missions most undesirable. After quiet waiting upon the Lord and deep consideration, this momentous step was taken with much peace and assurance of His will. I am now looking to Him for other Christian service that will not entail absence from home, and which will be less strenuous.”²³¹

This new situation meant that Lumsden would be much freer to do some lecturing at the Melbourne Bible Institute. But it did not mean that he would not go on tour again, or not spend time away from home at all.

In March, 1929, Lumsden went to Tasmania at the invitation of the Tasmanian Open Air Mission to speak at their Easter Convention. Other speakers were Malcolm McOmish, who then worked for the Open Air Campaigners in New South Wales, “Miss Yerbury, of England; and Mr. and Miss Sandlands, of Melbourne.”²³²

²³¹ *K.Q.* *ibid.* page 39.

²³² *Mercury.* Saturday, 16 March, 1929. page 7.

In September, 1929, Lumsden was in Tasmania again, and led a mission in Burnie, and one of place on the North-west Coast. This other commitment may have been the Ulverstone C.E. Convention, at which he was a speaker. This was followed by a ten days' mission in Launceston, which was extensively reported upon by the *Launceston Examiner*. This was to be followed again by several other missions in other places.²³³

The Launceston Mission was held under the auspices of the Northern Tasmanian Evangelisation Society. The two meetings for Monday, 16 September, were held in the Public Library Hall. The song leader was Mr. Fred. Levett.

“At 3 p.m. there was a fair gathering, when the mission dealt with “Personal Work,” and kept his audience interested throughout with excellent expository matter on similar lines to that given in his lectures to the students at the Melbourne Bible Institute. The qualifications for personal work were stated to be-

- (1) Experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ as Saviour.
- (2) The life must be adjusted to the will of God.
- (3) The life must be wholly given to God.
- (4) There must be a definite realisation that souls [are] in danger of being lost.

The patient, persistent, personal worker would be the reaper. Prayer and action went together. Personal work would not be found easy. It would cost something – be sacrificial.

Mr. Levett, the song leader, conducted the singing, and Mr. Lumsden acted as his own pianist. In the evening there was again a large audience for a Monday. Mr. Levett sang ‘God is now willing,’ and two ladies contributed a duet. Taking for his theme ‘An All-sufficient Refuge,’ Mr. N. C. Lumsden spoke powerfully and attractively. His main points were -

²³³ *Examiner*. Saturday, 7 September, 1929. page 7, and 14 September, page 10.

- (1) The need for a refuge from an accusing conscience.
- (2) The refuge from the power of sin had been provided.
- (3) The Saviour was a sufficient refuge in the hour of death.
- (4) The same Divine Redeemer was a refuge in the day of judgment.

Today the meetings will be conducted at 3, when the theme will be 'Personal Work –How to do it'; and in the evening at 8 a special address and special solos."²³⁴

Similar reports about the Mission appeared in the paper each night from Wednesday through to Saturday, and then on Monday through to Wednesday. The paper was not produced on Sunday.

In November, 1929, the Northern District Christian Endeavour Convention was held in Perth, just outside Launceston, and Lumsden was a main speaker. Fred Levett was again the song leader.²³⁵

The main call on Lumsden's time was his work as superintendent of the Mens' Hostel at the M.B.I., although, in the past, his wife, Jessie, had to do nearly all of this work while Norman was absent. After his resignation from the E.S.A., he had more time at the Hostel, and doing some lecturing and preaching around Melbourne. But the glimpse we get of his visits to Tasmania show us that he still did a great deal of preaching, both at conventions about the spiritual life, and at purely evangelistic missions.

Soon after his resignation, Norman Lumsden became the Australasian secretary for the Worldwide Evangelisation Crusade (W.E.C.), and a lot of time, work and travelling went into that aspect of his work. His concern for foreign missionary work surged to the surface in his life again.

²³⁴ *Examiner*. Tuesday, 17 September, 1929. page 6.

²³⁵ *Examiner*. Monday, 4 November, 1929. page 8.

Through the mid-1930's, another new Mission organisation was formed. This was the Unevangelised Fields Mission (U.F.M.), which was originally a breakaway from W.E.C. over a certain matter of principle. Lumsden became the Australasian secretary of this new mission, and stood aside from the work he had been doing for W.E.C. He travelled far and wide in support of this work, and also a number of the students from M.B.I. went to the mission field with the U.F.M., no doubt partly as a result of Lumsden's influence on them.

He also was called upon increasingly to be a main speaker at conventions to promote the spiritual life in many country locations, and including some of the main conventions meetings at Upwey.

After the new evangelical weekly paper, *New Life*, began to be published in 1938, a great many of Lumsden's activities were described at some length in print, for everyone to read and think about.

An interesting epistle arose because, in the second half of 1938, Lumsden went for a tour through New Zealand in order to promote the interests of the Unevangelised Fields Mission, and the needs of foreign missionary work generally.

When he returned, the *New Life* editors asked him to write an article sharing what he thought about the state of spiritual life in New Zealand. The result was:-

“IMPRESSIONS OF NEW ZEALAND.

Australian Evangelist's Comments.

Mr. N. C. Lumsden, the gifted Australian Evangelist, and secretary of the Unevangelised Fields Mission, gives his impressions of conditions in New Zealand, following his recent tour of that land.....

Looking back over the past sixteen weeks of travel through "God's own country," as one hears it called, visiting town after town from the far north to the furthest south, meeting many of the Lord's dear people, one feels that life has been greatly enriched.

Evangelistic Work.

There is a splendid evangelistic testimony in almost every town visited on this tour. The ministry of W. P. Nicholson was greatly blessed some years ago, particularly in the South Island, and on many occasions, when the inquiry was made to some keen Christian workers, 'When were you saved?' the answer would be, 'Through Mr. W. P. Nicholson.'

Andrew Johnston and his devoted wife, who have been for the past ten years travelling as evangelists through the Dominion, have also been the means of blessing to many souls. This brother lost both his eyes in the Great war, and as he says, has now been almost as long in the dark as he had previously been in the light, is a faithful and fearless preacher of the Gospel. His very infirmity draws people to him, and to hear him, while Mrs. Johnston's messages in song are a great feature of their united work.

Dr. Laird, of the C.S.S.M., has travelled far and wide, getting among the children and young people. In one town I found a daily prayer meeting being held by twelve or fourteen High School children every morning from 8.45 to 9, to pray for blessing on a special mission that was to be held in the school a week or two later. A Mr. Lewis, whom I did not meet, is also giving full-time service now to the work among the young people.

The Auckland B.T.I., through the Hon. Principal, Mr. W. H. Mains, Superintendent, J. O. Sanders, and also several

ex-students of the Institute, who are out in country districts with a caravan, are doing much evangelistic work. The Bible Institute also has a work established amongst the Maoris, who are very numerous in the North Island.

Mr. Robert Laidlaw, and others in fellowship with the “Brethren,” are doing much fine work in the preaching of the Gospel in the towns and road and railway construction camps. Most of the interdenominational Missionary Societies are well represented through the Dominion, and as deputationist for the Unevangelised Fields Mission, I found many friends and doors opened everywhere.

Liberal Gifts for Christian Work

There are men of affluence who are giving freely, ‘as the Lord has prospered them,’ for the support of home and foreign work, but also from the young people and those in poorer circumstance there is a generous response to the missionary appeal. For instance, at the great Easter Convention at Ngaruawahia (North Island), when 1200 people gather, the missionary offering last year was 3,000 pounds in gifts and promises. Also, at this Christmas Convention at Pounaweia, when 500 pounds was required for extension work – the Convention Hall, dining room and dormitories must be enlarged to meet the attendance – on one afternoon promise slips were passed round among the 250 or so attending – the immediate response was 680 pounds, with more to come later. And this was over and above other offerings for the expenses of the present Convention, and missionary gifts.

Auckland B. T. I.

The Auckland Bible Training Institute is a magnificent monument to the founder, the late Rev. Joseph Kemp. They have a great building, in which over sixty students are housed,

each in a separate room, besides the large lecture hall, dining and common rooms for staff and students. The Institute bookroom sends out sound evangelical literature throughout the country, whilst thousands of pounds pass through the Institute, given for the support of workers in various mission fields. The place is a hive of Christian service and influence.

Recently a moving picture film was taken, depicting the life of two students, one of either sex, from the time of their surrender to the Lord for full time service, their entering as students of the B.T.I., two years of training, every department of the Institute life being represented, and finally, their departure by boat from Auckland, farewelled by students and friends for their life work across the seas. This film has been shown throughout New Zealand by the Superintendent, with great interest being aroused, and this year the Institute is again filled to overflowing. Space forbids more than a word about the magnificent scenery, mountains, lakes, rivers, harbours, fjords – the wonder of the thermal region with Rotorua as the centre and the main place of attraction.

The Spiritual State.

Yet to return to the spiritual state of the country, there is the same godlessness, lack of reverence for sacred things, desecration of the Lord's Day, and the earnest open air preachers whom I joined on Friday night as I travelled, get no better hearing than in this land of Australia.

Maori Work.

One is saddened to find that, after the faithful beginning made by early missionaries among these intelligent and responsive people, that a false cult – Mormonism – has recently made great progress. A Maori prophet, Ratana, whose teaching seems to be a mixture of Christianity and heathenism, has also a

very large following. Lately one would judge there has been revived interest in Maori Missions among evangelical people, and loyal men and women are giving themselves to the task of their evangelism.”²³⁶

Many examples could be given of published descriptions of his Missions. Here is an account of one mission he led in 1939.

“Lumsden Mission.

The twelve days’ Evangelistic Mission in the Presbyterian Church, Penola conducted by Messrs N. C. Lumsden and V. Page, was owned and blessed of God in the conversion of sinners and edification of the saints. A hose-to-house canvass of the whole town was carried out by the missionaries during the first few days.

The children’s meetings every afternoon after school attracted practically every Protestant child over six years of age. On the last afternoon, when the touch of God’s Spirit was upon the gathering, the speaker said in closing: ‘Who will come to Christ and thank Him for dying for us on the Cross of Calvary?’ There was an unexpected response from almost every child – ‘I will – I will.’ Only God knows just how real such decisions are, but of this we are assured; impressions never to be effaced were made that day.

The first known conversion was that of a young man of 24, who was dealt with and led to the Lord in the street. The beginning of the work of grace in his heart went back some months to a Mission he had attended when visiting another country town. This young man’s conversion was followed by that of two of his brothers - a sister, and a sister-in-law.

²³⁶ *New Life*. Friday, 3 February, 1939. page 1.

A prayer meeting was unknown in Penola, but during the Mission up to fifteen gathered for twenty minutes for definite prayer prior to each evening service. To hear the young converts and others leading in prayer cause much joy.

On the Friday night the missionaries gave the Gospel message in the open air, when a number, chiefly men, stood to listen.

A Monthly fellowship meeting has been commenced at the Manse to help the converts and Christians, with every hope of success.”²³⁷

Mr. and Mrs. Lumsden’s Work at the M.B.I. Men’s Hostel.

Norman Lumsden’s work as superintendent at the male students’ Hostel with the Melbourne Bible Institute came to an end in 1940, and a special presentation was made to him. The report of the event went as follows:-

“M.B.I. Annual Meeting – Presentation to Mr. and Mrs. N. C. Lumsden.

The 20th Annual Meeting of the Melbourne Bible Institute was held in the Collins Street Baptist Church on Tuesday evening. There was a very large attendance, and the President (Mr. A.E. Coombe) chaired the gathering.

Following the opening hymn, and prayer by the Rev. Eric Evans (President of the Baptist Union), Mr. Coombe stated that during the past year the resignation of Mr. and Mrs. N. C. Lumsden, who had been associated with the work of the M.B.I. over a period of 20 years, had been accepted with regret. He referred to the important part they had taken in the life of the Institute, in control of the Young Men’s Hostel, and spoke of their faithful work for the Lord Jesus Christ. On behalf of the

²³⁷ *New Life*. 12 May, 1939. page 3.

Executive, the Council, and the Staff, he handed to Mr. Lumsden a handsome silver tea service and reading lamp.

In responding, Mr. Lumsden stated that, while their 20 years in the Training Home had been strenuous, particularly for Mrs. Lumsden, their service had truly been unto the Lord, and they felt that they had been receiving the “hundredfold” from Him in this present life. He spoke of the sweet and precious fellowship in the Home, and of the great circle of friends who to-day are serving the Lord in many lands, who passed through their hands. He expressed his sincere thanks for the gifts, which would be very precious in their new home.

During the evening, addresses were given by Professor A. Yule, (of Ormond College), the Rev. Theo. Lowther (of the Congregational Church, Bendigo, who was the first student of the Institute), and Bishop Donald Baker, M.A., (Principal of Ridley College), and the closing message was given by the Rev. T. C. Rentoul (President of the Methodist Conference of Victoria and Tasmania). Owing to lack of space, we are unable to publish a report of the addresses till next week. A brief report of the addresses by the President and the Principal, in which they outlined the projected forward move, appears in another column.”²³⁸

One of Norman Lumsden’s later Missions was in the city and suburbs of Adelaide. It involved quite a heavy programme of work. An appreciation of it was written by the South Australian Methodist minister, the Rev. Edgar Miller.

“At the request of the committee responsible for the arrangement of ‘a crusade for Christ,’ that has just been concluded in Adelaide, by Mr. Norman C. Lumsden, of Melbourne, this report and appreciation has been written. Mr.

²³⁸ *New Life*. 22 November, 1940. page 5.

Lumsden was originally invited by the committee of the Second Advent Association. The arrangements were afterwards undertaken by a united committee of that Association and the Adelaide United Gospel Committee, which organised the campaign of the Rev. W. F. Betts last year.

The original purpose was to hold a series of meetings in the A.N.A. Hall, in the city, where the meetings of the Rev. W. F. Betts were held last year. Just prior to the due date for the commencement of the crusade, however, the A.N.A. Hall was taken over by the military, as were many other suitable buildings in the city proper. It was then decided to hold three one-week series in three of the suburban areas. Black-out conditions (Adelaide is said to be the most blacked-out city in Australia) and the lack of continuity of meetings in one centre, were reckoned to be somewhat against the campaign, but there are many, including the writer, who are of opinion that a type of work was done, and a number of people were reached, by these campaigns, which would not have been possible in a central campaign.

Those who know Mr. Lumsden will appreciate the statement that the work wrought was of a very deep nature. The visitor was revealed, as he was reported to be, as a man of deep understanding of the Word of God, of very gracious and withal courageous presentation of that Word, and of the greatest sincerity and devotion to his Lord. Many Christian people (amongst them a great portion of the keen, evangelical people and leaders of the city) feel that it will take the coming months and years to work out in a practical way the new things which have been placed in their hands and experience by this very blessed ministry.

As one looked around the table at a farewell tea on Thursday afternoon, April 30, the impression came that foundations had been laid in the lives of those there which

would prove to be God's solid basis for an equally solid superstructure in the days to come.

Campaign at Norwood.

The first campaign was held in the Norwood area. The centre of these meetings was the Methodist Church, where at earnest, evangelical minister, Rev. V. H. Goldney, is in charge. In all the circumstances, attendances were as good as could be expected, especially in the face of a black-out, which is keeping many people, especially those of older years, indoors at night. Some fine cases of conversion were recorded, and the aftermath of the mission is proving good.

Other Campaigns.

Following the Norwood campaign, Mr. Lumsden went to the Hindmarsh, Bowden, and Brompton area, where the main centre was the Church of Christ, Hindmarsh. Here, again, a deep ministry was exercised, and people who attended the meetings have borne witness to the depth of the work wrought in their lives through the Word of God so clearly presented there. A feature of the meetings was a ten-minute prelude to the main address each night, in which the evangelist dealt with some aspect of prophetic truth. Testimony has been borne to the great helpfulness of this aspect of the meetings in the face of the great need of the hour.

A notable conversion occurred during the period spent at Hindmarsh. Mr. Lumsden went to Woodville church. A man in the city, 5 miles or so from Woodville, was constrained to go to Woodville, though he had not attended church for some time. Half way through the service he was convinced that he must acknowledge Christ that night, and thus he found the solution to very deep and trying problems in his life, and became at once a radiant witness for his Lord.

From Hindmarsh the visiting preacher went to the Unley district. There the main centre of the meetings was the Park Street Church of Christ building. The meetings throughout were much blessed of God to the hearers.

A feature of the campaign was the Saturday afternoon rallies, followed by fellowship tea, open-air witness, and an evening indoor meeting. These rallies, held at Norwood, Bowden, and Parkside respectively, were amongst the brightest features of the whole crusade.

Fine Mid-day Meetings.

In the judgment of the writer, and of others, the deepest work of the series was probably that done in the city, where mid-day meetings were held. The Pirie St. Methodist Lecture Hall is the centre of what is every week becoming a more and more effective prayer meeting. On three successive Tuesdays, Mr. Lumsden led these meetings, to the great profit of all who attended. On the Wednesdays and Thursdays, the Y.M.C.A. Hall in Gawler Place was the centre of the meetings. Here Mr. Lumsden brought forth again and again the deep treasures of the Word, so that, as one Christian remarked to her daughter, 'Isn't it wonderful to be a Christian, and to know that such things are in the Word of God?'

At the Adelaide University, three very telling mid-day meetings for students were held in the Sir George Murray Hall. Added to these were a meeting for the Australian Nurses' Christian Movement and many school instructional visits, and every meeting was powerful. It will be a long time before the ministry of Mr. Lumsden to the Bowden and Brompton Free Breakfast (a faith movement which is being blessed of God) will be forgotten. Whether in ministry to adults or to children, Mr. Lumsden is always at ease, and proves to be just full to overflowing of the glorious treasures of God's revelation.

The test of every campaign is the question: What will be its effect on the future? Well, it can be testified that the sanctifying and stirring of God's people in Adelaide has been such that already new ventures of faith are coming. The writer can testify that he feels convinced that the unspectacular, but solid, practical, God-originated ministry of Norman Lumsden is going to bring forth in and beyond Adelaide fruits that will be exceeding abundant above our asking or thinking – that this will be seen before very long to have been a mission of new beginnings. So we confidently reach forth unto those things which are before, because of those things which are now behind, but whose power will always be with us. To God be the glory!”²³⁹

There is a great deal more information available about Norman Lumsden's life after 1926, when the *Keswick Quarterly* began publication, and especially after 1938, when *The Edifier* began to be published, which changed its name to *New Life* the next year. What is written here is little more than a sample. The great trouble in finding any information related to the period between 1913 and 1926. It might be possible to gain other information, especially about his later ministry, through an examination of the archives at the Melbourne School of Theology (which is the latest incarnation of M.B.I.) and of the Minutes of the various organising bodies of the Belgrave Heights Convention (which evolved from the Upwey Convention.).

Lumsden's Death.

Norman Lumsden died after a very brief illness on 4 February, 1944. The obituary from *New Life* is as follows:-

²³⁹ *New Life*. Friday, 8 May, 1942. page 1.

“Homecall of Evangelist N. C. Lumsden.

44 Years of Full-Time Service for Christ.

Outstanding Victorian Evangelist.

Mr. Norman Clyde Lumsden, who had been engaged in evangelistic work in Australia for over 44 years, passed to be with the Lord he loved and served so faithfully, on February 4...

Three weeks ago, whilst holidaying at Airey’s Inlet (Vic.), Mr. Norman C. Lumsden was taken seriously ill following several heart seizures. He was brought by ambulance to his home at 16 Melby Avenue, East St. Kilda, and it was hoped that, with some weeks’ rest and medical care, he would again be able to continue his Christian work, even though it was anticipated that his activities would have to be curtailed. A week later he was transferred to the Alfred Hospital, Prahran, for special treatment. Few, however, realized just how serious was his condition, and the news of his sudden home-call on Friday last (February 4) came as a great shock to his wide circle of Christian friends. Although 64 years of age, he had retained his vigour and power as an evangelist until the Lord called him to Himself. He was a faithful and gifted evangelist – undoubtedly one of the most outstanding and fruitful Gospel preachers in Australia during recent decades. During his 44 years of full-time service for the Lord he was used of God to lead many hundreds of men and women, and boys and girls, to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. A man with an intense passion for souls, and with an uncompromising devotion and love for the Lord, his clear, direct preaching truly exalted the Saviour, and revealed the awful consequences of human sin. He preached the Word and preached it with power.

Early Service for Christ.

Whilst travelling in a train from Surrey Hills to Melbourne, at the age of 17 years, Mr. Lumsden was converted through reading a tract given to him by his mother – ‘Faith, Fact and Feeling,’ by Dr. F. B. Meyer. Two years later he commenced Police Mission work, in association with Mrs. John Dowling. For a period of months he lived at Mrs. Dowling’s home in Carlton, giving his time to evangelism amongst the men of the police force, seeking by personal witness and other means to lead them to a decision for Christ. Later, through the influence of Mr. Theo, Kitchen, he became concerned about the spiritual needs of the Kanakas engaged on the sugar plantations in Queensland and went to work in association with the Queensland Kanaka Mission. He spent his twenty-first birthday in Northern Queensland, and, for over eight years was active in evangelism amongst the South-Sea Islanders, with blessed results. God’s seal was upon his witness, and there was abundant evidence of the working of the Holy Spirit in souls led to the Saviour. In 1906 the Federal Government decided that the Kanakas were to be returned to the Islands, and Mr. Lumsden helped the Christian Kanakas in their deportation. He then worked for a time amongst the white cane-cutters, but there was not the same measure of interest or response to the Gospel. Nevertheless, souls were saved to the glory of God.

Missionary and Evangelistic Work.

At this time the South Sea Evangelical Mission was formed to continue in the Solomon Islands, the work conducted by the Queensland Kanaka Mission, and amongst the early missionaries who felt the urge to follow the Kanakas back to the Islands was Mr. Lumsden. His health only allowed him to spend several years in the Solomons, and he returned to Victoria to join the evangelistic staff of the Victorian Open-air

Mission, of which Mr. H. B. Denniston was the President. A few months later (1914) he was married to Mrs. Lumsden, upon her arrival from New Zealand. What a rich harvest of souls was reaped in the years which followed! With Mr. Hugh Cameron as singer, Mr. Lumsden toured throughout the country districts of Victoria. Their horse-drawn van was a familiar sight in many centres, and the Gospel, preached so winsomely, so earnestly and so faithfully, came with convicting power to transform the lives of hundreds who, to-day, bear glad testimony to what God wrought through Mr. Lumsden's ministry. Mrs. Lumsden frequently accompanied them on their journeys, assisting in personal work and visitation.

When the Open-air Mission merged with the Evangelisation Society of Victoria, Mr. Lumsden remained with the Society, and conducted suburban and country Missions. Mr. F. C. Wright, who was Secretary of the Evangelisation Society, declares: 'I don't know a man who was more continually successful as a soul-winner than Mr. Lumsden. As a preacher, his knowledge of the Word was exceptional, and his application was most pertinent. He was a great man of prayer, and was always a man with a message.' This tribute would be echoed by all who worked in close association with Mr. Lumsden. Mr. Wright also remarked upon his personal witness, saying: 'He was the finest personal worker I ever met. He inspired his team of workers wherever he went.' His talks on personal evangelism, which have proved so helpful to many Christian workers, were the outcome of a wide and rich experience in dealing with souls. Mr. Lumsden was always "on the job" in the Lord's service. Whether holding evangelistic campaigns, spending a brief period at home, or travelling, he was ever seeking an opportunity to witness for Christ.

Association with M. B. I.

Mr. Lumsden's name will be always linked with the establishment and growth of the Melbourne Bible Institute. When the Institute was commenced over twenty years ago, Mr. and Mrs. Lumsden took charge of the Men's Training Home. For nineteen years (the last eighteen years at 44 Williams Road, Prahran), they had the responsible task of conducting the home training of men students. Soon after their retirement from this work, the Institute removed to the present property at 117 Kooyong Road, Armadale. Mr. and Mrs. Lumsden, during that long period, made an important contribution in the spiritual development and training of the hundreds of men who were under their charge for periods varying from three months to two years. There are many to-day, working in distant fields, serving in the Forces, or ministering in various capacities in the Homeland, who thank God for Mr. Lumsden's gracious guidance and wise advice. The spiritual tone at the home was always high, and it will be remembered with affection and gratitude by the students who trained at 'Williams Road.'

Missionary Enthusiasm.

Not only was Mr. Lumsden an ardent and passionate Evangelist; he was also a true missionary. He never lost his missionary fervour – the urgent need of those in heathen darkness was constantly before him. From the time the council of the Unevangelised Fields Mission was formed in Australia he was a foundation member. For many years he was the Honorary General Secretary for Australasia, and, at the time of his home-call was the Honorary Secretary. In 1933 Mr. Lumsden visited the Papuan Field of the U. F. M., conferring with the workers, and gaining first-hand knowledge of the task confronting the Mission. His lectures dealing with the spiritual needs of New Guinea awakened many to a sense of their

responsibility to pray, go and give for the evangelisation of Papua. In 1938 he visited New Zealand as the U. F. M. Deputationist. 'There are hundreds of young people, in Australia and New Zealand, who owe their first glimpse of the "fields white unto harvest" to the burning enthusiasm of Mr. Lumsden,' said Mr. J. Robert Story, Australasian General Secretary of the U. F. M., who felt the call to missionary service in 1928 through Mr. Lumsden's ministry. Few speakers could present the missionary call so clearly.

Varied Interests.

On a number of occasions Mr. Lumsden visited Tasmania for evangelistic missions, and also visited Queensland, Western Australia and N.S.W.

Mr. Lumsden brought a party of converts to the second Upwey Convention. Some of these young Christians were the nucleus of a group of young men who asked the Rev. C. H. Nash to give them morning Bible Readings under the trees at Mr. John Griffiths' property, 'Forest Park.' There were the beginnings of Bible Readings which became such a feature at the Conventions. Later Mr. Lumsden became a member of the Upwey Council, and was intimately associated with the Convention, assisting as a speaker on various occasions. During recent years he visited a number of Victorian country Conventions, and also the Hobart 'Keswick' Convention, where his ministry was used in the blessing of believers, and the winning of the unsaved to Christ. He had the unique gift of combining solid teaching with direct evangelism, and was a fine Convention speaker.

It is impossible, in a brief article, to give an adequate review of a life so full of loyal and consistent service for the Lord Jesus Christ. At different periods he was associated closely with the work of many Churches and Mission Halls,

including the Williamstown Gospel Mission, Spring Street Mission, Prahran, the Prahran Presbyterian Church, and Inkerman Gospel Hall, St. Kilda. During the last twelve months he was Pastor of the St. Kilda Baptist Church. Speaking of his ministry there, the Secretary stated that the Church has grown spiritually, numerically, and financially. On Sunday next, Mr. F. C. Wright will lead a memorial service in the St. Kilda Baptist Church at 7 p.m., and Mr. W. L. Wright will give the address.

The deepest sympathy and prayers of the Lord's people will be with Mrs. Lumsden, and with their family – Ailsa, F/O Bruce (R.A.A.F., England), Sergeant-Navigator Ewan (R.A.A.F., England), and Lorna. Their triumphant faith in this time of bereavement and separation has been a glorious testimony to the peace of God and to the sense of His abiding Presence.

The funeral at the Box Hill Cemetery on Monday morning was preceded by a service at the home, conducted by the Rev. D. W. Smith, of the Prahran Presbyterian Church, who also officiated at the service at the graveside.”²⁴⁰

²⁴⁰ *New Life*. Thursday, 10 February, 1944. page 1.

CHAPTER NINE

HERBERT H. JANETZKI

E.S.A. Evangelist. 1927 to 1934.

It has not been possible, so far, to discover any information about Herbert Janetzki's pedigree or young days. He first appears on the V.O.A.M. horizon in April, 1921, when he led missions in Western Victoria, with his song leader, Hugh Cameron.

“Two agents of the Victorian Open-air Mission, Messrs. Cameron and Janetzki, conducted a ten days' mission in Portland during February, the use of our Hall being granted to them for their indoor meetings. Great earnestness marked their appeals, and we believe good was done. We desire to contradict a rumour that these men were Russellites. It is quite untrue.”²⁴¹

Apparently he did evangelistic work elsewhere for several years, because his name did not appear on the report of the Annual Meeting of the Evangelisation Society of Australasia in September, 1926. His name does not appear in E.S.A. reports until April, 1927, well after the *Keswick Quarterly* began publication.

“Our first mission was at Liffy, Tasmania, a small farming community at the foot of the Western Tiers. The attendance averaged forty, sometimes reaching eighty. Conviction seemed to attend the preaching and singing of the

²⁴¹ *Portland Guardian*. Monday 4 April, 1921. page 3.

message each night, but so far as we could ascertain no one made a decision; though two made a confession of their faith for the first time. Eternity will reveal the fruitage.

Blackwood Creek, ten miles distant, followed. Good attendance throughout. At first, preaching seemed to fall on deaf ears, but the second week conviction settled on many hearts. There were six adult conversions and about ten professions amongst girls and boys.

An interesting report about the mission at Longford, from 12 to 23 June, appeared in the Launceston *Examiner*. Janetzki was described as delivering “some very powerful and earnest addresses. Mrs. Janetzki “with her sweet voice proclaimed the gospel message in song.” The topics which Janetzki preached on were:- Blind Bartimeus; The Three-fold Witness of Salvation; A Midnight Experience; The Satisfied Seeker; Everlasting Punishment; A Lasting Salvation; The Gospel Invitation versus modern excuses; The Dynamic Message; The Three “R’s” of the Gospel (1. Ruined by the Fall. 2. Redemption through Jesus Christ. 3. Regeneration through the Holy Ghost.); The Question that Demands an Answer; The Peril of Procrastination. “All these subjects were listened to with great attention. During the mission over 20 decision cards were signed.” On the two Sundays of the mission, Janetzki preached in the Baptist Church on 12th, and in the Presbyterian Church on 19th.²⁴²

After returning to Melbourne, Janetzki and his wife took a new E.S.A. van away into country Victoria, starting on 21 July.²⁴³

During the Annual Meeting “some remarkable stories were told by the Society’s evangelists, Messrs N. C. Lumsden, George Hall, H. H. Janetzki, Eric Clarkson, and A. W. Smith.

²⁴² Launceston *Examiner*. Wednesday, 29 June, 1927. page 7.

²⁴³ *Keswick Quarterly*. August, 1927. page 32.

In addition, one or two converts who were present gave testimonies of what the Lord had done for them.”²⁴⁴

On 22 April, 1928, Janetzki wrote, firstly, about a mission that he and his wife led, with the help of Andrew Smith, and then about other campaigns they led after Smith had left for elsewhere. “One or two missions stand out as times of blessing and a visitation of God’s power for this year. The first was a tent mission at Hughesdale, in which Mr. Andrew Smith, Mrs. Janetzki and myself worked together. At times the tent was crowded and extra seats had to be borrowed. The mission was upheld by prayer – a half-day of prayer each week and a prayer meeting preceding each night meeting. We believe this was largely responsible for the blessing. In all there were 20 adult conversions, besides several boys and girls. It was a great joy to hear their testimonies from time to time.

We cite one case: a boy 11 years decide for Christ, and according to instructions witnessed for Christ at home, to the joy of his parents. At the week-end the boy’s uncle, a young man, came to stay, to whom the lad gave his testimony. The uncle told the boy he was too young to know he was saved, but the lad insisted he knew he was saved, and when retiring the boy knelt to pray. The uncle requested prayer for himself, to which the lad responded. The uncle began to break down, and then father came in to find the uncle converted. On the last night of the mission both boy and uncle gave their testimony. ‘A little child shall lead them’

[Footnote] At Hughesdale some 20 or 25 young Christians came out for full surrender to the Lord. Some of these anticipate getting to Upwey (D.V.) next Christmas.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁴ *K. Q.* November, 1927. page 39.

²⁴⁵ *K. Q.* May, 1928. page 39.

Widespread Indifference.

Janetzki complained about widespread indifference as he preached in many country locations. He thought this was a sure sign of the very soon Return to Earth of the Lord Jesus. “The love of many is waxing cold, and pleasure seems to have a death-like grip on our young people. Nevertheless the Lord is adding to His Church daily such as are being saved.”

“We recently held a mission in the small town of H_____, which to the knowledge of the people had never had a mission. Though we were granted use of the church, the minister did not come. The postmaster and his wife were the only witnesses for God, and, by the way, were both readers of the *Keswick Quarterly*. The people of one denomination, whose minister was really opposed to the work, were the most regular attendants. They seemed to be hungry for the truth, and told us they never understood the plan of salvation until the mission. About ten adults and several boys and girls made the great decision for Christ, including the local policeman’s wife and a bank assistant’s wife.

We called on the home of a woman who had been attending, and found out she was anxious to know the way, which we gladly explained. When told that she need not wait until the evening service, the husband (not a Christian) said: ‘Why not decide now?’ The wife did there and then. We then turned to the husband and said: ‘Will you accept Christ?’ and with quivering lips he replied, ‘Yes, I will,’ and after prayer we left them rejoicing.”

Janetzki described good results in a number of places, in each case using one capital letter and a line, instead of using the proper name of the town. He wrote from the town of Lexton,

where he led a mission before going on to Ballarat and Talbot.²⁴⁶

Towards the end of the year, he was still travelling in the Gospel van. “At B____, two young girls of advanced High School training, came to the penitent form on the second Sunday. When we passed through on our way to Melbourne, we had a special meeting for Christians and young converts, and both of these gave a clear testimony as to their conversion. Both hope to come to Upwey Convention.

On the last night there was a real break, seven coming out for Christ. The Spirit of God moved upon the meeting, and while we sang ‘Softly and Tenderly,’ many began to weep freely. First one came right forward and knelt in prayer, then another, and so on. It was a time of rejoicing for the Lord’s people. We believe these converts will receive spiritual help in this place.”

At another place, the young people, with scarcely an exception, were given over to dancing, even the professing Christians, hence no witness. However, after a hard Mission, God has answered prayer, and last night four young people came out for the Lord, and to-day two more.” A later footnote said that they had a cottage meeting to counteract against the drawing power of the dance. About 15 attended, including eight converts. So things were being stirred.²⁴⁷

In **1929**, no reports appeared about his work until November. He shared in the Annual Meeting in September. His short report told of factory meetings instead of visits to country towns.

“As we go from day to day to the various factories, workshops, wharves, etc., we praise God for the privilege of proclaiming the Gospel message to men, many of whom

²⁴⁶ K. Q. August, 1928. pages 42 – 43.

²⁴⁷ K. Q. November, 1928. page 43.

probably never heard it elsewhere. In most of these places it is not possible to ask men to make a public confession of Christ, hence we do not see the results, in decisions for Christ, of our labours, as we do in a Mission. Nevertheless, we believe that many do come to a decision for Christ through these meetings, and we know we are obeying the Word of the Risen Saviour – the King of Glory – who commanded us to ‘preach the Gospel to every creature.’ When the message is faithfully given ‘God giveth the increase.’

At present, two bands go out at midday on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Children’s meetings are also held, and open air meetings on Friday and Sunday nights.

In the open air we are not only privileged to speak and sing the message, but great opportunities are offered in personal work, which occasionally results in decisions for Christ. There were some four or five last month.”²⁴⁸

The Mission at Eaglehawk.

Over the end of the year, Janetzki’s factory work was done by Eric Clarkson, who had some good meetings, with the help of Miss Mitchell.

Instead, Janetzki led a tent mission in Eaglehawk.

“The mission at Eaglehawk was a time of blessing. Though there were over fifteen decisions for Christ, the mission seemed to be rather for the Christians, and a testimony to the non-church-going multitudes. On hot evenings the sides of the tent were lowered. In this way those who could not find seating inside the tent heard the message outside. This was the case several nights.

Open air meetings were held each Friday night. We were given permission to take up our stand where we wished.

²⁴⁸ K. Q. November, 1929. pages 24 and 26.

The electric lights (which ordinarily would not be on owing to the moon) were switched on for our benefit. These meetings were said to be the largest held in the place. Some 40 or 50 Christians joined us in the ring. The presence of God was very manifest, and we praised Him for such an opportunity to make known the unsearchable riches. After these meetings heart to heart talks with the young men took place, which we pray will bear fruit.

Each Sunday morning a sunrise prayer meeting was held, attended by about 40 or 50 Christians. Several afternoons children's meetings were held, with upward of 150 present. Some of the children accepted the Saviour.

The mission was made possible by the faithful preparatory work and co-operation of one of the most earnest soul-winners of the Methodist ministry – Rev. W. F. Betts. God has still His faithful ones who are carrying out His great commission.”

There were beach missions during the summer months, with children's meetings in the afternoons, and open air Gospel meetings at night. In these meetings Janetzki and Clarkson worked together. After the school holidays, they returned to the factory work.²⁴⁹

The Easter Convention at Devenish, 1930.

In the May issue, Janetzki reported at some length about a spiritual weekend held over Easter in the Devenish district. He emphasised the great need that there was for such meetings in country districts such as this. The main speakers were the President of the E.S.A., Mr. H. B. Denniston, and an evangelist named MacNeil Saunders.

²⁴⁹ *K. Q.* February, 1930. page 27.

On Good Friday afternoon, Denniston spoke on Philippians 2:5-11. Another address was given on “Calvary,” and many were deeply impressed. Saturday morning was given largely to prayer, and an address was given in the evening on “the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

The theme on Sunday morning was on “the filling of the Holy Spirit,” and the spiritual results of the weekend became more evident as the day progressed. A number of conversions were recorded, and many Christians were challenged to a deeper experience of God.

On the Monday afternoon, there was a hunger for a fuller experience of the Holy Spirit’s power, and in the evening an address was given along prophetic lines on the “Rise and Fall of World Empires and the Coming Kingdom.” Charts and lantern projection was used on a number of occasions during the weekend. Janetzki was very pleased with the spiritual quality of the results which he saw in the lives of those present at the meetings. Many of those attending came daily from local properties or nearby towns. Evangelist Saunders hoped to follow up this Convention with an evangelistic mission lasting for some weeks, and then come back for a short spiritual convention on the King’s Birthday long weekend in June.²⁵⁰

In the November issue Janetzki wrote of his city open air work, and his open air work in other areas. Because of the effects of the Great Depression he said that preachers like himself had access to the ears of the people in a way which had not been true for fifteen years.

“One of the worst interjectors has recently professed decision and has testified in the open air, appealing to his old

²⁵⁰ K.Q. May, 1930. page 26.

companions to come to Christ. He told us that behind a smiling face there is often an aching heart.”

In his suburban meetings:- “On one occasion after the meeting had been in progress for some time it began to rain, and it looked as if we would have to close down, which we did not like to do; so we drew close to the footpath, opened the side of the van, and the workers packed inside, while the listeners stood in a solid mass under the verandah till 9.45 p.m., and, best of all, three stepped out to accept Christ. At most of these meetings there have been decisions.”²⁵¹

A much shorter report appeared in February, **1931**. He had been concentrating on the beaches over the holidays. The weather had been against their work, but up to 150 children had attended some meetings. “During two weeks about 100 professed decisions for Christ” had been recorded, “and talks with many revealed sincerity of heart.”²⁵²

The May issue, 1931, speaks of Janetzki’s city open air work, as well as in the factories, workshops, and on the wharves. The number of decisions for Christ seemed not to be so high. He also described their “annual visit” to the waterfront at Queenscliff. They started near the pier on Friday afternoon, handing out tracts, and they had an open air meeting in the main street at night. The meetings continued over the weekend, with Thomas Grogan preaching in the Methodist Church. Grogan was not only the secretary of the Society at that time, but also represented the Pocket Testament League, and handed out copies of the New Testament for daily reading.²⁵³

In his long report in August, Janetzki was quite optimistic about their work, especially in the light of the economic depression. “With the general depression,

²⁵¹ *K. Q.* November, 1930. pages 27 – 28.

²⁵² *K. Q.* February, 1931. page 27.

²⁵³ *K. Q.* May, 1931. page 26.

uncertainty of employment, reduction of wages, and the political turmoil, the opportunity to point men to Jesus Christ as the only hope is surely one which we should make the best use of. For many weeks some exceptionally good meetings have been held at the wharves, Newport workshops, North Melbourne sheds, Brooks, Robinson's, Phoenix Biscuits, and other centres. At all places a straight-out challenge to accept a New Testament on the condition that a portion be read each day is given. The men generally are reluctant to come forward at once, but at length someone breaks the ice, comes forward, and others follow."

After writing about this city work, Janetzki wrote about country work, which he had to undertake because Eric Clarkson was ill, and could not work. With his wife, he went into country areas for three months, and ten missions were planned before the Annual Meeting in September. In July, they spent two weeks leading a mission in Bendigo Baptist Church. The weather worked against them, but there were some good meetings and some decisions. Three afternoons a week saw meetings held for the school children.

Another mission was held at White Hills, with another at Eaglehawk starting on July 19.²⁵⁴

His report for February, **1932**, covering the summer period, is much shorter. "The outstanding feature of the closing meetings of last year was the witness in the open air at Camberwell on Friday evenings. Assisted by a good band of keen young Christians, we were enabled to have some good meetings. Splendid numbers listened each week, and several in response to the invitation, came out boldly for the Lord. Over the holidays, as usually, they concentrated on the beaches, and had some "excellent meetings." Especially when the weather

²⁵⁴ K. Q. August, 1931. pages 19 – 20.

was hot, the evening meetings could be well attended. They were held at places like Mordialloc, Carrum, Middle Brighton and North Road. “A quietness and a searching spirit was experienced at several meetings, the conditions being as good as indoors. D.V., we continue during February, including our annual visit to Queenscliff, and covet prayer.”²⁵⁵

As winter approached Janetzki enjoyed going to hold a mission at Natte Yallock, because it reminded him of a mission which he had held there ten years earlier with Hugh Cameron, shortly before Cameron had died. Two young men who were converted in the earlier mission were now ministers of the Gospel. Other converts became Christian workers.

Without waiting for an invitation, Janetzki and his wife set out for Moonambel, in the Avoca district. But the Christians there had been praying for the coming of someone to hold a mission in their midst. So they were an answer to their prayers. It was hard to get the unsaved to attend the meetings. Quite a number of children and young people, up to age 20 years, made commitments to Christ.²⁵⁶

The November, 1932, issue contained a list of the places they had been. The list included Natte Yallock, Redbank, Rathscar West, Beaufort, Lexton, Yundool, Archdale, and at the time of writing they were working in Bealiba. He said that he had two helpers in this work whose names we have not met beforehand – Brothers W. Giles and Andrew Graham.

The Rathscar West mission was short, and was held in a small school room, seating 30 to 60. “On the opening Sunday 50 attended, in spite of blinding rain.” There were 14 decisions. “Several were completely broken up when spoken to. Among those deciding were three mothers, two of whom seemed to enter at once into the joy and assurance of salvation.”

²⁵⁵ K. Q. February, 1932. page 35.

²⁵⁶ K. Q. August, 1932. page 21.

At Beaufort, the local dances and euchre parties ruled the lives of the young people, and getting a response was very difficult. One minister who stood against the local practices was considered “narrow, and as having religious mania.”²⁵⁷

A report in May, **1933**, told of Janetzki’s work in New South Wales. He wrote from Yerong Creek in the Riverina, and had led missions in Corobimilla, Lockhart, The Rock and Mangoplah. The Methodist minister in that area was the Rev. Edgar Tredinnick, who strongly supported them. “Many promising young people were definite in their stand for Christ.”²⁵⁸

Later in 1933, Janetzki was in the town of Chewton, in the Castlemaine district, which was another spot where Hugh Cameron and he had been successful twelve years beforehand. A few years earlier, Grewar and Frost, from the Melbourne Gospel Crusade, had led a mission in Chewton, which had been a blessing to many of the Christians, but had not seen much success in winning converts. Somehow this had helped to provide a basis for future growth.

“A small band gathered for prayer each morning, with a prayer list, and one after another was saved. The second week we were invited to a home, all of whom were unsaved except a cripple lad in hospital. Hours were sent around the fire after the meetings, talking on spiritual things. On the Tuesday a girl member of the family came to the Lord, and her mother followed, then an older sister, also a young lad, a very decided case. He told us later that he settled the matter a few nights before, and made a clean break, including Sunday football, saying he could not serve God and mammon. On the last night another girl of twenty stood, followed by a lad of seventeen, and another fifteen years old. Several Christians stood for a

²⁵⁷ K. Q. November, 1932. page 30.

²⁵⁸ K. Q. May, 1933. page 42.

reconsecration, and two backsliders came back to the Lord. On the last Friday we had a cottage meeting, at which 24 were present. Of these, three were unsaved, but ultimately all decided. Janetzki and his wife were living all of this time in the Gospel van in which they travelled.²⁵⁹

In the November issue for 1933, Janetzki gives us quite an interesting report about a mission he led, but either he, or the editor, forgot to include the detail of telling us where the mission occurred.²⁶⁰

In February, **1934**, a decision was made to start a more permanent mission work in Box Hill, similar to another known as the Spring Street Mission. The centre of the operation was Horton Hall, in White Horse Road, just beyond the shopping centre. Meetings were held each Sunday in February, for a start.²⁶¹

This work in Box Hill developed slowly. They had trouble with rough-necks invading the meeting, yet, these were the very people they were trying to reach. A Sunday school was started for children who did not go to any other. A Friday night open air meeting developed, at which visiting speakers took part, such as Len Buck, C. A. Sandland, Mr. Denniston and Eric Clarkson. There was a prayer meeting on Wednesday nights. An Easter Convention was held, at which the speakers were Mr. H. P. Smith, the Rev. F. A. Crawshaw and Mr. T. Graham.²⁶²

This was the last report about Herbert Janetzki and his wife that appeared in the *Keswick Quarterly* regarding their work for the Evangelisation Society.

²⁵⁹ *K. Q.* August, 1933, pages 23 – 24.

²⁶⁰ *K. Q.* November, 1933. page 44.

²⁶¹ *K. Q.* February, 1934. page 57.

²⁶² *K. Q.* May, 1934. page 53.

Queensland.

The only other information I could gather about the Janetzki's concerned their move to Queensland, which had occurred by 1938, where they led a number of evangelistic missions.

There seems to be evidence that Janetzki was in Brisbane leading missions in Gospel Halls and Baptist churches through the middle months of 1938, although there are certain aspects of the advertisement that I could not understand. In October, 1938, he was at the Wood Street Baptist Church in Rockhampton.²⁶³

Early in 1939 he was still working in Rockhampton, following the visit there by J. Edwin Orr and his revival team. Another evangelist, Roy Lacey, was also working in the area.²⁶⁴

Donald Prout says that Herbert Janetzki later changed his name to Janson, and went with his wife, Stella, to the U.S.A. to study at the Bible Institute of Los Angeles.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ *Courier Mail*. 2 July, 1938, page 7, and the *Rockhampton Morning Bulletin*. 22 October, 1938. page 12.

²⁶⁴ *New Life*. Friday, 27 January, 1939. page 7.

²⁶⁵ Donald Prout. *Going Where the Need is Greater*. The E.S.A. Story. Page 12.

CHAPTER TEN

ERIC FRANK CLARKSON

E. S. A. evangelist, 1925 to 1935.

Eric Frank Clarkson was born in the Methodist parsonage, Sunbury, on 28 May, 1901. He was the son of Methodist Home Missionary, Henry Clarkson, and his wife, Ellen. Following his father, he became a Methodist local preacher. He completed an apprenticeship at Williamstown Docks as an engineering pattern-maker. During his apprenticeship he also studied to be a Methodist local preacher, and preached his trial sermon in 1921.

While recovering after an accident at work, he studied for two years at the newly formed Melbourne Bible Institute under the Rev. C. H. Nash, being student number 66, and was encouraged by the Principal to enter full time Christian service.²⁶⁶

As a result, he took up full-time evangelistic work with the Victorian Open Air Mission (VOAM).²⁶⁷

Extremely little information is available about his activities during the years that he worked with the VOAM, but he was already listed as an evangelist with the VOAM before the merger with the Evangelisation Society occurred in 1925, and probably had a year or two of experience by that time.

²⁶⁶ Personal papers of his son, David Clarkson.

²⁶⁷ *Sixth Synod Minutes, Uniting Church in Australia. Synod of Victoria.*
Page AA42.

The Evangelisation Society of Australasia.

In July, 1925, a merger occurred between the VOAM and what little remained of the Evangelisation Society of Australasia (ESA). Although the VOAM had much more to contribute, so far as personnel, force and drive were concerned, yet it was decided that the new organization would be called the Evangelisation Society of Australasia, possibly because the name and work of the Society was better and more widely known right through Victoria. It also had a longer history. The VOAM seems mainly to have worked around Melbourne.

Information about his years with the ESA (1925 to 1935) depends largely upon what was published in the *Keswick Quarterly*, which began publication in February, 1926. Photocopies of most of the relevant materials were kindly provided to me by Mr. Will. Renshaw. Also references to him sometimes appeared in newspapers. After he started working for the Methodist Church, reports about his work appeared from time to time in the Methodist newspaper, the *Spectator*.

Clarkson reported upon missions that he conducted in Childers (January 17 – 27), Thorpdale (January 31 – February 10), and at the time of writing he was having problems with disunity amongst the Christians at Moe (February 14 – 21.), 1926. At Childers, for example, he wrote – “This is just a small place buried in the hills of Gippsland. There was much prayer behind this Mission, and the preaching of the Gospel proved again to be the power of God and the salvation of 15 souls. Each evening the hills and valleys rang with the songs of Zion, conducted by Bro. Dickason, and the glorious light of the Gospel shone into many hearts and homes. The Lord also

blessed the work amongst the children, and many of these young lives are rejoicing in Christ as their Saviour.”²⁶⁸

Thorpdale was five miles away from Childers. There were several conversions, and a man who had trained for the ministry but had fallen away came back to the Lord.

Clarkson listed two places, Willow Grove and Narracan, where he was planned to preach in the next few weeks.

In mid-July he conducted missions at Sea Lake and Willangie, during which he also visited the village of Berriwillock, with Mr. Andrew W. Smith as song-leader.²⁶⁹ A lengthy report on the mission in Sea Lake appeared in the August issue of the *Keswick Quarterly*, with news that he was next to visit Moulamein in New South Wales, and then was to work in Orbost and district for three months.²⁷⁰

In Moulamein, he claimed there were only two practicing Christians. In Orbost the mission centred round the Methodist Church, and several Salvation Army officers came to boost the prayer effort. The young people would not attend the mission for fear of being converted. “The Lord answered prayer, and now the young are on pleasures for evermore. Each Monday night they gather together to learn more about the exceeding riches of His grace. The outstations, which are buried in the great Gippsland forest, are being worked, and then we go back to Orbost for the last week, where we hope to get out into the open air. Bro. S. Newnham has also visited some of these places, and the seed which was sown has taken root in

²⁶⁸ *Keswick Quarterly*. No. 1. February, 1926. page 14.

²⁶⁹ *Argus*, Friday, 9 July, 1926. page 18.

²⁷⁰ *Keswick Quarterly*. No. 3. August, 1926. page 20. Also *Argus*, Friday, 9 July, 1926, page 18. See the chapter in this book on Andrew W. Smith for this *K. Q.* report in full.

many hearts. May the Lord richly bless all faithful intercessors.”²⁷¹

The little country places near Orbost in East Gippsland were Brodribb River, Waygara, Tostaree and Hospital Creek. Children’s meetings were especially effective here. Clarkson provided stories about several of the converts. He said, “In evangelistic work we meet many people who are hard to love, yet without love our preaching is as ‘sounding brass or a clanging symbol.’ We must love souls in order to be able to speak to them about Christ. And we meet people who are very hard to deal with, so we need wisdom. We find that the enemy is strong, and we need power. So pray with us that in these days the Lord’s servants may have their hearts filled with love; that they may be wise to win souls; and be endued with power from on high.”²⁷²

For much of the second half of 1927 Clarkson went to Tasmania for a number of missions, although he hoped to back in Melbourne by Christmas for the Upwey Convention. In November, he provided a long report about his Tasmanian work without actually giving a clue as to which towns it was in which he had been working.²⁷³

For the first part of 1928, he gives us a list of places he visited. These were firstly at Meander, then January 29, Deloraine; February 12, Blacknell; February 26, Clunes; March 11, Longford; March 25, Yalla. (sic)²⁷⁴

In Deloraine he met the Ministers’ Fraternal on Tuesday, 7 February. His mission was in the process of being held in the Baptist Church. “The mission is catching on, Mr.

²⁷¹ *Keswick Quarterly*. No. 4. November, 1926. pages 18 – 19.

²⁷² *Keswick Quarterly*. No. 5. February, 1927. pages 25 – 26.

²⁷³ *Keswick Quarterly*. No. 8. November, 1927. pages 39 – 40.

²⁷⁴ *Keswick Quarterly*. No. 9. February, 1928.

Clarkson making his message understood in plain language, with an earnest appeal.”²⁷⁵

The Longford mission was also based in the Baptist Church. By the time the Mission happened, the schedule had been changed, so that he was in Longford from March 18 to 29.

“Each service was preceded by a prayer meeting and song service. Each night Mr. Clarkson, who is a gifted missionary, delivered very powerful and earnest addresses. Some of the subjects he dealt with during the mission were as follows:- ‘Prayer;’ ‘Doors’ (St. John 10 and 9); ‘The Three Parables of Luke 15;’ ‘The Great Invitation;’ ‘The Sure Foundation;’ ‘The Unveiling of Jesus Christ’ (Revelation); ‘The Second Coming;’ ‘Heaven and why you should be a Christian;’ ‘Strangers on the Earth;’ ‘Jesus, what a Friend for Sinners;’ ‘Jesus saves and Satisfies;’ ‘A Talk to Christians.’

All these subjects were listened to with great attention, and some accepted Christ as their Saviour. During the mission solos were rendered by Mesdames S. R. Boon and F. J. Barnes, and Mr. Lisle Barnes. The organists for the mission were Mrs. F. J. Barnes and Miss V. E.M. Wright. Five meetings were held for children and Mr. Clarkson gave some very bright and interesting talks to them. At some of the mission meetings he was assisted by Rev. F. J. Barnes. Mr. Clarkson left on March 30 to conduct evangelistic meetings in the Yolla district.”²⁷⁶

Soon afterwards he was in the little town of Railton. But he must have had some spare days. “During the past week there were opportunities of visiting some of the places where missions were conducted last year, and it was indeed encouraging to see the number of young Christians who have grown in grace. Some of the young men are now preaching the Gospel. In moving among the ministers of the various

²⁷⁵ *Examiner*. Thursday, 9 February, 1928. page 5.

²⁷⁶ *Examiner*. Tuesday, 3 April, 1928. page 10.

denominations one cannot help but notice the great division between the modernist and those who stand by the Word of God. Many preach from books about the Bible, of a Christ who is never to return, and a heaven that is invented by the minds of modern professors of theology. But praise the Lord for those who preach the Word, which is able to make us wise unto salvation, and who sound the note ‘Maranatha.’”

Clarkson also took the opportunity whenever he could to speak in State schools. He said, “During nine months in Tasmania I have only been refused admittance once.”²⁷⁷

Fruit from missions held the previous year became more apparent as the winter months of 1928 passed.

“Last winter I had the joy of traveling through the Western District with Brother Archie Law. This winter I traveled through the same district again, and in the homes, in the State schools and in the churches I have heard many testify of blessing received through the ministry of the Word by our Brother. I am confident that many boys and girls of the Western District today will be the messengers of the Word of Life tomorrow as a result of our Brother’s faithful ministry.” Apparently Mr. Law had died since the tour in 1927.²⁷⁸

The summer months found Clarkson involved with beach mission work, covering several months, and not merely in school holidays or the New Year period. “The weather has not been very favourable for beach work, yet we have had many good meetings with the children on the sand in the afternoons, and with the older folk on the cliffs in the evenings. But his time was also spent visiting factories, and leading Friday night street meetings in the heart of Melbourne, and in Footscray.”²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷ *Keswick Quarterly*. No.10. May, 1928. page 40.

²⁷⁸ *Keswick Quarterly*. No. 11. August, 1928. page 43.

²⁷⁹ *Keswick Quarterly*. No. 13. February, 1929. page 20.

As the autumn months of 1929 progressed, Clarkson was to be found in “parts of the Riverina and Mallee. At Barham we had a few meetings and Christians were strengthened. The people did not want the Gospel. Many a faithful minister is having a hard battle away in those ungodly places. No prayer, no fellowship, no response, only lukewarm indifference. One pastor has a set of deacons who thought it a strange thing that they should be asked to give thanks at the Lord’s Table. Another has the secretary of the race club as secretary of the church.”

A little later he was in East Gippsland, and was encouraged by seeing growth in the lives of some who came to the Lord three years ago. “At Gormandale we saw the hand of the Lord working in a new and marvelous way. Just before the mission started the secretary of the local dance professed conversion. The person who took his place was also converted later in the meetings. “Several who had never been in a church for years were in attendance every night.”

Clarkson tried hard to organize spiritual support for the Christians in this district. The Rev. C. H. Nash promised to visit. He hoped that Charles Sandland would bring a quartette, and lead a small convention at Gormandale on the King’s Birthday weekend. He wanted the Melbourne Gospel Crusade van to come for a visit – Jim Grewar and Stan Frost. In early May, He camped with several others (W. Dickason, and the Rev. Glanmor Rees) up in the hills near Callignee, to hold some meetings.²⁸⁰

Later in the year an interesting report was published about evangelistic work in parts of Gippsland which seem to reflect what Clarkson had been doing there, and so applied to earlier events. Mr. H. P. Barker apparently accompanied

²⁸⁰ *Keswick Quarterly*. No.14. May, 1929. pages 22 - 23.

Clarkson, and wrote most of the report. It included the following:- “At Maffra the Methodists have a live C.E., and one night during the mission at Heyfield about thirty of them came over and marched the street telling forth the Gospel in song. In another Gippsland town the minister, with the help of some young Christians, was able to conduct several short missions throughout his district. Some of these young helpers came to the Lord during one of our missions four years ago. Far away in another place several who came out for the Lord went through a severe testing time and some went back, but praise the Lord for those who came through fitted for His service. They are now faithful witnesses.”²⁸¹

As the year progressed, Clarkson preached frequently on the wharves, which he considered to be a work with many opportunities. In November, 1927, however, he led missions in Tasmania. Especially he visited Sheffield, and was greatly encouraged by seeing converts from previous missions growing strongly in the Lord. The summer months saw him again in Melbourne conducting beach meetings, and being involved in children’s work.²⁸²

Late summer and autumn 1930 saw Clarkson again in Gippsland, enjoying the fact that the new Princes Highway had come through, and made access so much easier. One of the places visited was South Carrajung, working again with the Rev. G. Rees (Anglican), and also Mr. Jack Matthewson, who had been a C.I.M. missionary. They camped near the school and held lunch hour meetings with the children, and used Rees’s car to visit all the farms in the district. Matthewson gave a public lecture on “With Christ over the Roof of the World,” related to his missionary experience. Clarkson was very pleased with spiritual progress at Gormandale, where some of

²⁸¹ *Keswick Quarterly*. No.16. November, 1929. page 27.

²⁸² *Keswick Quarterly*. No.17. February, 1930. page 28.

the locals were keen in personal witnessing to travellers. He also visited Heyfield, Orbost, Childers, Hospital Creek, and other places.²⁸³

This work continued through the winter months. In his annual report, Clarkson wrote;- “More back-block work has been undertaken this year, this being made possible by the well-fitted-up motor van. This work mainly consists of visiting from house to house, and leaving suitable literature, holding cottage meetings where possible, children’s gatherings at the schools, and conducting the Sunday services. It has been one’s experience several times this year to visit folk away in the hills of Gippsland, who have not seen a minister of the Gospel or attended a church service for years.

A number of missions have been conducted in churches of various denominations, and it has been a joy and encouragement to labour with ministers who still preach the old-time message, and we have rejoiced together in seeing souls added to the church of God.”²⁸⁴

The final months of 1930, however, saw Clarkson out of action. He had to return home and recover, and could not start his country work again until the following January.

In 1931 he went west. Missions were conducted in Warrnambool, Port Fairy, Portland, Nullawarre and Hamilton. He shared the work with a Methodist theological student, Cyril Cato, M.A., who had already been involved in other aspects of the Society’s work, and with Mr. Syd. Monk, a converted opera singer. A lengthy report was sent in about the Warrnambool mission.

Clarkson was sick again during the middle of the year and had to stop his work. This created a backlog in the country evangelism which had to be taken up by the Society’s other

²⁸³ *Keswick Quarterly*. No.18. May, 1930. page 27.

²⁸⁴ *Keswick Quarterly*. No.20. November, 1930. page 28.

main traveling evangelist at that time, Mr. H. H. Janetzki, and several other friends.²⁸⁵ Janetzki led missions at White Hills, and at Eaglehawk, before going to several places out in the Mallee.

In his annual report, Clarkson thanked all the friends for their many prayers during his illness, and gave a long statement about the country evangelistic work, much of which he had shared with Cyril Cato, traveling in the van, and he quoted examples of positive support that they had received from local school teachers.

Cyril Cato wrote some impressions of the work. “Early this year I spent a month in the Society’s van, assisting in the work carried on by Mr. Clarkson. This was one of the happiest months of service and many times I regretted that the denomination I represent did not carry on such work. I praised God because he had raised up men with vision to see that the work was done, and that He had separated my beloved brother in Christ to go forth in this war.”²⁸⁶

Cyril Cato was very well qualified academically, was a trained teacher, and had been the Methodist Conference evangelist in Tasmania for the year 1928, before training for the ministry between 1929 and 1931. In 1932 he began two years of ministry at Hopetoun before going as a missionary to Fiji in 1934.²⁸⁷ In later years he gained a PhD in Fijian anthropology, and later still ministered in New South Wales. He died in 1961.

Just before he got sick, Clarkson started a mission in the town of Beaufort, where the Methodist missionary was Mr. Mellor. He had to leave after a few days, but arranged to come back when he was well again. This happened in December,

²⁸⁵ *Keswick Quarterly*. Numbers 22, and 23. May 1931. page 27, and August, 1931. page 19.

²⁸⁶ *Keswick Quarterly*. No.24. November, 1931. page 21.

²⁸⁷ *Methodist Ministerial Index for Australasia*. 1936 edition. page 26.

when various friends came to help him. In the first week these friends were Cyril Cato, Dr. Gavin Johnson and Charlie Sandland. In the second week his helpers were Stella Sandland and Nell Kempton. Afternoon meetings were also held in the local theatre, where Cyril Cato, and Dr. Johnson did the preaching, helped by Mr. Mellor. There was also an early morning prayer meeting at Camp Hill. "Souls were saved and Christians built up."

He left for Western Australia after that. He spoke at the Annual Convention of the West Australian Christian Endeavour Union, at the Kalamunda Convention, and preached in a number of other places including in tent missions in Perth, and at the U.A.M. aboriginal station at Gnowangerup.²⁸⁸

After some months, upon returning to Victoria he embarked again on his normal country schedule. For the quarter leading up to November, 1932, he wrote that his work consisted of:- "(1) Children's work in State schools, all Protestant children (and some R.C.'s) of school age in 27 country places are not only reached with the Gospel message, but have regular fortnightly instruction in the Word which makes wise unto salvation. Through the children there is access into many homes. (2) Cottage Meetings.-Much profit and blessing has resulted from these. (3) Sunday Services.- In this work also there has been blessing both in city and country churches, and with a band of consecrated singers the message has been portrayed in two ways."²⁸⁹

²⁸⁸ *Keswick Quarterly*. No.25. February, 1932. page 36. Also, *West Australian*. 3 May, 1932. page 21.

²⁸⁹ *Keswick Quarterly*. No.28. November, 1932. pages 31-32.

One mission Clarkson conducted late in 1932 was at Kangaroo Ground. He was described as “a fine speaker and he treated his hearers to some very fine addresses.”²⁹⁰

On 25 March, 1933, Eric Clarkson married Nell Kempton in the Hampton Baptist Church – the beginning of a shared life of love, family happiness and Christian service.²⁹¹

In the winter months of 1933, with the help of his wife, Clarkson led missions in the Stawell Baptist Church, after which came Horsham and other places, followed in July by Janiember and Cavivil, and Woomelang in August. The Stawell Baptist minister provided the report on the meetings there.²⁹²

Clarkson’s report to the Annual Meeting in September, 1933, said that he had received many invitations to conduct missions in churches of several denominations. In some places the work had been hard – like pioneering work, with little to show for the effort. “In other places our work is reaping where others have faithfully sown.” He continued to hold children’s meetings during each mission, either in school hours or afterwards. He found that some of the strongest local Christians were people who had made decisions for Christ in these school meetings several years earlier.

Wherever possible he preached in the open air. He likened it to alluvial gold mining. Some miners work for months and find nothing. Sometimes they find a few specks, but other times in the most unlikely places they unearth real nuggets.

Because of the Great Depression, there were relief camps in many places. Stawell had been such a place. But he

²⁹⁰ *Advertiser*. (Hurstbridge.), 25 November, 1932, page 3, and 23 December, 1932. page 2.

²⁹¹ Private papers of Mr. David Clarkson.

²⁹² *Keswick Quarterly*. No.31. August, 1933. page 25.

was very keen to preach to thousands of men that he found in many such camps, in many locations. He also was very keen to make good use of the tracts and other forms of Christian literature that were sent to him.²⁹³

Clarkson continued his country work through 1934. He saw some wonderful results for his work. “Six years ago, on entering a small farming district in Gippsland for the first time, where the minister had set himself to do the work of a foreign missionary, we could only find one house open for a cottage meeting. Spiritual darkness was reigning. A few weeks ago I visited the same district, and it is now enjoying the sunshine of Gospel light. God has brought about great changes. It was formerly difficult to speak to the people about spiritual things, but as I went from house to house during the last week the general conversation centred round the things of the Lord. Ought not this to encourage all who are interested in country work?” His letter went on to speak of other similar results.²⁹⁴

When Clarkson returned to Melbourne after this stint of country work, he was asked what he thought about the spiritual condition of Victoria. His answer was that the prophecy of General William Booth was being fulfilled. Many years previously, Booth had said:- “I consider the chief dangers confronting the coming century will be a teaching of (1) Religion without the Holy Spirit; (2) Forgiveness without repentance; (3) Salvation without regeneration; (4) Politics without God; (5) Heaven without Hell.”

Despite this, he considered that it was a day of great opportunity, especially at open air and factory meetings, where he was able to address people with little or no contact with churches, of knowledge of the Bible. He was thankful to say that money had been given to buy an amplifier for his Gospel

²⁹³ *Keswick Quarterly*. No.32. November, 1933. page 44.

²⁹⁴ *Keswick Quarterly*. No.34. May, 1934. page 52 – 53.

van, which would also allow music to be amplified from gramophone records. At the time of writing his letter, he was leading a mission at Ascot Vale Methodist Church.²⁹⁵

By the beginning of 1935, Eric Clarkson had resigned from the Evangelisation Society, and had transferred his services to a special section of the Methodist Home Missions, called the Methodist Open-air and factory Mission. He extended the range of tools he used for this work, including not only his amplifier, but also lantern slides.

The Methodist Open-air and Factory Mission.

The driving motive behind this move was the concern of the Methodist Home Missions to present the Gospel to holiday and beach crowds in a way that would be attractive. The plan was to introduce a van with an amplification system which could broadcast music as well as voices. The plan was advertised in *The Spectator*, and received a ready response. A young lady came into the Mission office with a donation of fifty pounds for this purpose. Mr. Fred J. Cato provided a similar amount in his will, and other smaller donations were gathered, eventually enough to finance the project for a year. Eric Clarkson became the first missionary, in the later part of 1935. The vehicle used was a 1927 Chevrolet van, duly refurbished.²⁹⁶

An annual report was published a little over a year later. Clarkson kept a tally, which included 74 church services, 170 lunch-hour meetings, 38 Monday visits to factories and workshops, 72 open air meetings on streets and beaches, 51 children's meetings, either indoors or in the open, 16 young people's meetings, 13 women's meetings, and 8 miscellaneous gatherings. About 230 of these meetings had been held in the open air.

²⁹⁵ *Keswick Quarterly*. No.35. August, 1934. pages 44 – 45.

²⁹⁶ *Spectator*. 11 September, 1935. page 735.

“Through the generosity of a city businessman and others, the following distribution was made possible:- 11,000 Scripture portions, and 5,000 children’s booklets and tracts. A band of 18 regular helpers have faithfully assisted in the work. Some who help in the lunch-hour meetings go without their lunch. One young man places himself and his car at our disposal once a week. Ten others have been casual helpers.” Many ministers also helped. The main results had been “sowing seed,” which hopefully would produce fruit for eternity.

His factory work had to be flexible. “We have added three new places to our list of lunch-hour meetings: A.H. McDonald and Co., Richmond; McPherson’s Pty. Ltd, (street meeting), Richmond, and Foy and Gibson, Pty. Ltd., Collingwood. At McDonald’s we go right inside the works and so far only a few men have been reached because of the noise of running machines. At the other two places we use the amplifier in the streets, and on fine days reach large numbers, I am seeking permission to have meetings indoors at Foy and Gibson’s when the weather is too cold outside.

At Johns and Waygood works there is always plenty of noise, and because of this only limited numbers of men could be reached. We have now overcome the difficulty by driving the bus right into the works through a large back door and using the amplifier.

The shifts have been changed at Barnet Glass Works, and now less men are off at the midday lunch hour. We now park the bus with the amplifier speakers facing the dining room, and in this way reach many who do not come outside. At this place a number of Christian workmen stand with us, and at the last meeting there a foreman took the address and a young man from the office took a word of testimony.

A visit has been made to the settlement on the West Melbourne swamp, known to some as “Dudley Mansions.” At this place there are about 50 or 60 men, women and children living, or rather existing, in shocking conditions. If possible we hope to arrange some sort of a meeting for these people, and the Rev. H.L. Hawkins has promised to help.

Other meetings have been held at North Melbourne, Fitzroy, Balwyn, Brunswick, Footscray, Brighton, and the Campbellfield district.”²⁹⁷

Clarkson continued to report “Our work brings us into close touch with all sorts and conditions of men, and we find that gambling has a stranglehold on the community. The spirit of lawlessness is abroad, and some men are ready for anything. The masses of people are outside the Church, and to them we go with the Gospel message. The Rev. A. A. Lyons recently said after a lunch-hour meeting where many of the men showed little or no interest. ‘If we wait for the man to become interested in us, we will wait a long time.’”²⁹⁸

At another place, a workman said, “You do not get much encouragement here, and you certainly do not see much improvement, but take it from me, this place would go to ----- if it were not for your visits.”

The summer beach meetings for 1936 started on 13 December, at 3.30pm on the Chelsea foreshore, using his amplification equipment. By mid-January, about 500 people were attending meetings near the Mordialloc pier. The meetings were arranged by the Ministers’ Fraternal, and the speaker at the first meeting was Archbishop Head. On Sunday evenings, the Salvation Army band took part as well. Evening

²⁹⁷ *Spectator*. 1 July, 1936. page 520.

²⁹⁸ *Spectator*. 9 December, 1936. page 992.

gatherings were also held in local churches, and Mr. Len Buck was the visiting speaker in some cases.²⁹⁹

Eighteen months later, Clarkson wrote about his work. He told of a returned soldier and his wife who had been converted at one of the street meetings. At a later street meeting this soldier was able to help a man “past middle-age” who came forward as an enquirer after salvation. At a lunch-hour meeting at a workshop, over 300 employees and he was told that only six were known to be Christian believers. One of these believers said “You have no idea what these meetings mean to me. It is a bit of heaven in hell.”

A mother spoke to Clarkson during a tram ride. She said that both her children were Christians. She said, “I was anxious about them, and then they became interested in your picture talks, and I believe their decision for Christ was very real.”

By August, 1938, the old van had been traded in for a new International van.³⁰⁰

The annual report published at the end of 1938 said that 90 Church services had been conducted, 198 industrial meetings, 211 meetings in the street, on the beach, and children’s outdoor meetings, with 16 miscellaneous.

Because the new vehicle was so much better, and the equipment had been improved, he had also been able to help in evangelistic missions, conventions, the Wesley bi-centenary celebrations, and the No-License campaign. “In fact the requests for help have been more than we could accept.”

While this was a Methodist work, help came from many denominations. “At one street meeting recently we had eight

²⁹⁹ *Argus*. 12 December, 1936, page 26, 22 January, 1937, page 4, 23 January, 1937, page 23, and 25 January, 1937, page 4,

³⁰⁰ *Spectator*. 17 August, 1938. page 653.

helpers representing six denominations.” Clarkson said he had church union in operation.³⁰¹

As the preparations were made to send soldiers to the Second World War, the Y.M.C.A took a leading role in providing help for the soldiers, along with the padres. Clarkson became involved in this work also. For example, “Mr. Clarkson was probably the first to provide entertainment at Puckapunyal, the new camp site of the Second A.I.F. Hearing of his work in the other camps, the carpenters (of whom there are several hundreds engaged on the work of building huts) asked him to come to the new camp site. By this time there were several hundred A.I.F. men in camp. Mr. Clarkson’s night was a great success, and already he has been invited to camps in other areas for such acceptable service.” Clarkson’s amplification system also helped 2,000 men at a church parade hear the padre. “The commanding officer was delighted with the efficient broadcast, and expressed his thanks to the Chaplain-General for making the open air van available for this work.”³⁰²

The early years of the War produced a different attitude towards Clarkson at many of the meetings. “Never before have I seen such marked attention and reverence in street meetings. Very few move away during prayer, and the singing of the National Anthem is now much more than a form.” At the camps, however, movie projectors were in great demand, and a call was made to the Churches to provide 150 pounds for a new machine especially for the army work. Clarkson naturally did not want to lose the one he carried in his van. Clarkson took his share in the spread of Christian literature, along with the Bible Society’s distribution of New Testaments to the soldiers.³⁰³

³⁰¹ *Spectator*. 23 November, 1938. page 948.

³⁰² *Spectator*. 22 November, 1939. page 942.

³⁰³ *Spectator*. 14 August, 1940. page 620.

As the War developed, the factories operated differently, and the lunch hour meetings had to be modified. Street meetings had to be reduced so that more time could be given to army and A.I.F. work, especially at week ends. He conducted fewer Church services for that reason. But much time was still given to children's work, especially during the summer season, and through the school holidays. Beach meetings were held not only on the Port Philip beaches, but also at places as far away as Lakes Entrance.³⁰⁴

Clarkson used to take some of the theological students along with him to the factory meetings.

Regular visits were made to camps at Balcombe, Mount Martha, Seymour, Puckapunyal, and the Air Force station at Ascot Vale. A letter arrived from Tobruk, saying "I enjoyed your visits to our camp, but now that we are up against it here, I am beginning to realize the meaning of what you were telling us about Christ."

The beach work brought him into contact with many people who had drifted from the Churches, but the work could be very fruitful. "At Rosebud a very interesting young chap resented the idea of the church conducting services on week days, especially at the beach during holidays, but after attending several meetings, said he would have to revise many of his ideas about Christianity. After a service at Queenscliff a man said "I'll be at church tonight. I'm interested in what I heard at the open air meeting last night." Later, he said to Clarkson, "You could not see the reverence of the crowd or hear the remarks. I'm not a churchman, but this sort of preaching makes things real. When is the next meeting?"³⁰⁵

As factory work changed, because of the impact of the War, one workman said, "We really cannot come out and listen

³⁰⁴ *Spectator*. 8 January, 1941. page 12.

³⁰⁵ *Spectator*. 13 August, 1941. page 506.

to you these days. We only have twenty minutes for lunch now. But I would be glad to have some more of these little booklets. The wife usually reads them on Sunday nights.” These were not short little four-page tracts, but small booklets with a strong message.³⁰⁶

By the end of 1942, however, regulations had been introduced which changed what could be done during the holiday period, and Clarkson did very little beach mission work. The registration of the van was changed from “Methodist Home Missions” to “Methodist Naval, Military and Air Force Committee.” Probably they would not have been able to get enough petrol to continue any substantial work otherwise. It became increasingly difficult to obtain good movie films from the film libraries. He began to pay more attention to reaching gangs of men involved in construction camps, and to helping the Gaol chaplains.

By the end of 1943, Clarkson said that ninety percent of his time was given to work with the armed forces. The amplification equipment was a great benefit for the work. Six weeks were given to beach work during the summer.

“Some work was undertaken in C.C.C. camps and regular work maintained with certain army ordnance units, which consists of men engaged in their normal trades. War has brought about completely new conditions of life in industry, and until human nature adjusts itself industrial strife is inevitable. Life in the Services quickly unfits men and women for their ordinary occupations. Home life is toppling down around us. I have spoken to many men – and some of them behind bars – whose homes have been wrecked by others. One could report of parents, both of whom go to work without making proper arrangements for the care of their children; of

³⁰⁶ *Spectator*. 19 August, 1942. page 515.

the disappearance of yesterday's modesty, and the moral lawlessness found in many places, and of the small place religion has in the homes of many men and women. These things are mainly responsible for the home destruction."³⁰⁷

Before too long, he spent a lot of time in the convalescent hospitals also.

This work continued through the War, and slowly returned to more "normal" styles after the War came to an end.

Clarkson continued this style of work, travelling the length and breadth of Victoria and Tasmania, for the Methodist Home Missions until October, 1963, when he was ordained by the Methodist Conference. After that, he took normal circuit appointments, like any other minister. He was stationed at Noradjuha from 1964 to 1969. For 1969 he rested at Ivanhoe before he became a supernumerary. His address in retirement was 75 Dickson Street, Bacchus Marsh. He did some relief work in retirement for the Presbyterians at Ballan. He also did relief work in Ballarat. He died on 2 March, 1982.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁷ *Spectator*. 2 February, 1944. page 76.

³⁰⁸ *Sixth Synod Minutes*, Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria. Page AA4.2.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

ANDREW W. SMITH

E. S. A. Evangelist 1926 – 1929.

Andrew W. Smith was born around 1895. He served in the First World War and was decorated with a Military Cross. His wife's name was May.

On 17 January, 1925, he wrote to the secretary of the Baptist Home Mission Department in Melbourne and applied to serve as a Home Missionary. He gave his personal details as being 30 years of age, married but with no children. His father was Mr. J. S. Smith, who had been a founding member of the Ivanhoe Baptist Church. Andrew had been the first person to be received into membership in that church by baptism.

A reply was sent to him on 7 March, accepting him for this work, and asking him to go to Cudjee and District to replace Pastor Godden.

Apparently Andrew's circumstances had changed in the intervening period, and about two weeks after receiving this letter he had to reply declining this offer of work. He could no longer accept it.³⁰⁹

Some time during that year, 1925, Andrew applied to work for the Evangelisation Society of Australasia, and he was accepted. The Society wanted him to accompany their senior evangelist as a singer and song leader. The senior evangelist was Mr. Norman Lumsden.

³⁰⁹ Personal communication from Dr. K. Manley.

The main source of information about his work with the Society is the first issues of the *Keswick Quarterly and Upwey Convention News*, which began publication in February, 1926. There are also a few references to his work in the secular newspapers.

The first published report about missions conducted by Lumsden and Smith concerned a mission in the township and district of St. James. Lumsden wrote:-

“With Bro. Andrew Smith as soloist and song leader, I am now in the little township of St. James. No evangelistic effort has ever been made in this place as far as I can hear. There is no Christian family, and perhaps not a person who prays. Every house in the place has been visited with tracts, and an invitation to the hall where the meetings are being held. Men have been dealt with personally, an open air testimony is given in the main street each evening before the indoor meeting, but we are finding it very difficult to get the unsaved to come in. A few Christians from some of the farming districts are driving in to support us, and for them we thank God.

A little group of men drinking themselves into a state of helpless intoxication in a room beyond the bar of one of the hotels were given the Gospel one day. One bright lad got up and recited the 23rd Psalm, and afterwards came to me, saying confidentially, ‘I am the son of a minister; but I am no hypocrite, and I like my glass.’

Would someone take this dear fellow upon their heart, and pray for his conversion and deliverance from the power of the enemy?

One Christian farmer was telling us that, on going into St. James on business yesterday, he found that the chief topic of conversation was the mission and the Missioner, so we praise God that there is at least some stirring of the dry bones.

We shall greatly value prayer for a united mission to be held at Ararat from the 28th of February till the 14th of March.” Following that, they planned to spend some weeks in Tasmania, including a Mission and Convention to be held in Middleton, some miles south of Hobart, at Easter time.³¹⁰

The second report was written from Tasmania.

“Our last report was written from St. James, Victoria, where the Lord caused us to triumph in Him, although the field was a difficult one. Two very definite cases of conversion made us feel that the labor was truly not in vain.

A United Church Mission at Ararat followed. Here the interest and attendance grew till on the closing night the Lyceum Theatre was filled, overflowing even the gallery. There was some precious fruit at Ararat. One young man brought to the Lord there is now in the Melbourne Bible Institute in training for the Lord’s service. Another, a railway official, has been removed to a Mallee town, there to bear a witness for Christ.

After a few days in Melbourne we sailed for Tasmania and started immediately at Kittering in the far south, a fruit growing district on D’Entrecasteaux Channel. Apple picking and packing was in full swing and as we visited from house to house we were told that the people were too busy to come. Yet they did come until at the end of the all-too-brief week the little church was filled. Quite a number professed faith in Christ.

The next place was Middleton, a few miles further down the channel. Here ten days were spent, including the Easter weekend.

³¹⁰ *Keswick Quarterly*. (K. Q.) February, 1926. pages 13 – 14.

Easter Convention.

The Tasmanian Open Air Mission, under whose auspices we are working in Tasmania, had arranged a convention for Easter attended by nearly 50 Christians from Hobart. The old hall in which the meetings were held was built many years ago, right at the water's edge. The foundation is insecure and the whole structure is in danger of slipping into the sea, and almost immediately after our meetings it was to be removed to higher ground.

The old building became a veritable Bethel to many of us in those hallowed days. Bro. Thos. Graham, of the Melbourne Gospel Crusade, was the Lord's Messenger at most of the meetings. None of those present will forget the morning when Rom. 6 and the message of our identification with Him in His death and resurrection was unfolded to us. 'Sin shall not have dominion over you.' Hallelujah!

At the evening Gospel Meetings, local people, for whom the Mission had been arranged, attended in goodly numbers. There was liberty in preaching the Word – we believe there was conviction of sin but there were but a few who broke through to come to Christ.

Just one case must be mentioned. A lady who when visited on the first day of the Mission, when we had left, scoffed at the idea of a Mission. To her there was no God. The world came by chance. Christ was merely a good man. Yet she was impelled to come to the meetings. She was struck by the evident sincerity and earnestness of the Lord's Messengers and of the undoubted joy of all His people gathered for this convention. At last one night she was unable to hold out against the appeal of the Spirit of God and weeping stood to her feet. Her joy in the Lord now is beautiful to witness and her testimony to the wonderful change wrought in her life causes thanksgiving to God.

Other Country Work.

We are now in a small district among the mountains behind Hobart, at the little Methodist Church. It is small in numbers and with but little aggressive service, while the Seventh Day Adventists claim to have a live church. It is sad to visit the flock of these Judaistic teachers. No assurance of salvation, no joy in the Lord, but very 'jealous for the law.' A number of them attended our Sunday evening Gospel service. When we tested the meeting and the few believers stood confessing Christ, not one Adventist would stand as being saved.

Following Collinsvale we go to Longford, Hagley, and Glenorchy, and expect to return home (D.V.) about the first of June.³¹¹

Lumsden and Smith sent their next report on 26 July, 1926.

Our final Missions in Tasmania were greatly blessed of God. At Longford and Hagley, where the churches united and the meetings were held in public halls, there were large gatherings and a number professed conversion. Since leaving, most cheering letters have come from ministers and others telling of the continuance of the work of the Spirit of God. The Baptist minister says he has a new church since the mission; old members revived and a number of new members received, while the Presbyterian minister writes very recently: 'I believe the Lord is laying the heathen world on the hearts of many in this district. May the spark burst into unquenchable flame and may we indeed blaze away for our Beloved Master.' At Glenorchy, near Hobart, the meetings grew in numbers and

³¹¹ K. Q. Vol.1. No.2. May, 1926. page 13.

power, and not a few young people came out for Christ while others surrendered their lives wholly to Him.

From a Christian worker in one of the towns we visited has come a letter from which we quote: 'Christ has never meant so much to me as He does now; the whole of my life has been changed. I have a peace and joy in my heart that I never thought possible; it is joy unspeakable. The days of the mission have been the happiest days of my life, and to think of what I missed all the years. I thank God for... faithful witness but for which I would still be looking on my temper as an infirmity instead of a sin... you do not know what it means to have deliverance from my temper and to know that the chains that have bound me for 17 years are broken; for it is seventeen years since I was saved, and looking back I am ashamed and humbled... When you said 'Stop struggling, surrender all to Christ, trust Him and take the gift He is offering and thank Him,' I just said 'I will'.. and oh the peace and joy that came into my heart right away. I still want to shout Hallelujah! I am free after being bound 17 years. I just long for every Christian who does not know about it to enter into the victorious life... there are lots of Christians here... who are in the dark just as I was, oh the joy to tell them there is deliverance through Jesus Christ; He can and will save them from sin's power every moment of the day if they will only surrender and trust... Although the temptations to get into a temper have come thick and fast during the past few weeks I have not given way once. I can say 'Thanks be unto God who giveth me the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Returning from Tasmania early in June we commenced work in the Methodist Church, Fairfield, where the Lord blessed the Word and some of the young people professed faith in Him. Thence to the Alphington Methodist Church. Here we saw a wonderful movement of His Spirit. In the Young Men's

Bible Class one Sunday afternoon twelve of the lads took their stand for Christ and during the succeeding nights a number of others, both young men and women. In both churches there was behind us a praying band for whose fellowship and help in the battle we thank God. One young man for whose conversion his friends had prayed for years, and who had drifted far from God and righteousness, is now witnessing in the city and using his voice for the singing of the Gospel message.

Queensberry Street Mission Hall was the next scene of our labours. We thank God for the dear sisters who devote themselves to the work in that difficult field; they truly ‘labored with us in the Gospel,’ and some trophies were won. One young man who came to the free tea on Sunday evening told us how he had heard the Lord’s call to service when in the Salvation Army six years ago. He had offered for training but slipped through strong drink and had been drifting ever since. He returned to the Lord as a prodigal and has again the joy of salvation. His testimony in a subsequent meeting was very bright and he intended getting back into the Army and taking up the work where he dropped it years ago. Several others professed and seemed truly ‘born of God.’ A rather unruly crowd of children gathered from the State School every afternoon, but the Spirit of God, we believe, dealt with them and on the last afternoon there was a great hush and quietness when a number of them professed to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.

We are now in the midst of a mission in the Methodist Church, Bentlygh. Here there has been much blessing among the Christians and a marked feature has been the number attending and taking part in the prayer meeting held before service. On Sunday last there was a breaking down of opposition and eight young men and women took a stand for

Christ. One afterwards gave a clear testimony, telling how he was saved through the preaching of Gipsy Smith while at the war but had drifted and had known the sadness of a backslider's condition. He is now fully restored and rejoices in telling what great things the Lord has done for him.³¹²

In the same issue, Eric Clarkson says that Andrew W. Smith was his song leader during a mission that Clarkson led at Sea Lake, but not during any of the other missions that he conducted. His report was written on 4 July, 1926, which was "weeks" after the close of the mission, although the text (incorrectly?) says the year was 1925. So the actual date of this mission is not clear.

"The mission was conducted in the Methodist Church, of which the Rev. Greenwood is in charge. For the past two years he has been sowing the good seed in this needy place. The way had been prepared by prayer, and, after a week of preaching and singing, souls were borne into the Kingdom. On the Sunday night the church was full and the power of the Spirit could be felt; when the appeal was made more than 20 young people came to the Lord.

During the following weeks more souls were gathered in. The bank manager took his stand for the Lord, and is now keen for service. Another man, who for years had been in doubt, asked for prayer in the after meeting of the last night. Not long after he was rejoicing in the assurance of salvation. On the last night many Christians rededicated their lives to the Lord. The Lord blessed the children's meeting. Each afternoon about 60 would gather in the church after school and learn to sing Gospel choruses and hear the old, yet ever new story of Jesus and His love. Many of the boys and girls are rejoicing in

³¹² *K. Q.* August, 1926. pages 19 – 20.

Christ as their Saviour. Other souls were brought into the Kingdom in some of the outposts of the circuit. Bro. Andrew Smith was the singer with me during this mission.

At a town 14 miles away which we visited for an open air meeting, there lived a Cornishman, filled with the Holy Spirit. He had promised to let the people know of the meeting, and for this the hotel-keeper had promised him a bell, but at the last minute refused it. He then obtained a plough disc and hammer and walked up and down the street notifying the people of the meeting. When we arrived he was in a bath of perspiration and during the meeting kept shouting "Hallelujah." He had some glory to let out and it was a treat to have fellowship with him.

Please pray for the minister and those helping him who have gathered the young Christians together and are feeding them with the Word of God. This work cannot be carried on without prayer, and nothing will so stir Christians to mighty intercession and make us pleaders for a lost world as to whisper to our souls this wonderful truth: "While I am praying God is really doing that which I am asking."³¹³

Annual Meeting, 23rd September, 1926, report includes:-

Evangelist A. W. Smith led the morning prayer and praise meeting, and Evangelists Norman Lumsden and Eric Clarkson were among the speakers. Dr. MacColl gave the closing message. The best feature of the evening meeting was perhaps, the striking testimonies by four recent converts.

³¹³ K. Q. *ibid.* page 20.

Report in November 1926 issue. – Lumsden and Smith, but with a tail.

Our last report for the “Keswick Quarterly” was written in the midst of a Mission in the Centre Road Methodist Church, Benteigh. The Lord worked wonders in days of blessing there. Young men and women took their stand for Christ, and in many cases it was such a definite and real surrender to Him as absolute Lord and Master.

The young man who was restored to the joy of salvation (of whom mention was made in the last report), is now in the Melbourne Bible Institute with his face set towards the foreign Mission field. A few weeks after the Mission he wrote: “I am now leaning entirely on my Saviour, and He will never fail me... I have given up all my social hobbies such as the lodge, the military, etc., and have found no regrets in so doing. I have now a sense of freedom, and, in fact, am happier today than ever before... My home life is like something new... we are very happy... Previously I always hesitated praying aloud in public, whereas now I simply **must** pray. I cannot keep quiet. To-morrow (Sunday) I am to lead the men’s meeting at 10am.. God is very, very good. He not only saves, but He keeps and urges one on to do His work that others may gain some benefit from our testimony. I will never tire of testifying to His wonderful saving power as evidenced in my case. The boys in my office, whose characters I described to you, received my confession of accepting Christ as my Saviour with the utmost deference and respect, and I am proud now that I was led to tell them.”

Another young man, also now in the Bible Institute to train for the regions beyond, tells thus of his conversion: “I was invited to attend the Mission one night when I planned to go to a dance, so to decide the matter I tossed a penny – if ‘heads’ I would go to the dance, but if ‘tails’, then the Mission. ‘Tails’

won, so I walked to the church, with no thought or desire to be saved. I thought I was a good living fellow and that satisfied my conscience. To be a Christian would mean giving up dancing, theatre-going and smoking, so I was determined I would not yield. Yet that night in wonderful grace God met me, saved me, and I was compelled when the invitation was given to rise up and confess the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord.”

One other case must be mentioned. A young man with whom we had no opportunity of a personal talk, but we understood was a Christian, was present on the last night. He was impelled to stand when the appeal was made, but resisted until the meeting was closed. With overwhelming conviction of sin and need he rushed out of the church, grabbing in his distress another’s hat. As he walked hurriedly towards his home he cried to God to have mercy on him, and suddenly seemed to see the Lord upon the cross dying in his stead, while a voice seemed to say, “God is now willing, are you?” He ran to his bedside, and kneeling there he said, “Yes, Lord, I am willing. I am willing.” Taking up his Bible he opened at these words, which he did not remember having read before: “Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in heaven.” Immediately there came a great longing to go all round the district and confess to everybody what a wonderful Saviour he had found in the Lord Jesus.

A Christian worker from this church wrote to us last week:- “Since your Mission and our Annual Foreign Mission Meetings, several of our young men have offered themselves for foreign fields, and also in a short time we expect to have a few more local preachers.” To God be all the glory! Hallelujah!

At Noojee, the little Gippsland township and district which was swept by those terrible bush fires last February, the Lord gave us quite a revival. Some fine young men and women and a few of the older people came out for Christ. The Home Missionary writes that “Noojee is a new place spiritually.”

Space fails us to tell of the work at Rutherglen, Reservoir, Windsor, (Union St. Methodist), Burnley. At the last-named place there was a peculiar joy, for it meant returning to a church where the Lord had greatly blessed us just two years ago. Then about forty professed conversion, and our joy was to find so many walking in the truth and busy in the church and Sunday School, and to hear the testimonies of lives transformed and made glad by the grace of God. One understands what Paul meant when he wrote “ye are our joy and crown of rejoicing at that day.”

As this is written Bro. Smith is in the Mallee conducting Missions in the Mittyack (Methodist) circuit, the Lord is blessing and giving him souls, while Bro. Lumsden continues in the city, holding meetings for a fortnight in the Erskine Presbyterian Church, Carlton, where Mr. Esmond New, a former student of the M.B.I., is the missionary in charge.

44 Williams Rd. Windsor, 25
October, 1926.³¹⁴

[February, 1927.] Lumsden and Smith write:

Among those who professed conversion in the Mission held in the Erskine Presbyterian Church, Carlton, is one young man who afterwards spent a week-end with us in the country. He is very real, and has now commenced to study for the ministry of his own church. From Carlton we went to the Methodist churches in Healesville, Badger, and Dixon’s Creek.

³¹⁴ K. Q. November, 1926. pages 17 – 18.

Here we saw the Lord's hand working in the conversion of a few sinners and the establishment of the saints. This is the story of one man's conversion. It was a very hot Sunday. There was no morning service, and, as it was the first day of the Mission, we felt that it was well to visit from house to house as far as we were able. At one little home we found the husband alone in the back yard. After listening to the tale of his woes – years of ill-health caused by contracting rheumatism while working in the bush in wet weather, money spent on doctor's bills, etc. – we could tell him of the One who came to be the Friend and Saviour. It was so easy to lead this dear man to Him that we doubted the reality of his professed acceptance of the Lord Jesus. Lack of suitable clothing kept him from the Mission services, for, with a wife and five little children, it has been a great struggle even to provide food during these years of sickness. One can never forget the hour spent in that little home a week later. The joyful testimony of the Lord's saving grace and power, his evident emotion when he thanked us for coming and dealing with him. "Nobody has ever before asked me to come to Christ." That day the wife and eldest boy also turned to the Lord, and the letter that has since come tells of the changed and happy home.

Our final Mission before the Xmas season was in the Baptist Hall, Croxton. The Lord blessed His own Word here also, and there were quite a number who professed conversion. One Sunday night there were eight or nine in the inquiry room, amongst them a sad faced woman who, when asked if she would accept Christ as her Saviour, refused point-blank, and said, "No." One was surprised, but afterwards she told us that while her husband was away from God she could not take her stand. She was keen for us to visit her home and speak with her husband. Next day we were there just before he returned from work. As he approached the house one of the children ran out

to tell him “there was a man wanted to see him.” The wife was afraid he would not come in, but he greeted me pleasantly as I went through into the kitchen to meet him, and before long the great subject of his soul’s salvation was opened. After half an hour’s earnest conversation we got on our knees, and he could say, “Tis done, the great transaction’s done.” Husband and wife the next night together stood and confessed Christ in the Mission Hall, and there was joy on earth and “joy in the presence of the angels of God.”

Our work has commenced this year [1927] at Bentleigh, where a United Mission is being held in a large tent near the station. Much prayer has been made, and already in these first days there is evidence of the working of the Spirit of God. To Him be all the praise “Who only doeth wondrous things.”³¹⁵

Annual Meeting, 1927. includes:-

Some remarkable stories were told by the society’s evangelists, Messrs N. C. Lumsden, George Hall, H. H. Janetzki, Eric Clarkson, and A. W. Smith.³¹⁶

Lumsden resigned from the E.S.A. after the AGM.

In the same issue--

Evangelist Andrew W. Smith writes:-

For the past three months the Lord has been blessing the preaching of His Word in a most gracious way in the hill districts near Melbourne. Silvan has been the centre of this movement geographically and spiritually, for it was at this place that a band of faithful Christians had been praying for times of revival. The result of believing faith was remarkably demonstrated at the Silvan Dam a fortnight ago, when three young men gave effective testimonies before a number of the

³¹⁵ K. Q. February, 1927. page 25.

³¹⁶ K. Q. November, 1927. page 39.

workmen among whom we were having a service. There were other good testimonies, but the three mentioned spoke for the first time as Christians.

Missions have been held at Silvan, Mount Evelyn – at the Union Church and in the hall – where there was a fine break. Then at Wandin, in the I.O.R. Hall; Seville followed in the hall, where we again experienced a break on the last night, when ten professed conversion. We had a day of prayer in the Methodist Church, which proved of such blessing that an afternoon of prayer was held some days afterwards. The resultant power was mightily evident. Praise God! During this mission we were able to visit the men working on the dam twice, and had enjoyable meetings.

There has been a remarkable work of the Holy Spirit at Silvan, and we ask the praying readers to pray much, as we believe that great things can be done among the hundreds of workers to be employed on the dam, if the local sympathy is maintained.

I have just completed a mission at Monbulk, where we had the joy of seeing most of the senior school children profess conversion. The next mission is to be at South Silvan, followed by Kallista, after which a ten day's effort among the men on the Silvan Dam is to be held. For the latter work much prayer is asked.

We praise God that a number of young men, recently saved, have a desire to witness for their Saviour, in this district, and we are praying that the Lord will open the way for them to be organized into a preaching band. We hope to have a week's convention meetings after the busy season, when it is hoped, under God, to consolidate the work.

To Christians in country places where the spiritual life is at a low ebb, might it be suggested that the Silvan folks' method is worth emulating. They continued in prayer, and the Lord

answered. We believe this has been the history in a nutshell of every revival movement.

To those who are praying for me I would say, “Thank you,” and to all who read this I would say, “Please pray for me.”³¹⁷

Evangelist Herbert H. Janetzki provides another description of a mission in which Andrew W. Smith was involved. Written 22 April, 1928.

One or two missions stand out as times of blessing and a visitation of God’s power for this year. The first was a tent mission at Hughesdale, in which Mr. Andrew Smith, Mrs. Janetzki and myself worked together. At times the tent was crowded and extra seats had to be borrowed. The mission was upheld by prayer – a half-day of prayer each week and a prayer meeting preceding each night meeting. We believe this was largely responsible for the blessing. In all there were 20 adult conversions, besides several boys and girls. It was a great joy to hear their testimonies from time to time.

We cite one case: a boy 11 years decide for Christ, and according to instructions witnessed for Christ at home, to the joy of his parents. At the week-end the boy’s uncle, a young man, came to stay, to whom the lad gave his testimony. The uncle told the boy he was too young to know he was saved, but the lad insisted he knew he was saved, and when retiring the boy knelt to pray. The uncle requested prayer for himself, to which the lad responded. The uncle began to break down, and then father came in to find the uncle converted. On the last night of the mission both boy and uncle gave their testimony. ‘A little child shall lead them’

³¹⁷ K. Q. *ibid.* pages 40 – 41.

[Footnote] At Hughesdale some 20 or 25 young Christians came out for full surrender to the Lord. Some of these anticipate getting to Upwey. (D.V.) next Christmas. [The other missions described in Janetzki's report appear to have been run by him and his wife, without involvement by Smith.]³¹⁸

In August, 1928, Smith provided his own report.

At the time of my last report to the “Keswick Quarterly,” “Bro. Will. Dickason and myself were missioning in the tent at Box Hill. We rejoice to record that the Lord honoured His Word there in a number of professions. There was not the response in numbers for which the praying people were looking, but we believe those who did respond showed real evidence of a Work of Grace. The Prayer Meetings during the Mission were times of blessing, and we praise God for such a band of earnest workers, representative of all the Churches.

Following Box Hill we moved our “canvas cathedral” to Footscray, and the corner of Gordon Street and Ballarat Road. Two Churches are in this district, and both joined in the Mission – Gordon Street Baptist (Pastor J. Howard Kitchen) and Ballarat Road Methodist (Rev. J. F. Rankin). From the commencement it was evident we were in a well-prepared field, and there were decisions on most evenings.

One evening, when there were very few present, seven young men came in, some of whom obviously intended to treat everything as a joke. The joke was on the devil, however, as three of them stood for the Lord, and one remained behind with them, and professed to accept Christ. Many of the cases here gave us great joy, and we trust they will continue in His Word that they may be “disciples indeed.”

³¹⁸ K. Q. May, 1928, page 39.

At the end of this Mission we put the tent away for the winter, and are now conducting Missions in Churches, which the Lord has graciously opened to us. We have been in the Ballarat Road, Barkly Street, and Hyde Street Methodist Churches in Footscray. We praise God that we were privileged to see fruit in each place. The last Sunday at Hyde Street particularly was a day of victory, both in the Sunday school and in the evening service.

We are at present labouring in the Oakleigh Methodist Church, where there has been fine preparation in prayer, and a real spirit of expectancy. There have been some very happy professions already, and we are looking with confidence to the Lord for much fruit here, in answer to the prayers of His people.

We have invitations to Nyora, Seddon Congregational, and Ormond Methodist, after which we commence a United Tent Mission at Dandenong (D.V.) on September 30th.³¹⁹

Evangelist Andrew Smith writes:-

With Bro. Dickason as fellow worker, the Lord graciously permitted His saving grace to be manifested in work at Nyora, Gippsland. This place had been well prepared by earnest prayer and faithful work by the Methodist Home Missionary, supported by a band of the Lord's children. We praise God for a number of decisions, both among young people and adults. It was indeed a happy time, one of the best features of the work being the enthusiasm of the school children at the afternoon meetings. Some of these young folk truly found the Lord, and letters received testify to a real work of grace.

We then went to Seddon Congregational Church, where we found a faithful Pastor, who had well prepared the ground for a Mission by preaching the Gospel. The Lord again

³¹⁹ K. Q. August, 1928. page 23.

wonderfully honoured the preaching of His Word, and many souls came to the place where the sinner meets the Saviour. On a special young people's night fourteen confessed the Lord by standing for Him. To Him be all the glory!

Ormond Methodist was the next field. This place has had much faithful work done in it of late. The mission was blessed in several decisions, and amongst those who professed were some young people for whom much prayer had been made.

We are now labouring at Dandenong in the Tent. There have been four professions, all of them young men, for whom we thank God. The meetings have been hindered somewhat by the weather and other meetings. There is a growing interest, however, and we are praying that the closing work will yield good fruit. The next Tent effort will (D.V.) be at McKinnon, commencing November 4th, and continuing for three weeks. Please continue in prayer.³²⁰

Evangelist Andrew W. Smith writes:-

We have to praise God for continued blessing attending the preaching and singing of the Glad Tidings in the Evangelisation Society tent and open air. The work at Yarraville was indeed a time of blessing with the young people especially, and again a vacant allotment has been made a hallowed spot to some glad hearts, who thereon passed from death to life.

It is with great joy that I inform my praying friends of a new opening for my labours. On Sunday, May 5, I will begin service for God as Pastor of Hoddle Street Baptist Church, Abbotsford. God willing, I will enter the Baptist College next year. This has been made possible in a very happy and

³²⁰ K. Q. November, 1928. page 43.

unexpected way, and the tokens of the Lord's will have been precious and definite.

While anticipating with pleasure the advantage of fuller training and increased knowledge, I have much regret in resigning from the staff of the Evangelisation Society of Australasia. My association with this Society has been of the happiest, and of the greatest spiritual profit to myself, and I do pray that the truths it stands for so valiantly will ever be the keynote of my preaching.... Fellowship with the staff in the work has been joyous, and to break with them is not easy; this applies especially to my partnership with Bro. Will. Dickason.

I hope friends will take this new move earnestly upon their hearts in prayer, that there may be times of power at Abbotsford and profit in study. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all who have so effectively held up my hands in the past.³²¹

The final reference to Andrew W. Smith in the Keswick Quarterly is to say that he took part as song leader in one of the annual meetings of the Evangelisation Society in the following September.³²²

Survey after 1929.

From these documents we can see that Andrew W. Smith began his pastorate at the Hoddle Street Baptist Church, Abbotsford, about May, 1929, and that he started his College training in 1930.

Wilkin mentions the fact that A. W. Smith was one of the helpers at Abbotsford, and also says that he was one of the

³²¹ K. Q. May, 1929. pages 21 – 22.

³²² K. Q. November, 1929. page24.

College students who helped the congregation in Gordon Street, Footscray, although no dates are given.³²³

He also mentions that Smith was the pastor in Hamilton, but again, no date is given. Seeing that Wilkin published his book in 1938, and that E. Roberts-Thompson was pastor there after Smith, followed again by T. F. Keyte in 1937, we can perhaps say that Smith's time at Hamilton came directly after his time in College, and did not last very long.

The next anchor date that we have in A. W. Smith's career is that he became Pastor of the Sandringham Church in 1935.³²⁴

This, also, did not last long, because he was parachuted into the job of being the Baptist Union's organising evangelist in August, 1936, with the side role of helping struggling congregations when he was not evangelising.³²⁵

The first mission he conducted in this new capacity was at the Clifton Hill Baptist Church, which started on 30 August, 1936.³²⁶

He led only a few missions, and before many months were past, Smith took over pastoral charge of the congregation at Russell Street, Geelong. There followed a three-fold increase in the congregation, and in the Sunday School within a year or two of his arrival.³²⁷

Smith was pastor at Traralgon in 1940, in the early stages of the Second World War, when he asked for leave of

³²³ Wilkin. F. J., *Baptists in Victoria*, Our First Century. pages 128 and 124.

³²⁴ Wilkin. F. J., op cit. page 172.

³²⁵ *Argus*. Monday, 21 August, 1936. page 5. also *Australian Baptist*. 4 August, 1936, pages 4 – 5. Also Basil Brown. *Members One of Another*. page 147. *Argus*. Saturday, 18 July, 1936. page 29.

³²⁶ *Argus*. 29 August, 1936. page 19.

³²⁷ Wilkin. page 78.

absence in order to work with soldiers being prepared for action overseas. Soon he joined the A.I.F. Training staff at Colac.³²⁸

After a long illness, Andrew Smith died in the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, in September, 1949. The simple death notice appeared in the *Argus*.³²⁹

³²⁸ Personal communication from Dr. K. Manley.

³²⁹ *Argus*. Monday, 26 September, 1949. Death notices column.

CHAPTER TWELVE

F. W. GEORGE HALL

E.S.A. Evangelist -1925 to 1930.

A fairly short chapter about this man's life and work is probably all that can be done for the purposes of this present book about the history of the Evangelisation Society of Australasia, but it should be emphasised that George Hall played a major role in the building up of evangelicalism in Victoria from 1924, when he first arrived in Australia, until the mid-1940s, when he left Victoria to become a Baptist pastor, first in Western Australia, and later in New South Wales. Indeed, if a PhD thesis was written about his life, it would open up in a new way the whole panorama of evangelism in Australia, particularly in so far as it was carried on by inter-denominational organisations.

A sketch outline of his early life was given on the occasion when he was guest editor of one of the early issues of *New Life*. In later issues of this paper, an enormous amount was published about his work in the years covered by the Second World War, as well as seeing many of his articles being published.

Hall was born in England, and trained as an architect. He served for four years in the Great War with the Royal Field Artillery in Palestine and Egypt. After the War he went to Canada and worked as a draughtsman, and in the early 1920's he trained for Christian work at the Bible College of Los Angeles.

In Los Angeles, he met “Cairo” Bradley of Sydney, who appreciated Hall’s gifts. It was Bradley who spoke about him to H. B. Denniston, the President of the Victorian Open Air Mission. Denniston invited Hall to come to Melbourne to work in direct evangelistic work with the V.O.A.M., arriving probably in 1924. He spoke at the Annual Meeting of the V.O.A.M. that year.³³⁰

The Evangelisation Society of Australasia.

After the amalgamation of the V.O.A.M. with the Evangelisation Society in mid-1925, Hall became one of the evangelists working now for the Society. He continued this work through to 1930, before he changed his relationship with the Society, although he kept on doing the same work as he had been doing beforehand.

Almost nothing is known about the details of what Hall did, either in the V.O.A.M., or the E.S.A., before the commencement of publication of the *Keswick Quarterly*, in February, **1926**. After that date, some details of his work were published on several occasions.

The first of Hall’s reports to be published went as follows:-

“Revivals of religion have been characterised in the past by revivals of open air work, and a getting out of the established ruts of a self-satisfied church life. Christ’s commission is, ‘Go ye into all the world,’ but at times of great spiritual declension the church says unto the world, ‘Come ye.’

It has been my privilege for the last eighteen months to meet almost all classes of society in the open air, and I want to affirm this statement: If you have the compassion of Christ, a burning message that is wind swept by the breath of Calvary,

³³⁰ *New Life*. Friday, 13 October, 1939, page 4.

and enough of the milk of human kindness to get down to the people's needs, you will find open air work an amazing and delightful field of service.

On Saturday a well-equipped group of workers go out to the beaches. A few penny Gospels gathered last week one hundred children (not counting the adults), anxious to procure a Gospel. They were taught some up-to-date children's choruses, and they sang with such fervor that older folk applauded their efforts. O, the joy!

In the evenings crowds have listened to Gospel messages.

A further extension of the work in the railway shops in North Melbourne has been very profitable. Out of the hundreds of men who work there, possibly 70 per cent of the total number came out of the meeting last week. These men are skilled mechanics, untouched by the churches, yet they are prepared to listen attentively to the old story of the Cross.

Through the scarcity of efficient workers I cannot adequately cope with all the work in this almost entirely neglected field of service.

Such was the call that the Evangelisation Society of Australasia, at an increased expenditure, have sent me out expressly to do this class of work.

About three hundred men gathered at an open air meeting on Sunday evening, where two souls made decisions for Christ. A fortnight before, on giving the invitation, a man, shabbily dressed, broken through drink, and trembling in every limb, almost ran out from the crowd and knelt in the ring. On Sunday evening I was introduced to a well-dressed man, with a face that was beaming with a light that is not kindled in this world. He was anxious to give his testimony, and could not wait to be introduced. It was the man who had come out the fortnight before. Hallelujah!

We are hopeful that Gipsy Smith will come down to the Newport works and reap souls there.

I am anxious to start open air meetings in the suburbs on Friday evenings. Would all those who can assist please let me know?

The success of this work largely depends on the band of prayers who are faithfully behind this work. Will you join this band, and pray especially from 12.15 p.m. to 12.45 p.m. daily?

A monthly report meeting is held in the Friends' Hall, Russell Street, on the second Tuesday in the month. This is a great spiritual feast. You are invited to the banquet.

If you can help, or give any suggestions, please notify the Secretary:- Mr. T. Grogan, 101 Flinders Lane."³³¹

Six months later we discover that Hall had arranged to run his own department within the Evangelisation Society's work, which he called the Open Air, Factories and Workshops Department. His published report was half composed of preaching his enthusiasm to the readers, but the news part of his report said, "On Thursday, July 15th, twenty workers met to sing in the open air at a business men's meeting in the city. The following Monday, on a vacant lot in Bourke Street, while the wind was blowing (proverbially speaking), 'the teeth out of a buzz saw,' about two hundred men and women stood to listen to the old story of the Cross. The wind ploughed a great furrow in our ranks, and filled their eyes with dust, but some were in no wise anxious to get away even when the meeting had closed."³³²

Hall's next report to be published appeared in May, **1927**. He tried to describe his work, trying also to enthuse his readers with the possibilities of what he was doing, and minimising or overlooking the difficulties. In part, he wrote:-

³³¹ *Keswick Quarterly*. February, 1926, pages 14 – 15.

³³² *K. Q.* August, 1926. pages 20 – 21.

“Some official recently tried to stop us from going down to the wharves, and the result of a vote from the wharfies was unanimous that the meetings should be continued. Thanks are due to the Hon. W. H. Edgar, and the Chairman of the Harbour Trust especially for the privilege of carrying on.

One of the Union officials (unsolicited) said, ‘You can use my name if you want to, for there is neither a boss nor a man who is not pleased to see you along these wharves.’ Praise the Lord, the Gospel has lost none of its ancient attractiveness, and success is largely due to the willing helpers who sing and co-operate with us.”

Regarding factory work, he said, “Very often men who do not profess to be Christians are so disgusted with the awful language that pervades these shops, that they welcome the refining influence of consecrated women who sing the songs of Zion, and hand out Christian literature.”³³³

By November that year, Hall was reporting about the beginnings of beach work. “With the advent of warm weather, we have started work on the beaches among the children. At Frankston the meeting was announced from the day schools, and the children were awaiting us on the beach. There was a good response from these meetings, and a Bible class was started in one of the local homes to support those who responded, with about thirty attending at first.

Hall’s report also included reference to Miss Mitchell, who had experience working amongst sailors on the wharves in Gibraltar. Miss Mitchell joined Hall’s new E.S.A. Department. It is not clear how long this arrangement lasted.³³⁴

No reports were published from Hall’s hand in the *Keswick Quarterly* through **1928**, but in October, Hall and his wife went touring in Tasmania, holding missions under the

³³³ K. Q. May, 1927. page 14 – 15.

³³⁴ K. Q. November, 1927. pages 41 – 42.

auspices of the Northern Tasmanian Evangelisation Society. One of the missions was held in the Reed Memorial Church, Launceston.

“A ten days’ mission of inspirational and Gospel mission talks will commence to-day at 3 p.m. in the Christian Mission Church. Mr. Geo. Hall, of the Australian Evangelisation Society, will speak each afternoon at 3, and evening at 7.45, on special themes, and Mrs. Hall, who is a post-graduate of Los Angeles Bible Institute, will sing.”³³⁵

The *Examiner* often gave more details about such events than would appear in many other papers. It was actually Mrs. Hall who gave the afternoon address, using a large chart, and she spoke about God’s plans “on dispensational lines.” George Hall was described as having “a racy and attractive style of address.” He “addressed a large audience in the evening on the theme, ‘The Power that Moved Three Worlds,’ the whole address being an eloquent and telling appeal for earnest, vital, and believing prayer, under four divisions:- (1) Extent; (2) eligibility; (3) Efficacy; (4) entirety. Homely illustrations and unusually quaint and new forms of expression, made the address intensely appealing. Mrs. Hall and Miss Jones sang the duet, ‘Have Thine Own Way, Lord,’ and Rev. L. C. Donaldson presided at the organ. This evening the subject of the special address will be ‘The Early Church – A Contrast.’ The storm of the day before had reduced the large sign across the church front to a complete wreck, and as the people entered it was hanging by the electric light standard.”³³⁶

Mrs. Hall gave another talk the following afternoon, again using her large chart, and expounding aspects of dispensationalism. Hall spoke in the evening on the early

³³⁵ *Launceston Examiner*. Tuesday, 9 October, 1928. page 3.

³³⁶ *Examiner*. Wednesday, 10 October, 1928. page 14.

Church, under three headings – Organic, dynamic and volcanic.³³⁷

The other comment about Hall's mission to appear in the *Examiner* was an appreciation of the generosity of the minister and officers from the Christian Mission Church in supporting the Mission which Mr. and Mrs. Hall had led the previous month. It appeared in the report about the Annual Meeting of the Northern Tasmanian Evangelisation Society.³³⁸

In February, 1929, Hall tells how he tried to visit a Spanish training ship which visited Melbourne in order to distribute copies of St. Matthew's Gospel. After specifically praying about the whole matter, he took with him an interpreter, and boarded the ship, asking to see the commanding officer. As the sailors waited for a word from the commander, they handled copies of the Gospel, and said, "Evangelico Matteo Protestanti – no good." After the commander had examined the Gospel, Hall was given permission to distribute them widely, which he and the interpreter proceeded to do, until all copies were gone. In his report, Hall exulted in the answer to prayer which had occurred in that event.³³⁹

The other report written by Hall that year appeared in the November issue. Hall had spent several weeks in quietness, waiting on God for guidance as he planned to enter a new area of evangelistic work. He related an incident which occurred soon after. There had been manifest spiritual power at their open air meeting, so much so that the fruit barrow sellers had lost business, and one of the barrowmen had given a drunkard ten shillings if he would steal the organ being used at the meeting.

³³⁷ *Examiner*. Thursday, 11 October, 1928. page 11.

³³⁸ *Examiner*. Tuesday, 13 November, 1928. page 11.

³³⁹ *K. Q.* February, 1929. page 20.

“The drunken man was arrested by the Gospel. He had been actively engaged in times past with the Salvation Army. That very evening he had sold two pictures of Christ, the only ones in the home, for two shillings to buy drink.

I made a public appeal for anxious souls to accept a Gospel of John as a token that when they had found the truth in it they would accept Christ, and to my surprise the offended fruit merchant publicly shook my hand and took the Gospel. A number of others did likewise.

The backslider took me ‘home’ to an hotel, and there the wife, who had once been a salvation lass, said she, too, would come back to the Lord. The man, now sober, said, ‘I actually had your organ under my wing.’ I replied, ‘Yes, and the Lord had it under His wing also.’³⁴⁰

1930 and After.

From 1930, and for three years, George Hall began operating on his own, with his own team of helpers. He called his new organisation the “Open Air and Factories Evangelistic Movement.” As a result, his reports in the *Keswick Quarterly* appeared under a separate heading, and not under the heading of the Evangelisation Society. In one sense, his reports do not represent part of the history of the Evangelisation Society, and we do not need to produce them in detail. However, several very interesting reports were published from his pen in this period.

Also in 1930, Hall approached the Rev. C. H. Nash to speak at a new regular Monday evening Bible study group that he was trying to form in the city of Melbourne. This group became known as the City Men’s Bible Class. It grew strongly under the inspired teaching of Nash. The group came to include

³⁴⁰ K. Q. November, 1929. page 24.

a significant number of leading Christian businessmen in Melbourne, and exerted an influence far wider and stronger than one might expect. Indeed, the evangelical scene in Melbourne through the 1930s became almost dominated by a number of these leading men, who were strong characters, full of energy and drive, wealthy, vitally interested in foreign missions and evangelistic work. Some were well known also for their saintliness. They were like a team of spiritual giants in the land. These men, along with many others, were also influenced by two spiritual movements in this period. One flowed through the visit to Australia of J. Edwin Orr and his team in 1937, and the other flowed through the Methodist Local Preachers' Association, to which some of them belonged.³⁴¹

Somehow, it was in part through this City Men's Bible Class, started by Hall, and led by Nash, that the spiritual flow of new life seemed to burst forth and flourish, through the decade of the 1930s. In time, Mrs. Hall started a similar group for the ladies, which she led.

Mr. R. B. Stirling.

After 1932, Hall's name disappears from view for three years. He went to England in this period, and by some means became involved with the evangelistic work of Mr. R. B. Stirling. Mr. Stirling was a politician, and had been one for many years. He had founded the British Labour Party in England with Philip Snowdon and Ramsay McDonald, who later was Prime Minister. But in 1933 Stirling experienced an evangelical conversion, and suddenly became an evangelist. It was my purpose to research this three year period in London, through copies of the newspapers, and through copies of *The Christian*, in the British Library, but this plan did not eventuate.

³⁴¹ K. Q. May, 1940. page 55.

I thought it would be a very interesting project, and I may perhaps be able to do it one day.

George Hall returned to Australia with R. B. Stirling in April, 1936, when Stirling came to take part for six months in the Centenary Evangelistic Mission in South Australia, to mark the centenary of the white settlement of South Australia.³⁴² Hall acted also as an associate evangelist.

Campaigners for Christ.

His return to Australia coincided with the formation in Melbourne of a new evangelistic organisation called "Campaigners for Christ," and Hall immediately became the first full-time secretary. He continued this work until the outbreak of the Second World War, when he was seconded to take part in the work in the military camps. The Campaigners for Christ organisation was heavily involved in this work in its own name, and also under the name of "Everyman's Huts." This latter setup became larger than the rest of the Campaigners' work and organisation through this period, and for some time afterwards.

After doing this work in the military camps for a few years, Hall left, and became the Pastor of the Maylands Baptist Church in Western Australia. Some years later again, he moved to New South Wales, and became the Pastor at the Baptist Church in Bowral.

Hall was a dynamic leader and organiser, full of ideas, enthusiasm and energy, and he often spoke or wrote on many other subjects relevant to the welfare of the world, and of human society, as well as about the spread of the Gospel locally and more widely. An interesting range of his writings appears

³⁴² *Adelaide Advertiser*. Saturday, 18 April, 1936. page 13. etc.

in various copies of *New Life*, especially before he went to the West.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

JACK NEILSEN

E.S.A. Hospital Visitor, 1928 to 1937.

Jack Neilsen's story is considerably different from the personal stories of any of the other E.S.A. workers we have come across so far. Up to the age of 35 years, Neilsen was a criminal with a long record, unclean in various ways, subject to periods of uncontrolled violence, and an alcoholic. When he met Jesus Christ, his life and character was transformed. His life is rather like that of the Gadarene Maniac described in the Gospels, who met Christ and sat at His feet, clothed and in his right mind, and who then went around telling what great things Christ had done for him.

Mr. F. Woods was an evangelist from Bendigo, who published a small tract about Neilsen's early life and conversion experience. It was a testimony to the ability of Jesus Christ to overturn a life of sin, and to produce a saint. The tract had two pictures of Neilsen on it; "Jack Neilsen in chains," on the front cover, and "Jack Neilsen in Christ," on the back cover.

Jack Neilsen was born in Norway, and grew to be a big man physically, powerfully built. "At the early age of 13 he entered upon his wild and willful career, robbing orchards, breaking into shops and houses, frequenting drinking taverns, gambling dens, and other haunts of vice and villainy. His first conviction was at the age of 13, but he was leniently dealt with under the provisions of the First Offender's Act. Two years later he was in court again, was found guilty, and was sentenced

to a birching of sixteen stripes. After a medical examination, he bared his back that was soon to become blue, bleeding and broken with the stinging lash.”

This checked his career for a short time only, but he soon forgot it. It was only the goodness of God which restrained and redeemed him from his headlong dash towards destruction.

“He saw the inside of gaols in different climes and countries over a score of years, sometimes lying in two sets of the strongest handcuffs; being a powerful man of fine proportions, he became the policeman’s terror. But at length his wild life of dissipation began to tell upon him; he began to suffer frightfully from D.T.s, sometimes tearing his hair and lacerating his skin with his nails, in an agonising attempt to destroy the frightful reptiles that crawled over him. So bad did he become that, when in Charlton, he had to be imprisoned for his own safety; from there he was taken and treated in the Bendigo Hospital, and finally became an inmate of Sunbury Asylum.”

At the age of 35 years, in Trentham, he was within hearing range of an open air meeting, and he was arrested by a stray sentence from the preacher – “where will you spend eternity?” “It pierced his conscience, and for months after this he was driven by a tortured sense of guilt from place to place seeking rest, and finding none, until he was led by the Holy Spirit to rest where God is resting in the worth and work of his Saviour Christ. Then his conscience, that was once a nest of stinging scorpions, became a nest of song bird singing ‘To God be the glory. Great things He hath done.’”

In Woods’s tract, an evangelistic message is made from this story, pointing out that Neilsen came to know Jesus Christ as a Saviour from the **penalty** of his sins, and as One who could save him from the **power** of his sins. He knew God’s

forgiveness, and, where previously he had been a helpless alcoholic, Christ took away from him all desire for drink, so that he came to loathe what he had previously loved to destruction.

Woods also pointed out that Christ delivered him from the **pleasures** of sin. “He once enjoyed the pleasures of sin which are for a season, but now he hates the things he once loved, and loves the things he once hated. I never met a man who loves the spiritual pleasure of God’s presence as he does; he is never happier than when he is reading the Word of God, praying to God, or among the people of God; and this is proof positive that he has passed out of death into life.”³⁴³

The tract does not tell us when Neilsen was born, when he came to Australia, or the date of his conversion experience.

Hospital Visitor.

It is not clear when Neilsen began his ministry of hospital visiting, or why he believed he was called by God to do it.

But it became a part of the ministry of the Evangelisation Society of Australasia after the Annual Meeting in September, 1928. This is evident from a paragraph which appeared in the *Keswick Quarterly* for February, 1929.

“Mr. Neilsen’s Hospital Visitation.- One of the best branches of city Gospel work being carried on is that of tract distribution in hospitals and similar institutions. The large majority of the patients or inmates are those who are quite in the dark as to eternal realities, and very many of them are so shortly to pass from time into eternity that their need is great indeed – it could not be greater. Friends who are interested in this all-important work of our brother, Mr. Neilsen, if they have

³⁴³ *A Great Change!* Tract published by F. Woods, evangelist, of Bendigo.

not already done so, should read the section dealing with it in the last annual report of the Evangelisation Society, copies of which can still be obtained.”³⁴⁴

The following year, the E.S.A. strongly encouraged the hospital aspect of their work, saying that no other part of its work was of greater importance than the visiting being done by Mr. Neilsen. As time passed, a team of helpers developed in support of him. In the November, 1929, issue of the *Keswick Quarterly*, Neilsen’s report to the Society’s annual meeting the previous September was reproduced in full, covering a page and a half. A few details of this report were:-

“How utterly one has to cast himself upon the Lord as each individual patient is dealt with, and the longing desire to know that they are ‘safe in Him’ ere they pass yonder causes one to know that it truly is ‘not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord.’ There are some ‘eleventh hour’ conversions, but God accepts all who come to Him by Christ Jesus.

Some patients are visited for many weeks, even months, and many talks take place before they show any sign of interest in the Gospel.”

A generous prayer supporter had paid for over 14,000 illustrated Gospels of Saint John for distribution. “During the year 20,870 beds were visited. More than 13,000 Gospels were given out, over 300 Testaments, a large number of Bibles, and several hundred ‘Traveller’s Guides.’ Thousands of tracts and other spiritual literature have also been distributed. During that time 220 have made the great decision and many have given proof that they are truly following on to know the Lord, letters having been received which speak of their new-found joy in Him. Others, again, follow afar off when they get well and

³⁴⁴ *Keswick Quarterly*. February, 1929. page 21.

leave the hospital, but they have heard the way of salvation, and we leave them with Him.”

“Scriptures are given out in many different languages, as will be seen by the following – Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Russian, German, French, Belgian, Spanish, Greek, Italian, Austrian, Hungarian, Roumanian, Maltese, Yiddish, Hebrew, Japanese and Chinese. One Hungarian professed conversion, also one Italian, who was very bright in his witness for the Lord.” The literature costs were considerable.³⁴⁵

Three months later, Neilsen said that an average of fifteen visits per week had been made, through the Christmas period, which involved 250 beds, and between forty and fifty decisions for Christ had been made. To his prayer supporters he said, “If we sow in tears we shall reap in joy. Jesus said: ‘I send you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour. Other men laboured and ye have entered into their labours.’ I believe there is a great responsibility on the worker to follow up those who have come out for the Lord. It is a great joy to be able to do this when they have returned from the hospital to their homes. During January many such visits were made, and converts have been strengthened in the way of the Lord. Some that I am unable to visit I keep in touch with by correspondence.”³⁴⁶

A Conversion Story, One of Many.

Neilsen’s reports, usually appearing in each issue of the *Keswick Quarterly*, normally provided stories of some of the contacts he had with various types of people. But there were also many little stories of the professed conversions which he had seen occur. For example:-

³⁴⁵ *K. Q.* November, 1929. pages 25 – 26.

³⁴⁶ *K. Q.* February, 1930. pages 27 – 28.

“While conversing with a patient in one of the metropolitan hospitals on the plan of salvation, the patient, a lady, said she had been for years an attendant at church, and did believe in Christ as Saviour. ‘Yes, that is good, but has He become your Saviour; that is another thing?’ She admitted that she had not, for she believed she could not be a Christian in her home. ‘I know,’ she remarked, ‘that my little girl loves Jesus, and we can see this in her life.’ She was tactfully asked if she would tell the hindrance in her home, and she said that it was her husband, who, although he did not drink, gamble or smoke, had no time for church or for God, and cursed and swore from morning till night. She said, ‘I could not live a Christian life in my home.’ I said, ‘My friend, is this to keep you out of heaven? You have a desire to become a Christian?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘Is it possible for you to take your husband to the Lord in prayer? Do you believe that He can change your husband’s life?’ ‘Yes,’ was the reply. ‘Then are you prepared to take your stand now on the side of the Lord?’ ‘Yes, I will take Christ as my Saviour.’

The next day this lady told her husband what had taken place. He was in opposition at once, and said there was no truth in it. But, blessed be God, her life in the hospital soon proved that she was a child of God. She witnessed to the other patients by her constant reading of Scripture and singing of hymns. She was not ashamed to let others know that Christ had become her Saviour. She spoke to her husband concerning the booklet, ‘The Great Change,’ but he said it was not true and would not believe it.

On the following Saturday I was introduced to the husband as he sat by the bedside of his wife, and I proved from the Scriptures how God had changed so many lives, and that Christ was waiting to change his life. He had noticed the

change in his wife, and God was evidently working in him, for, on leaving the ward, he asked me for a *Traveller's Guide*.

On Monday he came again to his wife, and said, 'Mother, when you come home we will begin a new home.' It was a delightful surprise to his wife. Did God fail to answer her prayer? He says, 'Call upon Me and I will answer thee.' God never fails when we come to Him. The wife said to her husband, 'Father, you cannot start a new home in your own strength; you need to have a strength outside yourself.' No more was said then, but there was joy in the wife's heart. God had begun a good work in her husband, and He would complete it in His own time.

Next day was my visiting day to this hospital, and, to my surprise, I found the husband there again, and in the course of our conversation he came right out for the Lord and said, 'We are going to start a new home.'

On the following Saturday I saw him at Prahran. He said, 'It works already. To-morrow will be the first Sunday on which I have not worked for many years. All days have been alike to me, and I have been the poorer for it. My wife is now home and the home is new.' Christ had come to stay and was changing the old routine in that home. One who lives close by said, 'I will soon find out if you are a Christian or not; if I don't see you in the garden on Sunday working as you have always done.' The answer was, 'My friend, you will not find me there.' Praise God, he is going to do something quite different. His desire now is that his neighbour should accept Christ, and asked me to go and see him and give him God's message. As usual, in their new found joy, these people are anxious to pass it on to others."³⁴⁷

³⁴⁷ K. Q. May, 1930. pages 25 – 26.

Neilsen's annual reports sometimes listed the names of the hospitals he had visited. "During the past twelve months the following hospitals, etc., were visited regularly:- The Melbourne, Alfred, Homeopathic, Austin, St, Vincent's, Eye and Ear, Caulfield Convalescent Home, Soldiers' Military Hospital, the 'After-care' Home in Victoria Parade, the Royal Park Home for the Aged; also at Cheltenham the Heatherton Sanatorium, the Benevolent Asylum, and the Convalescent Home for Men; the Mont Park Sanatorium, and the Children's Cottages, Kew Asylum."

During the year ending September, 1930, he had visited 14,100 beds, given away 300 Bibles and Testaments, and 9,000 Gospels. 242 people had made the great decision.³⁴⁸

With his team of helpers, he continued this work unrelentingly, until his death in 1937 or early 1938, with extensive reports on what had happened. His helpers, mainly under the leadership of Mr. G. L. Aitken, continued his work after Neilsen's death for another ten years.

The Traveller's Guide from Death to Life.

It is interesting to consider also one of the tract-like books which Neilsen used on many occasions to give away to patients that he visited. It was a favourite tool of city missionaries throughout the English speaking world. The book was *The Traveller's Guide from Death to Life*. It was first published soon after 1860 by S. W. Partridge of Paternoster Row, but also in many other formats by the Religious Tract Society and the British Gospel Book Association of Liverpool. Edited by Mrs. Stephen Menzies, it contained 150 small verses, poems, very short stories, very brief sermons, and hymns, which explain very clearly in simple steps how to come to Jesus

³⁴⁸ K. Q. November, 1930. pages 29 – 30.

Christ in faith. Today, it looks and reads a little old fashioned, but it was used by God to lead untold thousands of people to the foot of the Cross, through a period of many, many years, and could still be useful in this way today if given to the right person.

When I was a teenager, I had a pocket edition of the *Traveller's Guide*, though it has long since gone. It had a picture on the front cover of an Australian traveler on horseback being guided by the stars of the Southern Cross. It contained many of the hymns and stories I later heard from evangelists' sermons. Some of these stories I used myself.

But in preparing this chapter, I bought an old copy, about quarto size, and with very large type. When new, it would have looked very nice indeed. It was printed around 1900, and stated that already over a million copies were printed, which would have weighed 300 tons. It contains the following piece on the front title page.

“A certain lord kept a fool or jester in his house, as great men did in olden times for their amusement. This lord gave a staff to his fool, and charged him to keep it until he met with a greater fool than himself, and if he met with such an one to deliver it over to him. Not many years after, the lord fell sick. His fool came to see him and was told of his master's illness. ‘And wither wilt thou go?’ asked the fool. ‘On a long journey,’ said the lord. ‘And when wilt thou come again? within a month?’ ‘No.’ ‘Within a year?’ ‘No.’ ‘What then – never?’ ‘Never.’ ‘And what provision hast thou made for whither thou goest?’ ‘None at all.’ ‘Art thou going away for ever,’ said the fool, ‘and hast made no provision for thy departure? Here, take my staff, for I am not guilty of any such folly as that.’”

To round off this chapter, instead of giving a series of other excerpts written by Neilsen from the *Keswick Quarterly*, here is some of the contents of a small tract that he wrote and

published about his contact with three “sceptics” in a hospital ward. The title of the leaflet was “Sceptic or No Sceptic, I’ve Got to Die.”

“One day as I walked into one of the wards I came to three beds wherein lay three men to whom I had not previously spoken. Approaching the nearest, by way of introduction I offered him a little Gospel booklet, and soon we got into an interesting conversation regarding the things of time. That, however, was not my purpose, so I carefully turned the conversation to the things of God and Eternity. Not much was said before I was interrupted. I found he had no time for such things. Why? Because he was a sceptic.

Passing to the second bed, I found the occupant had been listening to what was said, and without waiting he said, ‘Please don’t speak to me about your God. I am a sceptic, and have no time for your belief; I had quite enough listening to the other.’ He ridiculed the things of God and those who were His messengers. I have learned how necessary it is to be tactful with the sick, so waited till he had finished and was calm again. Then I asked him: ‘Was there never a time in your life when you cared for the things of God?’ ‘Yes,’ was the reply. ‘I was once a Sunday school teacher.’ Further, he had been a singer in the choir for some years.

Undaunted, I passed to the third bed, only to meet with the same reception. Telling me that no one had ever come back to tell us anything about the future, I said, ‘Yes, my friend, there is One who came back and told us all about the future, the Lord Jesus Christ.’ He replied, ‘I don’t believe it.’

Some time later I found my way to the same ward, and again I went to the same three beds. Silently I lifted my heart to God for help.

The first man, seeing my approach, motioned me away; the second shook his head, and turned over on his pillow, but

there was still the third, and to him I said, 'Well, my friend, and how are you to-day?' Waving my question aside, he looked fixedly at me and said, 'I've been thinking that, sceptic or no sceptic, I've got to die, and on the other side I have to meet with God.' Turning to God, my heart bounded with joy. To myself I said, 'The Spirit of God has been working here.' I replied, 'That is true; but God loves you and wants you to know it.' Then I repeated to him those golden words of our precious Saviour, 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.'

In order that he might be impressed, I repeated the verse again. 'That is clear enough,' and instantly he took God at His word and passed out of death into life. It was not long before I saw him again, and the first thing that struck me was the change in his face. When first I met him so hard to speak to, now a bright smile bade me welcome, and his first words were: 'Please Mr. Neilsen, read to me from the Bible.'

While I was reading, number 1 lay in bed attentive, listening. Number 2 sat by the fire, listening also. But Mr. Smith, who had passed from death to life, was drinking in the Living Word of God.

The following Saturday, Sceptic number 2 was walking in the drive, and as I approached him he said, 'What did you do to Mr. Smith last Saturday? He is absolutely a changed man. He used to be the crabbiest man in the ward; nothing could be done to please him. It is a mystery to me and I cannot understand it. Tell me what you did to him.' To him I said, 'I did nothing. But I will tell you what God did for him. When he believed that he was a sinner before God, and when he took the sinner's place, then the Lord Jesus saved his soul, changed his whole life, his character, and his conduct to his fellow patients.'

Now he is no longer old James Smith “The Sceptic,” but new James Smith in Christ.’

Again and again I met him, and over and over again he said what a ‘mystery’ it was to him. Then I simply told him that he would never be able to solve the mystery until he had experienced what took place in the life of Mr. Smith; that is, to accept Christ as his own personal Saviour. Then he would be able to solve the mystery. He saw Mr. Smith happy and contented in spite of pain and extreme weakness of body, and could not understand the joy that had taken possession of his heart. And now Mr. Smith could sing –

Now none but Christ can satisfy,
None other name for me,
There’s life and love and lasting joy
Lord Jesus, found in Thee.

Sceptic Number 1 is dead. Number 2 returned to his home, Number 3 also has passed away, but not to where number 1 went. Number 2 went home to think of the great mystery, and the only way to solve the mystery which was before his mind – one of the most wonderful things he ever had seen. Number 3, no longer to be called a sceptic, died happy and confident. Two of the Lord’s servants who were with him at the end told the Sister of the ward it was one of the finest death bed scenes they had witnessed.”³⁴⁹

After telling this story, Neilsen used the last page of the leaflet to make an appeal, and to provide a few basic steps to be followed by an earnest seeker after salvation.

³⁴⁹ J. N. *Sceptic, or No Sceptic, I’ve got to Die*. Leaflet provided by Will Renshaw.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

WALTER J. BEASLEY

E. S. A. Office Bearer. Founder of A.C.C.A.

The chapter in this book about the evangelist F. W. George Hall contains a section about some “giants” who were operating in Victorian evangelicalism through the 1930s. Many of them belonged, at least for a while, to the City Men’s Bible Class that Hall had formed and fostered in 1930-32. They were not all spiritual giants in the sense of being saintly people, but generally they were leading businessmen, often wealthy, strongly interested in Christian holiness, vitally interested in evangelism and in foreign missions, who were used to exercising some authority, were full of energy, and thus were used to seeing things that they wanted actually happen in their sphere of influence. They were high achievers.

Walter J. Beasley belonged to this class of people. While excellent obituaries were written at his passing, still many details of his life have been hard to find, or impossible to find.

Evangelisation Society of Australasia, and/or of Australia.

We know that Walter Beasley was treasurer of the Society in 1929, and he remained so through the next five years while the Society retained its strength of manpower.

Donald Prout tells us that in 1934, at perhaps the height of the economic depression, the Society’s Executive and

business meetings ceased to meet.³⁵⁰ So it may be that Beasley's association with the Society ceased at that point, or at least became a matter to which he no longer paid much attention.

Mr. Beasley, however, was the founder, main supporter and inspiration of the Australian Christian Colportage Association, which began its life in the first month or so of 1939. Under his directorship, this Association flourished and achieved many things. It was this Association which, on 2 March, 1944, officially became the Evangelisation Society of Australia. In this way it has become the father of everything which has happened since that time, so far as the Evangelisation Society was concerned, or of E.S.A Country Ministries, to the present day.

Because there are chapters in this book about the Australian Christian Colportage Association, and several others which bear upon the period of Beasley's work with the Society, we will use this chapter to highlight some other factors about Walter Beasley's life and achievements.

His Early Life, His Job, and His Missionary Interest.

Walter Beasley was born probably in 1889. As a young man he planned to go to the mission field, and towards that end he studied at Angas College, which was run at that time in Adelaide by the Rev. W. Lockhart Morton. But, the medical reports which any mission organisation would have required were against him, and he was not able to go overseas. So he decided to be a strong supporter of missions.

He became a businessman, and was very successful, although his work was always subjected to his Christian interests, and to his complete surrender to Jesus Christ. In due

³⁵⁰ Donald Prout. *Going Where the Need is Greater*. The E.S.A. Story. Page 34.

course he became the Managing Director of Thomas H. Young Pty. Ltd., which was an interstate transportation company. Many times he was elected chairman of the interstate transport section of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce.³⁵¹ At some stage, it even appears that he might have eventually owned the company because later in his life he organised the company in such a way that the profits from it went towards his pet project, which was the Australian Institute of Archaeology.

He developed an interest in the land of India, and for many years was the honorary deputationist and driving force in Australia for the Poona and Indian Village Mission, and was also honorary treasurer for many years. But he also had many interests in other mission fields, such as the Borneo Evangelical Mission and the Unevangelised Fields Mission.

In order to take even further steps to promote the use of the Bible, and appreciation for it, Beasley was for many years the President of the Bible Union of Australia, and he spent much effort and time in promoting the work of this organisation.

Beasley was also very generous in allowing mission organisations to use his Melbourne office area as their base of operations. For many years 174 Collins Street was the office address for the Scripture Gift Mission, and others, and also for his Institute of Archaeology.

The Australian Institute of Archaeology.

Beasley was the founder and life president of this organisation. It did not formally exist until about 1946, after the Second World War had ended. But for twenty years or more before that Beasley had developed a vital interest in archaeology, especially in the ways that the most recent

³⁵¹ *Argus*. Tuesday, 2 September, 1941. page 4.

discoveries supported the historical accuracy of the Old Testament.

Like many other conservative evangelicals in his time, he was appalled at the destructive Biblical criticism, or “Higher Criticism” which had flowed from Germany for nearly 100 years, and had caused such devastation in many Protestant theological seminaries around the world. After about 1900, there had been a number of archaeological diggings take place which had shown the falsity of many of the claims about the Old Testament which had been made by these Critics. Beasley realised the value of these discoveries, and determined to understand them and promote them.

For readers who do not know, “Higher Criticism” refers to asking questions about who wrote parts of the Bible, and when they might have been written. German theories in this area had been very speculative, although apparently based upon great erudition and knowledge of the old languages. In fact these theories were given far too much credence amongst theological academics, far more than what they were actually worth, and this led to the destructive effects of Modernist and Liberal Theology.³⁵² On the other hand, “Lower Criticism” refers to questions about smaller passages and verses of the Bible. Beasley fought against the higher criticism and its effects.

Beasley went on trips to the excavations around Jericho and Ur of the Chaldees. He was in constant touch with the leading archaeologists, and knew their work well. He helped finance some of these excavations. He went and took part in some of them. In due course, he developed a large library on

³⁵² Readers are referred to the writings of C. S. Lewis on this subject of the mistaken over-valuation of higher criticism, especially his little essay *Fern-seed and Elephants*. Also W. H. Fitchett, *Where the Higher Criticism Fails*. The Fundamentalists also attacked it, but often for other reasons.

the subject, and a large collection of artifacts from the ancient world, mainly from Biblical times.

The Australian Institute of Archaeology was dedicated to the defense of the Bible, and the promotion of the Bible, through the means of archaeological studies.

The first Director of the Institute was J. A. Thompson. Its publications attacked evolution as a means of accounting for the existence of everything without reference to the Creator.

Walter Beasley's more mature ideas, as expressed in his book *Creation's Amazing Architect*, interpret the six days of creation as referring to six geological eras. The word for "day" in Hebrew can be understood to mean a long period of time as well as a short one. So he seems there to support the normal ideas in science about the age of the earth, involving many millions of years, and agreeing with the great ages of the fossils and rocks. This view does NOT support modern "Creationism," which sees the Creation happening in six days of 24 hours each.

According to Beasley, the first chapter of Genesis saw the creation as involving a number of wise acts by the Creator in which new forms of life had burst forth at different times in the history of the earth. Beasley claimed that the **ORDER** in which plants and animals are described in Genesis chapter one, **is actually the same as is revealed by the fossil records in Geology.** Charts, and lists of comparisons, were published which illustrated this parallel.³⁵³

Beasley himself wrote books about the archaeological findings in Jericho, and about the evidences that had been found about a gigantic flood in the Tigris and Euphrates basin in early archaeological history. The Institute also produced publications, large and small, covering many of these topics.

³⁵³ Beasley, Walter J., *Creation's Amazing Architect*.

The Institute helped to produce the idea in many minds that the archaeology of Biblical sites was well and truly on the side of evangelical religion.

The Institute became a separate organisation in due course, although a strong link was maintained with the Inter-Varsity Fellowship and the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students. Beasley donated his library and artifact collection to it.

The Visit of the Rev. Dr. D. E. Hart-Davies.

One of the men Beasley had been in touch with in Europe in his fight in defense of the Bible, and in promoting the values of archaeology, was the Rev. Dr. D. E. Hart-Davies. Hart-Davies was a senior Episcopal minister, and by 1935, had been the rector of St. Thomas's Church, Edinburgh, for two years. He was also a member of the Victoria Institute in London, which was concerned over these archaeological matters. He had received this Institute's Gunning Prize for an essay on *Biblical History in the Light of Archaeological Research and Discovery since 1900*. His Doctor of Divinity degree was from Cambridge University. He was a world expert on these matters, and an able defender of Christian orthodoxy.

Hart-Davies visited Canada to be present at the wedding of his son, who was also an Episcopal minister there. He visited Australia after the wedding for about three months for a speaking tour.³⁵⁴

He arrived in Sydney at the beginning of June, 1935. His time in Sydney lasted for about three weeks before he went to Brisbane. At his first speech, in Chapter House, Sydney, he created an immense stir, which was reported all around the country, by saying that people should not be concerned if

³⁵⁴ *West Australian*. 17 August, 1935. page 17.

“Professor This or Professor That” should speak against God and the Bible. God had hidden many things from the wise of this world, and revealed them to the simple. Really, it was surprising how little the Professors knew. A well dressed man walked up to the pulpit, handed Davies a note, and walked out of the church. The note said, “Come and see me, and I’ll make you smile a smile that won’t come off.” It was signed by a scientist, with an address at Northmead. The Press interpreted this as a possible challenge to his assertion, but Hart-Davies said he did not view it that way. Reports of the event were repeated all around the Australian States.³⁵⁵

“Dr. Hart-Davies, in a lecture at St. Barnabas’ Church last night, said that much of the doubt and unbelief in the Bible was due in great measure to the extreme higher criticism which was manufactured principally in Germany, imported into Scotland, and then incorporated in text-books used in schools and colleges. As a result, a thinly veiled infidelity in the Bible as the inspired Word of God became widespread. The tide has turned now and the Bible was coming back to its proper place of authority and pre-eminence in the minds and hearts of the people.” The chairman at the church gathering was Canon T. C. Hammond., who also gave a brief inspirational message.³⁵⁶

Some few years later, Hammond wrote his own book on the German Higher Criticism, making the point that the theological and philosophical decline in Germany had been one of the reasons why Hitler had been able to come to power, and been able to do what he had done.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁵ For example, *Western Argus* (Kalgoorlie). Tuesday, 11 June, 1935. page 10, and *Mercury* (Hobart), Tuesday, 4 June, 1935. page 6.

³⁵⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*. Thursday, 20 June, 1935. page 8.

³⁵⁷ Hammond. T. C., *Fading Light: The Tragedy of Spiritual Decline in Germany*. London. Marshall, Morgan and Scott. No date.

He returned to Sydney by 9 July, and then went on to Melbourne. Really, the whole philosophy behind Beasley's archaeological work is explained in Hart-Davies's lectures.³⁵⁸ Naturally, Beasley accompanied him on his tour. He also visited Ballarat. He was in South Australia by early August, and his addresses were reported at considerable length.³⁵⁹

In Western Australia, his addresses were reported in even greater detail. These reports appeared almost daily in the *West Australian*. After a Civic Reception, the topics of his addresses included:- The Bible and Archaeology; The Unity of the Scriptures; The Story of Creation – A Miracle of Literature; Chance or Design?; The Biblical Flood; The Fall of Man; The Mystery of Life – Christian Belief and the “Beyond”; The Witch of Endor and Ancient Spiritualism; God's Wireless and the Cosmic Phonograph; The Resurrection of Christ – The Crowning Fact of History; Bricks versus Cobwebs, or the Romance of Archaeology; Dust and Deity – the Dual Nature of Man; Belshazzar's Feast. Some of his addresses were also evangelistic in character.³⁶⁰

Hart-Davies was particularly impressed with the response he got from his addresses in the West. He returned to Australia in 1938, arriving first in Fremantle, and then also visiting some of the other States.³⁶¹

Walter Beasley F.R.G.S.

Beasley travelled widely in the interests of his archaeological concerns, visited people and sites, and bought artifacts. He also travelled to India several times, and to other mission fields. His travels qualified him to become a Fellow of

³⁵⁸ *Argus*. Saturday 13 July, 1935. page 20.

³⁵⁹ For example, *Advertiser*, Friday, 9 August, 1935. page 9.

³⁶⁰ *West Australian*. Monday, 26 August, 1935. page 11.

³⁶¹ *West Australian*. Tuesday, 21 June, 1938. page 20.

the Royal Geographic Society. He took photographs and made movies in many parts of the world, and used these to illustrate many lectures that he gave in many places, either to support foreign missionary work,³⁶² or to back up his lectures on archaeology in support of the Bible.

He also used illustrated lectures on archaeological discoveries, and displays from his artifacts collections, in support of the Bible as an evangelistic tool. These lectures therefore often became vehicles of challenge for people to yield their lives to Jesus Christ.

For example, Dr. Hart-Davies' second visit to Australia in 1938 was stated to be an evangelistic campaign, and Beasley toured with him. The following is one example of advertising for that tour:-

“Visiting Evangelist to Show Ancient Pottery.

Taken from graves in Cyprus after having been buried for about 4,500 years, some hand-made pottery, dating 500 years before Abraham, is to be shown in the Flinders Street Baptist Church hall on Monday by Mr. W. J. Beasley of Melbourne, who, with the Rev. Dr. D. E. Hart-Davies, of Edinburgh, is on an evangelistic campaign.

The morning session, which opens at 10.15, will be for ministers, professional men and their wives, and the afternoon (2.15) for the general public.

Mr. Beasley will speak on pottery *and on other archaeological exhibits*. He will draw attention to the advanced cultures of the ancient people. Not only were streamlined slingstones, similar to modern bullets, used by the Greeks in 300 B.C., he states, but case-hardened copper was used by the Canaanites.

³⁶² *Advertiser*. (meeting about the Poona Mission.) Friday, 20 June, 1930. page 16.

The lecturer will show specimens of brimstone, salt, and bitumen taken from the Jordan Valley, from which the modern geologist has reconstructed the Bible story of Sodom and Gomorrah, dated 4,000 years ago.”³⁶³

The evangelical newspaper, *New Life*, also received strong support from Beasley. He realised the value that such a paper provided to the whole evangelical community, and also strengthened the way that news of all kinds could be promoted in the service of the Kingdom of God.

Beasley published a number of titles, the best known of which was *What Think Ye of Christ?* This was a Bible study of passages from the Gospels. It was first published in 1927, but was republished many times, was read by many people, and was used widely as an evangelistic tract.

His wife died about 1968, and Walter Beasley retired to a good degree from public life, going to live at his country property for a while. But as his health declined, he moved back into Melbourne to live near one of his daughters. He died on 9 June, 1976, after a short illness.

At his funeral service, the minister of the Kew Baptist Church, the Rev. W. S. Hadden, referred to the fact that “although Mr. Beasley’s mind had become clouded in the final period of his life, and his memory had become dim, Mr. Beasley’s desire for the things of the Lord remained strong. His ‘amens’ and ‘praise the Lord’ as the Scriptures were read to him attested to the comfort he received from the Word of God and his steadfast trust in his Saviour. A few days before his passing, after Mr. Hadden had prayed, Mr. Beasley had followed on in a simple, child-like prayer of love for the Lord and faith in Him.”³⁶⁴

³⁶³ *Advertiser*. Saturday, 9 July, 1938. page 14.

³⁶⁴ *New Life*. 17 June, 1976. page 3.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN COLPORTAGE ASSOCIATION.

1939 to 1944.

While I did not find any evidence to support this idea, the coincidence is too great to allow any other conclusion to be drawn. The name of the Australian Christian Colportage Association probably arose in the minds of men like Walter Beasley because they knew about an English organisation which had existed for many years called **The Christian Colportage Association**.

The Christian Colportage Association was founded in England in 1874 “to enable people who had little opportunity to visit church, because of working hours being so long, to have and read Christian literature. The original ‘colporteurs’ took tracts, leaflets and Scripture portions to many houses, visiting mainly ‘below stairs’ employees in service.”

The organisation is now called “Outreach UK.” It no longer has colporteurs, “but it has both staff and volunteers who visit homes, shops, senior citizens’ clubs, businesses, markets, schools, and many other places, taking the time to speak and share of their faith with anyone interested enough to ask questions. They also have opportunity to listen to people’s concerns about illness, loneliness, overwork, finance and many other ‘life’ problems”³⁶⁵

³⁶⁵ Outreach UK website.

Regarding the Australian organisation being written about here, a considerable amount of information is available about the whole range of activities of the A.C.C.A., through the pages of *New Life*.

This organisation was the brain-child of Mr. Walter J. Beasley, who became its first Director, and it was designed at first to meet a particular need, although it changed its basic activities as time passed into a more normal evangelistic society.

It came into existence in the first month of so of 1939 in Melbourne, more precisely at 174 Collins Street, where Mr. Beasley based his business and his exhibition of archaeological artifacts, as well as other mission activities that he was interested in supporting.³⁶⁶

The particular need it was designed to meet was to match, and to counteract, the widespread literature work of the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Seventh Day Adventists, and other similar religious cults, and also to do some better evangelisation in the outback areas of Victoria, and hopefully in other States of Australia.

Mr. Alf. Reid, a jockey who was converted to Christ some years earlier, had been touring parts of Australia for evangelistic purposes. He wrote to Mr. Beasley, telling him of sad situations, from an evangelical viewpoint. He stated that he had found the publications of the cults in some of the most remote towns. For example, he visited Carnarvon (which the printer spelled incorrectly), in Western Australia. There Reid had visited the Public Library, "and found sixteen volumes by Judge Rutherford upon the shelves. He was able to inform the librarian of the nature of these books, and was instrumental in having them removed, but such an incident illustrates the

³⁶⁶ *New Life*. 3 March, 1939. page 3.

manner in which these cults have ‘evangelised’ the country districts of Australia.”³⁶⁷

Reid said that a Pastor in Western Australia travelled over a hundred miles in order to take four services on a Sunday. The Pastor thought he was only able to impart “the barest elements of the Christian faith in the short time at his disposal.” Often churches go for a month without a service, and in some places even this did not impart anything that was worth delivering. So, well written and strongly evangelical literature was needed in order to carry out a missionary work in the outback, but also in many country places.

Within a few months a vehicle had been purchased, arrangements had been made to collect many books for libraries in local country areas, and plans were being developed for students from the Melbourne Bible Institute to do some country work in the van during their term holidays. The first area to be visited was around Yarra Junction.

A dedication service was held for the van at the Bible Institute, at 11am on Friday 12 May, 1939. The service was led by the Rev. C. H. Nash. Mr. Beasley gave an address on the aims of the Association, and prayers were offered by Mr. Alf. Reid, and by Principal C. H. Nash.³⁶⁸

First Use by A.C.C.A. of the Gospel Van.

The van had been one used by Eric Clarkson, but was repaired and re-fitted before being used again in 1939.

Robert Pocklington led the group, and the other three students were Ron Teale, Preston Walker and Alan Lock. In the first week, ending on Saturday, 20th, they visited 360 homes, gave away 600 Gospels of St. John, and 270 copies of *The Reason Why*. Mr. Beasley visited Yarra Junction on the

³⁶⁷ *New Life*. 3 March, 1939. page 5.

³⁶⁸ *New Life*. 19 May, 1939. page 1.

Wednesday evening, and gave his illustrated lecture on “Sodom and Gomorrhah.” A closing address on the Sunday evening was given by the Rev. C. H. Nash.

The A.C.C.A. also advertised that an evangelist was available to lead missions. This was Mr. William H. Brice, who had been converted through the ministry of W. P. Nicholson, and had joined J. Edwin Orr in some of his meetings.³⁶⁹

After the new term started at the Bible Institute, the A.C.C.A. had a van, but nobody to take it anywhere. So an arrangement was made with two brothers, Geoff. and Harold Malins. Geoff Malins was preparing to go to China as a missionary. Harold was a gospel singer, with experience in assisting Norman Lumsden and the Rev. John G. Ridley in some of their campaigns. Their intention was to drive through many parts of Victoria and make their witness. A long list was published, and “Christians who can assist in arranging meetings in these centres are asked to communicate with the A.C.C.A., C/- Scripture Gift Mission, 174 Collins Street, Melbourne.”

A report followed about the number of small libraries which had been sent to various localities where there was someone to look after them and use them, and also a supply of games were sent, which used the game in order to help people memorise verses of Scripture, and to “impart spiritual truths to young people.”³⁷⁰

Articles were published in *New Life* which emphasised to the reader the great need, and the importance, of evangelising in the outback, which, of course, meant the outback of Victoria primarily. Before long, articles on this theme appeared from the pen of Mr. S. John Bacon, a Melbourne book publisher, who was the Australian outlet for books published by Marshall, Morgan and Scott, of London. Bacon wrote:-

³⁶⁹ *New Life*. Friday, 9 June, 1939. page 1.

³⁷⁰ *New Life*. 23 June, 1939. page 1.

“The cry of the outback for the Gospel message has inspired the commencement of the A.C.C.A. The Association seeks means whereby the Bible and evangelical literature may be brought to the people in the country districts of Australia. Already a start has been made. Libraries containing a varied assortment of Christian books have been placed free of charge in a number of centres, and other districts have applied for the establishment of similar libraries. The A.C.C.A. Gospel van is at present visiting a number of Victorian towns, with Messrs Harold and Geoff. Malins in charge, whilst Mr. A. Reid has commenced a tour of the Murray towns as a colporteur of the Association. Excellent tracts and Scripture portions are distributed by these colporteurs, in an endeavour to bring men and women to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Lantern talks, which show the archaeological proofs of the authenticity and veracity of the Biblical stories, and evangelical addresses, are given in country towns.” A Thursday evening prayer meeting for the Association was also started at the Collins Street address.³⁷¹

Bacon also joined the Executive of the A.C.C.A., and helped to provide the books needed for the country libraries.

After a six weeks tour, the Malins brothers returned to Melbourne. It was also the end of the term. These holidays Preston Walker and Alan Lock went out in the van for a week, this time to the Bannockburn district.³⁷²

By the end of August, 36 libraries had been established, including two in New South Wales, three in South Australia, two in Western Australia, and one in Queensland.

It was at this stage that a new dimension was introduced. Miss Una Dods had studied at the Bible Institute also, making a special study of personal evangelism. She started work in the

³⁷¹ *New Life*. 12 July, 1939. page 3.

³⁷² *New Life*. 18 August, 1939. page 7.

city of Prahran. She provided an article which gave a brief summary of her work, and an outline of her methods. Her work was at that time largely door-to-door. The issue of assurance of salvation was raised as quickly as possible, when a conversation was able to get past the first hurdle. Often, also, the person being visited might be new in the area, and then it might be possible to alert a local minister to the address to be followed up. She also found that, when it was possible to sell a book at the door, the ones which sold most easily were books about the Second Coming of Christ. She also came across quite a few people who had at one time attended a church, but who had got out of the habit for one reason or another.³⁷³

Alf. Reid continued his evangelistic journey down the Murray River, and at last reached Victor Harbour, where he had some very good meetings. But in November he resigned from his link with the A.C.C.A.³⁷⁴

Immediately before Christmas, a kind of annual report was published, giving a panorama of the year's work, and also providing Miss Dods a chance to relate some of her experiences. Robert Pocklington's testimony was also published.

Robert Pocklington's Testimony.

In part, he said:- "Living in a contented, prosperous, and peaceful land, we are endowed with many privileges, but we must recognise that privilege always brings responsibility. From this fact we are reminded of One who said, 'And to whom much is given of him shall much be required.' Therefore we do well to quietly meditate, and by the Spirit of God see if we have really been obedient to His will in revealing the Lord Jesus to others through our lives.

³⁷³ *New Life*. 29 September, 1939. page 2.

³⁷⁴ *New Life*. 17 November, 1939. page 5.

In these days of modern advancement, with all its association of moral declension and indifference to the incomparable claims of the Lord Jesus Christ, there has come to the writer a challenge, and a call to present the Gospel message of free and full salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus, to the people of the 'outback.'

Having spent my life in isolated districts, among people who are deprived of certain advantages accruing from more densely populated areas, I have been confronted with the dire need of the presentation of 'The Word of Life' to many who have no opportunity of attending places of worship, and whose children are deprived of Sunday School training and religious instruction. Many Christian workers are carrying on a noble and fruitful ministry, but they are facing an almost insuperable task.

Must we remain in our comfortable armchairs of privilege and see these children develop into manhood and womanhood with scarcely any understanding of the purpose for which they have been created? Can we, who are bought with a price, even the precious blood of the spotless Lamb of God, stand by whilst men and women die without having received a clear presentation of the truth as it is contained in God's Word?

Such is the challenge, which issues from no fancy of imagination, but from actual conditions as they exist, even less than fifty miles from our capital cities. Thus, with a vision of the King of kings in all His beauty and all sufficiency, and with His invitation and offer of salvation to all men, we launch out in faith, believing that God who has called will also enable."

He then challenged his readers to be a part of this project for the same reasons that he had applied to himself,

although they may not be able to go anywhere, as he intended to do. They could provide other vital support.³⁷⁵

The First Year of the A.C.C.A. Itinerancy.

Early in the new year, therefore, Robert Pocklington took the A.C.C.A van out into the country areas, travelling by himself.

He went first to Yarra Junction, and then to the Warburton district, and became involved in house-to-house visiting, and in working amongst the timber mill men. He found that there were many timber mills scattered around the Warburton, Marysville and Matlock centres, where numbers of men worked, living in camps under various conditions, but without spiritual help from outside sources.

He tried to hold lunch hour meetings in several of these camps. In one large camp, he was warned not to go to the hut where the younger men lived. But he ignored this advice, and found himself subjected to a “torrent of filth and profanity for several minutes.” When they quietened down, he made his testimony.

“The following night, after an invitation was given, four young men came to the Gospel van and spent some time in real heart to heart spiritual conversation. They acknowledged their sin, but were not prepared to accept Christ and face the inevitable taunts of their workmates.”³⁷⁶

For part of the time he worked with the Anglican minister in Warburton, the Rev. C. J. Nash. Together the two men went and lived with the men in their camp for a short period. But he persisted in this kind of work through the first five months of his work for the A.C.C.A.

³⁷⁵ *New Life*. Friday, 22 December, 1939. page 6.

³⁷⁶ *New Life*. 12 April, 1940. page 5.

About the middle of the year, he was joined by George Fuhrmeister, and together they went up towards the Murray River, aiming to visit places like Katamatite, Cobram, Numurkah, and up in to New South Wales, to Deniliquin and Moulamein.³⁷⁷

Miss Una Dods was also at work continually, and sent in reports describing glimpses of her conversations with various people she met. These were published every month or so under the title of “Leaves from a Colporteurs’ Diary.”³⁷⁸

Walter Beasley also took his part, amongst the many other things that he did. He went with S. John Bacon to visit Yarrawonga. These meetings were arranged in support of the fact that Pocklington and Fuhrmeister had just arrived to start their work.

Beasley began a series of special meetings. He gave some of his illustrated lectures on subjects like “Jericho’s Judgment.” His lectures usually attracted good congregations.

Beasley said, “The outstanding feature of the visit to Yarrawonga was a very definite evidence of a small band of the Lord’s people having a burden for the district upon their hearts. They have been faithfully praying for a revival in spiritual things, and it is believed that, in the days ahead, the district is going to see the results of the prayers of these earnest intercessors. They themselves were tremendously moved by the evidence of the Lord’s leading in this campaign.

The district is large and scattered, and it is expected that Messrs Pocklington and Fuhrmeister will remain here for some considerable time.” Beasley was very keen to support and promote the work in that area, as a result of what he saw of the prayers of these people.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁷ *New Life*. 20 September, 1940. page 2.

³⁷⁸ *New Life*. 31 May, 1940. page 1.

³⁷⁹ *New Life*. 21 June, 1940. page 5.

Subsequent reports seemed to show that the two men stayed in Yarrawonga for perhaps a month after the meetings finished. There were other villages and towns to visit in that area, as well. After working in Cobram in September, they were in the Shepparton area in October, and went up to Deniliquin and Moulamein for the month of November. Lengthy reports about their work were published fairly regularly, at least once a month.³⁸⁰

1941.

The year began with the A.C.C.A. colporteurs in the van doing beach mission work, and then going west to take part in the Portland Convention on the spiritual life. Pocklington and Fuhrmeister continued working in these western districts for several months, doing their house-to-house visitation, speaking at meetings which might be arranged, distributing Gospels, New Testaments, Bibles, and selling other books.

Editorial Support.

The editor of *New Life* tried to make good contributions and encouragement on many issues. At the end of January he returned to the example of the Jehovah's Witnesses which had been one of the things which had prompted the formation of the A.C.C.A. at the start of the previous year.

Because of the situation created by the Second World War, the Jehovah's Witnesses were banned in Australia as an organisation working against the patriotic unity of the country, so they were no longer able to do their door-to-door colportage propaganda work. The Editor of *New Life* used this occasion to promote the work of the A.C.C.A. The J.W.s had a considerable army doing this work, including teams of women

³⁸⁰ For example, *New Life*. 8 December, 1940. page 1.

who seemed to get a better response from people than male visitors did. On the other hand, the editor said that evangelicals made almost no use at all of this proven means of being successful.

“The fine results achieved by Miss Una Dods, of the Australian Christian Colportage Association, in the Prahran district, illustrates the possibilities of this method. The number of men and women engaged in colportage work in Victoria is, however, remarkably small. Messrs Pocklington and Fuhrmeister, of the A.C.C.A.; Mr. R. Wilson, who is working in Northern Victoria; and Mr. F. Toby, of Open Brethren Assemblies, are the only workers we can recollect at present engaged in this ministry. What a fruitful field of service awaits those who are willing to take up such work at the call of the Master!”³⁸¹

There had been a few instances where congregations had canvassed a suburb in the interest of local evangelism. One of these had been carried out by the Fitzroy Methodist Mission.

On another occasion, the Editor quoted at some length from a letter which had appeared in *The Christian* some time beforehand. The letter had been written by a famous missionary, Mr. Frederick C. Glass, who had spent years doing colportage work selling Bibles in Brazil for the Evangelical Union of South America.³⁸²

“In *The Christian* of January 23, we read with interest a letter by Mr. F. C. Glass, the well-known missionary writer. Mr. Glass stated: ‘I have often been amazed at one feature of the great Evangelical Conferences, held from time to time. They seem to devote so much consideration and expense to such matters as church buildings, literature, hospitals, colleges,

³⁸¹ *New Life*. Friday, 31 January, 1941. page 5.

³⁸² F. C. Glass, *Adventures with the Bible in Brazil*. London. Pickering and Inglis. Date after 1922.

periodicals, and finance – all good and necessary objects for consideration, and yet relatively crude and elementary in the light of the strange and fatal neglect disclosed in not giving due weight to the proper use of the supreme arm of our warfare, provided, ordained, and owned of God throughout all ages. Our very best goes to the pulpit, while the lame and halt will do our Bible colportage, neglected and miserably remunerated, while the Church suffers immensely in consequence.

In the programmes of these great modern gatherings referred to, why is not space provided for a serious and practical consideration of how we can increase the circulation of the Bible, and co-operate more effectively with our indispensable friends the Bible Societies, so sorely pressed in these days? Why is not more attention given to the vast importance of the colporteur's ministry and machinery, and to the very useful choosing of the type of man who will worthily represent our churches, as he goes from house to house throughout the land? He touches the vital springs of the nation in a far more intimate and effective manner than many times his number of simple pastors or missionaries. Whoever seems to think of the need for a well-staffed Bible school for training Bible colporteurs?'

Mr. Glass has pertinently presented facts, which apply, not only to Christian work in England, but also in Australia. We would again bring before our readers the need for prayerful and practical support for those undertaking colportage work, and also urge earnest intercession that God will thrust out labourers with the essential qualifications into this service, for His glory."³⁸³

Pocklington and Fuhrmeister continued their work, but in 1941 their attention moved to the Western Districts of Victoria. On 23 May, they passed the mark of having worked

³⁸³ *New Life*. Friday, 4 April, 1941. page 4.

together for one year. Miss Dods continued her visiting around Prahran.

The two men, for example, were working around Casterton in July, and hoped to work in Merino and Coleraine districts through till December, when they returned to Melbourne for the first A.G.M., and to prepare for running an A.C.C.A. house party at the Upwey Convention.³⁸⁴

Eventually, a report flowed from the A.G.M., and appeared in *New Life*. After introductory remarks from Mr. Walter Beasley, who was the chairman, the first speaker was Miss Una Dods. She told of her calling to this work, of some wonderful results, as well as some of the disappointments. Then Pocklington and Fuhrmeister showed their travelogue pictures. George commented on the pictures as they were shown, and Robert spoke afterwards, stressing the challenge which this work was designed to meet. Many church people welcomed them, but others were strongly opposed. In one remote country spot they had been accused of being German spies, and this had made their work very difficult.

The closing address for the evening was given by the Rev. C. H. Nash, Principal of the Melbourne Bible Institute, who spoke on the text – Zechariah 12:7, and on the parable of the Great Supper in Luke’s Gospel, chapter 14, which Beasley had read at the beginning.

Nash “dealt with the three classes among whom the Lord Jesus worked during His earthly ministry – those in the city, the towns, and the villages. He referred to the work of evangelism in Australia, which was largely confined to the cities and towns, while the villages of the outback were neglected. Reference was made to the number of small schools in the country districts in which no religious instruction was

³⁸⁴ *New Life*. Friday, 29 August, 1941. page 2.

given. Mr. Nash spoke of the exodus from country districts to the cities, evidenced by the numbers of empty houses in some centres. Young people came from good homes to work in munition factories, or to undergo military training, and find themselves in environments which have a lasting, and often blighting, effect on their lives. The speaker stressed the urgent need to reach these country villages. 'If I were free, there is no work which I should be happier to choose than this very work,' he said. 'I know you are faced with many claims on your time, on your prayers, and your service, and on your gifts, but if you will patiently wait before the Lord. He will show you clearly what part you should take in relation to this ministry.'"³⁸⁵

1942.

As this year developed, we find that the A.C.C.A work did not have so much print space given to it as had appeared in 1941.

The A.C.C.A. house party provided good opportunities for witness by the two men who led it, and supported the spiritual growth offered by the Convention.

Robert Pocklington flexed his writing muscles, and another article by him appeared in the issue for 13 February.

He said that many men had left country areas to go to the War. This had caused a large movement of people away from country areas into the cities. "Schools are left without teachers, churches without preachers, and many towns without any faithful witness for Jesus Christ. The inevitable result is abounding worldliness and awful spiritual indifference. Aggressive evangelical witness in the outback country districts at present is negligible.

³⁸⁵ *New Life*. Friday, 12 December, 1941. page 3.

If we continually fail in this hour, when seeds of selfishness, greed, pride, covetousness, drunkenness, immorality and unrighteousness are bursting forth into a great harvest, how much more critical will be the post-war days for the Christian Church?''³⁸⁶

The months of February and March were spent amongst the hop pickers in parts of Gippsland. By April the two men were working in the Kiewa Valley. Mr. Arthur Barnes was the Methodist Home Missionary in Kiewa.

It was in May that the news appeared of a Court action whereby a Judge had declared that the Evangelisation Society did in fact still exist, where the Committee of the Society had not met since about 1934. The continuity was made possible because Mr. G. Aitken had continued his hospital visiting through these years, after the tradition created by Jack Neilsen.

As a result, two bequests which had been left by two ladies in favour of the Evangelisation Society were able to be claimed, and used, for evangelistic work. The Committee decided to spend this money to support Mr. Arthur Pocklington to do evangelistic work for three months through the winter. Arthur was Robert's older brother, and had been a missionary in China for a period. Arthur was one of the leaders in the Upwey Convention organisation. The article announcing this revival in the existence of the Evangelisation Society also included some reminiscences from Dr. J. J. Kitchen of days in his youth when Mr. Charles Carter had first arrived from England.³⁸⁷

In June, a lengthy article appeared describing the mission which had been held in the Kiewa Methodist Church. The children's meetings seem to have produced good evangelistic results. There were also a few memories of a

³⁸⁶ *New Life*. Friday, 13 February, 1942. page 5

³⁸⁷ *New Life*. Friday, 22 May, 1942. page 5.

mission in that area which Norman Lumsden had led 25 years beforehand.³⁸⁸

The Kiewa Mission, however, lasted for two months through both May and June. While May was spent in and around Kiewa itself, June was spent in surrounding towns, such as in Staghorn Flat and Yackandandah. Good results continued to flow through the work amongst children and young people, but only a few adults responded to the challenge to surrender their lives to Christ.³⁸⁹

In August, the two men moved on to the Methodist Church in Maffra, where the minister was the Rev. G. Wilson. Again there were good results amongst the children and young people. From there they went to Heyfield, and then to Briegalong and Boisdale.³⁹⁰

By October, Robert Pocklington sent in another of his letters aimed at stirring some enthusiasm for his kind of work, and telling of some results in a little village nick-named “Sleepy Hollow,” for “it was void of enthusiasm in social or religious life.” Another such letter was written in November from the town of Whitfield. Two weeks were also spent in Chestunt. Robert said that this whole area seemed spiritual barren.³⁹¹

The report on the Annual Meeting got front page coverage. After reading Psalm 96, Walter Beasley outlined the financial aspects of the work. Allowances paid to the three workers totalled 232 pounds, ten shillings, and expenses such as travelling costs averaged only ten shillings a week each.

Una Dods told of conversions which had occurred during her visiting. For example, one lady, rather advanced in years, “confessed that she had been impressed and influenced

³⁸⁸ *New Life*. Friday, 12 June, 1942. page 5.

³⁸⁹ *New Life*. Friday, 10 July, 1942. page 3.

³⁹⁰ *New Life*. Friday 6 August, 1942. page 7.

³⁹¹ *New Life*. 8 October, 1942, page 2, and 19 November, page 7.

by a friend whose life had been transformed following her conversion. The friend talked to this lady about accepting Christ, and the need for the new birth – but she had not responded, and now her friend had gone away. Miss Dods had a long talk with her, and was invited inside. This woman came under deep conviction, and, as they knelt in prayer, she broke down before the Lord and accepted Christ as Saviour. “Today she is a bright and radiant Christian,” said Miss Dods.

George Fuhrmeister spoke about the impact and spread of the cults in the areas where he had worked, and described how their work was a standing challenge to evangelical Christians.

Mr. L. Hayes talked about the work he did at A.C.C.A. headquarters, handling correspondence, and trying to organise follow-up work.

Robert Pocklington showed their illustrated travelogue, and talked about it. He said that there were over 1,000 small towns and centres in Victoria, and 410 little schools in Victoria, where no religious instruction was being given. The A.C.C.A. van had only managed to visit 75 centres in three years. At that rate, it would take forty years to cover the State. The need is great.

The closing address was again given by the Rev. C. H. Nash.³⁹²

Pocklington and Fuhrmeister did deputation work in suburban churches through December, and prepared again to run the A.C.C.A house party during the coming Upwey Convention, starting at Christmas.

As we review the information about 1942, we should perhaps emphasise the realisation amongst people linked to the colportage work that the cults apparently had more success

³⁹² *New Life*, Thursday, 10 December, 1942, page 1.

when teams of women went from door to door rather than men. This seems to have had a parallel in the A.C.C.A. work because they realised that Miss Una Dods's work in Prahran seemed to be more successful in producing conversions than would have been the case if the work had been done by men. It was the ladies' touch which seemed to make the difference. However, the A.C.C.A. leadership did not seem to be able to capitalise upon this insight quickly.

1943.

After tidying up following the Convention period, Pocklington and Fuhrmeister went north to the timber milling areas, where Robert Pocklington had made his first solo efforts a few years before – in the Warburton district..

Miss Una Dods changed her tactics somewhat. Instead of going from house to house, as she had done over the previous years, she was able to set up a "Gospel Stand" in the Prahran Markets. Una Dods wrote the article herself about this new sphere of work. The stall had Bible texts on the outside walls, plus a picture of an open Bible, with the question – "Have you read your Bible Today?" The stall sold various kinds of Scriptures, books and mottoes. She also had "real flowers from the Holy Land." Helpers distributed tracts amongst those passing by, and conversations took place wherever possible.

"One lady, who showed great interest in the stall, had never possessed a Bible. She purchased one, and in the course of conversation revealed the fact that she was a really hungry soul. A few days later she was visited in her own home, and it was a joy to tell her of the way of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ, and this soul was left rejoicing, for she accepted Him as her own personal Saviour. For this seal on the witness we praise the Lord, for it is HIS doing and marvellous in our eyes.

There have been other vital contacts, and in due course these will be visited, and in some cases written to. We thank God for what we have seen during the short time this work has been in progress, and we look to Him for guidance in the future, for it is felt that there are great possibilities in this particular type of Christian witness.”³⁹³

The Editor also supported the work. He said:- “The opening days proved so successful that it is felt that this constitutes an avenue of service with great possibilities.” He said that Una’s assistants were, from time to time, Mr. Walter Pike, who had been working with the China Inland Mission; Miss Sylvia Redston, of the Australian Nepalese Mission, and Miss Manning, from the Spring Street Mission.

The Editor said, “There are Christian men and women with ability and experience as personal workers, who could give an afternoon or more a week to this work, with the assurance that it provides contacts with those out of Christ. The cost of a suitable stand is not great, and it has been found that a tract courteously offered in the market is usually readily received, and is often an opening for conversation to needy souls.”³⁹⁴

The Official End of the E. S. A.

It was on Monday, 8 March, 1943, that the Committee of the Evangelisation Society of Australasia voted itself out of existence, and gave all its work and assets to the A.C.C.A.³⁹⁵

As we shall see, when the A.C.C.A. decided to change its name back to the “Evangelisation Society,” about a year later, it chose no longer to use the name “Australasia,” but the more common name, “AUSTRALIA.” Thus, in 1944, it began calling itself the “Evangelisation Society of Australia.”

³⁹³ *New Life*. Thursday, 4 March, 1943. page 4.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.* page 5.

³⁹⁵ *New Life*. Thursday, 11 March, 1943. page 8.

The word “Australasia” had been part of the E.S.A.’s name since 1896, right through to 1943, when it officially went out of existence. That was the end of an era.

Special advertising appeared on 25 March, asking for special prayer in support of a mission to be held in Millgrove from Thursday through to the following Monday, and also to praise God that another person had professed conversion at the Gospel Stand in Prahran.³⁹⁶

Occasionally, letters from Robert Pocklington were published to inform the public, and their praying friends, how they were getting on evangelising amongst the mill workers, and, again, they were supported by the Editor.³⁹⁷

Arthur Barnes and Bill. Merreweather.

There was front page news a few weeks later, because two extra workers joined the staff, to work with Robert and George in their country evangelism.

We saw that Arthur Barnes had been a Methodist Home Missionary in the Kiewa area. Here he joined the staff of the A.C.C.A. for the rest of 1943, before he started training for the Methodist ministry.

Bill Merreweather (that is how his name was spelled in this lead article,) was an Englishman who came to Australia in order to become a missionary in Papua with the Unevangelised Fields Mission. He had been in Papua, but the Japanese invasion of New Guinea had caused all the missionaries to be evacuated. He decided to work with the A.C.C.A. until he could return to Papua again. His name was spelled other ways

³⁹⁶ *New Life*. Thursday, 25 March, 1943. page 5.

³⁹⁷ *New Life*. Thursday, 1 April, 1943. pages 4 and 5.

in subsequent news items about him. In the official history of the U.F.M. his name is spelled with an “i”.³⁹⁸

Several new arrangements were also announced. Fuhrmeister and Barnes would be leaving before Easter to spend some time in the Devenish, Yarrawonga and surrounding districts. Pocklington and Merreweather would visit the Colac district. Walter Beasley also announced that, because the A.C.C.A. had recently included within itself all of the old E.S.A. work, the hospital visitation work of Mr. G. Aitken was also welcomed and included into the A.C.C.A.

As time passed, because of the fact that there were now two teams travelling around the country, Pocklington’s team would have another vehicle with a V8 engine.

The Civil Construction Camp.

Early June, Pocklington and Merriweather spent several weeks in the Dreeite Settlement near Colac, and then conducted a children’s mission at Cressy, also visiting Foxhow and Berrybank. They were told that no mission had been held in that area for quite a number of years. Fuhrmeister and Barnes worked at a Civil Construction Camp of 2,400 men in northern Victoria where they experienced some opposition. The only Christian witness was from two Salvation army ladies. But as the series of meetings ended, an interest in Christian literature had developed, leading to a good deal of discussion, and a children’s mission followed. Another visit was planned.³⁹⁹

By the end of July, a team of five men were preparing to visit the Civil Construction Camp again. Pocklington and Merriweather had led a successful mission in the Pleasant Street Church in Ballarat, but came to join the other two men to start

³⁹⁸ *New Life*. Thursday, 15 April, 1943. page 1, and J. & M. Prince, *No Fading Vision*. page 66ff.

³⁹⁹ *New Life*. Thursday, 24 June, 1943. page 8.

meetings at the Camp. George and Arthur had been in the Lake Rowan district. They were also joined by the experienced evangelist, F. W. George Hall, who was seconded to join this team from the Campaigners for Christ.⁴⁰⁰

This second mission in the Construction Camp lasted for two weeks.

“Some months ago the challenge was received to provide Christian witness in a camp of nearly 3,000 men. On arriving it was discovered that two Salvation Army lassies alone were attempting to reach the men inside the camps with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

After the first visit, it was decided that the A.C.C.A. teams, including Mr. Geo. Hall, should join forces in a united campaign. During the last two weeks, equipped with amplifying apparatus and movie projector, daily lunch-hour meetings and several week-night entertainments were conducted. In addition to these meetings, each Sunday afternoon open-air Sunday school and adult witness was given; also on Tuesday nights pictures were shown to the campers of ‘The Grove,’ Yarrawonga. The concluding meeting of the series was held in the Shire Hall on the Sunday night, when Mr. Geo. Hall addressed the gathering on ‘Russia and Britain in Prophecy.’

Few Christian people realise the desperate need of the men in these camps. Bound by the powers of Satanic darkness and sin, they are without counteracting influences of discipline and welfare huts as in military camps.

Here is outstanding opportunity afforded to provide welfare facilities whereby workers can the more effectively present the Gospel. At present men and lads have limited entertainment, and spend their evenings either in their huts or at

⁴⁰⁰ *New Life*. Thursday, 29 July, 1943. page 8.

the gambling ring, hence a vital need for a fully-equipped welfare hut, giving a homely atmosphere with games, writing tables, reading material and social life, etc., with a spiritual man in charge as a friend and helper to all. Such a work could be maintained amongst the incoming, residential factory employees.”

The published account describes the location which the vehicle took amongst the various huts and meal areas, and the discussion with an atheist which followed.

After this effort at the Camp, the team of five left for some more work amongst the timber mill workers.⁴⁰¹

However, George Hall seems to have returned fairly quickly to his previous work with the Campaigners for Christ, and the others moved on as well. Pocklington and Merriweather went into northern New South Wales to lead a mission in Lismore, while Fuhrmeister and Barnes worked in the Boweya area, and soon after came back towards Devenish.⁴⁰²

The Annual Meeting occurred late in November. Una Dods said that the idea of using a stall in the Markets had come from a story that Canon T. C. Hammond had told in one of his addresses about what had happened in the “fairs” in Ireland. In Prahran there had been early difficulties, but God had blessed the witness, and a number of conversions had occurred. A tract telling the testimony of John G. Ridley was also very popular.

Bill Merriweather gave a graphic description of his experiences working as an evangelist. Work amongst the children he found particularly heartening. He said, “Some have had no religious training whatever, and there is an appalling ignorance, yet they are really interested, and seem hungry for God’s Word.”

⁴⁰¹ *New Life*. Thursday, 26 August, 1943. pages 4 and 8.

⁴⁰² *New Life*. Thursday, 23 September, 1943. page 8.

Walter Beasley said that there were about 250 people in Melbourne who had agreed to pray for those who had decided for the Lord. The “follow up” work was carefully organised, and, “through letters and literature, an effort was made to keep in touch with the converts, and to give needed spiritual guidance and help.”

Another pictorial display was also given, in order to emphasise the great spiritual needs in the country areas. These pictures included scenes from the timber mills around Warburton and Noogee districts where the evangelists had visited a number of isolated mills. Arthur Barnes sang “Where are the reapers?” as a concluding solo.⁴⁰³

1944.

A special half day of prayer was arranged for the last Monday of January, 1944, at Scots Church Hall in Russell Street, led in the Afternoon by Robert Pocklington, followed by a tea, and the evening meeting, led by Walter Beasley.⁴⁰⁴

As the new year started, Arthur Barnes went to South Australia to train for the Methodist ministry.⁴⁰⁵ A new recruit arrived to take his place, in the form of Stan. Robinson. Two teas formed for the country evangelistic work. Robinson went out with Robert Pocklington, and George Fuhrmeister teamed with Bill Merriweather.

The normal country work of the A.C.C.A. got going through February, with Pocklington and Robinson going to Tasmania, to work with the Evangelisation Societies there, and with the Tasmanian evangelist, William Tate.

⁴⁰³ *New Life*. Thursday, 2 December, 1943. page 1.

⁴⁰⁴ *New Life*. Thursday, 27 January, 1944. page 1.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ministerial Index*. Methodist Church of Australasia. 1949 edition. page 109.

A landmark in our history occurred early in February, although it did not directly involve the A.C.C.A. itself. This was the death of Mr. Norman Lumsden on February. More details about this event is given in the chapter written about him.

The Beginning of the Evangelisation Society of Australia.

The final event in this chapter, however, occurred soon after. This was the decision to stop using the name “Australian Christian Colportage Association,” and to use instead a name which was both old and new. This was the name “The Evangelisation Society of Australia.” It was really the old A.C.C.A. under a new name, so, all that has been done since that time by the E.S.A., and by the E.S.A. Country Ministries, until the present day, is really descended directly from the A.C.C.A.’s work at that time.

“This year the Australian Christian Colportage Association, which is doing fine work in country districts, will use the name EVANGELISATION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA in connection with its activities, as the title used in the past has led to some confusion as to the main nature of its work, which is evangelistic in character. Friends will recognise the A.C.C.A. under its more imposing name of the Evangelisation Society. Evangelists R. Pocklington and W. Merriweather are at present working amongst the men in the timber mills in the Noojee district. The Society has arranged for Evangelist Geo. Brown, of Adelaide, to undertake evangelistic work in Melbourne during June, July and August. Mr. Stan Robinson, who has completed his training at the Melbourne Bible Institute,

has been accepted as a worker with the Evangelisation Society.”⁴⁰⁶

By the middle of the year, the [new] E.S.A. had asked the Rev. George R. Brown from South Australia to become the organising evangelist in charge of the Victorian work. For some details the reader is referred to the chapters on the Timeline, and on the work of Mr. Brown.

⁴⁰⁶ *New Life*. Thursday, 2 March, 1944. page 8.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The MILD MAY MOVEMENT in AUSTRALIA.

The name of Mildmay found its way into the annals of evangelical history through the work of an Anglican minister, the Rev. William Pennefather, B.A.

William Pennefather was born in Dublin in 1816. Although he was ordained in Durham, he was a minister of the Irish Church, and his first settlements were in Ireland.⁴⁰⁷

In December, 1852, he became minister of the parish church in the London suburb of Barnet. Firstly in 1856, and then annually from 1858, he organized, in the Barnet Church, public conventions to promote the quality of the spiritual life, with the congregation providing accommodation, where needed. In 1864, he moved a short distance to St. Jude's church at Mildmay Park. Here the conventions continued and grew, until by 1869, 1,000 people attended. These conventions had a certain atmosphere and quality which Pennefather controlled, promoting the doctrines of holiness. These conventions became one of the forerunners of the Keswick Conventions which commenced about 1875. From 1873 holiness conventions mushroomed around England.

A number of large and substantial buildings were set up as part of the overall work which Pennefather fostered. These included a conference hall and range of smaller buildings and offices to house the convention meetings, a training institution for deaconesses, and a hospital.

⁴⁰⁷ Robert Braithwaite. (ed.) *Life and Letters of Rev. William Pennefather*. B.A. London. John F. Shaw. No date.

After William Pennefather's death in 1873, the convention movement declined, especially as other conventions, such as the one at Keswick grew. The neighbourhood changed its character, and much that the Mildmay Centre had stood for slowly disappeared, although the hospital continued to serve a great purpose.

In the First World War, the compound was taken over by the Y.M.C.A. as part of its efforts to serve the troops. After the War it became the head quarters for training men for the work of the Salvation Army. After a while, the Salvation Army developed their own buildings for this work, and many of the Mildmay buildings fell into disrepair, except perhaps for being used by some students.⁴⁰⁸

The Second Incarnation of Mildmay.

The second incarnation of the Mildmay Movement began with the retirement from China of Dr. Thomas Cochrane, Scottish medical missionary.

This is the part of the Mildmay story which concerns us here.

During his time in China, Cochrane had founded the Peking Medical School, and had translated several medical texts into Chinese. He returned to Britain about 1922. When he discovered that the Mildmay property was on the market, he went with some friends to inspect it, noting enthusiastically in his mind many ideas about how the place could be used to promote the missionary task of the Church, and the allied task of world evangelization. Cochrane was a man of immense vision and energy.

With the assistance of a band of influential citizens, the whole area of the Mildmay property was purchased to be used

⁴⁰⁸ Francesca French. *Thomas Cochrane: Pioneer and Missionary Statesman*. London. Hodder and Stoughton. 1956. chapter 18.

for these new purposes in Cochrane's mind, but allowing the old Mildmay Hospital on part of the property to continue functioning as it had before. The purchase of the property seems to have happened in 1930.

A Board of Directors was formed, and the Mildmay organization developed two main departments of work at first.

(a.) "One was the preparation of surveys of the countries of the world in the interests of the Kingdom of God. The movement had experts in the various fields collecting information, and that information embraced the work of all missions. The objects of the surveys was to indicate not only what was being done with a view to preventing duplication, and the inevitable rivalries which duplication engendered, but to show what remained to be done, and so to concentrate on unoccupied fields and to reach unoccupied areas." Up to the year 1934, 24 volumes of these surveys already had been published.

In 1934, Mildmay was the only movement in the world that was doing this work. There were surveys prepared by almost all missionary societies, but they related only to their own work. They had neither the time, the men, nor the money to make comprehensive surveys, and in any case it was not their job. Mildmay was not another missionary society. It stood behind all the missionary societies much in the same way as the British and Foreign Bible Society did. The object of Mildmay was to aid the missionary societies with information, and in other ways. Consequently, these surveys were an essential part of the library of all missionary societies, since they formed an excellent reference for the latest facts.

Mildmay was a missionary intelligence centre for all missionary societies, at once interdenominational and universal in its scope.

(b.) The other aspect of Mildmay's work was known as the movement for world evangelization. It looked at world evangelization as being the supreme and most urgent task of the Christian Church. Mildmay thought in terms of exact information on the present world situation with a view to its evangelization. It looked at the missionary situation so that missionary societies might coordinate and cooperate, at home and abroad. It sought to work for the indigenous government of churches on mission fields, and of having a spiritually powerful church at home.

Firstly, the Directors had appointed Dr. Kilgour, who had been literary superintendent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the Australian evangelist, the Rev. Lionel Fletcher to be Empire Evangelist. These appointments had both been made in 1932.

In the two years, 1933 and 1934, Lionel Fletcher had conducted campaigns throughout Great Britain and South Africa. From May to August, 1934, for example, he held campaigns in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town, with remarkable results. He returned to South Africa several other times later.

The next person to join the staff for a three year period was the Rev. Dr. W. Graham Scroggie, whose task was to lead campaigns to enrich the spiritual life of the churches, to give Christians a clearer and wider picture of the world enterprise, and to create greater interest in the study of the Bible. His work was part of what the Mildmay people called the "World Dominion Movement". He joined Mildmay in 1933, after being a Baptist minister for 35 years, 33 years as a Keswick Convention speaker, and a very widely read author and Bible teacher, including through correspondence courses.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁹ *Hobart Mercury*. Monday, 26 November, 1934. page 3.

Mildmay in Australia.

It was the Rev. Dr. W. Graham Scroggie who brought this second form of the Mildmay movement to Australia. Because he was already so well known in evangelical circles, local people began to make good preparations for his visits to the various States as soon as it was known that he was coming, especially in the form of prayer meetings. He arrived in Sydney around the end of May, 1934, for a short campaign of meetings, and then went to Brisbane for a few weeks. This was followed by a visit to Adelaide. The original plan was for the Adelaide meetings to start on 4 August, but this had to be changed at the last minute because of the illness of Mrs. Scroggie. He arrived instead about five days later. Meetings began on Sunday, 12 August, in the Flinders Street Baptist Church, to be followed by more meetings in the Stow Congregational Church from 13 – 17 August, and then from 20 to 24 August in the Baptist Church again. The Adelaide meetings were called the “Life and Service Campaign,” and were organized by two secretaries, G. A. Rogers and G. R. Brown (organizing evangelist of the Evangelisation Society of South Australia.). The preparatory prayer meetings in Adelaide had been held in the Y.M.C.A., each Wednesday evening from 5.15 pm to 6 pm.⁴¹⁰

Meetings in Hobart for Dr. Graham Scroggie occurred around the end of November for ten days. He made a good impression by being very complimentary about the beauty of the local scenery.⁴¹¹ Overall, Scroggie’s visit to Australia was planned to last until February, 1935, when he would return to England.

⁴¹⁰ *The Advertiser*. Wednesday, 30 May, 1934, page 16, and Saturday, 4 August, 1934. page 6.

⁴¹¹ *Mercury*. Wednesday, 28 November, 1934. page 6.

Christian workers who were strong on organizing abilities were able to take advantage of the momentum created by this visit by Dr. Scroggie. This was achieved by the Rev. G. R. Brown, the organizing evangelist for the Evangelisation Society in South Australia, who was able to raise the funds to open a new Centre of operations in October of 1935, which was called “Mildmay Centre,” and was in Gawler Place.⁴¹²

By identifying the Society’s work with Mildmay in this way, it had the effect of widening the scope of the Society’s activities. For example, even before the new Centre was officially opened in October, meetings had been held earlier in the year to highlight the persecution of Christians in Russia. Mlle. N. Grushenkov of the Russian Missionary Society, declared at a meeting held in the Mildmay Centre, Adelaide, that “Christians are being persecuted more in Soviet Russia today than at any other time in history.” Eighty missionaries belonging to her Society had gone into Soviet Russia, but only seven now remained. Some were shot, some were imprisoned, and others just disappeared.⁴¹³

The following year, when Mrs. Booth-Clibborn arrived in Adelaide to take part in the mission which celebrated the centenary of white settlement in South Australia, some of the newspapers said that her visit occurred under the auspices of the Mildmay missions. So, clearly, her tour was something much wider in purpose than simply to fit into the South Australian celebrations. She made brief visits to a number of States and locations to promote the Mildmay themes.⁴¹⁴

When the Evangelisation Society of South Australia opened another new centre in Adelaide in 1938, on the corner

⁴¹² *The Advertiser*. Tuesday, 8 October, 1935. page 7.

⁴¹³ *The Advertiser*. Saturday, 30 March, 1935, page 2, and Monday 1 April, 1935. page 15.

⁴¹⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*. Saturday, 13 June, 1936. page 11.

of Pirie Street and Gawler Place, this was also called Mildmay Centre, and it was hoped that it would not only serve as a base of operations for the Evangelisation Society, but also “as evangelical and missionary headquarters for city and State. It will be used by visiting missionaries, particularly those associated with the faith missions of the world.”⁴¹⁵

While the Australian evangelist, the Rev. Lionel Fletcher, had been one of the first to join in the Mildmay work in London, as we have seen, he terminated his association with Mildmay in 1935, and in October, 1936, he joined forces with the British National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches for several years. But he was no longer a young man, and in 1941 he returned to Australia, where, generally speaking, he lived in the Sydney suburb of Manly, until his death on 19 February, 1954, at the age of 76 years.

One of the decisions made by the Mildmay directors to fill the enormous gap left in their work-force by the departure of Lionel Fletcher in 1935 was to appoint two young Australian evangelists to travel the world. These were Trevor Morris and Fred. Levett.⁴¹⁶

Both these men were from the Hobart Baptist scene, and had graduated from Melbourne Bible Institute. Following this, they had worked in England, and in some other places, for the Children’s Special Service Mission (CSSM). Then they were asked to work for Mildmay, and accepted the invitation. They traveled extensively and preached in a great many places in the following few years, until the beginnings of the Second World War.⁴¹⁷

By 1940, the Mildmay work included three sections called the World Dominion Movement, the Movement for

⁴¹⁵ *The Advertiser*. Thursday, 28 April, 1938. page 11.

⁴¹⁶ *Keswick Quarterly*. No. 41. February, 1936. page 58.

⁴¹⁷ *Mercury*. Monday, 1 January. 1940. page 8.

World Evangelisation, and the International Fellowship for World-wide Witness. Morris and Levett were linked to this third division.

As part of their normal work touring in many parts of the world, they arrived in Australia at the very end of 1939. Fairly quickly it was realized that it would be better for them if they stayed in Australia for longer than had been expected, partly because of the dangers for traveling by sea created by German submarines in the Atlantic Ocean, but also because the Mildmay property in London had been taken over by the British Military authorities, and as a result, the Mildmay evangelists had lost their main centre of operations.⁴¹⁸

Through 1940, and for a year or two after that, Morris and Levett took their part in the evangelistic scene in many parts of Australia. Through their efforts the profile of the Mildmay movement increased, and a number of evangelical groups made an effort to associate or combine their efforts with the name and principles of Mildmay.

For the next few years, they preached at many local evangelistic campaigns around Australia (Levett was a song leader), at Conventions promoting the spiritual life of Christians, and showing movie films shot before the War portraying aspects of missionary work in various countries. This included an extensive evangelistic tour through New Zealand.⁴¹⁹

Many aspects of the work of Morris and Levett through these years were reported in the pages of the Victorian evangelical paper *New Life*.

In the period around 1943, however, Trevor Morris took a pastoral job in charge of a Baptist congregation in Melbourne, while Fred. Levett joined the Royal Australian Air Force and

⁴¹⁸ *New Life*. Friday, 5 January, 1940. page 1.

⁴¹⁹ *Mercury*. Monday, 11 January, 1943. page 4.

became a technical instructor in Melbourne. They returned to their evangelistic work very quickly when the War ended.

With the return of the Rev. Lionel Fletcher to Australia in 1941, as mentioned, an increased impact of the name and principles of Mildmay found its way into many aspects of evangelical work in many parts of Australia. This was especially so after 1944, when the Rev. George R. Brown moved from South Australia, and became the organizing evangelist for the Victorian organization – the newly named the Evangelisation Society of Australia. The ESA work in many instances became work done under the auspices of three or four societies working together. These organizations included the Campaigners for Christ, as well as Mildmay.

Dr. Thomas Cochrane's Post War Plans.

As mentioned earlier, Dr. Thomas Cochrane had a fertile brain for new schemes, and a vision for the future.

Even in 1942, when the Second World War was at its depths, he propounded plans for the future, regarding what he thought could be done after the War was over – assuming that the German armies did not win. These ideas were published, and appeared in a lengthy article in *New Life*. The editor introduced what Cochrane had written, and then quoted from it, adding some explanatory comments along the way:-

“Dr. Thomas Cochrane, President of the Mildmay Movement for World Evangelization, in writing of the task which will confront the Christian Church in the post-war world, gives the outline of a plan whereby Mildmay hopes the evangelical forces may be coordinated in a great forward move. Dr. Cochrane states:-

‘The outstanding need of the world today is Christian leadership. At the outbreak of the War, and for a long time

afterwards, with blitzes and black-outs, confusion and paralysis prevailed; then days of prayer were started, and signs of an awakening appeared, which showed themselves in such phrases as “The Need for a Christian Civilization.” Now individuals and groups are beginning to think and plan for post-war movements, but adequate, comprehensive leadership has not yet emerged.’

The Mildmay Centre, where a continuous study of the religious situation in the various countries of the world is being made, has a group of workers who will be well equipped to make an effective contribution to the Christian offensive in post-war years. The term “World-wide Evangelisation Strategy” has been used as descriptive of Mildmay’s outlook and outreach.

Many thank God for Mildmay’s ‘Life with a Purpose’ campaign, conducted in London during the years 1935-1936. There were 52 campaign centres; 1,200 churches cooperated; 3,800 men and women professed conversion; 2,400 Christian people dedicated themselves afresh to service, and there was a total aggregate attendance of three quarters of a million. Campaigns have also been held in various parts of the British Empire, the most recent being those conducted by evangelists Trevor M. Morris, Frederick R. Levett, and Alfred Williams, in Australia and New Zealand, as a result of which nearly 2,000 men and women joined the Movement’s World-wide Witness Fellowship; numbers were converted, and many were led to a new vision of the Church’s missionary task.

Mildmay’s Post-war Plans.

In conference at the centre in England, the Mildmay Movement has resolved, on the basis of its experience, to embark on post-war campaigns on a world-wide scale, as far as resources will permit. But, even on a very large scale, the

efforts of the Mildmay Movement cannot hope to meet more than a fraction of the need; therefore it will gladly cooperate with any other similar efforts which may be made. Some are already projected. One patch, which will not make a quilt, but many will, and a patch-work quilt can be made adequate for its purpose. Dr. Cochrane asks: ‘Will members of our World-wide Witness fellowship in various parts of the world follow our example, so that gradually coordinated Movements may cover the globe?’

We quote as follows from a letter received from Dr. Cochrane:- ‘How ‘can two walk together except they be agreed?’ Teams should be made from a nucleus to which like-minded people are added carefully. It will be necessary to have a common basis of agreement, inside of which, however, every liberty of method should be encouraged.’”

There follows a long explanation from Cochrane about what this “agreement” means. This included a basic definition of a Christian - involving-loyalties to Christ, the Bible, and the missionary command. The objects of the crusade had also to be agreed upon – namely, to win people for Christ, to give them a vision of the evangelistic work, and get them to join a Fellowship of world-wide witness.

He expected that even greater opportunities for united evangelism could be expected after the War, when the present difficulties being experienced in England would be overcome. He expected that all forms of evangelism might be used to good effect, including big campaigns, some of which he envisaged that the Mildmay Movement would lead.⁴²⁰

⁴²⁰ *New Life*. Thursday, 1 October, 1942. page 2.

With the benefit of hindsight, one might think that such ideas were grandiose, even arrogant, and flowing from an old man using an unbridled imagination.

However, in the past, many of Cochrane's ideas had achieved great things, as we have seen.

In London, after the Second World War, the Mildmay complex of buildings was demolished (except for the hospital, which now specializes in work on Aids and HIV) to make way for new blocks of council flats.

Possibly, loss of the old substantial headquarters buildings may have helped to derail the great plans for the future. Somehow it seems that the wheels began to fall off the Mildmay train, and its work began to dissipate and evaporate, and be picked up by newer organizations with younger leaders. But it has been impossible for me to find out what eventually became of Mildmay.

In 1949, when George Brown left the ESA, he accepted a directing role in the Australian branch of the Mildmay work, similar to the controlling role that he held in the ESSA, and also in the ESA in Victoria.

The Evangelisation Society of Australia had affiliated with Mildmay two years beforehand, and even before that time had worked together on evangelistic projects with Mildmay, and with the Campaigners for Christ. Probably, Mildmay was seen as a much wider thing than the E.S.A., which could influence the whole country and beyond in ways that the E.S.A. could not do.

By this time, however, Brown was not a young man. I have not been able to discover what happened to him, where he went, or what he did after that date. Some information would probably be available from later issues of *New Life*.

In the annals of Australian evangelicalism, Mildmay in Australia, which contributed so much in the 1930s and 1940s, seems to have slowly disappeared.

Dr. Thomas Cochrane died at his English home on 7 December, 1953. His son, Dr. Robert Cochrane, spent much of his life as a medical missionary in India, and may have become the leader of Mildmay after his father. Robert's name appears in some of the materials in *New Life*, during visits to Australia.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE REV. GEORGE R. BROWN

Organising and Directing Evangelist 1944 – 1949.

The Evangelisation Society of South Australia was formed on 9 February, 1921. The first President was the Rev. Dr. J. A. Seymour, with Mr. S. R. Barrett as secretary, and Mr. A. M. W. Jolly as treasurer. The first evangelist employed by the Society was the Rev. Edgar Miller, a Methodist minister, who began his work for the Society by 1 March, 1922. The first Annual Meeting of the Society was held in mid-October, 1922, meeting in the Y.M.C.A. building, Adelaide.

Between March and October, 1922, missions were conducted first in Broken Hill, then in Magill Baptist Church, the Hindley Street Gospel Mission hall, Port Pirie, Black Forest, Edwardstown, Brompton Park, Norwood Baptist, West End Mission, and then in Halifax Street Baptist Church.⁴²¹

Mr. Miller seems to have been a native of Broken Hill. He began his circuit ministry in 1915, and worked for six years in five different circuits in South Australia. He married Miss Laura Jane Millstead, at the Lane Street Methodist Church, Broken Hill, on 24 April, 1919, which probably means that he had been ordained by the Conference earlier that year. For some reason, he retired from the circuit ministry at the Conference in 1921, and remained in this relation to the

⁴²¹ *The Advertiser*. (Adelaide). Wednesday, 18 October, 1922. page 15.

Conference until the Conference of 1925, when he took up a circuit appointment once again.⁴²²

Despite this, Edgar Miller's work with the Society did not seem to have lasted very long. By mid-1923, another Methodist minister had become the Society's evangelist. This was the Rev. George R. Brown. He continued as the Society's main evangelist for twenty-one years.

The Rev. George R. Brown was a son of one of the pioneer South Australian families, and spent his early days on the Eyre Peninsula. George was the fourth son of Mr. and Mrs. W. Brown. He was led to the Lord during a revival begun through the efforts of the Head Master of the local school. He trained for the ministry in Brighton College, under the tuition of Dr. W. G. Torr, M.A., LL.D. At some stage he spent two years doing Home Missions work in Central Western Australia.⁴²³

Mr. Brown commenced his circuit ministry in South Australia in April, 1917. In the next six years he worked in four different circuits. These appointments were at Elliston and Cleve for one year each, and at Parkside and Waikerie for two years each. He was ordained at the Conference early in 1921. He began working for the Evangelisation Society in April, 1923, with the blessing of the Conference. However, after five years, the Conference expected him to return to circuit work, which was the normal type of work that all Methodist ministers were then expected to do. Because he wanted to maintain his work as an evangelist, George Brown was forced to sever his connection with the Conference, and so he ceased to be listed as

⁴²² *Barrier Miner*, Thursday, 24 April, 1919. page 2. (The marriage advertisement wrongly dates the wedding as 1918). For other details, see the *Methodist Ministerial Index*. 8th edition, 1949.

⁴²³ *New Life*. Friday, 27 October, 1939. page 4.

a minister by the Methodist Church in South Australia in 1928.⁴²⁴

George Brown married Miss Mildred Muriel Cole, at the Parkside West Methodist Church, on 28 May, 1924. George's parents lived in Mitcham by that time. Mildred was the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Cole, of Montpelier Street, Parkside.⁴²⁵ The new Mrs. Brown was a talented musician, and possessed the qualifications A.L.C.M, and A.T.C.L.

Not only was George Brown strong and effective as an evangelist, and as a leader, but the Society possessed a strong and effective Executive Committee through this period, and for a number of years after. In 1925, as well as the office-bearers, there was also a council of reference of "leading citizens," which included the Rev. W. H. McCann, and the Rev. Hugh Morris, Lady Holder, and Mr. J. T. Massey, the last named representing the Y.M.C.A. They also had generous financial support from Mr. J. Amos.⁴²⁶

A number of initiatives were taken during Brown's time with the Society, and a sample only of these will be described here.

In 1925, for example, through Mr. Amos's generosity, the Society opened a central office and book room in the Hindmarsh Square mission building, a marquee had been purchased in which to hold suburban missions, open air Gospel services had commenced on several beaches, and steps were being taken to purchase a specially designed motor vehicle for holding open air services, similar to the vehicles already being used in Sydney. The vehicle cost 400 pounds – almost equal in

⁴²⁴ *Australasian Methodist Ministerial Index*, 1926 edition. See also the *Advertiser*, 12 October, 1928.

⁴²⁵ *The Advertiser*. Tuesday, 24 June, 1924. Page 12.

⁴²⁶ *The Advertiser*. Saturday, 21 February, 1925. page 19.

those days to the cost of a modest sized house and suburban block of land.⁴²⁷

Another preacher joined as a volunteer evangelist. This was Commander H. W. Harvey, a retired naval officer. They were soon joined by Miss L. A. Robinson, M.A., who specialised in women's and children's work, and who worked with the Society until 1929, and again later.

At the beginning of 1926, a universal week of prayer was organised by the Society, with announcements in all the churches. A week of mid-day meetings was arranged in Victoria Hall, starting Monday 4 January. The Rev. David Morgan spoke on "Thanksgiving and Humiliation." On Tuesday, the Rev. Principal Kiek (Congregational) spoke on "The Church Universal, of which Christ is the Head." On Wednesday, the Right Rev. W. Floyd Shannon (Presbyterian State Moderator) spoke on "Nations and their Rulers." On Thursday Brigadier W. D. McClure (Salvation Army Divisional commander) spoke on "Missions." On Friday, Miss Robinson, of the Evangelisation Society, spoke on "Families, Schools, Colleges and the Social and Spiritual Education of Children."⁴²⁸

In February, the Society was combining efforts with the South Australian Prohibition League in promoting the views on the social questions that the League represented.⁴²⁹

By the middle of the year, the Rev. G. R. Brown, Commander Harvey and Miss Robinson were combining their efforts in an evangelistic mission which included various of the churches, and the Y.M.C.A., in Broken Hill.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ *The Advertiser*. Monday, 4 January, 1926, page 9, and Saturday, 9 January, page 13.

⁴²⁹ *The Advertiser*. Saturday, 27 February, 1926. page 13.

⁴³⁰ *Barrier Miner*. Wednesday, 30 June, 1926. page 1. Etc.

The annual meeting for 1926 was held later in the year, with Mr. A.W.M. Jolly (treasurer) presiding. George Brown was now called the “directing evangelist.” He quoted from the annual report, which said 936 meetings had been held during the past year, including those at missions in city, in the country, and at Broken Hill. They had been encouraged by seeing 506 professed conversions, and with seeing 696 Christians make re-consecrations. Miss Robinson gave the report on the “young people’s department,” saying that about 600 children had yielded their lives to Christ. She declared that the work among the children was “the most important work of all.”

The annual report also surveyed the campaigns in the country, the meetings in the Botanical Gardens every Sunday afternoon, every Saturday night at the Y.M.C.A., and preaching meetings at factories and in the streets. Congregational singing at this meeting was led by Mr. W. Wood, “with Mrs. G. R. Brown at the piano.”⁴³¹

At the annual meeting the following year, 1927, it was reported that 1,154 meetings had been held in the year’s work, divided as follows:- indoor meetings for adults – 250; for children – 102; tent meetings for adults – 43; for children – 39; open-air meetings -395; open-air meetings for children – 88; church services – 170; and other meetings – 67. Over a thousand homes had been visited, thousands of tracts, Gospels and Testaments had been distributed. Many scores of letters, signed decision cards, and personal testimonies had been received. The tent and the car had both been well used. “Street preaching and open-air meetings were the hardest and the happiest and most effective part of the work. The invariable and immediate results of open-air campaigns had been increased attendances at Sunday schools.” Prayer meetings

⁴³¹ *The Advertiser*. Wednesday, 27 October, 1926. page 20.

were held every Saturday night. The costs for the year had been just over one thousand pounds, leaving a credit balance of seven pounds.⁴³²

Another important matter which the Society pursued was supporting the drive to get the Parliament to adopt the practice of daily Bible reading in State schools. The reason for this was the widespread belief amongst Christians that knowledge of the Bible had been of fundamental importance in developing the better qualities of British (and Australian) society, and was thus of fundamental importance in the balanced education of children, and improvement of society for the future.⁴³³

The annual report for 1928 showed that Dr. Seymour had moved on, and that the President of the Society was now Mr. A. S. Jackson, with three vice-Presidents – Lady Holder, and Messrs. A. Jolly and J. Butler. There was a fairly small Executive, with Commander Harvey as the organising secretary, but with a large supporting Committee, which included clergymen of various denominations. A total of 1,048 meetings had been held between 1 October, 1927 and 30 September, 1928. The report stated – “We have seen old hurts healed, ancient grudges forgotten, higher moral standards willingly embraced, some lives reclaimed from shame, others steadied and directed, and still others made purposive and influential for good. Tired and discouraged workers have taken fresh courage. Our work includes not only the direct proclamation of the Gospel, but also that release of spiritual energy that comes through united prayer. Probably the most prominent feature of the year’s activities is the development of the work amongst the children.”

⁴³² *The Advertiser*. Saturday 29 October, 1927, page 16.

⁴³³ *The Advertiser*. Friday, 14 September, 1928. pages 17 and 21.

It was in this report that George Brown stated that he had been constrained to relinquish his ties with the Methodist ministry, because he considered the work of direct evangelism that he was doing was the call of God upon him, more than returning to circuit work, which the Methodist Conference required.⁴³⁴

Early in 1929, Miss Robinson had a well-earned holiday in the form of a voyage to England. She was farewelled at a special function organised by the Committee. Lady Holder led a team of ladies in catering for the event. Speeches were made extolling the value of her work for the Society by the President, Mr. Jackman, especially in the public schools and high schools. Dr. Frank Burden spoke about Miss Robinson's work at Henley Beach during the annual beach missions. A local minister spoke about her work among the young people of Knightsbridge and Burnside. A representative of the China Inland Mission also spoke of her work in its effect upon what he was doing. Mr. Brown spoke about her helpful work in many other areas of the Society's work, not only amongst the children.⁴³⁵

When she returned from the trip, Commander Harvey joined her in a series of evangelistic campaigns in Queensland for about eighteen months before she returned to her work in South Australia.

The annual meeting of the Society in 1930 included references to the sending of these two workers to Queensland. "The Rev. Geo. R. Brown used a set of photographic slides to illustrate the work in various centres, and to show the many-sided methods of the society's activities. The year had been a difficult one, he said, but unparalleled in the development of the work; and the many doors of opportunity and the reception

⁴³⁴ *The Advertiser*. Friday, 12 October, 1928. page 16.

⁴³⁵ *The Advertiser*. Friday, 5 April, 1929. Page 14.

given to the message generally was a great encouragement. Groups for Christian fellowship and witness begun in schools and centres of industry were growing rapidly. The formation of a women's circle of prayer under the leadership of Mrs. A. E. Clarkson, and a young people's band of witness were features of the past year, and the desire was expressed for the extension of aggressive work in the future, especially through the channel of the large body of the young people of the State C. E. Union having decided to take up similar work in association with the society."⁴³⁶

The 1932 annual report seems to indicate that doctrinal matters were becoming more important, because it contains a brief statement of the society's basics. It stated that the society was interdenominational, and had three doctrinal planks. These were the inspiration, authority and sufficiency of the Bible; justification by faith, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the enlightenment, conversion, and growth in grace of the sinner.

An extensive evangelistic campaign was being carried on in the city and suburbs. During the year open air meetings had been held every Saturday night at the Central market, on Sunday afternoons at the Botanical Park, and on Sunday evenings after church hours in Victoria Square. Amongst other things, after school missions for children had been held, and systematic visitation of homes and hospitals had occurred.⁴³⁷

The doctrinal matter arose again during 1933 when George Brown spoke at a monthly gathering of the Christian Fundamentals Association, held in Holy Trinity hall, North Terrace. The brief published report of what he said contained both an attack on Modernist theology, and also on the Theory of Evolution. His attack seemed to highlight what he (and many others) thought were undesirable general trends resulting from

⁴³⁶ *The Advertiser*. Saturday, 13 September, 1930. Page 17.

⁴³⁷ *The Advertiser*. 29 September, 1932. page 7.

these ideas and theories, rather than exposing any logical fallacies in them.

Modernism in religion was described as “Unitarianism with an evangelical coat on.” “It led to confusion, and ultimately rationalism, godless anarchy and superstition, both material and religious. Modernism killed spiritual life, sapped the Church’s prayer and fellowship, had a baneful influence on true missionary enterprise, and attempted to destroy the relationship between men and God on the ground of so-called ‘justification by faith.’” It “stood on unsecure foundations, and was being unmasked.”

Evolutionary theory was a “theoretical lie,” being peddled extensively in schools, and was finding its way even into Sunday schools and the church.⁴³⁸

By the annual meeting in 1935, the leadership of the Executive had changed extensively. The President was now the Rev. J. Wesley Smith. The vice-presidents were Pastor Burrow and the Rev. H. F. Lyons. The treasurer and his assistant were Messrs. W. Hunt and C. Perriam, and the Hon. Secretary was Mr. M. Cole. The Rev. B. M. Wilson had been working with the Society, but he was farewelled, as he left to join the “world evangelisation work” of the Mildmay Movement.⁴³⁹

Later in 1935, George Brown was involved in the United Bible Convention at Victor Harbour, where the special preacher was the Rev. W. L. Jarvis, who was then the minister at the Central Baptist Church in Sydney. The brief report upon the contents of Jarvis’s address on the Inspiration and Authority of the Bible showed that he propounded a strongly conservative view, which also encouraged Bible reading as the foundation for personal spiritual growth. This Convention operated the same way, and at the same time of the year, as the more famous

⁴³⁸ *The Advertiser*. 8 August, 1933. page 15.

⁴³⁹ *The Advertiser*. Wednesday, 9 October, 1935. page 17.

Upwey Conventions in Melbourne. Brown had the job of leading the open air evangelistic meetings at 7 o'clock in the evening. The President of the Society, the Rev. J. Wesley Smith, was one of the Convention speakers.⁴⁴⁰

The Centenary Mission.

March, 1936, saw the start of meetings to organise a State-wide evangelistic mission to be held through the second half of the year. The mission was called the Centenary campaign of evangelism, to mark the centenary of the founding of the British colony of South Australia.

Thirty-five centres around the State would be involved. The featured preacher was a former British politician, Mr. R. B. Stirling. Stirling was to visit Port Adelaide, Adelaide, Broken Hill, Peterborough, Port Pirie, Port Augusta, Port Lincoln, Mount Gambier, Naracoorte, Murray Bridge and Victor Harbour. Other places would be visited by two associate evangelists, Mr. F. W. George Hall, and Mr. Leonard Buck.⁴⁴¹

Mr. Stirling had been a British Labor leader. With Mr. Philip Snowdon and Mr. Ramsay McDonald he had formed the Labor Party in Great Britain. He had toured the United States and Canada promoting his political views, and was called the "Glasgow Rebel." At that time he had been an advocate of atheistic materialism. Three years before 1936 he had been converted to Christ, and was now preaching the Gospel. During those three years, Mr. F. W. G. Hall had been in England, working in association with Mr. Stirling. Mr. Stirling's first mission in Port Adelaide was to start on 21 June.

Another famous person who was featured to lead in the campaign, starting in late August, was "La Marechale," eldest daughter of General William Booth, who had gained the French

⁴⁴⁰ *The Advertiser*. Saturday, 28 December, 1935. page 13.

⁴⁴¹ *The Advertiser*. Tuesday, 17 March, 1936. page 6.

name from her days as the Field Marshall of Salvation Army work in Paris. Her married name was Mrs. Booth-Clibborn.

In 1936, Catherine Booth-Clibborn was by no means young, and was in every sense of the word a “formidable lady.” She was to lead two missions, in Port Adelaide and in Adelaide city. These were planned to take place about two months after the missions in those places led by R. B. Stirling. She was no longer associated with the Salvation Army. She composed a five stanza hymn with chorus to be used as a rallying call during this campaign, which was sung to the tune of Sankey’s number 127 – “Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious!”⁴⁴²

During the campaign in the Adelaide Town Hall, on the evening of Saturday, 5 September, Mrs. Booth-Clibborn spoke at the annual meeting of the Evangelisation Society of South Australia. On the Sunday she spoke on “World Movements in the Light of Prophecy.” The Monday night was the concluding meeting, in the Flinders Street Baptist Church. But she addressed two more meetings on the Tuesday and Wednesday evenings in the Waterside Workers’ Hall, Port Adelaide.

Apparently, at this A.G.M. she had spoken on the subject of “World Evangelisation and Christians and Amusements.” She said that “never before in the history of the world had there been such a mad rush after pleasure, and in many cases, the form of amusement was questionable.” The part of this address which was reported at greater length was that it included an attack on the theatre. She said she had never met an habitu  of the theatre or the ballroom who had power with God. The theatre plays on the passions and glorifies sin. It was preposterous to expect people to be pure when they are in the atmosphere of the theatre. Ministers who attended the theatre set a bad example for their weaker brothers. The theatre

⁴⁴² *The Advertiser*. Tuesday, 4 August, 1936, page 19, and Saturday, 5 September, 1936. Page 18.

destroys the home, and makes sexual questions prominent. Thus children learn of sex in the wrong way.⁴⁴³

During 1937, one of Brown's activities was to take part in the Protestant reaction to the push by Roman Catholics to have the State Governments provide and maintain Roman Catholic schools.⁴⁴⁴

The annual meeting that year took place in Willard Hall, and the main speakers were the Rev. E. L. Watson, and the Baptist evangelist, the Rev. John G. Ridley. As "directing evangelist," Brown reported that progress had been achieved in ministering to the large section of the community which did not go to church, through united evangelistic campaigns, general open air work, children's special service missions, and through other activities in which they had combined with the Adelaide City Mission. A male quartet had also been formed to sing in hospitals on Sunday mornings.⁴⁴⁵

Some kind of alliance had also been developed with the Mildmay Movement by that time, because in April, 1938, a new Forward Movement was announced by the Society, which included the purchase of a new centre of operations, on the corner of Pirie Street and Gawler Place, Adelaide. The new building was also called the new Mildmay Centre. It would not only serve as HQ for the Society, but also as a base for visiting missionaries, mainly from the so-called "faith" mission societies.

Other aspects of this new forward effort were that another missionary was appointed, to help keep work going in both city and country locations. This person was Mr. Wallace Guilford, who had worked with the Open Air Campaigners in Sydney for fourteen years. Although Wally Guilford became

⁴⁴³ *The Advertiser*. Monday, 7 September, 1936. Page 20.

⁴⁴⁴ *The Advertiser*. Tuesday, 25 May. 1937. Page 22.

⁴⁴⁵ *The Advertiser*. Thursday, 2 September, 1937. Page 11.

best known for his children's evangelism, the South Australians saw him as an outstanding worker in four areas, as evangelist, Bible teacher, convention speaker, and youth worker.

A new Gospel wagon was also being sought by the Society. Six such vehicles were already in use in New South Wales.⁴⁴⁶

The new centre was officially opened by Sir David Gordon on Saturday, 17 September, 1938, with all denominations represented, and the dedicatory prayer being offered by the Dean of Adelaide. The annual meeting was held on the following Tuesday evening in Scots Church.⁴⁴⁷

The new Gospel wagon was dedicated on Saturday, 3 December, 1938.⁴⁴⁸

As the Second World War approached, and when hostilities began, the Society became involved in doing evangelistic work amongst the soldiers, and, with other such organisations, working at doing a wide range of things to supply the social and personal needs of those preparing to go to the War.

It has already been mentioned that George Brown's work involved a close association with the State Christian Endeavour Union. In 1942, the newspaper indicated that he had been appointed the national service superintendent for the State of South Australia.⁴⁴⁹ No doubt he had held other positions on the State Executive previously.

Another State-wide campaign was set in motion through the winter of 1943, when Mr. B. C. Morgan arrived from

⁴⁴⁶ *The Advertiser*. Thursday, 28 April, 1938. Page 11.

⁴⁴⁷ *The Advertiser*. Thursday, 15 September, 1938. Page 27, and Monday 19 September. Page 7.

⁴⁴⁸ *The Advertiser*. Monday, 5 December, 1938, page 20.

⁴⁴⁹ *The Advertiser*. Friday, 18 September, 1942. page 11.

Sydney. A special welcome and Dedication Prayer service was held in the Pirie Street Methodist Church.

“After spending a few weeks in the metropolitan area, Mr. Morgan will begin his State-wide itinerary. The Society’s director (Evangelist George R. Brown) will continue his work with the Fighting Forces Christian Fellowship, among men and women of the services in military camps, and undertake work in factories in conjunction with the Industrial Fellowship Movement.

Citizens’ weekly prayer meetings will be continued in the Pirie Street Methodist Church from 1 to 2 p.m. each Tuesday during July.

On July 6, the leader will be Pastor W. L. Ewers; on July 13, Rev. A. H. Betteridge; on July 20, Major Jones of the Bowden Salvation Army and on July 27, the Rev. H. Watts Grimmett.”⁴⁵⁰

George Brown’s Move to Victoria.

After 21 years working for the Evangelisation Society of South Australia, the Rev. G. R. Brown and his wife pulled up their roots and moved to Melbourne. A united farewell rally was held in the Salvation Army Congress hall, in the evening of Friday, 28 April, 1944. After a number of months, another evangelist was chosen to lead the work in South Australia, in the form of Mr. E. H. Tomlinson. By that time a number of other changes had also occurred in the Executive members.⁴⁵¹

He began work for the Evangelisation Society of Australia on 30 April, 1944, although he preached for the Fitzroy Methodist Mission in Melbourne through the first half

⁴⁵⁰ *The Advertiser*. Thursday, 1 July, 1943. page 4.

⁴⁵¹ *The Advertiser*. Monday, 24 April, 1944. page 5, and 13 October, 1945. page 3.

of May, and for the St. Kilda Baptist Church through the month of June.

His farewell meeting in Adelaide was described at some length in *New Life*, and his address included a personal testimony.

“The speaker indicated that his life had been crisis upon crisis. He spoke of his decision for Christ under the influence of his schoolmaster, of his call to service, for which he prepared in the old Methodist Training Home at Brighton, under the late Dr. W. G. Torr, of his response to a call to Home Mission work in West Australia, his entry into the Methodist Ministry in South Australia, his urge to evangelise, and his call to go out to the masses with the Gospel, and his ultimate choice to leave the ranks of the ministry as a circuit minister, and to go on with a ministry of full-time evangelism.”

Mr. Brown said he had invitations to move to the U.S.A., and to England, but his vision was for Australia. He said, “This is my vision – an Australian-wide inter-Church and Interstate link-up and movement of evangelism, directed by God Himself, energized and empowered by the Holy Spirit, using methods, perhaps unusual, but calculated to bring the glorious Gospel message of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ to perishing souls, and the shepherdless masses, and so win countless thousands of lost souls to our blessed Saviour and Lord. To this, God helping me, I mean to give myself as He directs and enables. Pray for me and pray that God will set His seal to the work of evangelising Australia. Let us go on, - on before the darkness overtakes us in this day of grace, before God calls the mortgage on a bankrupt world – on with the great evangelising vision and programme, gathering in as many souls as we can into the life-boat before the tempest breaks. That is my vision, my heart’s desire, my consuming passion, my Royal Commission. ‘Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.’ This is

the message and command of Almighty God to the whole Church for the whole world.”⁴⁵²

He had hardly started in Victoria before he was appointed “Organising Evangelist” of the Evangelisation Society of Australia, much as he had been for some years in South Australia. The original invitation to work in Victoria for the E.S.A. had only been for three months, but after only two weeks – “after considerable prayer [he] decided to undertake the leadership of the field work of the Society at the request of the Council.”⁴⁵³

Immediately, Brown developed his co-operative action by launching a series of lectures to give practical instruction in personal evangelism. He was to work with the Evangelistic Committee of the Baptist union of Victoria, and the World-wide Witness Fellowship, which was part of the Mildmay organisation. These lectures were to take place in the Collins Street Baptist Church on July, 7, 14, 21, and 28. The subjects were “The Personal Worker and his Work,” “The Personal Worker and His Pattern,” “The Personal Worker and His Textbook,” and “The Personal Worker: His Field and Task.”⁴⁵⁴

A report appeared after the second of these meetings. “There have been excellent attendances at the Friday evening meetings in the Collins Street Baptist Church, Melbourne, at which the Rev. G. R. Brown, organising evangelist of the Evangelisation Society of Australia, is delivering four lectures on Personal Evangelism. On Friday last, Mr. A. L. Gibson, chairman of the Mildmay Council, presided. Mr. F. R. Levett led the song service and rendered a solo at the close of the address, and the Mildmay Choir contributed several numbers. Mr. Brown delivered a very fine address, and a number

⁴⁵² *New Life*. Thursday, 4 May, 1944. page 1.

⁴⁵³ *New Life*. Thursday, 18 May, 1944. page 1.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid*.

responded to an appeal to join an united prayer and personal work campaign. Large gatherings are expected on the next two Friday nights.”⁴⁵⁵

Some of Brown’s tips on personal evangelism began to appear in print, in the “Child Evangelism” column in *New Life*. These revolved around telling the Bible stories in such a way as to get children to use their imagination, leading up to the challenge to come to Jesus Christ.⁴⁵⁶

The four lectures that Brown had given at the Collins Street Church, however, began to appear in print also. The first lecture appeared on 20 July, with the other lectures being published in the following weeks.⁴⁵⁷

George Brown’s first mission under the auspices of the Evangelisation Society of Australia was announced to be held at St. Kilda Baptist Church through the month of June, 1944, although most of it was to be held during the second half of the month. Young people who were keen to do evangelistic work were urged to watch Brown’s methods and work at St. Kilda.⁴⁵⁸

Another mission conducted by Brown was held at the Merlynston Baptist Church, starting on Sunday, 16 July. Also a joint committee of representatives of the Mildmay Movement, the Evangelisation Society of Australia, and the Campaigners for Christ, started holding after-Church Gospel witness meetings in the Central Theatre in Little Collins Street on Sunday evenings at 8pm. The address on the first occasion was given by Mr. W. L. Pike, and the soloist was Ken Field,

⁴⁵⁵ *New Life*. Thursday, 20 July, 1944. page 8.

⁴⁵⁶ *New Life*. Thursday, 13 July, 1944. page 2.

⁴⁵⁷ *New Life*. Thursday, 13 July, 1944. page 7, 20 July, 1944. page 7, 27 July, page 6, and 3 August, page 3.

⁴⁵⁸ *New Life*. Thursday, 25 May, 1944. page 8.

accompanied by a small orchestra. So George Brown was very soon active on a number of fronts.⁴⁵⁹

Very soon Brown was also involved in factory evangelism. Notice of this appeared in an editorial. The editor said that in recent years in Melbourne no extensive work had been done in the form of factory evangelism, although there had been good success in places like Sydney and Adelaide. This claim was in fact not entirely true, because Eric Clarkson had been doing this kind of work in Melbourne for the Methodist Church for many years.

However, the Rev. George Brown embarked upon the project of visiting a number of factories during the course of his missions in St. Kilda and in Merlynston. Brown had been a leader in this type of work in Adelaide in previous years. This work was described by the Rev. Gordon Carr as follows:-

“During the months of July and August, Mr. Brown conducted an evangelistic campaign in the industrial centres around Merlynston with great success. At times Mr. Brown was greeted coldly by the workers, even to the extent of hoots and jeers, but before he had finished speaking there was always a receptive and courteous audience. Men asked him to come again, expressing appreciation of the honest and plain talking of this man amongst men.

As Mr. Brown entered each factory, unstrung and twanged his guitar, cynical glances from men commencing lunch had no opportunity to develop into argument, for the evangelist was already chatting with them, and as he talked in his easy and friendly style they found themselves listening to a man who was not preaching at all, but just talking naturally about the deep things of the human heart. Then a song from his very powerful voice, another brief and challenging talk, an

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

announcement that he would be back again, and the ‘nuisance’ who had turned out to be ‘not so bad after all’ had gone. At one factory the men broke into applause, at another all hell seemed let loose in a volley of abuse – perhaps that den of sin was most deeply affected by the hammer blows of Mr. Brown’s talk.

A change of tactics at one factory of over one thousand employees took Mr. Brown out from the large dining hall on to the street, where some fifty men and women were eating lunch and chatting. A hymn sung on the roadside brought others, and as Mr. Brown began to speak – he needs no amplifying apparatus! – employees came from all directions until there was a congregation that would have made any preacher envious – or send him into a panic. No room for rhetoric here. Something had to be said in a few minutes, something worthwhile and to the point, something sufficiently interesting for an open roadway in a busy suburb.”⁴⁶⁰

Before long, the joint committee mentioned above, of people from the Evangelisation Society of Australia, Campaigners for Christ, and the Mildmay Movement, were organising a united mission, each Sunday night in the Central Theatre at 8pm. Help was requested from sympathetic Christians and Churches, with further announcements to follow.⁴⁶¹

This same joint committee also began organising a united evangelistic campaign in Melbourne on a much more ambitious scale, which eventually featured the well-known Baptist evangelist from New South Wales, the Rev. John G. Ridley, M.C. This campaign came to fruition in November 1944.

This kaleidoscope of activity in the first few months of George Brown’s work in Victoria gives a glimpse of the

⁴⁶⁰ *New Life*. Thursday, 24 August, 1944. page 4.

⁴⁶¹ *New Life*. Thursday, 31 August, 1944. page 5.

panorama of his work as a whole for the Society while he carried out as the Society's organising evangelist in Victoria. He continued as organising evangelist until he resigned in 1949, in order to accept an appointment as Australasian Director of Evangelism with the Mildmay Movement for World Evangelisation. In this new role, George Brown was able to spread out his work to other parts of Australia, and possibly beyond.⁴⁶²

The purpose of the present paper is to describe part of an overview of what became the Evangelisation Society of Australia from 1919 until 1945. As a result, George Brown's activities through from 1945 until 1949 and later will not be treated here. The reader is referred to the substantial amount of information that exists about the work of George Brown for the E.S.A., and for other causes, including materials written by him, which is recorded in copies of *New Life* between 1944 and 1949, and which can be viewed at the State Library of Victoria in hard copy or on microfilm. The microfilms can also be purchased for a modest amount. Also useful is Donald Prout's little book, and other publications by the Society, about the Society's history in 1945 and after.

⁴⁶² *Advertiser*. Monday, 18 July, 1949. page 7.

Suggestions for Further or Wider Reading.

Further reading and research into the history of the Evangelisation Society is mainly dependent upon reading the *Keswick Quarterly* and *New Life* more thoroughly, but there are possibilities with country local papers, personal or family papers, individual church or congregational archives, or other denominational newspapers which have not been perused here.

For wider reading:- (a.) on the history of evangelism in Australia before 1919, see some of my other books listed on page 318, and books by Drs. Darrell Paproth and Stuart Piggin.

(b.) on the general evangelical theology which was widely believed in Australia by people such as those in the E.S.A., see Darrell Paproth's biography of the Rev. C. H. Nash. Also basic theology books, such as Benjamin Field's *Manual of Theology*, and T. C. Hammond's *In Understanding Be Men*.

(c.) on evangelical revival movements, there are many introductory books, and a vast literature. Valuable are J. Edwin Orr's books, *The Eager Feet*, *The Fervent Prayer* and *The Flaming Tongue*, and his set of five books on Evangelical Revivals in East Asia, Southern Asia, Africa, the South Seas, and Latin America. See also the list of library books relating to revivals on my website – www.revivals.arkangles.com

(d.) In the years 1919 to 1945, Australian evangelicalism was strengthened by interest in the imminent Second Coming of Christ. The main theory which received a lot of attention in this period was Dispensationalism, which arose from the teachings of the Brethren leader, John Nelson Darby, and his peculiar method of interpreting the Bible. There is a considerable literature on the subject which historians call Millenarianism. For example, Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*. Also, Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*.

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