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## CHAPTER TWELVE

### WOMEN OF THE SPIRIT

#### **The role of women in evangelising and church planting**

According to Boswell, Samuel Johnson once said, ‘Sir, a woman’s preaching is like a dog’s walking on its hinder legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all.’<sup>1</sup> Judging by the scope given to women to occupy Australia’s pulpits in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many people agreed with him. It was all right to preach to Aborigines or to the heathen in other lands, but not to proclaim the Word at home. In the first Pentecostal churches, however, as in some of the other less recognised religious movements of the time, women preached regularly, and in spite of Johnson’s reservations, by all accounts rather well.

In a memorial list of 297 ministers and probationers in Victorian Methodism published in 1935, there is not one woman.<sup>2</sup> It would have been surprising if there had been. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with the exception of the Salvation Army, where women officers were active from its inception,<sup>3</sup> ordained women were unheard of. Not that this situation was universally approved. As early as 1893, one Methodist writer declared that it was ‘in harmony with the spirit and practice of early Methodism that women should preach’ and that the experience of the Salvation Army had made it plain

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<sup>1</sup> Boswell, James, *Life of Johnson* Vol I p.463, 31 July 1763, various publishers..

<sup>2</sup> Benson, 1935, pp.505ff.

that ‘by closing the mouths of women’ the church was depriving itself of ‘one of the mightiest weapons of evangelisation.’<sup>4</sup> However, this was clearly a minority view. Sabine Willis points out that in the nineteenth century, ‘the Church, with its moral and social code, supported and promoted a strictly limited role for women.’<sup>5</sup> Hilary Carey puts it even more strongly —

Women — including clergy wives and religious — were excluded from almost all positions of clerical and administrative authority in the vast majority of Australian churches until very recently. Catholic, Lutheran, Orthodox and Islamic women have no official role in church governance, preaching or administration of the sacraments.<sup>6</sup>

In simple terms, ordination for women in both Catholic and Protestant churches, was not an option. Martha Turner occupied the pulpit of the small Unitarian church in Melbourne in the 1870’s.<sup>7</sup> She was a rarity. The first woman member of the clergy in a recognised denomination, Reverend Winifred Kiek, a Congregationalist, was not ordained till 1927.<sup>8</sup> It was many years before any other established denomination followed suit. Among Catholics, there were opportunities for women to exercise highly effective and influential ministries through religious orders — Mary MacKillop and Mother Vincent Whitty being well-known examples. But their work was not without its struggles and there were significant clashes between the Sisters and the hierarchy on more than one occasion. Today, the great value of the work of these women is openly acknowledged, with Mary MacKillop’s beatification now a matter of history. But as Janet West has pointed out, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many nuns and sisters faced strong

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Father and I joined them because of their holiness teaching, and their opportunities for female ministry,’ M.A.Alway, ‘Jesus Christ the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever,’ GN 1:1 April 1910, p.14.

<sup>4</sup> *Spectator* 24 February 1893, p.148.

<sup>5</sup> Sabine Willis (ed), *Women, Faith and Fetes* Melbourne: Dove Communications, 1977, p.12. It was not until 1908 that the last Australian State (Victoria) allowed women to vote in State elections.

<sup>6</sup> Carey, 1996, p.134.

<sup>7</sup> Roe, JRH December 1968, p.156.

<sup>8</sup> R.McCutcheon, ‘Margaret Holmes: Larger Than the Roles She Played’ in Willis (ed), 1977, pp. 97, 114.

opposition, criticism and victimisation at the hands of church leaders. Their work was not always easy, and at times, they suffered painful restrictions or had to move elsewhere. According to West, the major problem was male prejudice and intransigence. In reality, while there was much the sisters could do, there were still very clear demarcations.<sup>9</sup>

For Protestants, there were some non-clerical roles of distinction which women could fulfil, especially in parachurch or lay movements such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), where people like Mary Clement Leavitt and Frances Willard were internationally recognised. In arguing for universal suffrage, the WCTU asserted that 'woman must be acknowledged as the equal of man in reasoning, adjudicating and discharging business generally' and proved it by their highly effective work in temperance, prison welfare, philanthropic activity among the poor and unemployed, concern for children and work for women generally. Nevertheless, they did not believe it was appropriate for them to seek legislative office in either church or state. This was still the province of men.<sup>10</sup> For the WCTU, a woman's best place was the home, where her role in safeguarding family life and a strong social fabric was seen as primary.<sup>11</sup> Within most denominations, there were semiclerical positions for women, or roles such as that of deaconess or missionary. And there was always the responsibility-without-privilege of being a clergy wife.<sup>12</sup>

From the earliest days of European settlement, many women served faithfully as missionaries. Protestants saw three roles for women in the great task of world evangelisation. Hilary Carey has summarised these as: money, marriage and mission. Women could raise money for missions; or they could be the

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<sup>9</sup> Janet West, 'A Recipe for Confrontation: Female Religious Orders and the Male Hierarchy in Nineteenth Century Australia,' in M.Hutchinson and E.Campion (eds), *Long Patient Struggle: Studies in the Role of Women in Australian Christianity* Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1994, pp.71ff.

<sup>10</sup> A.Hyslop, 'Christian Temperance and Social Reform: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Victoria 1887-1912,' in Willis, 1977, p.43ff.

<sup>11</sup> J.Smart, 'The Panacea of Prohibition: the Reaction of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Victoria to the Great War,' in Willis, 1977, p.179.

<sup>12</sup> Carey, 1996, pp.111-139; Ruth Sturmeay, 'Anglicanism and gender in Australian society,' in Black (ed), 1991, pp.39-51.

wives of missionaries; or they could be missionaries in their own right. There were few in the latter category. Initially, most women on the field were married, although this was to change in the early years of the twentieth century.<sup>13</sup> Here they could perform a wide range of tasks — including running meetings in the absence of their husbands, teaching Sunday School or leading hymn singing. But they could not usually lead a Sunday service or preach, and they would not dare to administer the sacraments. If they were left widows, they were usually brought home. There was no place for them on their own.<sup>14</sup>

Sarah Jane Lancaster's pointed comments when Charles Anstis asked her to lay hands on him and pray for him reflect the contemporary status of women in ministry —

What! In a conservative building where women might wash the cloth for the Lord's table, but were warned not to encroach on man's prerogative as their superior? Yes, for the Holy Spirit makes the bodies of women His temple, as well as those of men; He speaks and acts through either sex at His own sweet will, declaring that 'As many as have been baptised into Christ ... have put on Christ ... there is, therefore, neither male or [sic] female, for ye are all ONE in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26,27). The capitals are ours, to emphasise a truth which man, proud man, will rarely entertain, for just as Jewish Christians in the days of Paul found it hard to believe the glorious fact that the Christ of God had torn down the middle wall of partition between the Gentiles and themselves ... so to-day the pride of man forbids his acceptance of the grace of God toward those women upon whom He has poured His Spirit, thus making men and women one in Christ.'<sup>15</sup>

## Evangelists

Women evangelists were not common, but they were recognised. Emilia Baeyertz, born in England of Jewish parentage, came to Australia around 1860, where she was converted after the death of her husband in 1871. She soon

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<sup>13</sup> J. West, 'The Role of the Woman Missionary,' in *Lucas: an Evangelical History Review* #21,22, June and December 1996, p.46.

<sup>14</sup> H. Carey, "'Women's Peculiar Mission to the Heathen'" — Protestant Missionary Wives in Australia, 1788-1900,' in Hutchinson and Campion (eds), *Long Patient Struggle*, 1994, pp.25ff.

<sup>15</sup> GN 17:10 October 1926, p.11.

became involved in mission, especially with the YWCA in Melbourne. In the 1880's, she evangelised with the Baptists in South Australia, with considerable success, and with the Free Methodist Churches in Victoria. She was later to have a significant part to play in the spiritual development of T.C.Hammond.<sup>16</sup>

The Englishwoman Margaret Hampson held successful Australian meetings. In Melbourne, in May 1883, large crowds from all denominations attended her rallies in the Town Hall, the Bijou Theatre and various church venues. Over one thousand people attended mid-day services and hundreds were turned away from the evening rallies during the first week of her campaign.<sup>17</sup> There was 'not the slightest touch of hysterical excitement or ... uncontrollable fervour,' noted the *Southern Cross*, yet the evangelist kept her audience 'spell-bound.' Her preaching was marked by 'force of eloquence, power, passion, and sweep of dramatic expression.'<sup>18</sup> Her presentation was clear and forthright. The call to follow Christ was uncompromising.<sup>19</sup> Over 700 people professed conversion, including 84 who nominated the Church of England as the church they wished to attend, 62 the Wesleyan; 53 the Baptist; 32 the Presbyterian and 29 the Congregational.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless,

although Hampson was so well received and her name became 'a household word all over the Colony (of Victoria)' she was clearly the exception rather than the rule, both as an evangelist and a woman.<sup>21</sup>

In November 1914, the founder of the small Bethshan Holiness Mission at Wyee, NSW, Elliot John Rien (1866-1935) cheerfully acknowledged the work of several women — 'Sister' Esther, 'Sister' Bruce, 'Sister' Rose and 'Sister' Elsie. Esther Wood ('Sister' Esther) was the matron. Rose Flaxman ('Sister'

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<sup>16</sup> Piggin, 1996, pp.57, 130; W.Nelson, *T.C.Hammond: Irish Christian* Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1994, p.37; J.Walker in B.Dickey (ed), ADEB, 1994, pp.18f. *The Observer and Free Methodist Chronicle* Vol 1, No. 9, 26 November 1886.

<sup>17</sup> SC II:20 19 May 1883, p.8; II:25 23 June 1883, p.5.

<sup>18</sup> SC II:21 26 May 1883, p.7.

<sup>19</sup> SC II:22 2 June 1883, pp.11f.

<sup>20</sup> SC II:26 30 June 1883, p.5.

<sup>21</sup> SC II:26 30 June 1883, p.8.

Rose) was an 'outstanding evangelist.'<sup>22</sup> Among South Australian Bible Christians, although there were no ordained women, there were some women evangelists.<sup>23</sup> When Aimee Semple McPherson visited Melbourne and Adelaide in 1922, one reporter wrote, 'Though women have taken up pretty well everything else and are not supposed to be at a loss for words in ordinary life, the idea of a woman as a minister, as a preacher, as leader of an evangelistic mission is decidedly startling.'<sup>24</sup> McPherson was not fazed. It was a woman who preached the first salvation message, she argued, namely the woman at the well. And as men were quick to point out that it was a woman who introduced sin into the world, why should not a woman do something to eradicate it? Not that she particularly liked to hear a woman preach. For that matter, she wasn't keen about men preachers. She liked to hear the Holy Spirit preach.<sup>25</sup>

A woman might preach and evangelise, but there were still limits to what else she could do. Stephen Judd summarises the position among Sydney Anglicans—

Laywomen were similarly restricted to an auxiliary role, such as parish visiting, mothers' union and the women's guild. They had little opportunity for participation in the making of decisions which affected Church life: they were denied participation in parish councils until 1922 and prior to 1978 could not be churchwardens. For those women who sought a more active church role in the extension of Christ's Kingdom there was only one option: missionary service, both overseas and in remote parts of Australia.<sup>26</sup>

Not that women were inactive. Anglican sisterhoods such as the Kilburn Sisters and Community of the Holy Name ran convalescent homes, cared for poor children and pursued other works of charity.<sup>27</sup> Orders of deaconesses were similarly busy with faith and good works. Although only a handful in

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<sup>22</sup> Elliot T. Rien, *A Challenge to Holiness* Wyee: Bethshan, 1975, pp.58, 89f.

<sup>23</sup> Hunt, 1985, p.129.

<sup>24</sup> *Register*, 9 October 1922.

<sup>25</sup> *Register*, 2 October 1922; *Advertiser*, 2 October 1922.

<sup>26</sup> Judd and Cable, 1987, p.217.

<sup>27</sup> Carey, 1996, p. 135f.

number, the few women who passed through the Bethany Deaconess Institution in Sydney from 1891 achieved an enormous amount — visiting the sick, bringing food and clothing to struggling families, running Sunday Schools, opening schools and an employment agency for women, providing accommodation and training for women and children.<sup>28</sup> But these women ‘never entered the administrative councils of the church, the parochial vestries, diocesan synods and boards, and particularly their finance committees.’ For Anglicans, here were three categories for women: matron, maid or missionary.<sup>29</sup> Unitarians and Quakers gave more opportunity to women to exercise leadership and public ministry.<sup>30</sup> Not that women generally were looking for a more recognised role. When in 1866, Portland Methodists found the rules did allow for women to attend a local leaders’ meeting, this fact was made known. Only two women braved it to the next meeting — a minister’s wife and a minister’s widow. On later occasions, the number did increase slightly.<sup>31</sup> When it came to joining the ranks of the clergy, or administering the sacraments or holding office in the denominational corridors of power, there was room only for men.<sup>32</sup>

Pentecostalism was more akin to the newer nineteenth century radical religious movements where women were openly accepted in leadership in and some cases founded and led by women such as Ellen White (Seventh Day Adventism — 1846), Mary Baker Eddy (Christian Science — 1876) and Helena Blavatsky (Theosophy — 1875). And at the World Parliament for Religions in Chicago in 1893, there were five papers presented by women.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Judd and Cable, 1987, p.153f.

<sup>29</sup> R.Teale, ‘Matron, Maid and Missionary: the Work of Anglican Women in Australia,’ in Willis (ed), 1977, pp. 117ff.

<sup>30</sup> Thompson, 1994, p.27

<sup>31</sup> Gribben, 1972, p.70.

<sup>32</sup> By 1917, there were women on the Council of the Australian Board of Missions. R.Teale, ‘Matron, Maid and Missionary: the Work of Anglican Women in Australia,’ in Willis (ed), 1977, p. 122.

<sup>33</sup> Roe, 1986, p.165. Roe points out that there were another fifty presented by men. But she also sees a limited, but rising, involvement of women in churches during the latter part of the nineteenth century (pp.162ff).

### ‘... and daughters’

In the fledgling Pentecostal movement, as in its ante-Nicene precursor, Montanism, women openly expressed themselves as leaders, especially in the first two decades.<sup>34</sup> Of the eighteen Pentecostal churches founded in this country up to and including 1925, eleven were planted by women. Of the 37 churches established by 1930, over half (20) were started by women.<sup>35</sup> Fundamentally, this was a question of the nature of ordination as much as anything. Early Pentecostals believed they were living in the last days, that God was pouring out His Spirit on both men and women and that their ‘sons and daughters’ would prophesy (Acts 2:17-18),<sup>36</sup> which they were doing in a new way through the prophetic gift of glossolalia. It was the coming of the Spirit that commissioned people for ministry — and He was coming not only to men, but to women, too. So ordination was no longer a gender issue. If God Himself had anointed someone with the Spirit, what further endorsement did they need? Rather than wait for official benediction, they simply went ahead. Recognition usually followed, rather than preceded, active ministry.

While this concept was held all round the world in Pentecostal churches, the ministry of women was a distinctive feature of the early Australian movement. The dominant leaders of American Pentecostalism, for example, were men. In spite of the incredible feats of an occasional woman preacher such as Maria Woodworth Etter, it was men like the pioneering Charles Parham, the black Holiness preacher William Seymour, Chicago’s imposing William Durham, North Carolina’s enterprising G.B.Cashwell and the widely-read A.J.Tomlinson who laid the foundations of the movement there.<sup>37</sup> True, six of

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<sup>34</sup> For the role of the women Maximilla and Priscilla in Montanism, see Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiae*, xiv-xviii; Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul*, ix; *Against Praxeas*, i.

<sup>35</sup> See Appendix One. See also GN, various issues from 1913-1926, in particular, 1:5 January 1913, p.32; 12:8 September 1923, p.21; 14:10 November 1923, p.18; 15:12 December 1924, p.22. There were also many home meetings led by women. For an overview see Chant, 1984, 34ff, 103ff, 125ff.

<sup>36</sup> Acts 2:17 — ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy’ (AV).

<sup>37</sup> M.Woodworth-Etter, *A Diary of Signs and Wonders* Tulsa: Harrison, (1916), 1980. For basic information on these men see Burgess et al (eds), 1988, relevant articles.



twelve elders at Azusa Street were women, and there were several well-known women preachers in America such as Carrie Judd Montgomery and Aimee Semple McPherson, but they were clearly in the minority.<sup>38</sup> In the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) in 1912, 12.2% of ministers were women. But although they were encouraged to preach and to evangelise, they were limited in the extent to which they could be involved in church government. From its earliest days, A.J.Tomlinson, the first General Overseer, taught that the Scriptures did not allow women to participate in governmental affairs. Nor did the Church approve the ordination of women.<sup>39</sup> The Assemblies of God, likewise, encouraged women to evangelise, prophesy and preach, but from the formation of the movement in 1914, they would not allow them to be elders, a condition that prevailed for the next twenty years.<sup>40</sup> Even for evangelists, there were different credentials for men and women. That women could evangelise very well was evident from the work of people like McPherson. But she was clearly seen to be the exception rather than the rule — and with her, there were still many who had reservations. In Sweden, the apostolic Lewi Pethrus's name towers above everyone else's. In Norway, Methodist preacher Alexander Boddy was the recognised pioneer. In England, the earliest leaders were men — such as William Oliver Hutchinson, Jones Williams, the remarkable Jeffreys brothers and the gentlemanly Donald Gee. In South Africa, it was John G.Lake's extraordinary evangelism that launched the movement. In Brazil, Swedish pioneer missionaries Daniel Berg and Gunnar Vingren laid the foundations.<sup>41</sup> The principal role of women was caring for the family and

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<sup>38</sup> Richard Riss argues a case for the role of women in the early American Pentecostal movement, but struggles to find a substantial list of women in leadership. See Burgess et al (eds), 1988, pp.893ff.

<sup>39</sup> D.Roebeck, 'Perfect liberty to Preach the Gospel: Women Ministers in the Church of God,' *Pneuma* 17:1 Spring 1995, pp.25ff.

<sup>40</sup> Deborah Gill, 'The Contemporary State of Women in Ministry in the Assemblies of God,' *Pneuma* 17:1 Spring 1995, p.33. Note that the American Assemblies of God and the Assemblies of God in Queensland were formed independently of each other.

<sup>41</sup> For basic information on these people, see Burgess et al (eds), 1988, relevant articles; Worsfold, 1991, pp.1ff; Hollenweger, 1988, pp.21ff, 75ff, 111ff, 176ff, 197ff, 206ff; E.Lawless, 'Not so Different After All: Pentecostal Women in the Pulpit' in C.Wessinger (ed) *Women's Leadership in Marginal Religions: Explorations Outside the Mainstream* University of Illinois Press, 1993, p.41 — 'Males founded Pentecostalism and males dominate the leadership ...' It is worth noting that the Brethren, who were in so many ways similar to

supporting the church through craft work and the like. There were women pastors, but they could only reach 'a certain pastoral level.'<sup>42</sup> In Fiji, the initial leadership was in the hands of men. Women were able assistants, but never in oversight.<sup>43</sup>

In Australia, however, the earliest pioneers were women. And their role was not just that of active laywomen or ministers' wives. They not only preached, but were involved in decision-making, teaching, administering the sacraments and general leadership. This is not to say they worked harder than missionaries' wives or the women in organisations like the WCTU. But their role was different. As is usual in new religious movements, authority passed fairly quickly into the hands of men,<sup>44</sup> but it was not so at the beginning. The first recorded meetings in Melbourne were held in the North Carlton home of Mrs J.H.Nickson in September 1906.<sup>45</sup> Sarah Jane Lancaster attended Nickson's meetings and looked to her for guidance.<sup>46</sup> Lancaster's own extraordinary work has already been discussed. There seems little doubt that it was her prominence and success that opened the way for other women to exercise their gifts. Her ministry was clearly a model for others to follow.

### **Florence Mortomore (1890-1927)**

Florrie Mortomore (1890-1927) showed daring and enterprise by exercising a ministry normally felt to be the province of men. She seems to have cared little about traditional concepts of ministry. For her, it was sufficient ordination to be anointed by the Spirit of God and to have the Good News to preach. Armed with her Bible, a deep sense of compassion for the lost and needy, a strong faith in the miracle-working power of God and an earnest desire to see

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Pentecostals, made no provision for women in leadership. Not one woman is given separate entry in a study of one hundred early Brethren leaders. Not surprisingly, the work is called *Chief Men Among the Brethren*. See Pickering (ed), (1918), 1961

<sup>42</sup> Gutierrez and Smith (eds), 1996, pp.152, 176.

<sup>43</sup> Larson, 1997, pp.25ff.

<sup>44</sup> Weber, 1965, p.104.

<sup>45</sup> Muirhead, 'John Barclay,' 1988, p.2; J.H.Nickson, 'Pentecost in Melbourne, Australia' in Moorhead (ed), 1908, p.28. See also Chapter Five.

<sup>46</sup> J.Lancaster, 'Australia,' in *Confidence* October 1908, p.18; J.Lancaster, GN 17:9 September 1996, p.11. See also Chapter Six. See also Chant, 1984, pp.34ff.

Christians filled with the Holy Spirit, she travelled far and wide as an ambassador for Christ. In the 1920s, she established — or helped to establish — as many as seven congregations. Her ministry resulted in missionaries going overseas.

Born in 1890, she was the eldest child of Charles and Caroline Mortomore of Lilydale, Victoria.<sup>47</sup> Although she died at the young age of 37, Florrie achieved more for the kingdom of God than most people manage to do in twice the time. Charles and Caroline attended the Baptist church at Lilydale, where Charles was a lay preacher. Around 1909, Caroline visited Good News Hall<sup>48</sup> and thirteen months later, with great joy and delight, she spoke in tongues.<sup>49</sup>

The Mission proudly advertised that Good News Hall was ‘ALWAYS open to Christians, for waiting on God’ and that hospitality was free (although friends coming would ‘add to their comfort by bringing a cushion and rug’). Around 1910, the twenty-year-old Florrie availed herself of this invitation, and stayed for a weekend. During this time, she was baptised in the Spirit with ‘such a mighty anointing’ that Lancaster feared her family would not understand what had happened to her when she returned home. So she encouraged her to stay until the following Wednesday.<sup>50</sup> When she arrived home, she found a small prayer meeting in progress. Brimming with new-found zeal, she began to pray individually for those present. There were some dramatic results. A lady ‘who had not walked without sticks for years, walked home without them.’ The women in the group were enchanted. ‘She is like an angel,’ they said. Well might they think so, agreed Lancaster. ‘With her delicate, ivory skin,

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<sup>47</sup> Mortomore had three younger brothers — Albert (b.1892), Leonard (b.1894) and Cyril (b.1902). Her parents also adopted three children, Maizie, Dorothy and Mavis. Cyril became a Foursquare pastor, serving churches in several places in New South Wales, including Orange, Cessnock, Newcastle and Newtown. See John O’Connell, ‘Cyril Ernest Mortomore (1902-1974)’, unpublished essay, Sydney: Tabor College, 1993.

<sup>48</sup> GN 16:1 January 1925, p.10.

<sup>49</sup> Caroline already had some experience of divine power. On one occasion, one of the boys suffered from a painful knee, the result of an unnamed disease affecting the hip. His leg was strapped in irons and he could only walk with the aid of crutches. For many weeks, there was no sign of improvement. Finally, in desperation, Caroline sought help through prayer. Subsequent medical examination affirmed that the boy had recovered. See GN 1:5 January 1913, p.12.

<sup>50</sup> GN 18:8 August 1927, p.14. Following details about Florrie Mortomore are from this source, pp.14-15, unless otherwise stated.

surmounted by a wealth of flaxen hair, added to the deep spirituality of her words and actions,' she did seem out of this world. Later, her father was healed of an injury through her prayers.<sup>51</sup> In mid-1912, she volunteered for service in India.<sup>52</sup> As a missionary, she was both gifted and faithful, but reluctantly, for health reasons, she yielded to her parents' urging to return to Australia in 1914, where she settled in Brisbane, Queensland. and was assisted in her work in the first twelve months by Emmy Field (later Close).<sup>53</sup> Mortomore now began a widespread work of evangelism in many parts of Queensland. 'She carried her Gospel torch,' said Lancaster, 'until many lights were kindled which shall never be put out.' At a time when travel was difficult and accommodation often spartan, Mortomore showed courage, persistence and strength in covering large distances in a large State 'now up the north coast, now down the south coast, or anon along the main railway line'. Testimonies of conversion, healing and baptism in the Holy Spirit followed her.<sup>54</sup>

In Mackay, one thousand kilometres north of Brisbane, she met Bessie Couldrey (1891-1958). Of Brethren background, Couldrey had been born in England, migrated to Canada and thence to Australia.<sup>55</sup> The two travelled together till the end of 1923, when Bessie married and settled in Cairns. In Mackay, Mortomore introduced Annie Dennis to the baptism in the Holy Spirit; she was also to become an effective minister.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> GN 1:6 October 1913, p.6

<sup>52</sup> GN 1:5 January 1913, p.9; 'Your Young Men Shall See Visions,' GN 1:5 January 1913, p.17.

<sup>53</sup> After this, the Closes itinerated through Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, 'with Gospel van' doing open air work. GN, 18:4, April 1927, p.11. They were later officially recognised as evangelists. GN 18:6 June 1927, p.11.

<sup>54</sup> For example, a woman who signed herself only as 'MD' reported a miraculous shower of rain in time of drought providing water for baptism by immersion, her own baptism in the Spirit and her own healing, all as a result of a visit from Florrie Mortomore. See 'Another Comforter,' GN 9:1 February 1923, p.13. Little is known of Mortomore's preaching content. However, it was plainly Pentecostal. One of the few surviving written articles of hers is a brief Bible study on dreams and visions. See GN 17:5 June 1926, p.17.

<sup>55</sup> Leonard Cook, personal interview, 30 January 1994; Ruth Dyer, personal interview, 28 January, 1994; N.Smallcombe, *Into the 21st Century* Cairns: Cairns Christian Centre, n.d., p.6; GN Vol 18, No2, February 1927, p.10.

<sup>56</sup> *Richmond Temple Souvenir*, 1939, p.42; see AE 6:11 October 1940, p.9; AE 13:1 December 1946, p.13f. See more on Dennis later in this chapter and in Appendix Ten.

In Toowoomba, in 1921, Mortomore and Couldrey held weekly meetings in the O'Brien home where many spoke in tongues for the first time.<sup>57</sup> Some members of the Churches of Christ congregation at Meringandan, an outreach from the church in Toowoomba, had a charismatic experience, including George Burns, who was later to pioneer a new church in Mackay.<sup>58</sup> Initially, Burns had been disturbed about Mortomore's ministry, fearing that she was bringing division and harm. He was ultimately disarmed by a kindly letter from Mortomore telling him they were praying for him to be led into the fullness of the Spirit. Burns was 'half amused and half annoyed' at the suggestion that he was not already Spirit-filled, but ultimately humbled himself and cried out to God for an outpouring of the Spirit in his life.<sup>59</sup>

At Maryborough, Mortomore spent months in 'pioneering, visiting and giving out' until an assembly was formed. So many people responded that she had to call her parents from Melbourne to shepherd them. This they gladly did, later moving to Brisbane to help with the church there.<sup>60</sup>

When Aimee McPherson withdrew from her commitment to preach for Good News Hall,<sup>61</sup> Mortomore courageously undertook to be the campaign speaker in the Exhibition Building in Brisbane. Lancaster and Winnie Andrews, the church secretary, journeyed from Melbourne to assist her. Small numbers

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<sup>57</sup> GN 19:7 July 1928, p.12.

<sup>58</sup> George Burns, 'A Tribute to Sister F.Mortomore,' GN 18:8, August 1927, p.15; for more on Burns see Chapter Eight.

<sup>59</sup> 'Sister O'Brien', 'Pentecost in Toowoomba,' AE 15:6, May 1949, p.18f; W.A.Buchanan, letter provided by Buchanan family. The first person in Toowoomba to experience the fullness of the Spirit was Edie Peters whose husband became one of the Pentecostal stalwarts in the district. Others to be affected were members of the Kajewski family. See H.Farnsworth, 'Pentecost in Toowoomba,' AE 15:6 May 1949, p.18. In 1945, a Kajewski family reunion was held at Toowoomba, and according to a contemporary report, 'all but about half a dozen' of the 93 descendants of the original couple were present. An accompanying photo shows about 60 family members. AE 11:11 October 1945, p.20f. It has already been mentioned that Florrie's brother Cyril married a Kajewski girl. Mortomore also awakened the interest of an accountant named Cecil Swenson (b.18 June 1906) and his wife Pearl (b.17 May 1906), whose kinfolk are still in the church although it was actually under the ministry of W.A.Buchanan, Lancaster's son in law, that the Swensons were filled with the Spirit. Cecil Swenson's son was surprised that it was his father, not his mother, who first experienced the Spirit's anointing, as his mother was 'a good woman' but his father was 'not such a good man.' He concluded that his father needed God's blessing more than his mother! See C.B.Swenson, 'Pentecost in Toowoomba,' AE 15:6, May 1949, p.16f; Pearl Swenson, personal interview, 16 April 1993..

<sup>60</sup> GN 16:9 September 1925, 17; J.Lancaster in GN 18:8 August 1927, 14.

<sup>61</sup> See Chapter Seven.

attended, but over a dozen people were converted to Christ.<sup>62</sup> A woman who had been ‘stone-deaf’ for six months received ‘perfect hearing.’ A lump immediately disappeared from another woman’s side. A woman whose knees were bandaged because of injured cartilages walked normally the next day and burned the bandages. A young insomniac slept peacefully through the whole night and continued to do so thereafter. Others claimed healing from neuritis and rheumatism. One woman was converted from Christian Science and baptised in the local Church of Christ the following Sunday night. Three people were baptised in the sea at Sandgate and five more in a waterhole. In Brisbane, there was now a small but sound congregation of about fifty people, with three meetings every Sunday.<sup>63</sup> Shortly afterwards they visited Nambour and began meetings there.<sup>64</sup>

The dedication and passion of Florrie Mortomore’s faith is indicated in an address she gave in Brisbane in 1922 at the Exhibition Buildings called ‘The Dragon’s Plot.’ In this study on Revelation chapter 12, she argued that the ‘woman’ represented all believers and that the ‘manchild’ signified a small body of more dedicated saints.<sup>65</sup> This company were those who had ‘set their whole hearts on purifying themselves, and are calling others to do the same, that their Bridegroom may find them ready when He comes, and receive them with joy.’ Was it against ‘respectable churchgoers’ that the Dragon was plotting? Or was it against those who were willing to go into the world to reach the lost and to stand for God’s truth? She concluded with a plea that

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<sup>62</sup> GN 9:1 February 1923, p.18. Further details about Florrie Mortomore’s Brisbane meetings are also from this source.

<sup>63</sup> GN 9:1 February 1923, p.23; H.Martin, ‘Queensland report of Evangelist Van Eyk’s Brisbane Visit,’ GN 18:4 April 1927, p.11.

<sup>64</sup> James Speer Conwell (1863-1943), a devout Presbyterian, was living with his family at Nambour when his son-in-law picked up a tract from Good News Hall at a railway siding. James read it and wrote to Melbourne for more information. As a result, Mortomore and Couldrey visited Nambour. Through their ministry, James was baptised in the Spirit, as was his son Thomas, together with a few neighbours. Tom Conwell’s family left the Presbyterian church and he began home meetings. This was the beginning of the Assembly of God work at Nambour — Allan and Jean Conwell, personal interview, c.1991; M. Penny, personal interview, 23 March 1992. Tom Conwell also initiated the work at Woombye — AE 12:5 April 1946, p.20.

<sup>65</sup> F.Mortomore, ‘The Dragon’s Plot,’ GN 14: 10, November 1923, p.3.

Christians would yield wholly to the Lord. While the validity of her exegesis might be questioned, the intensity of the application seems beyond question.<sup>66</sup>

In 1925, in an address on the 'Last Days', she drew heavily on the Bible, providing chapter and verse for every point — over 100 specific quotations in all! It is plain that there were several foundational beliefs to her philosophy of ministry. Firstly, she had a strong commitment to the authority and integrity of Scripture. Secondly, she clearly affirmed that salvation was secured on the basis of the atonement of Christ and that the Spirit of Jesus indwelt every believer. But to be in the body of Christ it was necessary to be baptised in the Holy Spirit for there was no other way into the body (1 Corinthians 12:13)<sup>67</sup>. First it was necessary to fulfil the conditions, especially repentance and baptism by immersion. It was important to obey God's Word in every respect, for God's 'true children' would 'rather die than dishonor [sic] God by denying Him.' The end of the age was fast approaching and the Lord would soon be returning for His Bride. There was no time for delay. It was important now to obey God's Word and ask for the 'latter rain' of the Spirit before it was too late.<sup>68</sup> Herb and Thera Smith were so challenged by Mortomore's message of total commitment, they journeyed in 1925 to Osaka, Japan, as missionaries,<sup>69</sup> as did the Neilsons of Townsville.<sup>70</sup>

In December 1923, Mortomore was back in Melbourne where she was one of several speakers at a special Christmas luncheon provided by the Mission for over a hundred 'poor and needy' people. 'In no millionaire's home was a Christmas dinner enjoyed more,' reported *Good News*.<sup>71</sup> In 1924, she was on the move again, travelling as far north as Cairns. In Maryborough she enjoyed

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<sup>66</sup> It is of interest that a similar view of the 'Rapture' was presented in 1913 in Melbourne by John Coombe, who became the founder of the Australian Nepalese Mission. See J.Coombe, 'The Rapture of the Saints,' sermon transcript, 31 July 1913. Van Eyk also drew a distinction between 'two classes of believers,' those who were in the kingdom and those who were in the Body of Christ — GN 17:12 December 1926, pp.5f.

<sup>67</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:13 — 'For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body...' (AV).

<sup>68</sup> F.Mortomore, 'In the Last Days,' GN 16:1 January 1925, pp.8-10.

<sup>69</sup> 'First Australian Recruits for Japan,' GN 17:3 March 1926, p.10f.

<sup>70</sup> GN 16:10 October 1925, p.10.

<sup>71</sup> GN 15:2 February 1924, p.20.

‘sweet fellowship’ with the believers there. One of the women of the church joined her<sup>72</sup> and they travelled on to Rockhampton, where she held tent meetings for most of June, with gatherings almost every night of the week. They unearthed some ‘precious jewels’ and three people ‘followed the Lord in the waters of baptism,’ one of them ‘so mightily under the power of God’ that he could hardly make it back to the tent. Florrie wrote, ‘Oh! May I ever be an emptied, cleansed channel to be used as He wills.’<sup>73</sup>

In Townsville, they were able to share the Word with a number of Aboriginal people. The young Enticknap brothers, who had been called to the ministry through the work of Annie Dennis, were evangelising there.<sup>74</sup> The two women continued to Mackay where they were greeted warmly and then went on to Cairns, where, on 9 December 1923, Bessie Couldrey had married widower Carl Lewis (Charles) Kajewski (1891-1976).

Here Mortomore was glad to help in the quest of all those who longed for ‘more of God and His righteousness.’ There were both white and ‘coloured folk’, both old and young. Of particular joy was the fact that groups of 40 to 50 Aborigines were now meeting together in and around Cairns, evidently the fruit of the work of Isabella Hetherington.<sup>75</sup> A few short years previously, ‘the glorious light of the Gospel with the accompanying baptism in the Holy Spirit had scarcely touched these places’ but that now there were ‘little companies of earnest Christians shining for Jesus, earnestly pressing on themselves and earnest for the blessing of others.’

In 1926, Lancaster visited Cairns. She reported that two Sunday services and an Apostolic Faith Sunday School were conducted regularly.<sup>76</sup>

All over Queensland and beyond, Florrie Mortomore won many hearts. Her simplicity of faith, her earnestness, her compassion, her dedication and her

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<sup>72</sup> This woman is identified only as ‘Sister B.D.’ or ‘Sister Bernice’. See GN 15:6 June 1924, p.9; 15:11 November 1924, p.11

<sup>73</sup> GN 15:6 June 1924, 9; 15:11 November 1924, p.11

<sup>74</sup> GN 16:9 September 1925, p.17. See further on Annie Dennis in this chapter and in Appendix Ten. On Charles and Will Enticknap, see Chapter Thirteen and Appendix Ten.

<sup>75</sup> See Chapter Eleven.

<sup>76</sup> GN 18:2, Feb 1927, p.10.



sweet disposition disarmed the most antagonistic. Only 36 years old, but again suffering ill health, she returned to Brisbane where in late 1926, Lancaster wrote of the ‘hallowed joy’ she experienced in being reunited with her and others there.<sup>77</sup>

By now there were two congregations in Brisbane — one at Woolloowin pastored by Harold Martin and one at the West End Mission House led by Mortomore, where sick and needy people were taken in and cared for.<sup>78</sup> Baptist layman F.W.W.Bates told how he had thought Pentecostal teaching was evil, but after meeting Mortomore, he was convinced of its truth. On 9 July he received the Spirit.<sup>79</sup> Mortomore was just as delighted with being able to give a New Testament to a small boy as she was when crowds came to her meetings.<sup>80</sup> Meanwhile, her health did not improve. Although Pentecostal ministers were later to recognise that divine healing may not apply when there has been bodily abuse, in those pioneering days, anything other than absolute trust in God for recovery could be seen as a lack of faith.<sup>81</sup> A call for increased prayer was issued.<sup>82</sup> That year, although her work was openly honoured, she was not asked to serve on the Apostolic Faith Mission council. ‘Our sister's health is too valuable,’ wrote Lancaster, ‘for the Conference to impose the strenuous duties of a Councillor upon her.’<sup>83</sup>

In 1927, in spite of the many prayers, she passed away. At the young age of 37, she had, to quote one member, ‘burned out for God and precious souls.’<sup>84</sup> Winnie Andrews wrote —

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<sup>77</sup> J.Lancaster, ‘The Editor Visits Queensland,’ GN 18:1 January 1927, p.10.

<sup>78</sup> Roy Valentine, private communication, 11 July 1994; GN 16:12 December 1925, p.19; GN 18:7 July 1927, p.19; GN 21:6 June 1930, p.7.

<sup>79</sup> GN 19:8 August 1928, p.7.

<sup>80</sup> GN, 17:3 March 1926, p.12.

<sup>81</sup> See B.Phillips, *The Life Story of Beryl Phillips* published by the author, 1985, p.5. ‘One time I was away with the pastor (C.L.Greenwood) and his family at Daylesford Springs for a rest. He was suffering from bad carbuncles on his neck, and when I asked why God didn’t heal him, he said he hadn’t the faith to ask for healing because he had worked too hard and needed rest.’

<sup>82</sup> GN, 18:2 February 1927, 19.

<sup>83</sup> GN 18: 6 June 1927, p.11.

<sup>84</sup> W.A.Buchanan, letter, quoted in Chant, 1984:45.

A few short weeks have sufficed to show the magnitude of her self-sacrificing labors for her beloved Lord, for all over Queensland we find rejoicing hearts, and lives sweetened, as the direct result of the life-giving word which she preached.<sup>85</sup>

A former neighbour in Lilydale wrote, 'I shall never forget the wonderful address (the last I heard her give) from Psalm 45: "The king's daughter is all glorious within"; the way this dear, weak sister held forth in a strong voice, her very being pulsating with love and joy, was indeed, an inspiration to all present.'<sup>86</sup> Her mother described her death in moving terms —

Her end was sweet and peaceful; she did long for someone to continue in prayer most of the time. Saturday midday she asked for all to get down and pray for victory; it was a very busy day for most but God touched hearts and prayers ascended in real earnest. Father had a vision: 'all the cushions and carpet were sprinkled with earth.' I knew too well what that meant: 'Earth to earth.' During the evening she would have us sing hymns of victory and she joined in the singing ...

When we said, 'Jesus,' she would repeat it. We think she had a vision once; her face lit up, she smiled so sweetly and said: 'Blessed Jesus.' She died with 'Jesus' on her lips. Nurse Green said she never saw such a peaceful death — no struggling, just a simple falling asleep.<sup>87</sup>

A photo published at the time of her death shows her looking much older than her 37 years. But there is a serenity and an intensity in her gaze that reflects both her peace with God and her determination to serve Him unswervingly. After her death, Lancaster found a poem written in her handwriting which, as Lancaster put it, 'express(ed) her inmost feelings and desires' —

Laid on Thine altar, O my Lord divine,  
Accept this gift to-day for Jesus' sake.  
I have no jewels to adorn Thy shrine,  
Nor any world-famed sacrifice to make;  
But, here, I bring within my trembling hand  
This will of mine — a thing that seemeth small,

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<sup>85</sup> 'Secretary's Report of Brisbane Campaign,' GN 18:11 November 1927, p.10.

<sup>86</sup> F.W.Perrin, 'A Tribute of Christian Love,' GN 18:8 August 1927, p.15.

<sup>87</sup> GN 18:8 August 1927, p.15.

And Thou, O Lord, alone canst understand  
How, when I yield Thee this, I yield mine all.<sup>88</sup>

### **Pauline Heath (c.1889-1940)**

Pauline Heath (c.1889-1940), like Sarah Jane Lancaster, pastored a Pentecostal congregation for many years. Having spent her childhood in India, where her father was a railwayman, and having been brought up as an Anglican, at the age of 21, she drifted away from the church.<sup>89</sup> Two years later, influenced by the writings of Thomas Paine, W.G.Foote and Robert Blatchford, she declared herself an agnostic, and became 'strong in her arguments for agnosticism,'<sup>90</sup> although she formed a set of rules by which she sought to direct her life. 'I was going to live ethically, be good, honest, truthful, helping and cheering others, to sacrifice myself, and help those I met into a happier frame of mind,' she said. She believed her philosophy was based on the teaching of Jesus and so felt reassured that all was well with her life.

However, for the next two decades, she felt increasingly despondent. Her motives were pure, but 'failure heaped on failure,' among them a divorce.<sup>91</sup> Since 1922, she had been the successful and popular proprietor of the Lone Hand Cafe in Rundle Street, Adelaide, but was still discontent.<sup>92</sup> Her parents continued to pray for her and to urge her to believe.

Then, having been depressed for months, at the age of 41, she met Gustav Jansen, someone she felt she could trust and stirred by his story, she attended the Apostolic Mission in Adelaide. 13 November 1925, she made a public commitment to Christ. It was a transforming experience.

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<sup>88</sup> GN 18:8 August 1927, p.8. It is not clear whether Mortomore composed these verses herself or simply copied them.

<sup>89</sup> GN 17:6 June 1926, p.7; BSC XII:2 December 1940, p.2ff; N.Fabian, personal interview, 15 August 1991.

<sup>90</sup> *The News*, 30 November 1927.

<sup>91</sup> N.Fabian, personal interview, 15 August 1991.

<sup>92</sup> *The News* 31 March 1927.

As a result of her conversion, she was filled with joy and love. She gave up smoking, but began to be beset by doubts. How could she know what had happened to her was real? Then, two months later, she, received the Spirit —

As I prayed, *something happened*. A softness of power fell upon me bringing with it a fragrance and soothing. How can I express the things of GOD in the words of man? Words fail. But there *was* an answer ... A voice, a vision, a message, yes, that would have been according to my idea, but this, *this soft, sweet power*. What was it? What could it be but the answer? Here then was the God I had been searching for ... I was satisfied... But GOD, Who knew the hardness of my heart, knew also that I needed more. For even as I attempted to rise from my knees ... the POWER fell. This time, not sweet and fragrant, but like a stroke of lightning, like a swift electric current, like an overwhelming flood, it held me, I could not rise. It took possession, I could not kneel. Every muscle was visited, every nerve dealt with, till I lay on the floor, helpless under the POWER of GOD ... I lay there for more than an hour.<sup>93</sup>

The spirit of Pentecost had done its work. She was never to look back again. Some thought her mad; others believed her testimony.<sup>94</sup>

By 1927, at the age of 38, she was the acknowledged leader of the work and known affectionately by the members of the Mission as ‘Sister Joy’. Regular, although small, newspaper advertisements presented her as ‘Sister P.A.Heath, the Ex-agnostic Gospel Preacher,’<sup>95</sup> with Hines Retchford as song leader. An undated flyer draws special attention to her being a woman, inviting people to ‘Hear Adelaide’s Ex-agnostic Lady Preacher.’ No collections were taken and she received no salary. She was ‘absolutely out on faith’ trusting God for her needs to be met.<sup>96</sup> In 1930, the Mission launched an eight page quarterly called *The Apostolic News*.<sup>97</sup> Only original articles were published.

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<sup>93</sup> P.Heath, letter to the congregation at the Mission, 15 January 1937, copy from Gus Jansen; ‘Promoted to Glory,’ BSC XII:2 December 1940, p.4.

<sup>94</sup> M.M.Fabian, AN 3:2 December 1931, page number deleted; GN 16:12 December 1925, p.14. Reference is made here to a woman who was so filled with praise at her conversion that she was henceforth called ‘Joy’. See also GN 17:6 June 1926, p.7.

<sup>95</sup> eg *The News*, 31 March 1927; 7 July 1927; 30 September, 1927.

<sup>96</sup> AN 1:4 June 1930, p.2.

<sup>97</sup> In 1937, the Mission became the Bible Standard Mission and the name was changed in December of that year to the *Bible Standard Call*. From a historian’s viewpoint there is an

The Mission did not grow significantly over the ensuing years. But Sister Joy was not overly concerned; she always counted a small dedicated group of people more valuable than a large group of indifferent ones.<sup>98</sup> She spent a great deal of time in prayer — even to the point of wearing dark glasses to cover the redness in her eyes caused by weeping in intercession.<sup>99</sup> ‘We all knew when we were prayed for!’ recalled Norm Fabian, the man who succeeded her as pastor.<sup>100</sup>

Heath’s story illustrates very clearly the power of experience in affirming a religious conviction. A few lines evidently written by her appeared both in *Good News* and *The Apostolic News*. They reflect her spirit and heart for the faith she professed —

Give me, my God, that upward look,  
That gazes but on Thee;  
That senses naught on earth, but grasps  
Thy matchless majesty ...  
That realises while on earth  
My life is lived with Thee,  
Hidden in Christ, and Thou alone,  
Life’s grand Reality.<sup>101</sup>

For eight years — from December 1932 to her death in 1940 — Heath published a series of short Bible studies on the Song of Solomon, some 32 in all. She got as far as chapter two verse 15. With tender tones, and a sense of longing and intimate love reminiscent of that of the mystic Teresa of Avila or the effusive Mother Julian of Norwich or the passionate Richard Rolle, she dwells lovingly on the Bride’s relationship with the Bridegroom and her exquisite communion with Him. The spirit of Pentecost is hardly anywhere more intimately portrayed —

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annoying anonymity in the *News*. But this was a matter of policy: ‘...we do not print names in our paper except in very exceptional cases...’ — BSC 11:2 December 1939, p.4.

<sup>98</sup> L.Hart, personal interview, n.d. but c. 1970.

<sup>99</sup> L.Hart, interview; Norman Fabian, interview, 15 August 1991.

<sup>100</sup> N.Fabian, personal interview, 15 August 1991.

<sup>101</sup> GN September 17:9 1926, p.5; AN 1:4 June 1930, p.4.

Her beloved has called to her. She awakes. She hears. She moves. There is but one who could thus stir her heart, for there is only one who has won and now holds her love. ‘Listen, listen,’ she whispers, ‘it is the voice of my beloved.’

Hast thou a beloved, O soul of mine? Does the word of the Shulamite rouse an answering throb in thine heart? Is there *one* voice for whose tones thou art ever listening? Art thou waiting and longing to hear it?<sup>102</sup>

Or,

Earthly kisses lose their freshness ... But with the Bridegroom, Who loves with everlasting love, there is no weariness. Each new kiss comes with its own abiding joy, and a sweet promise of more yet to be ...<sup>103</sup>

Or,

And knowing Him, seeing the banner of love floating overhead, the eyes of the Bride turn to Him Who has won her love, and the strength of that love overwhelms her. Her head drops on His bosom, she feels his Arm of strength around her, and she cries.<sup>104</sup>

Or,

My Beloved is mine ... yea, all this and more, much more, O soul of mine. He is mine to speak to — mine to look to — mine to love — mine to care for me — mine to succour me — mine to understand my pain — mine to increase my joy — mine to walk with me all along my weary pilgrim path — mine to enfold me in His own love — mine to take me to be with Himself for ever ...<sup>105</sup>

Yet in spite of this affective focus, there is a warning of the dangers of depending on experience alone. It was faith, not feeling, that pleased God. To seek emotional experiences was to allow feelings ‘to usurp the place of the Word of God and of faith in that Word.’<sup>106</sup> The spirit of Pentecost was central to Heath’s ministry, but never to the supplanting of Scripture. In all her published articles, Bible studies and sermons, the use of the biblical texts was

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<sup>102</sup> BSC 9:3 March 1938, p.9.

<sup>103</sup> AN 4:3 March 1933, pp.6,7.

<sup>104</sup> AN 8:3 March 1937, p.12.

<sup>105</sup> BSC XI:4 June 1940, p.10.

<sup>106</sup> ‘Faith or Feeling,’ AN 8:4 June 1937, p.2.

paramount. She had no theological training but spoke ‘by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost’.

She regularly conducted open air meetings at Kingston Statue, in the city of Adelaide, and in Botanic Park, and occasionally organised special series of meetings.<sup>107</sup> Prophesying was an integral part of worship in the Mission, and the texts of these prophecies were occasionally printed. Heath’s interpretations of utterances in tongues, usually spoken in conjunction with a prepared sermon, were also published. One newspaper advertisement even quoted one.<sup>108</sup>

Like most Pentecostal interpretations it was largely a restatement of Scripture (in this case Psalm 45 and Revelation chapter 19) with a positive note of encouragement, proclamation and urgency.<sup>109</sup> Others of Heath’s interpretations were disarmingly simple (‘Behind the written word stands the living Word, the glorious invisible Saviour who reveals himself in secret to the loving heart’). Others were more profound —

We revive the memory of His humiliation;  
we make a sacrament of His shame.  
Through centuries,  
His death is associated with His glory;  
and when we preach,  
it is the preaching of the Cross.

Or,

With His own hand  
He lights the beacon fire  
from hilltop to hilltop

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<sup>107</sup> *The News*, 30 November 1927.

<sup>108</sup> *Advertiser*, 1 October 1927.

<sup>109</sup> The text of one advertisement read — SUNDAY 7 p.m. SISTER HEATH CONDUCTS SERVICES. Being filled with the Holy Spirit, she often speaks with other tongues and interpretations as the Spirit gives her utterance. One message last Sunday night was, ‘Arise, Oh Lord Jesus! Arise in Thy [sic] might and plead Thy Own cause. Thou Who art King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Whose vesture is dipped in blood. Ride gloriously forth in Thy might. Ride gloriously forth because of meekness, truth and righteousness. Arise and gird on Thy sword that all the earth be filled with Thy Presence and Salvation, his earth which Thou hast redeemed with Thy most precious blood.’ Prove all things. Come and hear her who for 20 years was an agnostic and only converted two years ago. All welcome. No collection.

till their wandering eyes  
 look back to the gates of Paradise  
 and there they see in glowing letters  
 the words God Omnipotent hath said,  
 'The woman's seed shall bruise the serpent's head.'<sup>110</sup>

These were not just ecstatic outbursts. They illustrate the subtle rhythms and striking imagery of a person with a natural feel for language and a deft balance between contemplation, inspiration and imagination. Heath's praying, too, was impressive. 'Sister Joy would lift you up to heaven when she was anointed by the Holy Spirit in prayer,' said Fabian.<sup>111</sup>

In spite of seven years of faithful ministry, inevitably, some disaffection arose about female leadership. So in 1934, Heath stepped down as pastor and took the title evangelist 'owing to the belief among our brethren in Christ that a woman is not permitted to be a pastor according to the Scriptures'.<sup>112</sup> However, Norm Fabian, the new pastor, later made the wry comment, 'We just carried on as usual.'<sup>113</sup> The titles had changed, but the roles had not.

Two years later, after preaching at the Bible Standard Church in Melbourne, Heath was offered a preacher's credential from them, which she accepted. She was pleased to find that she and the leader, Dr Mina Brawner, agreed on almost all points of doctrine.<sup>114</sup> In 1940, a building was erected in Compton Street, Adelaide, for the Mission. Sadly, Sister Joy never saw the fruition of this project. On 6 October, at the age of fifty, before the building was completed, she died of cancer and the key was first turned by her grand daughter.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Pauline Heath, 'Tongues and Interpretation.' This is a seven-page document provided by Norm Fabian and attributed by him to Heath

<sup>111</sup> N.Fabian, personal interview, 15 August 1991..

<sup>112</sup> AN 5:4 June 1934, p.1.

<sup>113</sup> N.Fabian, personal interview, 15 August 1991.

<sup>114</sup> P.Heath, letter to the congregation at the Mission, 15 January 1937. See further on Brawner in this chapter.

<sup>115</sup> For reports of the new building see BSC XI:3 March 1940, p.1; BSC XII:1, September 1940, p.1. See also N.Fabian, personal interview, 15 August 1991.



### **Ellen Caroline ('Nellie') Mather (b.1894)**

Ellen Caroline ('Nellie') Mather (b.1894) was brought up on a farm in Gippsland, where she suffered with a gradual deterioration of the spinal cord and was bedfast much of the time. By the time she was 27, she was in so much pain she began to long for death. Any physical exertion would leave her exhausted for days. In September 1922, she heard of Aimee McPherson's meetings in Wirth's Olympia in Melbourne and arranged to be taken there. During this time, she felt something like an electric shock go through her body and realised she was healed. Over the next few days, there was a struggle of faith as some of the symptoms reappeared, but she persisted in trusting God and soon was free of all pain and working hard on the farm without difficulty.<sup>116</sup>

Within a year, she preached for the first time in a Methodist church at Allandale, in South Australia. In 1924, she and her recently widowed mother established a boarding house in Geelong, Victoria. During that time, she began to hunger for a deeper spiritual experience and visited Robert Horne's Southern Evangelical Mission, where after praying for several days, she was baptised in the Holy Spirit —

The hunger for the blessing intensified until I felt broken-hearted and almost despairing of ever receiving the gift as I wept and wept before the Lord.

Suddenly it seemed as if liquid glory began flowing all over me and presently I began singing a beautiful melody in a language I had never learned. My tears of anguish and despair were turned to tears of joy and gladness. As I sang on and on a great joy was almost overwhelming me and my heart was overflowing with praises to the God of Heaven for hearing my prayer ...<sup>117</sup>

She had imbibed the spirit of Pentecost. In 1926, she enrolled in the newly-established Victorian Bible Institute. She later described life at the College —

The school was a two-storey building with a large lecture hall and many other rooms both upstairs and downstairs. My biggest difficulty was finding a place

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<sup>116</sup> GN 15:12 December 1924, pp.12f; Jordan, 1970., pp.14ff. Further details are from this source unless otherwise stated. Ellen (Nellie) Jordan's maiden name was Nellie Mather.

<sup>117</sup> Jordan, 1970, p.51.

where I could get alone to pray. One morning... I made my way quietly down stairs, through the lecture hall and into the printing press enclosure. It was just what I needed...

The young men students having apparently agreed together to try out the printing press, rose early and came bustling into the printing press enclosure to try their skill at printing. Needless to say that put an end to my sanctuary ...One day I discovered an empty built-in wardrobe just a few doors away from our sleeping quarters, and I thought, 'I have found a place at last.' This one worked well for quite a time (apart from the stuffy feeling...) One morning, I was down on the floor in prayer in the wardrobe when suddenly the door flew open. I don't know who received the biggest fright, the young man or I...<sup>118</sup>

In October 1927, a 'tall, slim, dignified young woman,'<sup>119</sup> she launched out with a companion named Grace Greig in itinerant ministry.<sup>120</sup> Armed with a few hymn books, a collapsible chair and a small folding organ, they began by setting up in the street, just the two of them, and singing and preaching. After some rugged activities in Gippsland, they bought a second-hand car and ministered in Castlemaine. Then Mather was invited to pastor a Pentecostal church in Bendigo which she did for a few months until 'Daddy' Clarkson, a former Salvation Army officer, took over. In June 1930, she and her mother were invited to serve in Ballarat for three months. The church, heavily in debt, was under the impression Mather had agreed to 'trust the Lord for her needs' and she laboured for several weeks in the cold of winter without any income. Finally, they gave her five pounds.<sup>121</sup> Not surprisingly, at the end of her term, Mather moved back to Bendigo, where she recuperated from a time of ill health, and then conducted meetings in many towns throughout country areas. In Echuca, over 50 people attended meetings — in spite of the town band playing right outside the hall.<sup>122</sup> In Wonthaggi, she slept in a tent for three months and suffered privation through lack of food and money. But there were

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<sup>118</sup> Jordan, 1970, pp.56f. See also GN December 1924, pp.12f.

<sup>119</sup> S.Douglas, personal interview, 21 November 1989.

<sup>120</sup> A.Davidson, personal interview, 20 November 1990; RTS, 1939, p.27.

<sup>121</sup> *Minutes of Assembly of God Church* (originally called Pentecostal Church), Ballarat Branch, 16 June 1930, 4 July 1930 and 21 July 1930.

<sup>122</sup> AE December 1930, p.10.

rewards. Here, a young woman with a spinal injury was healed after anointing with oil, as was a woman with painful legs and a man with damage to his eye. One day, she prayed for a turnip to make soup: the next day she found one on the road. It was an encouraging sign of God's grace.

At the beginning of 1937, after a brief stay in Melbourne, Mather was back in Ballarat. The assembly's financial woes had not been alleviated. There were only a dozen people attending members' meetings and in May 1931, they still could not afford to pay a pastor. By 1937, they were able to offer a small stipend of around two pounds a week — a target they sometimes did not meet but which eventually was increased. Mather and her strong-minded assistant Gladys Williams were offered a twelve month term of office, which was renewed the following year. During this time, baptismal services were held in the City Baths, even in winter. After another six months, Mather declined a further invitation as she had 'other definite prospects'.<sup>123</sup> The congregation was grateful for her and her companion's efforts. The membership had doubled and many were baptised in the Holy Spirit.<sup>124</sup>

In 1939, Mather moved to Queensland and took over the Gympie Assembly of God church. She was not averse to hard work, and readily helped with milking a herd of 94 cows when the machines broke down. She also ministered in other towns in Queensland, before moving to Brisbane where she was to spend the next fourteen years, pastoring the Full Gospel Assembly at Woolloongabba, assisted still by Williams.<sup>125</sup> 'We had a visit from Sisters Mather and Williams,' wrote the pastor at Maryborough, 'and their ministry was greatly appreciated (and) enjoyed by all.'<sup>126</sup> She was willing to do anything — even sewing for Aboriginals at Daintree, 'from daylight to dark.'<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> *Minutes* Ballarat, 31 December 1936, 24 October 1937 to 16 April 1939.

<sup>124</sup> *Minutes* Ballarat, 7 May 1939.

<sup>125</sup> AE 7:7 June 1941, p.16.

<sup>126</sup> AE 7:1 December 1940 p.12.

<sup>127</sup> F.Lancaster, personal interview, 18 December 1993.

All through her ministry, Mather loved to conduct open air meetings, playing her portable organ or piano accordion as well as preaching.<sup>128</sup>

Ian Munro, in his foreword to Mather's autobiography, pays tribute to her ministry —

Her reputation as a spiritual and loving shepherd of the flock of God, was held in exceedingly high esteem, among the circles in which she moved. Her dedication to the call of Christ and obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit, were at all times a direct inspiration ... She was always a pioneer, and has never sought or asked an easy road.<sup>129</sup>

### **Mina Ross Brawner (b. c.1880)**

Mina Ross Brawner was an American medical practitioner who, feeling called to Australia, arrived in Sydney in 1927.<sup>130</sup> She was welcomed into the Northbridge home of Jotham and Kate Metcalfe which she used as an operating base and where she had 'a deep-cushioned chair' where every morning she spent time in prayer.<sup>131</sup> Prior to her conversion in 1904, Kate Metcalfe had been constantly ill, and 'could not go two days without medicine.' She had not touched any since. She had also been baptised in the Holy Spirit, evidently through Lancaster's ministry.<sup>132</sup>

Brawner was a good speaker and made effective use of her medical training to illustrate her preaching of the gospel. She was dramatic in both dress and manner, her Aimee McPherson-styled gown and her white hair creating an impressive image. 'All the kids in Balmain and Rozelle thought she was an angel,' recalled one man.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> In 1949 in Brisbane she married, but within days of the wedding, her husband, a World War Two veteran, died. Six years later she married again, this time a widower named Jordan, who died in his sleep in 1961. In 1970, at the age of 76, Mather married Methodist minister Henry Lawson-Smith, at Pakenham East, Victoria, where they continued to minister together. See Jordan, 1970, pp.133ff.

<sup>129</sup> Jordan, 1970, 'Foreword,' no page number.

<sup>130</sup> GN 19:12 December 1928, p.11. For background details on Brawner see Appendix Ten.

<sup>131</sup> GN 18:6 September 1927, p.19; 20:3 March 1929, p.5.

<sup>132</sup> GN 1:6 October 1913, p.11.

<sup>133</sup> N.L.Armstrong, personal interview, October 1993.

On 27 October 1928, she was accepted into the Apostolic Faith Mission as a Pastor-Evangelist.<sup>134</sup> She wrote a series of articles in *Good News* under the title, ‘Woman in the Word’, which later appeared as a book, published at Good News Hall. In this work, she unashamedly advocated the public ministry of women. As a doctor, she had served equally with men and been taxed equally with men. Why could she not preach equally? Both man and woman were named ‘Adam’ by God (Genesis 5:2). They were both given dominion over the earth. The ‘female man’ was the culprit in the Fall and thus her independence was lost. But through the Saviour, there was hope. As both male and female received the sentence of death, so in Christ, both receive life. In arguing her case, she unashamedly touched the emotions —

Ah! Blind, loving, hopeless women, your tear-dimmed eyes have missed a wondrous sight, for your Lord and Saviour went to His death holding in one hand the curse that rested upon all mankind because of sin, and in the other He held your special curse, while upon His brow He bore the curse of thorns. He lifted the curses up on the Cross where God and angels and men might see them, and when the thorns pierced His brow and the nails were driven through His dear hands, our curse was borne, our debt was cancelled ...

Every curse pronounced in Eden He bore in His own body on the tree ... So weave the chaplet, thoughtless soldiers, entwine it about His holy brow; nothing becomes Him so much as the crown of thorns, for it is the *crown of suffering*, the *crown of the curse*, the *Crown of love*.<sup>135</sup>

Jesus did not prevent the woman at the well from preaching. The Psalmist prophesied, ‘The Lord gave the Word; great was the company of women that published it’ (Psalm 68:11, RV). Joel foretold an outpouring of the Spirit on both men and women who would prophesy (Joel 2:28f)<sup>136</sup>. This passage, quoted by Peter at Pentecost, was the ‘Magna Charta’ [sic] of the Church. It gave men and women, slaves and servants, Jews and Gentiles, an ‘absolute unalienable right, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, to prophesy, or

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<sup>134</sup> GN 20:5 May 1929, p.12.

<sup>135</sup> GN 20:7 July 1929, p.13.

<sup>136</sup> Joel 2:28f — ‘And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and daughters shall prophesy... and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit’ (AV).

preach, in the Church.’<sup>137</sup> Phoebe was not just a deacon, but the ‘minister’ or ‘pastor’ of the church at Cenchrea (Romans 15:1). Priscilla, Mary, Junia, Tryphena, Tryphosa — these and others were all preachers of the word.<sup>138</sup> If the word *πρεσβυτερον* in 1 Timothy 5:1 could mean male elder, why could not *πρεσβυτερα* mean female elder?<sup>139</sup> The ‘symbol of authority’ on a woman’s head (1 Corinthians 11:10) was not a hat but the anointing of the Holy Spirit. In Christ there was neither male nor female — we are all one. Finally, a challenge—

You may as well make room for us, brothers. We are here in the fulfillment of prophecy. The Lord gave the Word, that is, He has given us plentiful matter for speaking; we are never at a loss for a message.<sup>140</sup>

Evangelist Norman Armstrong tells how Brawner came to his father’s small church around this time and preached on Noah’s ark, pointing out that the animals had more sense than the humans. ‘I didn’t want to be less sensible than a monkey,’ he said, ‘so I was converted.’<sup>141</sup>

At the end of 1928, Brawner organised a tent campaign in Mosman, New South Wales. Brawner herself assisted Jotham Metcalfe and some of the men as she ‘pulled ropes, drove stakes, sawed boards, and did a man’s work all week.’ The holiday season was not the best time to open a campaign, but by mid-1929, she could report that she had preached 85 times in the tent, that there was a group of 25 to 30 people meeting regularly and that 24 adults had professed conversion in addition to many children. These figures could be trusted, she said, because she would ‘never inflate a report.’ She only counted those as converts who she had reason to believe had a ‘real experience’ of the Lord.<sup>142</sup> She had a regular program of preaching —

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<sup>137</sup> GN 20:11 November 1929, p.13,

<sup>138</sup> GN 20:12 December 1929, p.13.

<sup>139</sup> GN 21:1 January 1930, p.12; 21:3 March 1930, p.12.

<sup>140</sup> GN 21:1 January 1930, p.12.

<sup>141</sup> N.L.Armstrong, personal interview, October 1993. Note that Armstrong says this happened in 1927, but it could not have been before mid-1928. See M.Brawner, ‘My Own Story,’ GN 19:12 December 1928, p.10f.

<sup>142</sup> GN 20:3 March 1929, p.15.

Sunday afternoon — a message to Christians  
 Sunday night — the gospel of salvation  
 Tuesday night — divine healing  
 Wednesday night — the Holy Spirit  
 Thursday night — the second coming  
 Friday night — open air gospel meeting  
 Saturday afternoon — prayer and/or tarrying meeting<sup>143</sup>

The address given at the dedication of the tent mission clearly demonstrates both her Christocentric approach and her Pentecostal convictions. She spoke of Apostolic faith, of Apostolic preaching, of Apostolic signs. There was a strong emphasis on the need to be baptised in the Holy Spirit and on divine healing and speaking in tongues —

*Lord send another Pentecost!* Another rushing mighty wind, another sound from heaven; the world is fed up on sounds from hell and is waiting now to hear from heaven. I am looking for such a mighty revival that the very atmosphere about this tent will be charged with the breath of the Almighty, a spiritual cyclone! And it is coming, too. Bless God, 'I hear the sound of abundance of rain!'<sup>144</sup>

In 1929, Brawner spent the year in Ballarat, Victoria, where the assembly purchased a disused Lutheran Church building. During this time, some 50 people professed conversion, 17 were baptised in water and 19 in the Spirit.<sup>145</sup> The following year, she conducted a series of evangelistic campaigns in Victoria and Queensland, accompanied by Winnie Andrews. She had rewarding meetings in Good News Hall and then in Castlemaine.<sup>146</sup> For five weeks, through July and early August, she preached in Brisbane, often in the streets.<sup>147</sup> She held meetings for the unemployed and addressed a gathering of Methodist Lay Preachers, who urged her to address them again on her return. She and Andrews journeyed on to Rockhampton, Mackay and Townsville,

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<sup>143</sup> GN 20:5 May 1929, p.14.

<sup>144</sup> GN 20:3 March 1929, p.5.

<sup>145</sup> GN 20:6 June 1929, p.11; GN 20:9 September 1929, pp.12f.

<sup>146</sup> GN 21:5 May 1920, p.20; GN 21:7 July 1930, p.2.

<sup>147</sup> GN 21:10 October 1930, p.10. Following details about Brawner's work are from this source unless otherwise stated.

ministering in each place. Finally, in August, eighteen months after Van Eyk's memorable visit, they arrived in Cairns.

That night, the first of the campaign, 'several hundreds' gathered and stood for half an hour at an open air meeting and some proceeded to the hall for the commencing rally, where there were four converts. On Sunday 17 August, her topic was 'The End in Sight.' Taking as her text 2 Peter 3:3-4,<sup>148</sup> she challenged those who scoffed at the signs of the Coming of the Lord to consider the state of the world — the growth of population, the increasing shortage of food, the demands on energy resources, the escalating armament industry and the rising evidence of moral decadence. 'The outlook,' she declared, 'is bad, but the uplook is glorious.' God would one day lift His hand and bring an end to 'the mad rush of lawlessness' and when Christ returned the earth would be filled with the glory of the Lord.<sup>149</sup>

On the last Sunday night in August, a 'splendid open-air meeting' was held outside the Palace Theatre, where there were a thousand people 'listening attentively.' This was followed by a well-attended indoor service. During the campaign, there were twelve professions of faith and thirteen acknowledged cases of healing. Winnie Andrews reported that the local press gave favourable coverage and that almost the whole community heard the word of the Lord.<sup>150</sup>

In nearby Yungaburra, several people also claimed healing and spiritual blessing. On 26 September, a 'car-load of saints' travelled from Cairns and joined the group there in prayer. Several spoke in tongues including Beulah, a child of eleven, who had specifically come from Cairns to 'get under the showers of Latter Rain.' It was an occasion for both wonder and joy.. Brawner reported her wonder at listening to 'the Heavenly Orchestra ... playing the most heavenly music.' This phenomenon of an unseen symphony continued for half

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<sup>148</sup> 2 Pet 3:3-4 — 'Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation' (AV).

<sup>149</sup> CP, 21 August 1930.

<sup>150</sup> The description of these meetings is based on Winnie Andrews' report in *Good News*. Len Cook Jr does not remember large crowds attending or a significant number of conversions or new members to the church. See GN 21: 12 December 1930, p.10; Len Cook, personal interview, 30 January 1994.



an hour, and several of them heard it. For a while, there seemed to be only stringed instruments; then it sounded like ‘a supernatural full orchestra.’ Others spoke of their joy in receiving the Spirit. ‘Oh it was so sweet! She is just bubbling over with joy,’ wrote Winnie Andrews of one lady. And of another, she said, ‘Her mouth was filled with laughter’ and she was ‘full right up to the top.’<sup>151</sup>

After the meetings in Cairns, Brawner planned to spend a few days on the Coulters’ farm on the Atherton Tablelands. Here, she held a few home meetings and ‘the power and glory of God fell in a mighty way,’ with the result that she stayed for twelve days and six people were baptised in the Spirit, including Mrs Coulters, who had been praying for ten years to be filled, and her daughter Gladys. Consequently, Brawner hired the Oddfellows Hall at Atherton and on 26 October, 1930, began another campaign.<sup>152</sup> For six weeks she persisted with regular meetings in the face of considerable opposition and little response. But there were encouraging features. One young man missed a ride but walked six miles to the meeting. Another determined to rid himself of his business of growing tobacco. Some were healed. A few were baptised in the Barron River. On 9 December, a small church was formed. The church was not an organisation, Brawner declared, but an organism in which people could work together harmoniously. So those who joined, did so of their own free will. Nor was there any competition with others —

We have no quarrel with any other body of Christians, but we are devoted to Apostolic Christianity. We have Apostolic aims, for we feel that the Church Jesus calls for must conform to the pattern of the Church He established; therefore, we preach Apostolic Doctrines, and look for Apostolic results. That is why we call ourselves ‘Apostolic Faith,’ that the world and our fellow Christians may know just what we stand for — viz., all that the Apostles preached.<sup>153</sup>

In 1931, Brawner was ministering in Brisbane again. In March, a service of unity was held for the Pentecostal people in Brisbane — a gathering enhanced

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<sup>151</sup> GN 21:11 November 1930, p.12.

<sup>152</sup> W.Andrews. ‘Dr Brawner’s Cairns Campaign,’ GN 21:12 December 1930, p.10.

<sup>153</sup> GN 22:2 February 1931, p.11.

by the involvement of W.H.W.Lavers, who, together with his People's Evangelistic Mission, decided to link up with the Apostolic Faith Mission. Perhaps inspired by the not inconsiderable success of William Booth-Clibborn's tent mission,<sup>154</sup> they launched a similar project. About 75 people were present as they dedicated their United Portable Tabernacle for evangelism at Spring Hill. That night several hundred people crowded in to hear the gospel and 20 people were converted.<sup>155</sup> From then on, about 150 people attended nightly. In the first two weeks, some 112 conversions were recorded. After ten weeks, there were close to 300.<sup>156</sup> It was Depression time, so offerings were small — about 15 shillings a week, mostly pennies. But they felt they had to go on. After ten weeks, and the conversion of several young people, Ernest Tooth, the church secretary, claimed that Spring Hill had been deeply stirred.<sup>157</sup> Meanwhile, plans were going ahead to secure another hall on the opposite side of the valley from Lavers' church for the original AFM assembly and a small 'Bible and Theological Training College' was established.<sup>158</sup> 'I praise God that ever I came in contact with Doctor Brawner,' said Lavers, 'for she has been a tower of strength, and her life is a living testimony.'<sup>159</sup>

In July 1932, Brawner was in Gympie, Queensland, where there were twenty converts and people felt that a revival had begun.<sup>160</sup> In September she visited Toowoomba, setting up the Bible Standard People's Evangelistic Mission, a name which was also adopted by Lavers in Brisbane.<sup>161</sup> In the same month, she demonstrated another talent by designing the cover for *The Gathering Call*, published by F.B.Van Eyk.<sup>162</sup> In 1936, with Good News Hall's ministry now having languished since the death of its founder, Brawner took over the

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<sup>154</sup> See Chapter Nine.

<sup>155</sup> GN 22:5 May 1931, p.12.

<sup>156</sup> GN 22:9 September 1931, p.17.

<sup>157</sup> GN 22:7 July 1931, p.13.

<sup>158</sup> GN 22:6 June 1931, pp.12f; GN 22:9 September 1931, p.17.

<sup>159</sup> W.H.W.Lavers, 'Filled with His Spirit,' GN 22:11 November 1931, p.12.

<sup>160</sup> GN 23:8 August 1932, p.III.

<sup>161</sup> GN 23:10 October 1932, pp.16,III.

<sup>162</sup> GC September 1932, p.8.

original building, renamed it the Lighthouse Temple and linked four congregations together under the name Bible Standard Churches in Australia, in Adelaide, Ballarat, Melbourne and Northcote.<sup>163</sup> At the end of that year, just 63 people attended a Sunday evening service in Melbourne, one third of them men.<sup>164</sup> However, two years later, in a six-weeks' campaign, there were 108 conversions, 25 baptised in the Spirit and 69 in water.<sup>165</sup>

In 1939, Brawner planned a Bible Standard Training School which would offer a part-time Christian Workers' Course over a period of one year, covering such subjects as the Life of Christ, Genesis, Revelation, Church Organization, the Tabernacle, Soul Winning, Bibliology (presumably the authority and interpretation of Scripture) and 'Maranatha' (the Second Coming?). The rules were tough. 'Positively no talking, gum-chewing, eating or boisterous conduct' were allowed in class. Questions were to be in writing and signed. Single men and women had to sit separately. Students 'known to be guilty of smoking, drinking, movies, theatres, dance hall or card tables, lipstick, immodest dress or behaviour' would be 'positively refused admission.' Any student found unwilling to comply with the rules would be called before the Faculty. If 'after prayer and consultation' the offences did not cease, the offender would be dismissed. Nevertheless, the Faculty members were 'always glad to help and pray with any student' for, 'an Harmonious Bible School is carried on by love, prayer and cooperation.'<sup>166</sup> The numbers were small — still only six students in 1941 — but apparently effective. 'Over the 53 years I have never found any fault in any single thing taught at the Lighthouse Temple, and still praise the Lord for ... having been taught by that great little lady,' wrote one of them in 1993.<sup>167</sup> Among other things, Brawner tried hard to distance herself from

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<sup>163</sup> Len Outhred, 'Bible Standard Pentecostal Church,' *Minister's Bulletin* March 1998, p.20; BSC August 1928, p. 7.

<sup>164</sup> J.Heath, letter to the congregation at the Mission, 29 December 1936. According to Len Outhred, around 50 people attended regular services.

<sup>165</sup> BSC December 1938, p.10

<sup>166</sup> 'Results of Examination' sheet for W.Larsen, June 1941; 'Rules and Regulations,' The Bible Standard Training School for Christian Workers, Lighthouse Temple, North Melbourne, n.d. but c.1940; Christian Workers' Course Certificate, awarded to Walter Larsen, 13 December, 1941.

<sup>167</sup> Wal Larsen, personal communication, 19 March 1993.

some of Lancaster's unpopular beliefs, particularly Annihilation. To believe otherwise was to lower the value of Christ's sacrifice.<sup>168</sup>

With all her boldness, Brawner's heart was soft and she desired to live a life pleasing to God, not only in the spirit of Pentecost that comes with a mighty, rushing wind, but also with that of the gently settling dove. The following lines, written by her, are simply entitled, 'My Prayer.'

If I have climbed o'er friend or foe to reach a greater height,  
If I have made a shadow fall where but for me 'twas light,  
If I have laid a stumbling block on any traveller's road,  
Forgive me, Lord, and let these arms help bear my brother's load.

If I have failed to be as kind as Thou wouldst have me be,  
If malice in my heart abide, reveal it, Lord, to me.  
If I have held from any soul the tenderness he craved,  
By me let every pathway be with loving kindness paved.

If I have caused one suffering heart to shed a needless tear,  
If I have filled one struggling soul with darkness or with fear,  
If I have ever dealt a blow that on my brother fell,  
Forgive, and let me evermore Thy wondrous mercy tell.<sup>169</sup>

### **Edith ('Edie') Anstis and Ruby Wiles**

Edith Anstis and Ruby Wiles were two of six evangelists recognised by the Apostolic Faith Mission in 1927. They had both been involved with Good News Hall from the earliest days. Meetings had been held in the Anstis home in Ballarat, Victoria, in 1913. There Ruby experienced healing from abscesses on her neck when Grace Anstis prayed for her.<sup>170</sup> George Holroyd, later pastor

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<sup>168</sup> 'Please tell Brother Gus,' wrote Heath, 'that Dr Brawner believes in eternal punishment, just as we do ... and hates anything like annihilation.' P.Heath, letter to the congregation at the Mission, 15 January 1937.

<sup>169</sup> GN 20:12 December 1929, p.13. No further information on Brawner is currently extant.

<sup>170</sup> GN 1:6 October 1913, p.31. Extraordinary stories of healing were not uncommon at that time — Harriet ('Grandma') Weldon, an 87-year-old woman, who had been 'an energetic church worker,' had a fall and cracked three ribs. Charles Anstis laid hands on her and there was a remarkable response. Four days later, she found herself speaking in tongues. Then her arms began to flail about until she felt one hand being applied to her side and massaging it 'like an iron' and she heard the sound of bones cracking. The next day, similar things happened, only now she laughed for joy. Two days later she spoke at great length in tongues.

of the work at Geelong, recalled how the two women had visited Geelong and challenged him to receive the Spirit. An hour later, he was baptised in the Spirit and the desire to smoke left him from that time.<sup>171</sup>

Known simply as ‘Sister Edie’ and ‘Sister Ruby,’ they left Ballarat in 1921, to establish a work in Perth, Western Australia.<sup>172</sup> Lancaster had previously visited that city, testified and preached on the street corners and distributed tracts.<sup>173</sup> Returning to Melbourne, she sent her ‘best’ workers, Edie and Ruby, to continue the work. They began cottage meetings in several different homes.<sup>174</sup> Edie seems to have been the preacher; Ruby was ‘always helping lame dogs over stiles’ and loved to minister to the sick and needy.<sup>175</sup> On one occasion, when told of a woman suffering both from a nervous breakdown and ‘internal trouble,’ she had a vision of the woman sitting up and shouting, ‘Hallelujah!’ after being touched by God — which eventuated as she saw it.<sup>176</sup> Initially, they met a Salvationist named Mrs Palmer who had been praying for a long time that someone would come and help her raise up a Pentecostal church. For many years, the two women stayed at her home in Knebworth Avenue, North Perth.

The work was hard and slow. In 1923, while they were recuperating in Mildura, Victoria, there was plenty of pressure from family and friends to remain there. However, they returned to Perth and continued the work they had started. They did not lack courage. On Friday nights, they preached in the open air. In early 1924, they had the joy of seeing three young women kneel on the

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Then, she said, ‘I got up and dressed, and I am well!’ Three years later, she became ill with an enlarged liver, rheumatism in hands and feet, and distressing pains around the heart. One of the Anstis women visited and prayed for her. Two days later she was visiting people all around her parish, telling them how she was now totally well — GN 1:6 October 1913, pp.27f.

<sup>171</sup> GN 22:6 June 1931, p.10.

<sup>172</sup> GN 9:1 February 1923, p.21; GN 18:6 June 1927, p.13. Their surnames do appear in a list of Apostolic Faith Mission officers in June 1927, but as the first names are not used, it is still not easy to identify them. See GN 18:6 June 1927, p.11.

<sup>173</sup> ‘Brother Martin ... told of the work of Sister Lancaster in the open air of every capital city in Australia,’ 22:5 GN May 1931, p.12.

<sup>174</sup> A.Allday, quoted in J.Friend, *Pentecost in Western Australia*, unpublished manuscript, c.1991, p.16; GN 18:6 June 1927, p.19.

<sup>175</sup> H.S.Kilpatrick, GN 20:1 January 1929, p.14; GN 22:7 July 1931, p.7.

<sup>176</sup> GN 24:11 November 1933, p.5.

footpath in acts of penitence. A large crowd gathered and even the police came to investigate. Edie finished up preaching four times as the crowd would not disperse.<sup>177</sup> As they continued with home meetings in various places, a few people were baptised in the Spirit and some were healed. One of these was Edie herself, who recovered dramatically after suffering with rheumatoid arthritis for twelve months. Other testimonies included that of ‘an aged saint’ bed-ridden as the result of a stroke, who arose from her bed instantly after Edie and Ruby prayed for her. Others testified to healing from neuralgia, indigestion, influenza, boils, gallstones and skin disease. However, by 1927, there was still just a ‘little band’ of people. Judging by the testimonies and reports, most of these seem to have been women. Among them were Ada Boaler, who was confined to a wheelchair, Mrs Hinson, Avis Kate Lucy, another Salvationist, and her daughter Avis, who was later to become a Pentecostal pastor’s wife. Meetings were held in the homes of all these people.<sup>178</sup> Every week for nine years, Wednesday afternoon meetings were conducted in Ada Boaler’s little weatherboard house in Charles Street, Maylands. Initially, the numbers were small — sometimes only seven or eight — and at one point, when Edie and Ruby were on furlough, just Avis Lucy and Ada Boaler. But Lucy had fond memories —

Some meetings were very quiet, some full of manifested power, but always sweet...

Prayer has been *wonderful* in that little place, and once we heard it rain on the iron roof, but when we looked outside everything was quite dry to the eye. Was it the ‘latter rain’? We thought so.<sup>179</sup>

One by one, people were being immersed in water, or baptised in the Spirit and there were several visitors to the meetings, including a Baptist pastor.<sup>180</sup> Edie’s preaching was simple and direct. She based it plainly on Scripture and took the promises at face value. At a women’s Bible study, she spoke on healing, on

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<sup>177</sup> GN 15:6 June 1924, p.9.

<sup>178</sup> A.Allday, 13 February 1990, quoted in Friend, *Pentecost in WA*, p.16; GN 15:11 November 1924, p.18; GN 18:6 June 1927, p.13.

<sup>179</sup> A.K.Lucy, ‘One Little Room,’ GN 21:10 October 1930, p.16.

<sup>180</sup> E.Anstis, ‘God Blessing in Perth, WA,’ GN 18:1 January 1927, p.11.

praise and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. 'I was filled with wonder,' said one of her hearers, 'We women caught such a touch of the fire of the Holy Spirit from the sisters' ministry that ... a revival began and the church enjoyed a season of spiritual blessing.' One night, while Edie was preaching, she felt something like an 'electric thrill.'<sup>181</sup> In a published message on tithing, Sister Edie told several stories of people who had refused to tithe and had suffered loss, while others who had been obedient, had prospered, just as God said they would. 'A sister owned a fig tree,' she related, 'that had never borne fruit.' She began to tithe and the fig tree had been 'loaded each year since.'<sup>182</sup>

She was delighted to report later that year that one elderly woman and three more young women had turned to the Lord and were all contemplating baptism. By mid-1927, they were using the name Apostolic Faith Mission, there were four regular meetings a week, and Ernest Jarvis, a printer who had received the Spirit at Good News Hall in 1923 and had opened his home for meetings and who was later to become a pastor, had been appointed as secretary.<sup>183</sup>

It was then that the South African evangelist Frederick Van Eyk arrived in Perth. He had made a brief stop there in March en route to Adelaide, and spoke on four occasions to a house jammed with people. Now he returned for a formal campaign. Large crowds attended his meetings, there was a significant number of converts and many claimed to have been healed. Much of the success of the Mission, ran one report, resulted from 'the devoted and faithful work' of the two women.<sup>184</sup> Again, Edie testified to healing. After being anointed with oil, the next day she helped push an invalid in a chair some six miles. Another woman claimed to have been delivered from evil spirits. More than 20 people were baptised in the Holy Spirit.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> C.Cousins, 'Ask and Ye Shall Receive,' GN 17:2 February 1926, p.11.

<sup>182</sup> Edie Anstis, 'Getting from God,' GN 15:1 January 1924, p.8.

<sup>183</sup> T.Bentley, personal interview, 23 April 1997; GN 24:4,5 April-May 1933, p.III..

<sup>184</sup> GN 18:8 August 1927, p.11; 18:9 September 1927, p.12..

<sup>185</sup> A.Allday, 13 February 1990, in Friend, *Pentecost in WA*, p.17; GN 17:4 April 1926, p.19; GN 17:5 May 1926, p.6; GN 18:7 July 1927, p.11; GN 19:6 June 1928, p.12.

Not long after Van Eyk's visit, trouble emerged and there was potential division. As elsewhere, there appears to have been some disaffection over women being in leadership. Edie and Ruby sent an urgent message to Good News Hall for help and John Adams, the president of the Apostolic Faith Mission, and J.Jones visited the Perth church. Jones excelled in the open air meetings and Adams encouraged the folk 'by his deep and powerful Bible lessons'. Ernest Jarvis now became pastor. Edie was now able to report that the work was 'in good condition,' that the open air meetings were drawing good crowds, that numbers were increasing and that there some good testimonies of healing, this time including Ruby, who had suffered a stroke. 'It was a miracle done all in a moment,' reported Edie.<sup>186</sup> A year later, *Good News* again referred to Edie as the pastor of the Perth assembly and reported that there were some 60 people now meeting on Sunday nights, that five people had been baptised in water and six filled with the Spirit.<sup>187</sup> They were now gathering in the Women's Service Guild Rooms in Murray Street. Numbers continued to grow steadily, partly as the result of the 121 open air meetings they held from August 1928 to April 1929.<sup>188</sup> In November, 1928, M.A.Eather was attracted by one of these meetings. She went home 'with the message burning in ... (her) heart.' Early next morning, as an undertaker's employee, she was called to attend to a corpse. The reality of death without Christ confronted her and she decided to yield to Him then and there. She shared her new faith with her seven brothers and sisters and they were all converted and baptised in water, with five of them speaking in tongues. 'Oh what peace and joy has come into our home,' she wrote eight months later. 'Our home stands among the happiest in Perth today.'<sup>189</sup> In 1930, the two women were still 'keeping the Gospel flag flying ... amid many trials and difficulties.'<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> A.Allday, 13 February 1990, in Friend, *Pentecost in WA*, p.18; GN 18:11 November 1927, p.14; GN 19:6 June 1928, pp.10,12.

<sup>187</sup> GN 20:5 May 1929, p.16.

<sup>188</sup> GN 20:5 May 1929, p.10.

<sup>189</sup> GN 20:9 September 1929, p.13.

<sup>190</sup> GN 21:6 June 1930, p.11.



In July 1934, Van Eyk returned to Perth and once again ministered with telling effect. Ernest Jarvis reported that although there was considerable criticism, especially from the churches, many who 'came somewhat prejudiced ... remained till the end of the campaign.' Over 40 people were baptised in water. In one single meeting, 30 people made commitments to Christ. As ever, there were clear-cut testimonies of healing. The result was that with Lancaster having died earlier that year, the local church decided to join the Foursquare movement. So, too, did a small congregation at Fremantle.<sup>191</sup>

On 1 January 1936, Edie's health prevented her from continuing in leadership and Colonel John T. Bentley took over the pastorate and became superintendent of the Foursquare work in Western Australia. Not long after this, as Lancaster would have put it, Edie 'fell asleep'. Ruby continued for some years assisting in ministry, marrying late in life. She was around 80 when she died.<sup>192</sup>

### **Heather Burrows (1913—)**

When the Apostolic Church came to Australia in 1930 with a more tightly developed structure, there was little place for recognised women's leadership.<sup>193</sup> The *Constitution* allowed for Deaconesses, but there was no room for women to be apostles, prophets, pastors or teachers. They could pray, prophesy or speak publicly and engage in evangelism, but they could not be ordained.<sup>194</sup> How much opportunity was there for women to minister? 'You're joking,' was one woman's opinion. 'Only in Sunday School or Women's meetings or Open Air meetings.'<sup>195</sup>

One evangelist was Heather Isabel Burrows (b.7 March 1913). who was highly regarded as a speaker and travelled widely across Australia in the 1930's. Her

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<sup>191</sup> S.F. Du Plessis, 'Western Australia's Mighty Visitation from on High,' and E. Jarvis, 'Some impressions of F.B. Van Eyk's Campaign in Perth, WA,' GC 3:3 September-October 1934, p.40f.

<sup>192</sup> T. Bentley, personal interview, 23 April 1997; A. Allday, in Friend, p.19.

<sup>193</sup> J. McCabe, personal interview, 18 September 1990; P. Lovell, personal interview, 6 September, 1991.

<sup>194</sup> *The Apostolic Church — its Principles and Practices, Constitution*, Richmond: Apostolic Church, 1939, 6:3,4; 27:I and II. The question of whether a woman could be an apostle, for example, is not even raised here: it was taken for granted that only men qualified.

<sup>195</sup> K. Kirwan, personal interview, 11 September 1991.

family attended a Baptist church in North Sydney and at the age of eight, in a tent meeting, her 'childish eyes (were) opened to the precious reality of Jesus.' In June 1930, William Booth-Clibborn and his wife began an evangelistic crusade in the Railway Institute in Sydney which proved to be 'a time of revival.'<sup>196</sup> When Booth-Clibborn spoke on Joshua 24:15,<sup>197</sup> the 17 year old Burrows made the 'instant, clear-cut choice' to follow Christ and was soon seeking to be baptised in the Holy Spirit. She attended tarrying meetings at the Foursquare Church in Australia Street, Newtown, where she had a 'tremendous experience' but did not speak in tongues. She felt as if she was being lifted out of her body and saw what she described as 'liquid fire' all over her. This filled her with a sense of awe and she held back from pressing in further.<sup>198</sup> After two months, Booth-Clibborn moved to Brisbane, but his wife Genevieve continued to conduct well-attended meetings in the Bourke Street Congregational Hall.<sup>199</sup> She invited different people to speak and one night it was Heather Burrows' turn. To her astonishment, six people came to Christ. When, in October 1931, Genevieve Booth-Clibborn, joined her husband in Queensland, she invited Burrows to accompany her both as an evangelist and as her personal assistant.<sup>200</sup> The small, bright young woman stayed in Brisbane for three months, where she was baptised in water in the 'Canvas Cathedral.'<sup>201</sup> Not long after she arrived, she was advertised as 'Sydney's Girl Evangelist,' and preached for the first time in the large tent on Friday 30th October. She must have been reasonably successful, for she preached again on subsequent Fridays.<sup>202</sup> Within a month, she was joined by the more renowned Mary

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<sup>196</sup> AE, August 1930, p.9; H.Hoskin, personal interview, 21 November 1997; personal communication 10 February 1998. Further details are from these sources unless otherwise stated.

<sup>197</sup> Joshua 24:15 — 'And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord' (AV).

<sup>198</sup> AH 2:2 June 1937, p.31.

<sup>199</sup> 'Cooee,' 3:2 13 March 1932.

<sup>200</sup> 'Cooee,' 2:6 11 October 1931.

<sup>201</sup> L.Wahlquist, interview, 19 November 1991. Burrows had been baptised earlier in a Baptist church but with 'little understanding' of what it meant.

<sup>202</sup> 'Cooee,' 2:8 25 October 1931; 2:9 1 November 1931; 2:11 15 November 1931; 2:12 22 November 1931.

Ayers.<sup>203</sup> By the end of November, they were both occupying the platform on successive nights.<sup>204</sup> In December, when Booth-Clibborn came down with a 'high fever,' Burrows took two of the major mid-week meetings.<sup>205</sup> For a brief time she edited Booth-Clibborn's news letter.<sup>206</sup>

In January 1932, she was asked to conduct a three-weeks' tent mission in Toowoomba, deputising for Mrs Booth-Clibborn. In spite of having no training, she preached every night of the week. Her approach was a simple expression of the spirit of Pentecost —

I just simply opened my mouth and the Lord filled it. I did not have at any time the privilege of a Bible School training or special teaching; the Holy Spirit opened the Scriptures. He taught me and I did not even think it was strange or special.<sup>207</sup>

Her basic message was a simple gospel of salvation. 'Good news from Toowoomba,' reported a brief news item in the *Canvas Cathedral Cooee*. 'Crowded tent. Miss Burrows great form.'<sup>208</sup>

In 1934, Burrows joined the Apostolic Church in Sydney as a Young People's Deaconess. She was working as a secretary/stenographer, but it was not long before her speaking gifts came to the fore and within three years she was a full-time evangelist. Money was not plentiful — around one pound a week. But her travel expenses were covered and accommodation was provided, usually in private homes. Her ministry over the next few years would take her to every Australian State and to New Zealand. In 1934, she became the first Australian woman preacher to have her photo on the cover of the *Apostolic Herald*.<sup>209</sup> A leaflet advertising her meetings in Hobart, Tasmania, described her as

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<sup>203</sup> 'Cooee,' 2:12 22 November 1931. For more on Mary Ayers see Appendix Ten.

<sup>204</sup> 'Cooee,' 6 December 1931; 20 December 1931.

<sup>205</sup> 'Cooee,' 2:15 13 December 1931; 2:16 20 December 1931.

<sup>206</sup> 'Cooee,' 2:17, 27 December 1931.

<sup>207</sup> Personal communication, 10 February 1998; see also H.Hoskin, personal interview, 21 November 1997; 'Cooee,' Toowoomba, #7, 6 December 1931; 'Cooee' 2:19 10 January 1932.

<sup>208</sup> 'Cooee' 2:20 17 January 1932.

<sup>209</sup> AH 2:2 June 1937, p.1,31. From the first issue of *Revival Echoes* in 1933, there was usually a cover picture of a pastor on each edition. With the exception of a missionary to India, Burrows was the first woman to have her photo appear there in four years.

‘Australia’s Youngest Ordained Lady Evangelist.’<sup>210</sup> She was preaching every night except Fridays and twice on Sundays. Quoting from an un-named Victorian newspaper, the leaflet declared: ‘Placed on the public platform as a speaker, she would shine. On the stage she would make her mark. Instead, she has chosen the path of duty and is proclaiming the way of salvation to an erring world.’<sup>211</sup> She held successful meetings in Brisbane and in the Prahran Town Hall, Victoria. Another undated news cutting from this period tells how the Tivoli Theatre in Brisbane was engaged to accommodate the crowds that came to hear her speak —

This capable young preacher, still in her early twenties, has a power in oratory that holds the attention. Although the services have been in progress for more than five weeks, the interest has not waned, nor the speaker’s grip on her audience decreased.

In Wellington, New Zealand, in the early 1940’s, Heather Burrows was the main speaker at an Apostolic Convention where she was described as having been ‘greatly used throughout every State in Australia.’<sup>212</sup> Although it was not the practice of the Apostolic Church to recognise women as church leaders, Burrows was an acknowledged evangelist and had ‘no trouble at all’ being accepted in the places she visited. There were other women preachers, but she was the only one who conducted recognised missions.

Burrows gave herself unstintingly to the work of evangelism. She not only preached the gospel but also prayed for the sick. She visited people in prison. She preached at open air meetings on Friday nights in the Sydney suburb of Rockdale where large numbers gathered to hear her.<sup>213</sup> Most of the time she went to places where there was no existing Apostolic church. Leila Higgs accompanied her as a pianist and violinist in Australia as did Margaret Smith in New Zealand. On one occasion, she travelled by troop train across the

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<sup>210</sup> Evidently Burrows’s Hobart hosts overstated the case here. Although recognised as an evangelist, she was never formally ordained to the Apostolic ministry.

<sup>211</sup> This leaflet is undated but evidently c.1940.

<sup>212</sup> Undated leaflet, but c.1942.

<sup>213</sup> ‘You should have seen the people who came’ — H.Hoskin, personal interview, 1997.

Nullabor, a journey which took several days, as she stopped to conduct services for Outback station people in Penong and Ceduna.

After a couple of years in Western Australia, she revisited New Zealand where her health broke down and she had to withdraw from ministry. She was years recovering. In 1956 she married Horace Thomson Hoskin (d.1989), a New Zealand Presbyterian. She did not preach again.

### **Winnie Andrews (?1892-1932)**

When Winnie Andrews was still a baby in arms, Lancaster prayed for her — ‘May she win many souls for Christ!’<sup>214</sup> Some fifteen years later, in November, 1907, Winnie appeared in a Bible Class and in early 1908 was converted and baptised in the Spirit.<sup>215</sup> Winnie had one leg four inches shorter than the other as the result of some childhood surgery. During an all night prayer meeting, she was partly healed. About that time, Lancaster was approached by Max Moorhead, later a member of the Springfield Council of the Assemblies of God in the USA, to be the ‘Pentecostal secretary’ in Australia. With characteristic self-effacement, she ‘shrank from the publicity of such an office.’ She felt encouraged by the Holy Spirit to offer the position to the teenage Winnie, who took it gladly.<sup>216</sup> While never a preacher, she was not afraid to confront difficult issues with courage and competence.<sup>217</sup> At her death, in 1932, Lancaster spoke of her 24 years’ devoted labour for the Lord and of the way her face ‘lit up with the glory of God’ during her last days.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> GN 17:9 September 1926, p.11.

<sup>215</sup> GN 1:1 April 1910, p.6.

<sup>216</sup> The matter was referred to Mrs Nickson and John Coombe who both felt uneasy about the younger woman’s age. A week later, however, they both confirmed the decision, believing it to be the will of God.

<sup>217</sup> See Chapter Seven for her response to Aimee McPherson’s withdrawal from her commitment to Good News Hall.

<sup>218</sup> J.Lancaster, ‘He Giveth His Beloved Sleep,’ GN 23:8 August 1932, p.16.

### Leila Buchanan (1895-1966)

Leila Buchanan (1895-1966), Lancaster's daughter, was from 1937 the editor of *The Australian Evangel* and an accomplished preacher as well.<sup>219</sup> Baptised in the Spirit at age thirteen, Buchanan gave herself to ministry to the derelicts of society, especially neglected children. After her marriage, she accompanied her husband in itinerant ministry and acted as secretary for visiting evangelists such as Smith Wigglesworth, whose sermons she took down in short hand.<sup>220</sup> 'Through fear of man,' she hesitated to preach herself, but one night had a vision in which she saw a pulpit with a beautifully engraved open Bible on it, and behind it a gold crown against a stormy background. The vision was twice repeated and then 'a mighty hand' grasped the Bible and thrust it into Buchanan's hands. She took this as a divine commission to preach the gospel in the light of the urgency of the hour and was later 'fully ordained' as an Assemblies of God minister.<sup>221</sup>

### Other women

The ministry at Good News Hall was commonly seen as a kind of sisterhood. A Queensland woman was grateful for letters from 'the dear sisters' at the Hall. H.Hultgren told how 'the sisters' came to him and laid hands on him. 'A.H.' wrote, 'Much blessing has resulted, beloved sisters, from your visit in the precious Master's service.'<sup>222</sup> A young woman wrote a testimony addressed, 'Dear sisters.'<sup>223</sup> Regular reports were published in *Good News* of ministry by various 'Sisters.'<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> eg AE 3:8 July 1937, p.6; 4:5 April 1938, p.6; 11:4 March 1945, p.2; F.Lancaster, personal interview, 18 December 1993.

<sup>220</sup> These were later incorporated in S.Wigglesworth, *Ever Increasing Faith* Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1924.

<sup>221</sup> *Richmond Temple Souvenir*, 1939, p.45.

<sup>222</sup> GN 1:5 January 1913, p.23; GN 1:6 October 1913, p.19; GN 9:1 February 1923, p.15.

<sup>223</sup> GN 16:11 November 1925, Supplement, p.4; see also GN 17:1 January 1926, p.15. This sisterhood was quite informal. Ultimately, the word 'sister' did tend to be used as a semi-formal title (eg 'Sister' Edie, 'Sister' Ruby), but initially it was simply an expression of Christian fraternity. There was no structured sisterhood as in the Catholic and Anglican churches.

<sup>224</sup> eg GN 24:4,5 April-May 1933, p.7.

Not all were preachers but they all carried out significant work. Annie Chamberlain and Annie Dennis both conducted services and founded churches.<sup>225</sup> Mary Ayers was an itinerant preacher.<sup>226</sup> As early as 1910, a woman was nominated as the first Pentecostal representative in South Australia. Readers of the first issue of *Good News* who were interested in ‘the Outpouring of the Latter Rain and desiring to investigate’ were advised to contact Miss Pight of Reynella, now an outer suburb, but then a country town. Some of the first Pentecostal meetings in Adelaide were held in the home of Fannie L. Collie (1867-1930), who lived on Magill Rd, Kensington Park North, an eastern suburb<sup>227</sup> and had evidently been introduced to Pentecostalism by Sarah Jane Lancaster around 1910.<sup>228</sup>

In the 1920’s, ‘Sister’ Hotson and ‘Sister’ Turner devoted themselves to tract distribution and visitation in the Hornsby area of Sydney. ‘Sister’ Rowston did a similar work in Orange.<sup>229</sup> For many years, Alice MacCleary and Celia Casey who were honorary housekeepers at Good News Hall were especially busy during the Depression when they worked night and day to care for the needy. ‘Only God Himself knows their years of faithful service,’ said a report in *Good News*, ‘and daily taking up of their cross in Jesus’ Name.’<sup>230</sup>

**Table 12.1 Australian Pentecostal women in ministry prior to 1939**

Name	Dates	Marital state	Place of birth	Tertiary training	Original denomination or religion	Affiliation	Main areas of activity
Andrews, Winnie	?1881-1932	Single	Australia	None	Baptist	Good News Hall (AFM)	Melb, Vic

<sup>225</sup> See Appendix Ten.

<sup>226</sup> See Appendix Ten

<sup>227</sup> Chant, 1984, p.135. Additional information on Fannie Collie is from V.Short and C.Coulthard-Clark, *A Genealogy of the Bonnet Family of Adelaide*, Canberra, 1983; Thea McKelliff, personal interview, November, 1992; Dorothy Reekie, personal interview, 14 August 1991; Elaine Hulm, ‘Fannie Collie,’ unpublished essay, Tabor College, 14 December 1990. Note that the name is sometimes spelt ‘Fanny.’

<sup>228</sup> ‘By God’s grace we had been the first to carry the “Latter Rain” message to Adelaide’ — GN 18:6, June 1927, p.10; <sup>228</sup> ‘For some seventeen years past, (we have) been in loving fellowship with the dear brethren there’ — GN 18:6 June 1927, p.10..

<sup>229</sup> GN 19:6 June 1928, p.15.

<sup>230</sup> GN 25:3 March 1934, p.20.

Anstis, Edie	d.1936	Single	Australia	None	Not known	Good News Hall (AFM)	Perth, WA
Ayers, Mary	Not known	Single	Australia	None	Not known	Pent Church of Australia	Various States
Brawner, Mina	b.?1880	Married	America	Medicine	?Presbyterian; Methodist	Good News Hall (AFM); Bible Standard Church	NSW, Qld, Vic
Buchanan, Leila	1895-1966	Married	Australia	None	Methodist	Good News Hall (AFM); Ass of God	Qld
Burrows, Heather	1913 —	Single	Australia	None	Baptist	Pent Church of Australia; Apostolic Church	Various States and New Zealand
Chamberlain, Annie	b.?1868	Married	Australia	None (Salvation Army)	Salvation Army	Pent Church of Australia	Adelaide, SA
Collie, Fannie	1867-1930	Married	Australia	None	Methodist	Good News Hall (AFM)	Adelaide, SA
Dennis, Annie	Not known	?Single	Australia	None	Evangelical	Good News Hall (AFM)	Qld
Heath, Pauline	?1889-1940	Divorced	Australia (childhood in India)	None	Agnostic	Apostolic Mission	Adelaide, SA
Hetherington, Isabella <sup>231</sup>	?1869-1946	Single	Ireland	None	Evangelical	Good News Hall (AFM)	Vic, Qld
Lancaster, Sarah Jane	1858-1934	Married	Australia	Teacher	Methodist	Good News Hall (AFM)	Victoria and all Australian States
Mather, Ellen	1894-?1975	Single (married late)	Australia	None	Methodist	Pent Church of Australia	Vic, Qld
McPherson, Aimee Semple	1890-1944	Married	America	None	Baptist	Four Square	Melb, Vic; Adelaide, SA.
Mortimore, Florence	1890-1927	Single	Australia	None	Baptist	Good News Hall (AFM)	Qld

<sup>231</sup> See Chapter Eleven



Wiles, Ruby	Not known	Single	Australia	None	Not known	Good News Hall (AFM)	Perth, WA
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In many ways the role of women in the early years of Australian Pentecostalism set the pattern for the future of the movement. Of sixteen women leaders, all but three were Australian-born. Of these three, two, Isabella Hetherington and Mina Brawner lived most of their adult lives in this country. Only one, Aimee Semple McPherson, was a short-term visitor. All but one had a Methodist or Evangelical background and it is probable that three of those also came from that tradition. In this respect, women clearly reflect the overall religious heritage of the movement. All were prepared to travel and/or sacrifice for the sake of the ministry. Ten were unmarried, sacrificing security, home and family for the sake of the gospel. Most were self-educated: only two, Sarah Jane Lancaster and Mina Brawner, had tertiary qualifications (see Table 12.1)

After 1925, male leadership gradually gained the ascendancy, but the nature of this leadership was not dissimilar — those concerned were also mainly Australian-born although there was significant international input; the denominational roots tended to be Methodist or Evangelical; generally they were enterprising and capable, although not theologically trained; they were passionate in their desire to preach the gospel; and they saw the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit as of primary significance.

Theoretically any office was still open to women. In spite of reservations being expressed at one point, the original Good News Hall congregation (and subsequently the Apostolic Faith Mission) together with the Pentecostal Church of Australia (later the Assemblies of God) and the Foursquare movement continued to affirm the right of women both to preach and to lead.

<sup>232</sup> The prophet Joel promised that the Holy Spirit would be poured out on both men and women and that they would equally declare His Word (Joel 2:28f). At least in the early years, the Australian Pentecostal movement took

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<sup>232</sup> Even so, it appears there were ongoing reservations about women exercising ultimate leadership. Apart from Sarah Jane Lancaster holding office as President of the Apostolic Faith Mission, I am not aware of any State or National Superintendent in any Australian movement having been a woman.

this at face value. If God was not prejudiced, why should His people be? There was no gender discrimination in the spirit of Pentecost.