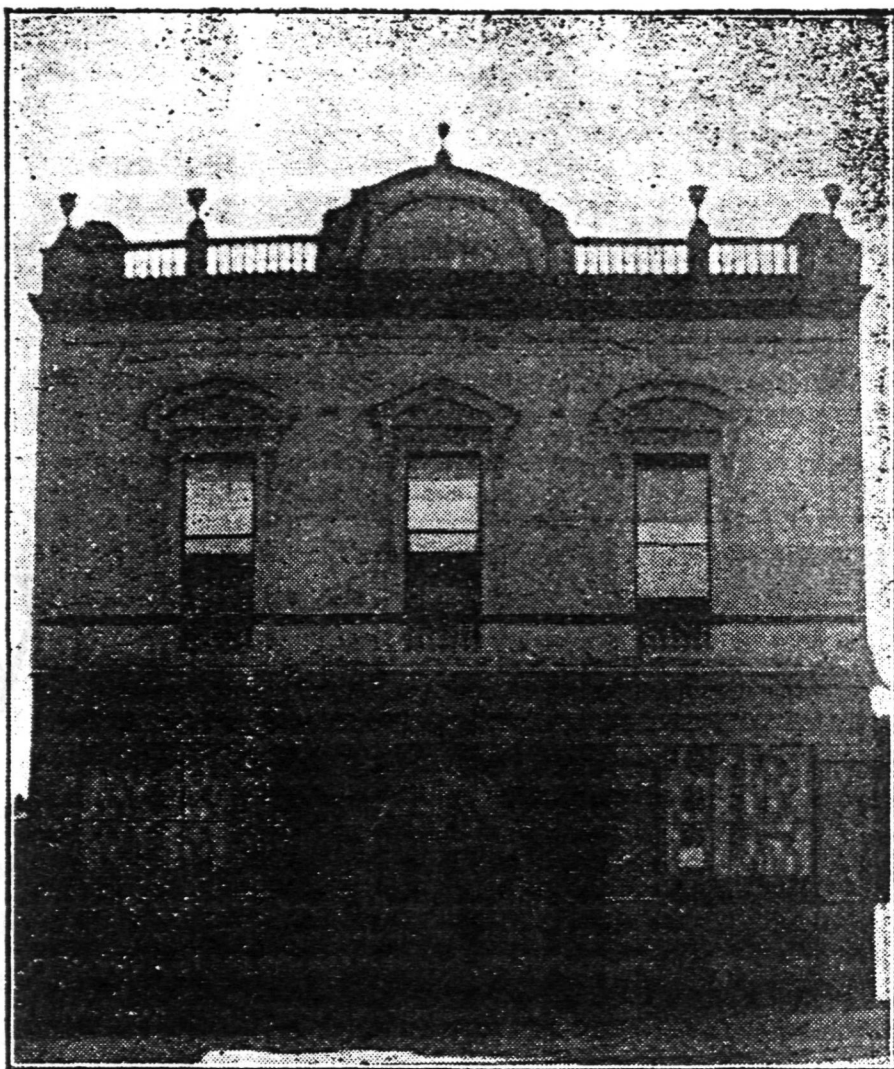


PART THREE
DEVELOPMENT

From the beginning, Pentecostalism in this country was an Australian movement with Australian leadership. However, there was also a significant international ingredient, the result of regular visits and in some cases, immigration, by ministers from several countries. The following chapters explore the early development of the movement, the impact of the overseas input and pioneering ministry to Aborigines. The dilemma of welding strong but dissonant understandings of Scripture and the stirring up of the ongoing quest for revival are also discussed.

GOOD NEWS HALL.



HOME OF THE "GOOD NEWS."

(Edited by J. Lancaster.)

— from *Good News* 17:10 October 1926, p.10

CHAPTER SIX

FOLLOWING THE SPIRIT

Sarah Jane Lancaster and the first Australian Pentecostal assembly, 1908-1934

Wherever we look in the first twenty years of Australian Pentecostal history, the imprint of Sarah Jane (Jeannie) Lancaster (1858-1934) can be found.¹ It is not, at first glance, obvious. Her ministry was humble and unobtrusive. No published photo of her appears in over 25 years of printing and distributing magazines, books and tracts. Articles written by her were rarely signed. Yet she did publish the photos of others and always gave credit to other writers when she published their works. She was not ambitious for position or human acclaim. Much of what she did was deliberately kept discreet. Yet her influence extended from east to west, from north to south. There are many members and pastors of Pentecostal churches today whose forebears were won by Jeannie Lancaster. From Perth to Cairns, she was involved in evangelism, church planting, preaching and prayer. She proclaimed the Word on street corners. She handed out tracts. She talked with strangers. She conducted meetings in halls and houses. She communicated with people of all ages. She edited a magazine. She published thousands of tracts. She engaged in welfare work with the poor. She prayed for the sick. She encouraged people to be filled with the Spirit. She eschewed the things of the world for the things of God.

¹ For details of Lancaster's early life see Appendix Ten. In my earlier volume, I refer to her as 'Janet' Lancaster. There now seems to be no satisfactory evidence that she or others used this name. She regularly signed letters as 'Jeannie Lancaster'. See *Confidence* October 1908,

Perhaps most significant of all, she was a woman of integrity, prizing love, sacrifice, unity and honesty above all else.² Australian Pentecostalism is her enduring legacy.

In 1909, after decades of rivalry between Victoria and NSW, Canberra was finally chosen as the site for the nation's new capital city. That same year, the first 'picture palaces' were being built, introducing what was to become a favoured means of entertainment for millions of people. And it was in 1909 that a North Melbourne Temperance Hall was purchased by Jeannie Lancaster and some friends and renamed Good News Hall, the meeting place of the 'Pentecostal Mission.'³

Lancaster had been baptised in the Holy Spirit on 2 April 1908, having already come to a strong conviction that she was to practise divine healing.⁴ She now needed a meeting place for her new-discovered ministry. The Hall was opened on New Year's Eve, 1909, with an all-night prayer meeting. Then 'for six weeks such a glorious revival continued night and day,' wrote Lancaster, 'that we never entered our home again. Our furniture was sent for and willing hands soon adapted various rooms to living purposes.' There were extraordinary claims of healing and Lancaster claimed in later years that even the dead were raised to life again. Soon a fully operating assembly was established.⁵

Lancaster was not at first glance the sort of person to lead a congregation. Of medium height and buxom build, she normally wore a full-length dress and kept her hair tied in a bun. She was motherly in her appearance, so much so that, though like the other women at the Hall, she was often referred to as 'Sister,' many people referred to her as 'Mother' or 'Mummy' Lancaster.⁶

p.18; also personal correspondence to Leila Mullin, 2 March 1931.

² A small example of her integrity lies in the publishing of a letter in February 1928 pointing out that a healing testimony printed two months previously, although largely true, had been exaggerated. See GN 19:2 February 1928, p.32.

³ GN 17:0 September 1926, p.10; GN 19:3 March 1928, p.9.

⁴ For further details see Appendix Ten.

⁵ GN 17:9 September 1926, p.10.

⁶ GN 17:3 March 1926, p.12 ('the next day, mother came down...'); GN 18:2 February 1927, p.11; GN 18:8 August 1927, pp.16f ('With love to Mummy ...'); GN 19:3 March 1928, p.12 ('Mummie, dear...'); GN 22:6 June 1931, p.5; GN 23:1 July 1932, pp.11f; GN 23:4 April 1932, p.11 ('Now, dear Mother, ...'); GN 23:12 December 1932, p.5 ('Please remember me to dear

BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY!

Good News



THE FIELDS ARE WHITE UNTO HARVEST.

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An Australian Monthly, shewing that Jesus is
just the same to-day: Saving Souls from Death
Answering Prayer; Baptising in the Holy Spirit;
Healing the Sick; Preparing the Church for His
Speedy Return.

WATCH YE! STAND FAST IN THE FAITH.

(Registered at G.P.O., Melbourne, for transmission by post as a newspaper.)

Towards the end of her life, Baptist minister Gordon Bennett said —

I have known our Sister, who is affectionately known to many as ‘Mother,’ for over twenty five years: during that time, she has been a gracious, loving and helpful ‘Mother’ to many of God’s children and to many who did not know God.⁷

Ivor Warburton, one of her most devoted adherents, described her as looking like a washerwoman.⁸ She clearly won people’s hearts —

She was a woman of God. She could only talk of the Spirit-filled life. She was a wonderful woman. I can hardly express it. I suppose she had faults, but we could never see them.

She was a lovely old darling, a sweet old dear. She was shortish and plump, motherly and sweet. Everyone loved her.

Mummy Lancaster, as they used to call her, was ... a woman of God. She was not a forceful preacher, but a good one. She knew the Word of God.

She preached the word in quiet style. She was gracious and compassionate. She did not make an issue of doctrines. Getting Christ into the hearts of people was what she was about.⁹

Lancaster was strong-minded and strong-willed. One man described her as a martinet.¹⁰ But she had a deep and sincere affection for those who worked with her.¹¹ Her habit of calling people ‘dear ones’ became universal in the work.¹² She was humble — she rarely reported on her own activities, preferring to speak of the works of others.

Good News Hall seated about 300 people, and was usually attended by about 100 on Sundays. Across the front of the building, above the platform, was

Mother ...’); GN 24:2 February 1933, p.9; GN 24:3 March 1933, p.7 (Here she is referred to both as ‘Mother’ and ‘Sister’). Other women at Good News Hall were consistently referred to as ‘Sister.’ See Chapter Twelve for examples of this.

⁷ GN 23:7 July 1932, p.18.

⁸ Ivor Warburton, personal interview..

⁹ Ivor Warburton, Mrs Henderson, Robert Davis and Jim Mullin, personal interviews.

¹⁰ P.Duncan, ‘Lecture to Students at Crusade Bible College,’ Fullarton, SA: 1965.

¹¹ At the death of one of the faithful women in the church she wrote, ‘A highway shall be there ... and thou, dear heart, with joy shalt walk thereon ... Good night, dear heart, ‘twill not be long.’ — GN 24:3 March 1933, p.16.

¹² See GN 17:3 March 1926, p.12; GN 17:4 April 1926, p.9; GN 19:5 May 1928, p.13; GN 19:9 September 1928, pp.11,13; GN 21:10 October 1920, p.10; GN 22:2 February 1931, p.13.

boldly painted the text, 'The Lord God Omnipotent Reigneth.' During the week there was plenty of activity.¹³ The Hall was always open for prayer and prayer meetings were held regularly. The building had a number of smaller rooms including a living apartment for the Lancasters. Consequently, people would often go there to stay for a few days or even a few weeks. During this time they prayed and studied the Bible, seeking deeper spiritual experience. There was a Bible, Book and Tract Room.

Good News

During 1910, Lancaster visited every State of Australia. Evangelists were sent out, many of them women.¹⁴ That same year, she began to publish a free periodical called *Good News*.¹⁵ For 25 years this magazine was circulated throughout Australia. Before long, a printing plant was set up and it was produced at the Hall. Although only six issues were published in the first three years, in 1923 it became a monthly publication, with a subscription price.¹⁶

There was a four page loose supplement for young people. Few photographs appeared in its pages and few of the features were written by Lancaster or her assistants. In most cases, articles were reprinted from overseas Pentecostal magazines. The doctrines expressed were generally sound and, from a Pentecostal point of view, orthodox. Its circulation reached 3,000 copies per month — a high rate for a religious magazine of this kind.¹⁷ James Self, who worked at the Hall as the printer of the magazine for many years, described it as containing 'the cream of other Pentecostal papers.'¹⁸

One pastor recalled —

¹³ See GN 18:9 September 1927, p.10 for a summary of activities.

¹⁴ For the role of women such as Florrie Mortomore, Edie Anstis and Ruby Wiles and the establishing of additional assemblies see Chapter Twelve.

¹⁵ See GN 1:1 April 1910.

¹⁶ Compare 1:1 April 1910 with 1:6 October 1913. See also 15:1 February 1923, p.20; 18:1 January 1927, p.10. By 1923 the cover featured a traditional drawing of Christ with a halo and light emanating from him. The title of the magazine was embellished with subheadings such as, 'Behold I come quickly!' and, 'The fields are white unto harvest.' In later issues (1924 onwards) further decorative devices were added — a harvest field, bunches of grapes and various scroll effects surrounding a table of contents.

¹⁷ GN 19:6 June 1928, p.12.

¹⁸ James Self, personal interview, n.d. recorded.

I suppose there was never up to that time such a challenging evangelical organ edited and published in Australia. It was taken from all the leading Pentecostal papers of the day but it was new to Australia. It caught the imagination. The message proclaiming the full gospel was one that was so true, so Scriptural and backed by such zeal and energy and appeal that it was a voice crying in the Australian wilderness.¹⁹

Good News was sent interstate and even overseas. Its correspondence columns regularly included letters from every Australian State and occasionally from New Zealand, India, Africa, England and the United States.²⁰ Its influence was largely responsible for the early spreading of the Pentecostal message throughout Australia. Over and again, there were reports of people coming to Christ or being baptised in the Spirit through reading the magazine. Often people made special visits to the Hall to find out more — many times travelling from country areas.²¹

Apart from regular editorials, few of Lancaster's own articles appeared and when they did, they were often unsigned and hard to identify. In spite of a disclaimer that writers were 'allowed latitude to express their own thoughts,' the editor accepted responsibility for the overall content and general character of what was printed.²² The magazine tended to cover topics such as the baptism in the Holy Spirit, divine healing, Christian living and — most commonly of all — the second coming.²³

Lancaster's editorials show evidence of wide reading and well-informed opinion. She kept close watch on events around her, both locally and internationally, and was not afraid to interpret them biblically. A fascinating piece published in March 1924, argued persuasively that a kind of madness had settled on the world.²⁴ For a start, people were ignoring God, stubbornly

¹⁹ P.Duncan, 'Lecture,' 1965.

²⁰ GN 16:5 May 1925, p.10; GN 17:8 August 1926, p.19; GN 19:11 November 1928, p.11; GN 25:12 December 1934, p.19; GN 22:3 March 1931, p.13; GN 24:1 January 1933, p.7; GN 24:6 June 1933, p.9.

²¹ GN 22:8 August 1931, p.11.

²² eg GN 19:8 August 1928, p.10.

²³ See Appendix Two and Chapter Thirteen for an analysis of articles and topics.

²⁴ 'Retribution,' GN 15:3 March 1924, pp.3ff.

refusing to recognise that 'storm, sword, drought, or pestilence (were) marks of His displeasure.' Then, Japan had to be seen as a serious threat to Australia.

How is it that politicians everywhere — while ardently desiring peace — commit their countries to policies which must engender strife? There is only one answer: 'They are mad.'²⁵

A doctor had recently diagnosed Russia's leaders as all being of unsound mind. And while Singapore was clearly a strategic Far East base for both America and England, the British Government had decided to abandon it. Was this common sense or madness? An American editor had pointed out that Italy's bombing of a Greek town was 'insane.' So, concluded Lancaster, 'we may expect to meet little but madness in the world from now on until our King comes.' As Jeremiah prophesied, the nations would drink the cup of God's fury and 'be mad' (Jeremiah 25:15f).

In October 1928, newspaper reports of a hurricane in Bavaria, a devastating flood in China, a collapsed dam in India and a terrifying storm in Haiti were all seen as warnings of God's judgement. Similarly, a burst dam in Los Angeles was a parable of the need to sound the warning of God's wrath. It was time to 'get on the solid foundation, Christ Jesus,' before it was too late.²⁶

In March, 1929, she commented on a report from Germany that people there were going to be invited to renounce Christianity; on a visit by a 'modernist' Anglican to Melbourne, who denied many basic biblical teachings; on the creation of a sovereign papal state in Italy; on the suggestion that the locusts of Revelation chapter nine were a prophetic depiction of aeroplanes; and on the upsurge of lawlessness in American cities.²⁷

There is no doubt that the theme of the Second Coming of Christ was dear to Lancaster's heart. In one of her few signed articles, entitled 'Behold He Cometh,' she describes a kind of dream in which she saw many signs around the world heralding Christ's return.²⁸ Another signed piece was entitled,

²⁵ GN 15:3 March 1924, p.4.

²⁶ GN 19:10 October 1928, p.11.

²⁷ GN 30:3 March 1929, pp.6f.

²⁸ GN 30:1 January 1929, pp.7f.

‘Anti-Christ: That Wicked One,’ in which again world events were evaluated according to biblical prophecies and which concluded with the question, ‘Will you be ready when the Bridegroom comes?’²⁹

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Lancaster’s other great theme was the baptism in the Holy Spirit. She strongly believed in the need to be filled with the Holy Spirit with the sign of speaking in tongues. It was important to pray earnestly for this, and not to give up until the Spirit came. Picking up a number of reported comments from Melbourne pulpits on Pentecost Sunday 1930, characteristically, she took the positive aspects and used them as a springboards to encourage people to believe God for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit —

What if there came to a waiting, praying, united Church today another Pentecost! What changes would result! Fear and timidity would yield to confidence and holy boldness. The sense of weakness would be replaced by the consciousness of power. Outside the Church society would feel the impact of new spiritual forces, and no longer would the awakened Church be despised and ignored.³⁰

While baptism in the Spirit was a gift, sincerity and obedience were still be necessary in order to receive.³¹

It was a feature of Lancaster’s style, that she often engaged the reader in dialogue. In an article on speaking in tongues, she proposed a hypothetical objection that it was sufficient to praise God in one’s own language, and then responded, ‘Sufficient for you perhaps, but not sufficient for God ... You don’t want tongues anyhow? Well, Paul the apostle did.’ And then, ‘Must it be written of you, dear friend,’ she asked, ‘that you cannot receive God’s Spirit? Do you refuse to speak in Tongues [sic] as the Spirit gives utterance?’³² In an article commenting on the views of a correspondent about eternal hellfire, she

²⁹ GN 23:4 April 1932, pp.12f.

³⁰ ‘With the Churches,’ GN 21:8 August 1930, pp.10ff.

³¹ ‘The condition for receiving the Holy Spirit was to keep the commandments of Jesus,’ E.Ridgway, *‘Ask for the Old Paths;’ or Back to the Bible Way*, Foster, Victoria: published by the author, n.d., p.20. See also pp.8ff. Ridgway places a greater stress on the need to keep God’s commandments before receiving the Spirit than Lancaster was wont to do.

³² J.Lancaster, ‘What’s the Use of Tongues?’ GN 1:6 October 1913, pp.8ff; GN 24:7 July 1933, p.5.

wrote, 'Fair and softly, friend ... Why do *you* suggest that God IS [sic] going to be eternally punishing? He does not hint at such a monstrous thing Himself.'³³

Lancaster's influence was expansive. By 1925, there were congregations to be found in Adelaide, Ballarat, Brisbane, Cairns, Mackay, Melbourne, Nambour, Parkes, Perth, Rockdale and Rockhampton together with numerous home groups in places like Burnie, Freeburgh, Heidelberg, Lilydale, Springvale and Wonthaggi.³⁴ She personally visited virtually all of these at some point, teaching, encouraging, praying and exhorting, as she did.

Divine healing

From the beginning, there were numerous reports of healing, visions and supernatural experiences through Lancaster's ministry. Whatever interpretation is to be placed on these reports, there is no doubt that Lancaster herself believed them to be true, which lends favour to their credibility. Adherence to the truth was a major quality of her life. She doggedly stood by her conscience and refused to be diverted from it: integrity was one of her outstanding characteristics. When praying for the sick, she would usually practise laying on of hands or anointing with oil.³⁵ Her son-in-law, W.A.Buchanan told how his mother was healed of a long-standing and serious illness after visiting Good News Hall and being anointed with oil. He himself was delivered from a swelling in his throat. His sister Kate was healed of rheumatism and persistent headaches.³⁶

An Oakleigh woman reported that her little son, who was born with deformed fingers, was now normal. Another told of release from a nervous disorder and another from kidney stones. A baby whose life was threatened was, four months after healing prayer, healthy and putting on weight. Ruby Lewis, a little girl with a nasal growth, was 'quite delivered'. Jessie Smart was so weak she could not get to the Hall on her own for anointing, but friends took her and

³³ GN 1:6 October 1913, p.16.

³⁴ See Appendix One and various issues of GN.

³⁵ Usually ordinary olive oil was used. Those praying would apply it to the forehead of the sick and then pray for them. No healing power was attributed to the oil: it was viewed sacramentally as a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

³⁶ GN 1:5 January 1913, pp.19ff.

after prayer the pain left her. A.Hultgren was at the point of death with pneumonia, but refused to take medication. After a visit from one of the women at Good News Hall, he showed dramatic improvement. A man who had been 'stone deaf' for 85 years, declared that he could now hear a clock ticking. Another suffered with severe heart trouble and could not climb two steps without pain, but after being anointed with oil, could 'run up and down two or three flights of stairs without noticing them.' A thirteen-year-old girl contracted appendicitis. After laying on of hands she felt relief. Five months later she was still free from pain. 'God sent dear Mother (Lancaster)' to a woman who had not been able to kneel in prayer for many years, and she was healed.³⁷ Ruby Anstis had a badly broken arm which remained swollen and bent for months. After Lancaster prayed for her, the arm became normal.³⁸

H.McLennan told how a specialist had advised that her little daughter needed ten weeks' complete rest. She took her to Good News Hall for anointing and prayer. Within a week she was back at school and 18 months later was brighter than ever.³⁹ M.G.Parker told how the Lord had given her surprising strength and energy when she was weak and down to 48 kilograms in weight.⁴⁰ In 1929, Margaret Clapp testified to having been healed from cancer four years' previously in Ballarat, Victoria.⁴¹ George Christian thanked God for healing him from cancer ten years previously.⁴² A mother brought her six-year-old son who had been in an iron frame for twelve months. After anointing with oil and prayer in the name of Jesus, he began to walk and was soon running and jumping without support. As a result, his older brother and sister were baptised in water and his mother was baptised in the Spirit.⁴³ Emily Huston, 62 years of age, reported how she had suffered from rheumatoid arthritis for five years, spending many weeks in hospital and being forced to use a wheelchair to get

³⁷ GN 1:6 October 1913, pp.5ff.

³⁸ GN 16:4 April 1925, p.20.

³⁹ GN 16:8 August 1925, p.12.

⁴⁰ GN 17:1 January 1926, pp.5f.

⁴¹ M.Clapp, 'Can My Heavenly Father Remove Cancer?' GN 20:12 December 1929, p.14.

⁴² GN 22:6 June 1931, p.7.

⁴³ GN 21:6 June 1930, p.10.

about. On 12 May 1930, she was brought by ambulance and wheeled into Good News Hall. That same night she walked out on her own.⁴⁴ A mother related how her daughter's arm had been broken in two places but had healed perfectly. There was no shortening of the limb and there was now normal freedom of movement.⁴⁵

The testimonies continued to pour in month after month — healing from ulcers, rheumatics, pneumonia, injury, bronchitis, abscesses, epilepsy, cancer, curvature of the spine, deafness, a perforated ear drum, leukemia, inflammation of the bladder, constipation, insomnia, asthma, failing eye sight, depression, a septic throat.⁴⁶

Sometimes, healing occurred at a distance. Nellie Robson from Queensland suffered from dengue fever and neuralgia and became blind in one eye. Encouraged by correspondence from Good News Hall, she prayed for healing and her health was restored.⁴⁷ A young man admitted to hospital with bronchial pneumonia recovered dramatically — 'At the time prayer was offered (at Good News Hall) he was made instantly whole.' May Wilson was suffering unusual pain in her third pregnancy. Although doctors had administered chloroform on the two previous occasions, this time, 'her little one was delivered painlessly.' M.Hart was crying with pain from an abscess on the tooth. She wrote a brief request for prayer and before she could send it, the pain diminished.⁴⁸

Sometimes, this healing was the result of 'anointed handkerchiefs' being sent to the sufferer. Taking a cue from Paul's experience,⁴⁹ people often asked for

⁴⁴ 'A Miracle of Healing,' GN 21:7 July 1930, p.4.

⁴⁵ GN 21:10 October 1930, p.13.

⁴⁶ GN 16:9 September 1925, p.14; GN 16:12 December 1925, p.4; GN 17:2 February 1926, pp.7,12; GN 17:6 June 1926, pp.7f; GN 17:12 December 1926, p.15; GN 18:1 January 1927, p.12; GN 24:8 August 1933, p.8; GN 24:9 September 1933, p.9; GN 25:1 January 1934, p.7.

⁴⁷ N.Robson, 'Showing Mercy unto Thousands of Them that Love Me,' GN 1:5 January 1913, pp.23ff.

⁴⁸ GN 1:6 October 1913, pp.5ff.

⁴⁹ Acts 19:11-12: 'God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.' (NIV)

handkerchiefs to be anointed and prayed over to take to sick friends.⁵⁰ Even a copy of *Good News* magazine could be an instrument of healing. Before the magazines were posted out, hands were laid on them and prayer was made to God that when they touched the bodies of sick people, they would be made whole.⁵¹ There were frequent testimonies to this effect. Lillian Jarrett told how after laying the magazine on her body there had been no recurrence of an illness she had endured for a year. A mother told how she laid the magazine on her daughter's throat while she slept and how next morning painful ulcers had gone. On another occasion she brought healing to her swollen knee by the same method. A woman who feared she had cancer laid the 'little paper' on the area of pain and suffered no more while another woman with a bad back found relief through sleeping on the magazine! A reader in Eagle Creek, Oregon, USA, wrote, 'I could tell you of many wonderful healings in our family through this precious paper,' and went on to report relief with various family members from colds, earache, toothache, headache, influenza and physical deformity.⁵²

Year after year, the reports continued. One woman wrote —

You will remember anointing for paralysis the young girl whose mother and father sought the Lord? This morning she prepared lunch for her mother and myself with her own hand and is now using her foot to work the sewing machine. Glory to Jesus.⁵³

Another testified that a fibroid tumour of ten years' standing had gone instantly when she prayed. Her ticket of admission to hospital was no longer needed.⁵⁴

Another told of a young man who had been in a plaster cast for five weeks in 1921 because of tuberculosis in the spine. In faith, he had removed the cast and for the previous three months had been picking and lumping potatoes. In 1924,

⁵⁰ GN 19:6 June 1928, p.6; GN 24:6 June 1933, p.2; GN 24:8 August 1933, p.8. This practice was also adopted in Richmond Temple and Glad Tidings Tabernacle. See G. and I. George, personal interview, 12 June 1990.

⁵¹ GN 17:8 August 1926, p.19; GN 19:6 June 1928, p.6.

⁵² GN 17:8 August 1926, p.19; GN 18:10 October 1927, p.11; GN 19:6 June 1928, p.6; GN 19:12 December 1928, p.14; GN 20:3 March 1929, p.15; GN 22:2 February 1931, p.7; GN 24:1 January 1933, p.7.

⁵³ GN 9:1 February 1923, p.15.

⁵⁴ GN 9:1 February 1923, p.6.

Lancaster reported that the man was still ‘well, strong, and happy, and seeking God’s best.’⁵⁵ Another man with heart trouble and catarrh who had been told he might drop dead at any time and rarely rose before 10.30 am was now, after anointing, rising at 6.30 am and coping with hard work.⁵⁶

Any need was considered a fair subject for prayer and faith. ‘Grandma’ Abrahams knelt in a barren, stunted field and prayed for a crop to grow in the midst of a drought and saw an unprecedented harvest.⁵⁷ A young man cutting thistles at Echuca and a farm hand in Rochester reported how God kept them from being attacked by a bull or troubled by snakes.⁵⁸ Several people testified to being cured of smoking.⁵⁹ A woman named Rosie told how, after 18 years of addiction to opium, she had not touched it for over a year. She had now been baptised and filled with the Spirit and was speaking regularly at open air meetings.⁶⁰ Often, there were reports of financial needs being met.⁶¹ One man who wanted to travel around preaching the gospel prayed successfully for a horse.⁶²

Sometimes, complaints were seen as demonic. For example —

I would like to tell you what the dear Lord has done for me. I came to Good News Hall with bad nerves and I asked the Lord to heal me and He did! Glory to His name. I also had evil spirits in me and I asked God to cast them out in Jesu’s name and He did ...⁶³

A frail little two-year-old who weighed only ten kilograms and whose flesh was wasting away from marasmus began to improve steadily and within three weeks was running about and playing. The cure was the result of exorcism — ‘We anointed him with oil in the Name of the Lord and he soon began to

⁵⁵ GN 9:1 February 1923, p.7; GN 15:6 June 1924, p.7..

⁵⁶ GN 9:1 February 1923, p.8.

⁵⁷ GN 20:12 December 1929, pp.14f.

⁵⁸ GN 22:2 February 1931, p.13; GN 22:6 June 1931, p.15..

⁵⁹ GN 22:9 September 1931, p.7.

⁶⁰ ‘Rosie’s testimony,’ GN 23:12 December 1932, p.5,

⁶¹ eg GN 24:2 February 1933, p.10.

⁶² GN 24:6 June 1933, p.8.

⁶³ GN 1:6 October 1913, p.5.

vomit. We realised the evil spirits were coming out ... ⁶⁴

After a particularly graphic letter from Charles Mortomore, in which he described seeing demon spirits like bluish, wriggling creatures, Janet Lancaster commented —

This statement concerning evil spirits may seem strange to Western ears, but to the dwellers in the East is nothing new ... The demi gods of Heathen mythology are not 'myths' but actual beings, half god — half man, the impious offspring of the sons of God (Gen 6: 4) ... but through all the bitter conflict Jesus IS Conqueror ... Jesus commanded the unclean spirits and they came out of the man... 'In my name they shall cast out demons.'⁶⁵

Having been prayed for, people were often encouraged to demonstrate their faith by acting as if they were already healed. A woman with diabetes was told to thank God for her healing, to eat anything as though she was well and to leave the rest to God. Later she told excitedly how her diet was back to normal without ill effect.⁶⁶

The use of medicine

Although she herself seems to have given little direct instruction in the matter, it was evidently Lancaster's belief that taking medicine was incompatible with faith in God. While not everyone agreed with this and many people did seek medical aid, others refused to do so.⁶⁷ Fred Lancaster, Jeannie Lancaster's grand-son, tells how he had a migraine attack once and a friend wanted to suggest he take an aspirin but was tentative about doing so —

We never went to doctors until I cut myself and was bleeding. I suppose Mum prayed but she also got the doctor. They were strong on divine healing. It was almost a sin to go the doctor. But their attitude was that if you took a pill you had failed God. I respect that high profile my mother taught us as kids.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ GN 1:6 October 1913, p.5.

⁶⁵ GN 1:6 October 1913, p.10.

⁶⁶ GN 18:6 June 1927, p.17.

⁶⁷ Charles Greenwood shared this view, although he dissented from Lancaster on several other issues. Greenwood, *Life Story*, 1965, p.45

⁶⁸ F.Lancaster, personal interview, 18 December 1993.

This attitude to medicine comes out again and again in the testimonies of healing published in *Good News*. John Russell told how he had contracted rheumatic fever and pneumonia with pain 'like toothache' all over his body. After a week, his wife finally sent for a doctor who prescribed some medication. He refused to take it. After three days, the doctor gave up on him and told him that without treatment he would die. A few weeks later, Russell was preaching in an open air meeting when to his great delight the doctor drove past. 'He is the doctor who attended me and said I could not live without taking his medicines,' he told his hearers, 'yet here I am, perfectly healed by God.'⁶⁹ Another man even threw out his 'cough lollies' and affirmed, 'I have not touched medicine of any description since.'⁷⁰

Harry Hultgren was drifting in and out of consciousness with pneumonia. An elder prayed for him and he claimed to be healed but was still very weak. Furthermore, his family had been told that a spiritualist medium had predicted his death. They urged him to see a doctor. He yielded to their urgings and was examined both by a general practitioner and a specialist. Neither found evidence of any infection or illness.⁷¹ In 1920, he severely burned one hand at his place of work. Again, he refused medication, anointed his hand with oil and prayed for healing. The next day there was no trace of any injury.⁷² In 1922, he was suffering with tuberculosis but refused to take any medicine. Again, he submitted to family pressure and on 11 February, finished up in a hospital for incurable cases. Here, he had 'another great battle for refusing remedies,' but the first Sunday after Easter was discharged from hospital, evidently recovered. Four years later, there had been no recurrence.⁷³ On another occasion, when he was 65 years old, he had two of his fingers crushed in a factory accident. He refused to allow his fingers to be washed in water with

⁶⁹ GN 15:5 May 1924, pp.7f.

⁷⁰ GN 18:7 July 1927, p.7.

⁷¹ H.Hultgren, 'Did the Medium Know,' GN 17:5 May 1926, p.7. Members of the Hultgren family are still involved in Pentecostal work.

⁷² H.Hultgren, 'God Heals Burns,' GN 17:7 July 1926, pp.5f.

⁷³ H.Hultgren, 'An Incurable Consumptive Healed,' GN 17:9, September 1926, p.6.

disinfectant in it. Within two weeks, he was back at work.⁷⁴

Often, this attitude required enormous faith and determination. In April 1918, one woman accidentally chopped off the top of her thumb just beneath the nail. Six years later she told the astonishing story of how initially, she had simply put it back on and bandaged it. After a few days, it turned completely black. Then part of the severed bone worked its way out through the skin, new flesh started to grow from the bottom part upwards, and 'in a short time, nothing could be (seen) of the accident.'⁷⁵ Another man was dying with pneumonia. His family finally called a doctor who told him his lungs and heart were affected and he would never leave his bed alive. 'God had no ... help when He created man,' came the reply, 'and He doesn't need ... help to mend man.' Fourteen years later, the man was still testifying to his medicine-free healing.⁷⁶

At times, refusal to use medical help seemed foolhardy. On 5 January 1925, three-year-old Joshua Rowston of Orange, NSW, was bitten on the foot by a black snake. Both parents laid hands on him and 'commanded satan [sic] to leave in the name of Jesus.' The next day, Joshua's foot was swollen and very painful. That night, on the basis of Mark 16:18 they prayed again⁷⁷, he slept well and next morning the foot was almost normal. Three months later the whole family testified to his healing, pointing out that 'no doctor was called, neither was any ligature used.'⁷⁸ May Mansell told how she had brought her little daughter home from hospital, with a leg infected by tuberculosis, removed the plaster cast and watched an abscess drain for twelve months with no medical application other than bathing. This was a severe test of her faith, but now two and a half years later, little Joan was fully recovered, except that her leg was bent. But Jesus would fix that, too.⁷⁹ Nothing was too big or too

⁷⁴ H.Hultgren, 'It Pays,' GN 17:6 June 1926, p.6.

⁷⁵ 'The Great Physician,' GN 15:5 May 1924, pp.6f.

⁷⁶ 'A Derelict Rescued,' GN 17:1 January 1926, pp.6ff.

⁷⁷ Mark 16:17-18 — 'And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and it they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover' (AV).

⁷⁸ L.Rowston, A.T.Rowston and John Rowston, 'Taking up Serpents,' GN 16:5 May 1925, p.9.

⁷⁹ GN 23:9 September 1932, p.5.

small to bring to the Lord. When one woman had a broken needle impaled in her hand, her friend prayed and the needle came out.⁸⁰

Even when healing did not seem to come, people refused to give in. One lass told how the Lord had healed her of a cough, the result of a nervous condition. The next Sunday at church she wanted to cough, but remembered she was healed and stuffed her handkerchief into her mouth to prevent it. It was ‘only Satan’ trying to make her cough, she said.⁸¹ The reason people were not healed, wrote Florence Holman, was that their faith wavered. Only firm faith would be effective.⁸² And healing did not always come as readily as it might. R.Close was travelling with his wife Emmy through outback New South Wales in missionary work among Aboriginal people when he became very ill with rheumatics. Although they prayed much, he suffered for days, while they remained trapped in the wagon by rain, living only on water and bread and butter until a kindly neighbour gave them some milk.⁸³ Edwin Ridgway’s daughter suffered polio as a child but was never given medical treatment. It was only when she became an adult that she underwent surgery.⁸⁴ Tom Henderson was another who was not healed. After months of suffering from ‘a grievous complaint’ he ‘fell asleep’ as did ‘Brother’ Purvis, following ‘a sharp battle with the enemy.’⁸⁵ The well-loved ‘Blind Dolly’ did not receive her sight.⁸⁶ Nor was Ada Boaler released from her wheelchair.⁸⁷ Lancaster’s nine-year-old grand daughter Esther May (‘Blossom’) died in April 1933 at the age of eleven after ten weeks of illness.⁸⁸ And death was the only relief ‘Sister’ Adams, wife of Philip Adams, found after ‘a protracted painful illness of several months.’⁸⁹

⁸⁰ GN 16:9 September 1925, p.14.

⁸¹ GN 15:7 July 1924, p.4.

⁸² GN 23:9 September 1932, p.6.

⁸³ GN 16:7 July 1925, p.11.

⁸⁴ I.Ridgway, personal communication, 4 June 1998.

⁸⁵ GN 16:8 August 1925, p.13; GN 17:6 June 1926, p.15.

⁸⁶ GN 16:9 September 1925, p.17.

⁸⁷ GN 21:10 October 1930, p.16.

⁸⁸ J.Lancaster, ‘Waiting for the Trumpet Sound,’ GN 24:4,5 April-May 1933, p.16.

⁸⁹ GN 24:3 March 1933, p.16.

Opponents were quick to pounce on these apparent failures as proof of the errors of Pentecostalism. Alan Price, a detractor of the Pentecostal work in Maryborough, Queensland, in 1927, claimed that wherever Pentecostalism was to be found, there would be ‘quite a formidable list of premature and avoidable deaths.’⁹⁰ In a little booklet sold in Queensland in the 1920’s, A.E.Bishop pointed out that many ‘of the choicest of saints’ had not been healed, because it was clearly not God’s will that they should be.⁹¹ Yet, while Lancaster freely acknowledged that some did not receive healing, there are no recorded significant cases of misadventure.

There were two fundamental reasons behind Lancaster’s healing ministry. One was a conviction that divine healing was clearly taught in Scripture. *Good News* frequently carried teaching articles on the subject of divine healing. Lancaster clearly approved of the Anglican James Moore Hickson’s healing missions and there are frequent references to him in the pages of *Good News*.⁹² In an article published by Lancaster, Hickson simply pointed out that Jesus healed the sick when on earth, because God was in Him and with Him, and that the only hindrance to the ‘outflow of Divine healing’ was human unbelief. When Christ suffered for us, it was not only for our sins but also for our sicknesses —

⁹⁰ Alan Price, ‘Pentecostalism,’ leaflet, Melbourne: Austral Printing and Publishing Co, n.d., p.6.

⁹¹ A.E.Bishop, *Tongues, Signs and Visions, not God’s Order for Today* Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1920, p.17.

⁹² GN 12:8 September 1923, p.8 quotes a report from the *Brisbane Courier* [sic] headed, ‘Wonderful Cures,’ and reporting healing from a twisted leg, infantile paralysis, cataracts, partial blindness, rheumatism, deafness, eczema, cardiac problems, violent headaches, muteness and other complaints — GN 16:11 November 1925, pp.15f. An English layman, Hickson visited Australia in 1923 and conducted healing missions all over the country. Thousands of people thronged cathedral altar rails seeking healing and many claims were published of positive results. The Australian bishops approved and in 1924 issued a pastoral letter endorsing both Hickson’s ministry and divine healing. While some were sceptical of the healing claims, it was generally agreed that a great deal of good was done. Stephen Judd writes — ‘Virtually every parish [in the Sydney diocese] received spiritual reinforcement and revitalisation by the mission. Even the most sceptical and nervous were challenged to deepen their understanding of the merciful and healing power of the Creator. Hickson, who earnestly believed in God’s willingness to intervene for a faithful people, encouraged Anglicans to incorporate healing into their pastoral ministry... Hickson’s mission did not immediately produce a large homegrown healing ministry. But it did undoubtedly result in a renewed spirit of sympathy and prayer for the sick and suffering ... It also gave a new and bold confidence to those few clergymen in the diocese who saw the healing ministry as an integral pastoral function’ — Judd and Cable, 1987, p.199; Jackson, 1987, p.60; Breward, 1993, p.119.

Christianity has accepted Jesus as the Saviour of the soul, and to a great extent forgotten Him as the Saviour of the body.

But 'is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by,' that Jesus Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases? That He made atonement for us, and by the new covenant has made a way to 'the Lord that healeth thee' — even Himself?⁹³

Lancaster could not have put it more simply. In the same issue, she also published a sermon which English evangelist Smith Wigglesworth (1859-1847) preached in Good News Hall in 1922 on the subject of faith. Taking the story of Abraham and Sarah, Wigglesworth argued that just as Abraham believed the word of God above all other evidences, so regardless of how we feel, we must believe.⁹⁴

In a short piece evidently written by Lancaster, there are listed six practical aspects of receiving healing. These are —

1. Healing is a free gift from God (Matthew 8:9)
2. Healing is secured through Christ's atonement (Job 33:24; Isaiah 53:4; Matthew 8:17)
3. We need to obey the Scriptures and call for the elders (James 5:14). If a wrong attitude prevents us, we must deal with it as wrong attitudes can prevent healing (1 Cor 11:30-32)
4. Our faith must not be in people's prayers, but in the Lord Himself.
5. Our aim must be God's glory rather than our comfort (Philippians 2:13; Romans 14:8)
6. Rejoicing and praising the Lord precedes healing (Psalm 40:11).⁹⁵

But it was not only a conviction of the truth of Scripture that motivated Lancaster. It was also a genuine concern for those in need. 'Our hearts have yearned with compassion,' she wrote, 'over the many who knew not that Jesus could heal them, and our prayers and tears have gone up to our Almighty Father that He would work His mighty works here as He has done in other

⁹³ J.M.Hickson, 'The Healing Saviour,' GN 9:1 February 1923, pp.2ff.

⁹⁴ S.Wigglesworth, 'Faith,' GN 9:1 February 1923, pp.8ff. Wigglesworth was an itinerant English evangelist who twice visited Australia. See Chant, 1984, pp.66ff; S.Frodsham, *Smith Wigglesworth: Apostle of Faith*, Elim, 1949; A.Hibbert, *Smith Wigglesworth — the Secret of His Power*, Chichester: Sovereign World, 1982; J.Hywel-Davies, *Baptised by Fire — the Story of Smith Wigglesworth*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1987.

⁹⁵ 'Why am I Not Healed?' GN 22:4 April 1931, p.7.

lands.’⁹⁶

Nevertheless, physical health was always secondary to spiritual health. Lancaster told a homely tale of a teenager who scoffed at the idea that God could heal his broken arm. But they prayed and God did heal it. As a result, the lad began to read his Bible. So Lancaster concluded, not with an exhortation to believe God for healing, but with a challenge to encourage others to start reading the Scriptures.⁹⁷

In an anonymous article entitled, ‘The Healing of Disease,’ the writer argued that many people continued to be sick because they persisted in ‘wrong methods of living.’ To receive healing, it was important to discover, if possible, what caused the affliction in the first place. The original cause of all diseases was sin, so it was of primary importance, when seeking healing, to deal with this first.⁹⁸

Doctrinal issues

In spite of Lancaster’s effectiveness as a pastor, there were still some who had grievances. In particular, there was criticism of her leadership, many feeling it was not work for a woman. Some attempt was made to overcome this in 1923 by the appointment of three elders — John Cavill, Charles Anstis and Philip Adams.⁹⁹ A nine-member Council was set up for the Good News Pentecostal Alliance of which John Cavill was president, Winnie Andrews, secretary and Jeannie Lancaster, treasurer. Lancaster accepted the new arrangements with equanimity and grace. As treasurer and editor of the magazine she was, in practice, the leader. Years later, she was still referred to as the pastor.¹⁰⁰ In 1926, under the influence of South Africans Isaac Hugo and F.B. Van Eyk¹⁰¹, she could see the growing need for the various assemblies to develop closer

⁹⁶ J.Lancaster, ‘Open Letter,’ GN 9:1 February 1923, p.17.

⁹⁷ GN 18:12 December 1927, Supplement, p.4.

⁹⁸ ‘The Healing of Disease,’ GN 15:2 February 1924, p.17.

⁹⁹ GN 9:1 February 1923, p.20; GN 12:8 September 1923, p.21; GN 17:10 October 1926, pp.10-12.

¹⁰⁰ GN 16:4 April 1925, p.19; GN 23:2 February 1932, p.19..

¹⁰¹ See Chapter Eight for more on Van Eyk.

relationships through a ‘fellowship tie,’ so she published profiles of each of the three elders. There was no division in their homes. They were all men of the Spirit. And although ‘the winds of persecution’ had blown from all sides, they simply ‘blew them into one.’ The greater the hatred and scorn flung at them, the more they stood together ‘for God and His Son.’¹⁰²

This latter comment was clearly a reference to another aspect of Lancaster’s work which was to prove a stone of stumbling for the rest of her life. This was her doctrinal stance. Although later editions of *Good News* were Pentecostally orthodox, early editions were more controversial. In the formative years of Pentecostal development in the United States, two major schools of thought were represented, namely, the trinitarian and the unitarian (or, Oneness) which resulted in the movement being irreversibly divided within a decade of Azusa Street.¹⁰³ Lancaster presented yet another view. In simple terms, what she taught was that God the Father and the Holy Spirit were one, and that Jesus Christ was God’s Son. In January 1913, an article by ‘A.W.’ made the issues plain —

Here is the key to the mystery. God the Father and God the Holy Spirit are One and the Same Person ...

We acknowledge and worship One God, Jehovah, the Holy Spirit who spake by the prophets, the Father who dwelt in Jesus Christ and who is pouring out His Spirit today (His substance is spirit) ‘upon all flesh’.

We can say with the apostle Paul, ‘To us there is but ONE GOD, the Father, and One Lord Jesus Christ’ 1 Cor 8: 6.¹⁰⁴

Other articles point out the same concept, and go to some length to discount trinitarian teaching. The obvious question that other Pentecostals — and other Christians generally — wanted to ask, of course, was, ‘Who, then, is Jesus Christ? Is He also God? Or is He less than God?’

In an accompanying article by ‘A.S.’, *Good News* goes on —

¹⁰² GN 17:10 October 1926, pp.10ff.

¹⁰³ It is interesting to note that Frank Ewart, an Australian Baptist pastor who had become a Pentecostal while ministering in Canada, was one of the strongest advocates of the Oneness teaching. See Ewart, 1947, pp.50ff; Burgess et al, 1988, pp.644f.

¹⁰⁴ GN 1:5 January 1913, p.15.

Many held various opinions about Christ, so He asked His disciples, 'But whom say ye that I am?' And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou are [sic] the Christ' (that is in Hebrew, the Messiah), 'The Son of the Living GOD.' Matt 16: 13-17.

This is the only Apostles' Creed that Jesus ever commended. There is nothing in the Bible about an equal and co-eternal, 'God the Son'.

The Son (is) inferior both in Dignity and in Time to the Father. Jesus said — 'My Father is greater than I.' John 14: 28 . . . The term 'God' is applied to our Lord as Son of God in a lower degree, as it is also used of men. Ps 82:6 ...¹⁰⁵

The article points out that Christ was pre-existent and that God 'used the instrumentality of His divine Son' in making the world. God put everything except Himself under the authority of His Son and He must reign until even death is subject to Him. Then the Son Himself will submit to the Father 'that God may be all in all' (1 Cor 15: 24-28). Furthermore, in a realistic sense, Jesus did not become the Christ, that is, the anointed One, until the Spirit came upon Him at the time of His baptism. This in no way took away from His pre-existence. Just as He had always been the Saviour, but did not actually bear our sins until He died on the cross; so He had always been the anointed One, but was not actually anointed until the Jordan.¹⁰⁶ In evangelical eyes, all this amounted to a denial of the deity of Christ. It was not enough to call him the Son of God; He must clearly be called 'God the Son.'

In the next issue of *Good News*, the textual authority of the trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7¹⁰⁷ was challenged and Pope Leo XIII blamed for endorsing it. An editorial comment, no doubt from Lancaster, noted that the previous issue had been sent out with the prayer that the Father would keep them true to Scripture and that the Spirit would 'move our pen' so that they would print nothing contrary to God's will. They had expected a 'gale of

¹⁰⁵ GN 1:5 January 1913, p.17. I have not been able to discover who A.W. and A.S. were. No one with those initials figures prominently in the work of Good News Hall. It is tempting to speculate that they were pen names used by Lancaster — that 'A.W.' could simply mean 'A Woman' and 'A.S.' could be 'A Sister.' However, as there seems no evidence of the use of pen names in subsequent issues, this may be going too far.

¹⁰⁶ W.Andrews, 'Mrs McPherson's "Open Letter" Answered,' 24 October 1922, p.3; GN 15:12 December 1924, p.19.

¹⁰⁷ 1 John 5:7 — 'For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one' (AV). This text is now universally recognised as being insufficiently supported by reliable textual evidence.

criticism from those trained in the traditions of men' in response to their statements about the godhead. But instead of a gale, only 'the gentlest breezes' were felt.¹⁰⁸ This judgement was, unfortunately, both premature and ill-formed. The gales might not yet have touched them, but they would certainly be stirred up. Although Lancaster did not seem to realise it, her isolation from the Pentecostal mainstream was thereafter ensured.

However, she and her fellow-believers were not of such mettle as to change for the sake of expediency. Ten years later, an article in the magazine pointed out—

If we desire to be overcomers we must, according to 1 John 5: 5, believe that Jesus is the Son of God; and when church dignitaries make such confusing statements as, 'I believe that the little Babe of Bethlehem was God Himself, the infinite God Who took on human flesh...' etc., worshippers who desire to approach God become perplexed...

Why are the people not told that there is one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ?¹⁰⁹

A statement of faith published in the same issue seems, however, to allow for variety of belief —

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Who was with Him and in Him before the world was; begotten by the Father — through the Holy Spirit — of the Virgin Mary. He became flesh and dwelt among us. Through Him, God has revealed himself to mankind — Luke 1: 35; Mark 14: 61-62; Rom 1: 3-4; Col 1: 15-16; Phil 2: 6; John 1: 1, 18 and 17: 5; Heb 1:10

The next clause speaks of the Holy Spirit as proceeding from the Father and the Son and says that he is 'of one substance, majesty and glory with the Father and the Son, eternal God.'¹¹⁰ The coming of F.B.Van Eyk in 1926 and the decision to adopt the name Apostolic Faith Mission required further conciliation. Van Eyk was evangelically orthodox and preached accordingly. To accommodate him, the Mission had to modify its earlier stand. There is no

¹⁰⁸ GN 1:6 October 1913, pp.15, 25ff.

¹⁰⁹ Chant, 1984, pp.52f.

¹¹⁰ GN 9:1 February 1923, p. 22.

doubt that Lancaster maintained her own personal views, but they were no longer expressed publicly.¹¹¹ By 1935, a year after Lancaster's death, the new editor, H.Martin, for many years an AFM pastor, could publish an article entitled, 'The Deity of Christ,' in which the writer clearly said, 'The Bible proves conclusively that Jesus is not only the Son of God but God the Son.'¹¹² Whatever convictions Lancaster may have had, the retreat to orthodoxy was by then complete.

Another teaching concerned the fate of the wicked after death. The traditional, evangelical view has been the eternal punishment and torment of the unrepentant wicked. Lancaster did not agree. She believed in eternal punishment and eternal destruction for sin, but she did not believe that God would be eternally judging. Rather, God's judgement would be eternal in its effects.¹¹³ Any thought of the immortality of the soul or of eternal, ongoing torment was unacceptable. The wages of sin were simply death. Allied to this was the concept that believers sleep until the resurrection. In other words, the common idea that the soul goes immediately either to heaven or hell at death was rejected.¹¹⁴

It is interesting to note that Lancaster's view, commonly known as 'conditional immortality' or 'annihilation,' was held by Charles Parham, the initiator of Pentecostal teaching in the United States.¹¹⁵ It was also the belief of the Irish evangelist George Grubb and of Harold Begbie, whose writings were popular with *Good News* readers.¹¹⁶ T.J.Ames, whose small church in Adelaide was loosely affiliated with Good News Hall wrote a tract entitled *Concerning the*

¹¹¹ See Chapter Eight.

¹¹² H.Proctor, 'The Deity of Christ,' GN 26:6 June 1935, p.11.

¹¹³ GN 1:5 January 1913, p.6.

¹¹⁴ In describing the passing of his wife, missionary H.N.Todd wrote, 'My dear one has fallen asleep until the resurrection morn. (Hail, blessed day!)' — GN 1:5 January 1913, p.6. Also, an obituary for the widow of Philip Adams bids her, 'Sleep well, sleep well, until His Kingdom comes ...' — GN 24:3 March 1933, p.16.

¹¹⁵ Anderson, 1979, p.89; Cerillo, 1993, p.82; Burgess et al, 1988, p.19. Note that Lancaster denied any belief in 'annihilation' but only on the grounds that the word does not appear in Scripture. In reality she side-stepped the real issue by making it a matter of semantics — GN 9:1 February 1923, p.23.

¹¹⁶ 'Religion and the Crisis,' GN 1:6 October 1913, p.4.

*Punishment of the Wicked*¹¹⁷ in which he argued that the Scriptures very clearly taught that the wicked would be punished with destruction at the return of Christ. How then could the Church teach that sinners go to hell as soon as they die and even worse, that they suffer eternally?¹¹⁸ To Ames, the idea of an eternity of suffering was 'monstrous' and he wondered that 'Pentecostal believers, with the love of the Spirit,' had not cultivated 'a better understanding of the Word.'¹¹⁹ As there was regular communication between Ames and Lancaster, there may well have been an exchange of ideas. In 1926, Lancaster spoke of his views with approval.¹²⁰ It is also likely that Lancaster was influenced by Seventh Day Adventist teaching. They befriended her in her initial search for help in the realm of healing and in later years she occasionally published material by Adventism's founder, Ellen White.¹²¹ Nevertheless, Lancaster strongly rejected any suggestion that she believed in 'annihilation,' although making little attempt to explain why.¹²²

There was a third distinctive area of teaching which does not seem to have been greatly challenged. This was the view that only certain believers constituted the Body and Bride of Christ and hence would take part in the rapture of the saints prior to His return.¹²³ This was not a matter of salvation. The Christian Church embraced all who confessed their sins and were 'cleansed in the precious Blood of the Lamb of God.'¹²⁴ And you could not be a

¹¹⁷ T.J.Ames, *Concerning the Punishment of the Wicked*, Elim Pentecostal Assembly Tract, No.23, Adelaide: ABC Printing Works, n.d.

¹¹⁸ Ames, *Punishment*, p.4.

¹¹⁹ Ames, *Punishment*, pp.5,11,12.

¹²⁰ J.Lancaster, 'First Impressions,' GN 17:5 May 1926, p.18.

¹²¹ F.Lancaster, personal interview, 18 December 1993; GN 22:9 September 1931, pp.12f..

¹²² GN 9:1 February 1923, p.23.

¹²³ From the late nineteenth century, premillennialism was popular among evangelicals and Pentecostals. Largely popularised through the teachings of the Brethren leader J.N.Darby and the *Scofield Reference Bible*, dispensational premillennialism taught that there would be a 'rapture of the saints' in which they would be taken up to heaven out of the Great Tribulation either three and a half years or seven years prior to the Second Coming of Christ, which would in turn be followed by a thousand year millennium. For an overview of various millennial views see my *The Return* Chichester: Sovereign World, 1991. For a thorough discussion of the premillennial view, see D.Pentecost, *Things to Come* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981; for a more popular, sensationalist view, see H.Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* New York: Bantam, 1974.

¹²⁴ GN 16:5 May 1925, p.10.

true believer without ‘a measure of the Spirit.’¹²⁵ But being in the *Body* of Christ was different. ‘A place in the Body is not ours or mine to give,’ wrote Lancaster in 1913. ‘It is “reserved” (1 Pet.1:4) for those for whom it is prepared by our Father; those baptised in the Spirit of God.’ She went on to argue that just as God took Eve from the living body of her spouse, so ‘Immanuel’s Bride’ would be taken from the living members of Christ’s Body. ‘The Bride! She has none within her ranks but members of the Body; those who have been baptised in that ‘one spirit’ [sic].’¹²⁶ Ten years later, she repeated the same viewpoint in clear and plain terms, but added, ‘The manifestation of the Body and Bride, however, is as yet unfulfilled prophecy, about which we cannot afford to be dogmatic.’¹²⁷ Nevertheless there were many who were consecrated and who wanted to be in the Bride, but they were partly overcome by the lures of the world, the lusts of the flesh or the enticements of the devil. ‘If they are in this condition,’ wrote Lancaster, ‘when our Lord comes for His Bride, they will not be in the Bride, but will have to go through the tribulations, which are coming upon the world when the Bride is taken away.’ If, however, during the tribulations they were to get right with God, they would still ‘serve God in His temple.’¹²⁸

A believer was justified by faith and trusting in Christ for salvation. But only those who were willing to present their bodies as living sacrifices, forgoing not only sin, but even good things which needed to be abandoned for the sake of the gospel (Romans 12:1-2) would form the Bride of Christ. Only those who suffered with Him would reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12). Under the heading, ‘The Bride of Christ,’ an unsigned article in *Good News* used Wesleyan terminology when it said —

It is impossible to get to the mark of the prize without the Holy Spirit which God will give to everyone who asks and obeys. Luke 11:13; Acts 5:32; and impossible, also, without much prayer. Having got to the mark — which is perfection in love

¹²⁵ J.Lancaster, ‘Diversities of Operations,’ GN 20:5 May 1929, p.17.

¹²⁶ ‘The Body of the Christ,’ GN 1:6 October 1913, pp.12f. Note that although this article is unsigned, its language and style is that of Jeannie Lancaster.

¹²⁷ GN 15:5 May 1924, p.5.

¹²⁸ GN 16:11 November 1925, p.20.

— the command is to stand firm. As we yield to the Lord moment by moment, so the Holy Spirit will overcome us; and all our fleshly desires will disappear.¹²⁹

Florrie Mortomore, whose evangelistic endeavours penetrated as far as North Queensland, taught a similar view. So, too, did John Coombe and F.B. Van Eyk.¹³⁰

In one of a series of sermons preached in 1913 on the return of Christ, Coombe argued very strongly for a pre-Tribulation Rapture only of those who were sincerely and wholeheartedly serving Christ. The ‘faithful,’ he argued, will be caught away to meet the Lord; the ‘greater part’ of the Church will be left behind to face a time of Tribulation. Would it be fair or reasonable that ‘triflers’ with the faith should share the glory of the Rapture with faithful believers?¹³¹

William Booth-Clibborn held a similar view. Just as the Pharisees, although Jews, rejected Christ’s first coming, so those who hardened their hearts against the Pentecostal message would not be ready when Jesus came the second time. ‘There is no other means provided,’ he declared, ‘whereby we may be prepared except by the fullness of the Holy Spirit.’¹³²

It is evident that this was a significant development of the Wesleyan view of perfectionism.¹³³ Now, through the coming of the Spirit, not only would the believer be made more holy, but would precede other believers to heaven at the end of the age. Interestingly, this view was not accepted by Pentecostalism generally. As early as 1933, C.L. Greenwood, of the Pentecostal Church of Australia, vigorously refuted it.¹³⁴ Nor did John Adams refer to it in his careful study on the work of the Spirit. For him, to be filled with the Spirit was the

¹²⁹ GN 17:9 September 1926, pp.14f.

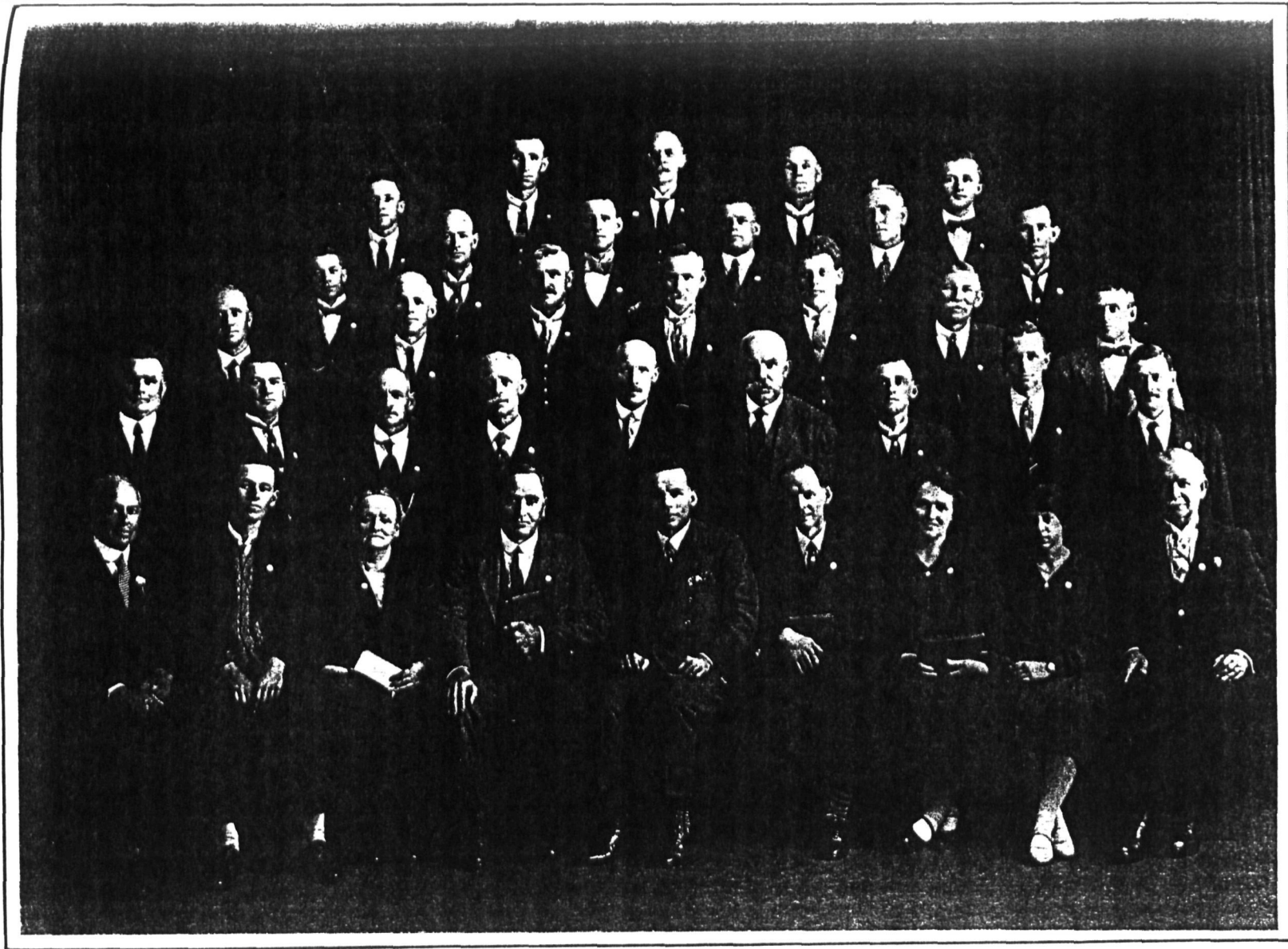
¹³⁰ GN Nov 1923, p.3; GN 17:12 Dec 1926, pp.5f; J.Coombe, ‘The Rapture of the Saints,’ transcript of sermon 31 July 1913. For more on Florrie Mortomore, see Chapter Twelve. For Van Eyk see Chapter Eight.

¹³¹ J.Coombe, ‘The Rapture of the Saints,’ sermon transcript, 31 July 1913.

¹³² William Booth-Clibborn, ‘Who Will be Translated?’ GN 19:8 August 1928, p.13. For more on Booth-Clibborn see Chapter Nine.

¹³³ See above Chapter Three.

¹³⁴ C.L.Greenwood, ‘The Ten Virgins,’ AE 6:11 April 1933, pp.2ff.



APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION, QUEENSLAND, C.1928.

'Mother' Lancaster is third from left in the front row. On her left are George Burns (with Bible), F.B.Van Eyk and W.A.Buchanan (with Bible).

Photo courtesy Fred Lancaster

norm for everyone.¹³⁵ Lancaster's view would be rejected today by all major Pentecostal denominations. Except for occasional expressions of a similar exclusivism by minority groups, contemporary Pentecostals universally see baptism in the Spirit as giving power for more effective Christian service, but not in any way forming a spiritual elite.¹³⁶

A spirit of tolerance

Lancaster was not afraid to challenge the status quo —

The North Melbourne Pentecostal Mission has never sailed under the flag of orthodoxy ie. it does not accept the creeds ... of any established denomination, but stands solely on the Word of God, requiring a 'Thus saith the Lord' for every article of belief.¹³⁷

On the other hand, there was never any intention to be needlessly controversial or antagonistic —

We have no quarrel with any of God's dear children who differ from us in doctrine, believing that the Father permits these differences that we may receive practice in that greatest thing of all, 'Love'. Therefore, praising Him that by His grace our love is greater than our knowledge, we gladly fellowship all who comply with the essentials of salvation as given in Rom.10:9, recognising that if the Body of Christ are ever to be of one mind (and they are), the unity can only be achieved by meeting together and enjoying liberty of the spirit (2 Cor 3: 17), and that means liberty for my brother as well as for me.¹³⁸

The profundity and depth of this sentiment is outweighed only by its idealism. Nevertheless, recalled one of her associates, 'Mummy was always the same.

¹³⁵ J.A.D.Adams, *The Scriptural Statement concerning the baptism of (or with or in) the Holy Spirit*, North Melbourne: Victory Press, n.d.; the contents of this book appeared as a series in *Good News* from February to May, 1928.

¹³⁶ While Van Eyk saw being in the body of Christ and being the Bride of Christ as one and the same thing, in the 1960s there was some teaching that there was a distinction between these two and that 'ordinary' Christians were in the Body, while only a select group formed the Bride. Again, mainstream Pentecostalism rejected this concept. See Chant, 1984, p.203.

¹³⁷ GN 1:5 January 1913, p.6; Lancaster's independence of thought is indicated also by her conviction that Christ was crucified on a Wednesday, not a Friday. See GN 19:4 April 1928, pp.10f; GN 25:3 March 1934, p.2.

¹³⁸ GN 1:5 January 1913, p.7. See also GN 15:5 May 1924, p.5: '...prophecy, about which we cannot afford to be dogmatic.'

She preferred freedom of fellowship.¹³⁹ She argued that people were free to believe just the Scriptures. Getting Christ into the hearts of people was what she was after, not doctrines.¹⁴⁰ In the statement of faith which was frequently published over the years, there was a continued expression of this spirit of tolerance —

PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED. We believe in the punishment of the wicked, who wilfully reject and despise the Love of God ... And whereas believers are not of the same mind as to what shall be the manner or form of punishment given to the wicked, it is considered advisable that scriptural language only shall be employed where this doctrine is concerned, all argument being thereby avoided — Matt. 25: 46; Matt. 13: 49-50; Luke 12: 47-48; Rom. 2: 6-9; 2 Thess. 2: 8-9; Rom. 6: 23; Rev. 20: 11-15.¹⁴¹

In 1927, Lancaster printed an article by F.B. Van Eyk in which he roundly asserted his belief in a literal hell and literal fire and expressed amazement at any alternative view.¹⁴² Lancaster's open attitude should have allowed sufficient freedom of thought and the Scripture references given are a combination of those used for either point of view. For evangelicals and other Pentecostals, however, nothing less than an unswerving commitment to a belief in everlasting punishment for the wicked would do. Questions were raised continually.¹⁴³ So Lancaster began to publish a series of Bible studies which were largely composed of quotations from Scripture, covering major aspects of doctrine. The first one was practical, concentrating on conversion, holy living and prayer. The next few covered topics such as baptism in water and in the Spirit, the Lord's Supper, divine healing and the second coming.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ This attitude was demonstrated in 1925, when she lamented the death of her 'beloved brother' 74-year-old G.H. Cargeeg, a Western Australian Baptist who had given himself unstintingly to ministry to the sick, but was not Pentecostal — .GN 16:5 May 1925, pp.9,16.

¹⁴⁰ J. Self, personal interview, n.d.; J. Mullin, personal interview, n.d.

¹⁴¹ GN 9:1 February 1923, p.23. According to the Hughes *Notebook* there were '210 positive Scriptures that the wicked shall die, perish, be destroyed, not see life, be consumed root and branch, cease to be etc.'

¹⁴² F.B. Van Eyk, 'Second Coming of Jesus Christ to this Earth,' GN 18:10 October 1927, pp.3ff.

¹⁴³ GN 15:9 September 1924, p.11: 'So many friends are asking questions on doctrine ...'

¹⁴⁴ GN 15:9 September 1924, p.20 to 15:12 December 1924, p.23. The October issue is missing.

But after this, there were no more.

In early 1925, someone asked, 'Should Pentecostal people divide from one another because they do not agree on every point of doctrine?' Not unless people make it their business to make it so, was the reply. Well, was there any way in which doctrinal finality could be reached? Lancaster took up the suggestion of 'a Pentecostal leader' that the Apostles' Creed might be a useful basis. Later, she suggested the Athanasian Creed.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, we still only saw through a glass darkly (1 Cor 13:8), and it was more important to be built up than to be puffed up! It was astonishing that people who had 'the unction of the Holy Ghost' should allow 'musty, fusty interpretations' of Scripture to blind their eyes to what it really said.¹⁴⁶

This was the dilemma of Pentecostalism. On the one hand, a dynamic experience of the Spirit spoke with a unique authority. On the other, the rule of Scripture was still paramount. How could the two be reconciled? Where did tolerance end and compromise begin? Was it possible for people equally endowed with the Spirit to remain in fellowship even though holding different views of biblical doctrine? To Lancaster, the answer was clearly 'yes.' To others, as she was to learn yet again to her own deep and lasting hurt, such a response was untenable.¹⁴⁷ This dilemma was to emerge more than once over the next two decades. Divine unction could be liberating and unifying. But it could also endow one's position with a sense of unshakeable authority. The wind of the Spirit might surge like a wild Australian willy-willy through neighbouring properties, but at the end of the day, the fences would all still stand.

¹⁴⁵ GN 20:9 September 1929, p.10 — 'If believers must have a creed in addition to the Bible, why do they not adopt that of Athanasius? It should be ample ground of fellowship for all believers and, at the same time, give plenty of scope for individual research.'

¹⁴⁶ GN 16:4 April 1925, p.12.

¹⁴⁷ See Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

Responding to Criticism and the Needs of the Poor (1922-1934)

Lancaster steadfastly refused to admit that her alienation was caused by her distinctive beliefs. For her, the real reason for Good News Hall's isolation was the fact that they were Pentecostal. This is illustrated by the events surrounding the visit of the American Pentecostal evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson (1890-1944) to Australia in 1922.¹

When she arrived, she claimed to be shocked at Lancaster's views and did everything possible to avoid being identified with them. Although Good News Hall people had invited her to come, paid her fares and underwritten the campaign, and although she did have some meetings with them, she had not been in Melbourne long before she issued a public statement dissociating herself from Lancaster and her associates. Secretary Winnie Andrews responded to this statement² and sent a copy of her comments to Stanley Frodsham (1882-1969) at the Assemblies of God headquarters in Springfield, Missouri, to clarify the position.³

¹ See Appendices Ten and Twelve for background on McPherson.

² See Appendix Twelve for the text of another statement issued by McPherson after her return to the US and for more on Andrews.

³ The Assemblies of God denomination was established in America in 1914 as an offshoot from the Azusa Street gatherings. It was basically a white movement and is today the largest Pentecostal denomination in the Western world. See relevant articles in Burgess et al, 1988. In 1921, Frodsham became editor of the *Pentecostal Evangel*, a position he was to hold for 15 years and became well known as a Pentecostal leader and the author of some 15 books. He also had previously questioned McPherson's commitment to the Pentecostal view of baptism in the Spirit and speaking in tongues, and Andrews felt her behaviour in Australia proved his

McPherson claimed that there were 'grave doctrinal differences' between her and Good News Hall, that these differences had been pointed out repeatedly, but that 'all evidences and proofs were denied' and that Good News Hall had continued to claim they believed the same doctrines as McPherson. Andrews responded that both an Anglican and a Baptist minister had seen no serious problems with Lancaster's teaching. Furthermore, there had been no direct conferring with McPherson at all on the subject. And as for 'evidences and proofs,' what was the evangelist talking about? None had been given. Furthermore, what was the problem with being identified with Good News Hall? —

She ought to have been proud to have been associated with Good News Hall. She would never have been heard of (to any extent) in Australia if Good News Hall had not made her name known. No statement was ever made broadcast by any representative of G.N.H. that they believed doctrinally 'exactly' the same as the Evangelist. How could they? We do not suppose that any two ministers on Mrs McPherson's platform believed doctrinally 'exactly' the same as the Evangelist.⁴

McPherson also claimed that the degree of support for the campaign had been exaggerated and misrepresented. She had expected ministers of all denominations to be cooperating with her. Andrews pointed out that her invitation had only ever been from 'a united Pentecost' which, with the exception of a couple of small assemblies in Melbourne and suburbs, had all issued the invitation.⁵ There were several other trivial points raised, including that of being faced with unexpected expenses — a particularly nasty charge since Good News Hall had underwritten the visit and was left in debt.

point. See Burgess et al, 1988, p.317. See also Frodsham, *Smith Wigglesworth: Apostle of Faith*, 1971 and *With Signs Following*, 1946.

⁴ W.Andrews, 'Mrs McPherson's "Open Letter" Answered,' 24 October 1922, p.1. Further details on McPherson's visit are from this source unless otherwise stated.

⁵ It is difficult to know quite what Andrews meant by this. In 1922, there were three recognised assemblies — Good News Hall (1908), the Southern Evangelical Mission (1911) and the Sunshine Gospel Mission (1916). Perhaps the Palmer Street Mission was also seen as Pentecostal. The invitation may have come from all of them. But as we shall see, by 1922 there was little fellowship between them, and it seems more likely that the other Missions were the 'small assemblies' referred to by Andrews. There was only one established provincial congregation at this time, in Ballarat. There were also some suburban house meetings such as those conducted by Mrs Hickson.

The major question raised by McPherson continued to be that of doctrine. She averred that Lancaster had represented herself to be of the same faith as the Evangelist, and had sent her statements of their beliefs, but that she now had 'positive proof, both verbal and documentary,' that these statements were misleading.

Andrews argued that the boot was on the other foot. It was the evangelist who had shifted ground. When she had first arrived she had spoken of the 'beautiful spirit' at Good News Hall and had declared that the atmosphere was 'as clear as heaven.' What had gone wrong? McPherson argued that she believed that God was 'Triune in His Being' and that the Son was 'Co-existent with the Father from Eternity.' 'We believe and teach,' replied Andrews, 'that the Godhead [sic] is manifested by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; that the Son was in the Father and of one substance with Him in the beginning.' But they could not endorse the practice of triune baptism or the use of the word 'Trinity,' preferring the biblical word 'Godhead.' In view of the fact that the Godhead was a mystery, they would not be controversial on the matter, but would simply use the language of Scripture. She wished the evangelist would 'content herself by doing the same.'

McPherson affirmed that she believed in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and that none of the gifts of the Spirit had been withdrawn from the Church. 'True,' said Winnie Andrews. 'But Sister McPherson believes more than this.' And this was, in her opinion, the real problem. Those who supported her had done so on the condition that she go quiet on speaking in tongues — which she had agreed to do.

Moreover, even though 'dying people' came thousands of miles, they were kept waiting for days, and then were left disappointed as McPherson failed to lay hands on them. So since Good News Hall still retained their Pentecostal stance, it was true that their doctrines were not the same as the evangelist's — which was actually an occasion for rejoicing. Finally, Andrews added, 'at the very time the letter (by Mrs McPherson) was being written and even after it was distributed the Good News Hall Friends were labouring for her.'

Success

Meanwhile, McPherson campaigned with great success. Newspaper reporters were unusually complimentary —

Tall and finely proportioned, with soft brown eyes that melt to a smile, flash in authority and fervour, or snap in a merry twinkle, Mrs. Semple McPherson possesses a magnificent platform appearance.

Her clear fine complexion is warmed to a golden glow suggestive of open air living and radiant health. Her personality is magnetic, with a joyous vitality that is mental, as well as physical; and her smile is a wholesome, hearty beam that calls 'Cheerio' to the world in general.⁶

So enthused a reporter from the *Sun News-Pictorial*. Moreover, she quickly won over the ministers of Melbourne. They were dazzled and charmed by her. At the conclusion of her meetings, 22 of them, including the President of the Conference of the Churches of Christ in Victoria, who was also the secretary of the Council of Churches, issued a statement which said among other things —

We, the undersigned Ministers of various denominations in Melbourne and suburbs, have great pleasure in testifying to the splendid work which has been done here by Mrs. Aimee Semple McPherson. Personally, we have received a great spiritual uplift and quickening. We have had the joy of seeing hundreds profess decisions for Christ, and it has been to our great satisfaction to find that Mrs. McPherson's preaching here has been strictly orthodox and that her methods were extremely wise and effective. She possesses great natural ability, but the outstanding feature is spiritual power and her intense love for souls.⁷

By the end of her visit, she was preaching to crowds of 4000 in Wirth's Olympia. Although she did not major on healing, there was some ministry to the sick after the main meetings with claims that ninety per cent of those prayed for were healed.⁸

⁶ *Sun News-Pictorial* 21 September 1922.

⁷ Aimee McPherson, *This is That* Los Angeles: Echo Park Evangelistic Association, 1923, pp.505f.

⁸ E.Jordan, *The Supreme Incentive* East Brunswick, Vic: pub. by the author, 1970, p.41; P.Duncan, Lecture, 1965.

Towards Lancaster, McPherson was intransigent. On her return to America, she wrote a damning indictment for her constituency of the Pentecostal matriarch and the folks at Good News Hall.⁹ If the best evidence of the Spirit-filled life is a loving, Christ-like spirit, Lancaster's response indicated the genuineness of her experience. In an Open Letter of her own, she responded to McPherson's charges with charity and grace. Even though McPherson did not openly pray for the sick, she said, it was clear that God had sent her and she had given a Gospel message which was 'far fuller' than people would hear in many churches. It was disappointing that she had not honoured her commitment, but no doubt God was in it all —

Here let us say that we are sorry Sister McPherson did not keep faith with the public of Australia by filling the appointments made by us at her request, and ratified by her in her own periodical. The disappointment was keen, for in various places choirs had been practising, and many came hundreds of miles only to find closed buildings. However, we must take it as one of the 'all things' that are working together for good to those who love God and are 'the called' according to His purpose.¹⁰

And then, prophetically, she added —

Mrs McPherson has returned to the USA to face the heavy trials which must be hers if she is to gain a place low down in the foot of the Christ Body, as her dream showed.

McPherson's subsequent history was to prove the truth of these words.¹¹

This 'Open Letter' reveals a lot about Jeannie Lancaster's character. No matter how many slings and arrows assailed her, she always responded positively, with love and forgiveness. Even when hurt and pain was evident, she did not waver from her commitment to the integrity of the gospel. She ever spoke courteously of people and honoured any who were faithfully serving God. In this letter, for

⁹ See Appendix Twelve.

¹⁰ J.Lancaster, 'Open Letter,' 9:1 February 1923, p.17.

¹¹ McPherson mysteriously disappeared in 1926, claimed she had been kidnapped but was subsequently subject to allegations of impropriety. See Burgess et al (eds), 1988, pp.568ff; Edith Blumhofer, *Aimee Semple McPherson: Everybody's Sister* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993; Wilson, 1970.

instance, she writes favourably of the ministry of Smith Wigglesworth, who had been at the Hall a few months previously. She also commends long-time associate, William Sloan, who was killed that year in an accident; Florrie Mortomore, who took on herself the task of standing in for Aimee McPherson in Brisbane, when the evangelist withdrew; Ernest Kramer, who undertook missionary work with the Aborigines; Nathan Todd, missionary to Japan; and Edie Anstis and Ruby Wiles, leaders of the church in Perth. All this was to be expected, of course, as these were associates of hers. But she also commends the Anglican James Moore Hickson for his preaching and practice of divine healing and Herbert Booth who 'with his large-hearted love, drew the people very near to the God whose highest name is "LOVE."' ¹² In the pages of *Good News* she regularly published extracts from evangelical journals or articles by evangelical writers such as F.B.Meyer, D.M.Panton, A.B.Simpson, J.N.Darby, Campbell Morgan, Wilbur Chapman and Charles Spurgeon, who would not all have agreed with her views on the gifts of the Spirit, but who were clearly one with her on the authority of Scripture and the centrality of Christ.¹³ In December 1924, Lancaster printed a long testimony of a woman who was healed from a spinal deterioration in Aimee McPherson's meetings at the Olympia.¹⁴

In 1931, Lancaster argued that there were good reasons why God allowed differences of understanding of His Word. These were to test our faith, our sincerity, our industry, our openness to all truth, our willingness to suffer for it and above all, our love.¹⁵ Her love was tested more than once. In 1922, Robert Horne (d.1950), who pastored the Southern Evangelical Mission, Melbourne's second Pentecostal congregation (1912), found it necessary to advertise in the

¹² See also GN 15:8 August 1924, p.20.

¹³ GN 14:9 September 1923, pp.2ff; GN 14:11 November 1923, p.2; GN 16:6 June 1925, p.3; GN 16:8 August 1925, p.15; GN 16:11 November 1925, p.8; GN 17:5 May 1926, pp.3,17; GN 17:7 July 1926, p.8; GN 17:8 August 1926, p.20; GN 19:2 February 1928, p.30.

¹⁴ Nellie Mather, 'His Thrilling Touch,' GN 15:12 December 1924, pp.12ff; see also Jordan, 1970, pp.39ff.

¹⁵ J.Lancaster, 'Truth and Love,' GN 22:4 April 1931, p.10.

press his dissociation with their doctrines and practices.¹⁶ Then, when the American evangelist A.C.Valdez (1896-1988) came to Melbourne, he quickly abandoned Good News Hall because of its doctrinal position and finished up working with Charles Greenwood (1891-1969) at the Sunshine Gospel Mission (est. 1916) and then establishing the Pentecostal Church of Australia.¹⁷

It is not without significance that the first 'Unity Conference' planned for April 1925 addressed itself to 'the business of considering how to form a common working basis with a view to mutual help and encouragement, and to prevent depredations of wolves amongst the Good Shepherd's flock.'¹⁸ There was some suggestion that for the sake of harmony, 'truth should be compromised.' But it was finally agreed that as the Scriptures affirmed that the nature of godliness was a great mystery, to deny one another fellowship on the basis of our understanding of the godhead was 'obviously an attempt at priestcraft.' By refusing to work for unity, they would make the Heart of Jesus bleed. Unity was 'all a matter of humility and love.'¹⁹

Lancaster's grace was superb. In July 1925 she reported that in three months some 209 people had been baptised in the Spirit through Valdez's ministry and hoped that this would be 'the beginning of a mighty wave of Pentecostal blessing throughout Australia.'²⁰ And two years later again, she could report 'a delightful time of refreshing' through the visit of George Clarke, an elder of the Pentecostal Church of Australia who gave them 'soul-stirring addresses.'²¹

The Apostolic Faith Mission

In May 1926, South Africans Isaac Hugo and F.B.Van Eyk persuaded Lancaster that it would be advisable for Good News Hall and its fifteen or so associate churches across Australia to combine under the name 'Apostolic Faith

¹⁶ Age 12 October 1922. For background on Horne see Appendix Ten.

¹⁷ See Chapter Nine and Appendix Ten on Greenwood and Valdez.

¹⁸ GN 16:4 April 1925, p.18.

¹⁹ GN 16:5 May 1925, pp.10,11.

²⁰ 'Pentecostal Church of Australia.' GN 16:7 July 1925, p.20. See Chapter Nine.

²¹ GN 18:10 October 1927, p.10.

Mission of Australasia' (AFM). As the Melbourne church was already officially called the Apostolic Mission, the change of name was not difficult. Surprisingly, Lancaster was reluctant. Her reason is interesting. Although, in 1910, she had been 'the first to carry the "Latter Rain" message to Adelaide,'²² and had been 'in loving fellowship' with the leaders there ever since, to forge a recognised link with them would require solving 'some difficult problems' and to do this would mean neglecting her 'direct ministry'.²³ Clearly, for Lancaster, preaching, evangelising and caring for people took precedence over administration. Her focus was pastoral rather than managerial. Nevertheless, in this instance, the two South Africans were so persuasive, she ultimately agreed to the proposal. Van Eyk was invited to Good News Hall for a series of meetings and the AFM was formed. The word 'Australasia' was used because Lancaster's ministry was already touching the Pacific islands through printed materials.

It was not easy. In the veiled terms common to public statements, Lancaster wrote a record of anguish, near-despair, relinquishment and ultimate resolution—

At the very outset ... the committee met with unparalleled difficulties. Never did the devil contend with such ferocity, collectively and individually, and by many subtle means he fought every unit of the committee and every helper, down to the apparently most insignificant ... Many desperate battles were fought, and the only way of safety was found to be lying low in the dust at the Saviour's feet, resolutely stamping out the self life, and reckoning it dead, that He might be exalted who has said: 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.' At all hazards, He must indeed be lifted up, and to that end bodies must be presented as living sacrifices. None but God Himself will ever know the struggle endured by those going deeper, deeper yet, into the crimson flood ... ; but victory is of the Lord, and so the Gethsemane soul travailing, culminated in a glorious victory. Floods of spiritual

²² The term 'Latter Rain' was based on the Old Testament prophecy of Joel (2:23) that God would pour out both 'former rain' (ie autumn) and 'latter rain' (ie spring). The former rain was seen to have fallen at Pentecost; the latter rain was falling now, through the new Pentecostal movement.

²³ GN 18:6 June 1927, p.10.

blessing were outpoured until the workers present could not stand before the glory of the Lord, but fell prostrate at His feet.²⁴

Just what lay behind all this will probably never be known. Clearly, there were very strong differences of opinion and equally clearly, there was some extremely painful giving of ground for the sake of unity, perhaps most of all by Lancaster herself. It seems, for example, that Hugo and Van Eyk were able to encourage the Good News Hall people to regularise their doctrinal stance, an achievement that must have cost Lancaster dearly.²⁵ A new Statement of Faith regarding the Godhead read simply —

The Godhead, consisting of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the Deity as manifested as Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is eternal and uncreated (Mal. 2:10; John 8:42; John 15:26.)

And regarding the fate of the wicked, they believed in ‘salvation from sin and death through faith in the atonement made by the blood of Jesus Christ’. A final clause on the ‘lake of fire’ used only the words of Scripture.²⁶

Nevertheless, the criticisms continued. In late 1926, she found it necessary to warn New Zealand readers of *Good News* that people were circulating false statements that the editors did not believe in the deity of Christ or the personality of the Holy Spirit.²⁷ In February 1927, Lancaster made reference to ‘a revival of divisionary activity’ by people who desired position and were lying about God’s servants. She listed seven simple statements of doctrine to which she adhered — the almighty God, Jesus the pre-existent Son of God, the person of the Holy Spirit, the three Persons in the Godhead, the death and burial of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus, the presence of Jesus among His people — and which she had believed, she said, from the days of her youth.²⁸

On Monday 18 April, 1927, the annual conference passed a four-clause resolution under the heading, ‘The Spirit of Conciliation’ again affirming their

²⁴ GN 17:8 August 1926, p.10.

²⁵ GN 17:9 September 1926, p.11; GN 18:6 June 1927, p.10.

²⁶ GN 18:7 July 1927, p.18.

²⁷ GN 17:10 October 1926, p.19.

²⁸ J.Lancaster, ‘Being Defamed — we Intreat,’ GN 18:2 February 1927, p.20.

‘entire lack of any ill-feeling’ towards those who persisted in laying charges of wrong doctrine against them. It pointed out that they might have made mistakes in the past by using words which lent themselves to misunderstanding or misinterpretation but that ‘whatsoever had been written, printed or spoken, that had not assisted the unity of our work for God’ they desired ‘forever to put aside.’²⁹

Evidently, this resolution was publicised immediately but treated with scepticism and suspicion by others. Less than a week later, the Executive Council met again and issued another memorandum regretting that there was a ‘disinclination to accept the (original) statement in the spirit in which it was passed’ and noting that the Council endorsed it ‘most emphatically’ and called upon all who had previously disagreed with them to accept their regret for ‘certain expressions’ which had appeared in early issues of *Good News*. In future, the doctrinal statement would be ‘rigidly adhered to.’³⁰ It is probably no coincidence that the next issue of *Good News* contained both an article and a poem under the heading, ‘On Being Misunderstood.’³¹

Although 68 years old, Lancaster continued her strenuous ministry. She journeyed to Brisbane, Goombungee, Meringandan and Toowoomba to visit the churches there, gladly suffering exposure to tropical rain in her joy at seeing the breaking of a drought, even for the sake of the cattle, for the story of the sparing of Nineveh showed plainly that God cared for them, too.

The First General Conference of the Apostolic Faith Mission of Australasia at Easter 1927 was promoted with excitement and confidence. There would be delegates from India and New Zealand as well as Australia. There would be a

²⁹ GN 18:6 June 1927, p.12.

³⁰ GN 18:6 June 1927, p.12.

³¹ GN 18:7 July 1927, p.14. When Van Eyk first arrived in 1926, he had been aware of the doctrinal difficulties. Lancaster claimed that he was ‘beset behind, and before’ by those who opposed them both doctrinally and governmentally — the latter no doubt a reference to her leadership as a woman. But she went on to say that he had gone into both questions ‘to his entire satisfaction’ and could not be shaken. However, it is interesting to note that when he later established the Elim Foursquare Gospel Mission, he very clearly spelled out his beliefs concerning the deity of Christ and the fate of the wicked. The three persons of the Godhead were ‘equal in every divine perfection’ and the wicked would suffer ‘eternal conscious punishment.’ See GC 3:2 August 1934, p.32.

ten days' united campaign 'unique in the history of Pentecostal Australia.' Speakers would include Cyrus Fockler from Milwaukee, USA; F.B. Van Eyk from South Africa; Evangelist Clark from New Zealand; H.N. Todd, missionary from India; together with local speakers E. Jarvis from Perth, Harold Martin from Brisbane and John Adams from Melbourne. It was an enriching time. There were several family reconciliations, many were healed and over the next two months, three baptismal services were held.³² At the conference, in a development from the 1923 resolution, John A.D. Adams was elected president of the Mission. Lancaster continued as editor of *Good News*, vice-president and treasurer.³³

Later that year, Lancaster expressed some thoughts on the Body of Christ which are worth reproducing, as they convey the heart of the matter from her perspective —

It is quite a common thing for members of a denomination to take offence over some doctrine or some trifling difference in administering an ordinance, and — leaving one denomination — join up with another ...

Many of those accustomed to such methods of procedure have now received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, but they still think division is a matter of little moment, an easy way to escape from difficulty; not realising that, though receiving 'the anointing that abideth' (1 John 2:27), they have been constituted members of Christ's Body ... from which not one member may separate himself without injury both to the Body and to himself ...

In the natural we do not cut off the feebler members of our bodies, but cherish them. If there be something in the Body (Eph. 1:22,23) which does not please us, we must not follow the natural impulse to fly from trial, or we cannot knit into the Body; we should rather bring into operation the contents of God's medicine chest (the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians)³⁴, which provides the panacea for every ill ...

She then goes on to quote from an open letter 'to division makers' which pointed out that disputes over finance or management could all be remedied by

³² GN 18:7 July 1927, p.10.

³³ GN 18:6 June 1927, pp.10f; GN 19:6 June 1928, p.10.

³⁴ 1 Corinthians 13 contains Paul's celebrated passage on divine love.

prayer and discussion. The fact of disagreeing with the way things were done was no reason to 'break God's Word' or break down what God had built up. It was better to face the sacred duty of staying, helping and praying. Division in fact did more harm to the work of God than any opposition by the world or by other churches.³⁵ In practical terms, it was more Christian and more spiritual to face the hard task of resolving issues than to take the easy way of separation.

In 1928, the Secretary's conference report noted that services were not as well attended as they would have liked, 'the reason being well-known to most'³⁶ — probably a reference to continued and ongoing criticism of Lancaster's beliefs. A sad notice appeared in *Good News* in June of that year —

It is our reluctant duty of give a word of warning and exhortation to every Assembly ... Both our Saviour and St Paul found it necessary to warn the sheep against wolves.

We love every member of the Body of Christ, and it is hard even to suggest that any of them could answer the above description, but it is true that, as we have gone forth weeping, bearing precious seed, others have seized every opportunity to follow in our tracks, endeavouring to make void the prayer of our Saviour, 'Father, that they may be ONE ... that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me ...'

To cover their real reasons, which are 'Envy and jealousy,' doctrinal reasons are advanced and wicked lies are freely circulated. All we ask is that any dear ones who are perplexed by the enemy's falsehoods should keep by them a copy of our doctrinal basis ... and, if puzzled, write to the General Secretary for information, which will gladly be supplied.³⁷

A few years later, Mina Brawner was to advise people not to 'stoop to the position of a religious detective.' It was important to stand on the fundamentals, but not to attack those of different views. 'Give sin no quarter,' she said, 'but love the brethren.'³⁸

³⁵ J.Lancaster, 'The Body of Christ Jesus,' GN 18:12 December 1927, pp.16f.

³⁶ GN 19:6 June 1928, p.10.

³⁷ GN 19:6 June 1928, p.15.

³⁸ M.Brawner, 'Shibboleth,' GN 21:7 July 1930, p.11.

Wider activities

During 1927 and 1928, Lancaster continued her itinerant evangelistic ministry. She journeyed to Portland, Victoria, where, together with 'Sister' Rooke and 'Sister' Casey, she ministered for two weeks. Here, with characteristic creativity, they used all manner of publicity, including writing invitations in chalk on the pavements. Lancaster commented that she knew no one who spent more time on her knees than Casey, but she supposed that the latter never thought she would be doing it in public streets!³⁹ Four people were baptised in water as a result. She also visited her old home town of Ballarat, as well as Geelong and Kilkunda. But the years of ministry and the ongoing criticism were beginning to take their toll. Now sixty nine years of age, she suffered nearly three months of severe illness during the year.

Nevertheless, over all, there was still an enormous output from Good News Hall. Seven services were conducted there weekly plus three open air meetings. There were two evangelistic campaigns and a Christmas Convention. Sunday school teachers were supplied to the City Mission and in January 1928 a Sunday School was commenced at the Hall. Six Bible instruction classes were given weekly at State schools. Twice weekly, workers distributed tracts and copies of *Good News* door to door. Welfare work was commenced among the unemployed. A stall was set up at the Agricultural Show in Melbourne, with between two and four workers daily. All told some 80,000 tracts and 900 copies of *Good News* were distributed. Tent missions were begun at Werribee, Victoria, under the supervision of former policeman Harold Sharman, his wife, H. Weimer, 'Sister' Casey and 'Sister' M. Parker. As a result a church was established at Werribee and the tent moved on to Portland. During that year, some 150,000 tracts were printed at the Hall, together with 36,000 copies of *Good News*. In addition to this was the ongoing evangelism of Van Eyk in Queensland and the congregations and home groups in at least 25 other places throughout Australia.⁴⁰

³⁹ GN 18:8 August 1927, p.10.

⁴⁰ GN 19:6 June 1928, pp.10ff, 19f. See Chapter Eight for details on Van Eyk.

There were to be ongoing disappointments. In late 1928, Van Eyk was adjudged guilty of indiscretion and asked to return to South Africa. This must have been a shattering blow to Lancaster who had been so delighted with his ministry. After disappointments from Aimee McPherson and A.C.Valdez, she had finally found in Van Eyk someone who was prepared to work with her. Now he, too, had let her down. To rub salt into the wound, at Easter 1929, he spoke at Richmond Temple, the headquarters of the newly-formed Pentecostal Church of Australia in Melbourne (1925), when he would normally have been present at the AFM conference. With exceptional but characteristic grace, the AFM conference unanimously approved a motion by John Cavill that they send a fraternal greeting to Richmond Temple for their Easter gatherings.⁴¹

This had further repercussions. The churches in Queensland dropped the name Apostolic Faith Mission and united under the new name of Assemblies of God with a new doctrinal statement and a new constitution.⁴² Initially, they retained their fellowship with Good News Hall but it was a delicate arrangement. The Queensland Council brought some proposals to the 1929 conference for modifications to the national constitution, which were 'freely and lovingly discussed.' George Burns, however, sensing that the proposals would foster further disunity, withdrew them, with the agreement of the other Queensland delegates.⁴³ It was a sign of imminent attrition. Subsequent history was to show that one by one many of them would dissociate themselves from the AFM.

George Joseph Clarke, who had been supported financially by the assembly at Ballarat for twelve months, resigned and joined the Pentecostal Church of Australia, taking half the AFM people with him. Charlie Anstis could still report blessing with thirteen people being empowered by the Spirit in two months. There was an average of 50 people attending on Sunday nights, with 25 to 30 participating in open air services and in Sunday morning gatherings. Nevertheless, he noted how they were praying that God would 'smash down

⁴¹ GN 20:5 May 1929, p.16.

⁴² AE June 1984, p.23. There was no connection with the American denomination of the same name.

⁴³ GN 20:5 May 1929, p.16.

such a devilish thing as division, so that this glorious work may go right ahead throughout the whole of Australia and the world.’⁴⁴ In Geelong, also, there was a split in the ranks. By the middle of 1929, they had fully recovered and were doing better than ever, with some 50 people attending regularly. But it was a traumatic time.⁴⁵ Dr Mina Brawner, on the other hand, wrote—

For myself, I wish to say that I have thoroughly enjoyed my three months’ labors [sic] under the Apostolic Faith Mission of Australasia. I have found it a sane, safe, and spiritual organisation, soundly orthodox from the Pentecostal viewpoint, with the same doctrinal basis as the best established Full Gospel organisations in America. It is with thrilling enthusiasm and buoyant expectancy that I return to my labors in this sunny south land, realising — yea, hoping — that my Lord will not long delay His coming.⁴⁶

This statement, and the earlier affirmation by Van Eyk, would suggest that the AFM had now clearly placed itself in the evangelical mainstream in its non-Pentecostal doctrines and that the charges being laid were indeed ill-founded. However, dark suspicions are hard to kill, and they continued to skulk in the shadows. At the 1929 conference, reference was made to the defamatory statements still being circulated, and a suggestion put that all AFM credential holders — and in particular the vice-president — should sign a statement reaffirming their stance on certain doctrines. A committee appointed to review this idea concluded that the existing doctrinal statement, to which all credential holders were required to subscribe, was adequate. There was no doubt, however, that there were still questions in people’s minds about Lancaster’s personal views, and it was her own position which was the real issue.⁴⁷

In spite of the efforts to institute male leadership in 1923, Lancaster was again elected president of the AFM in 1930 after John Adams and his wife transferred to Perth. ‘The love between us was so deeply rooted,’ wrote Lancaster, ‘that

⁴⁴ GN 19:6 June 1928, p.12; GN 20:5 May 1929, p.13.

⁴⁵ GN 20:5 May 1929, p.13.

⁴⁶ GN 20:5 May 1929, p.10. (Note: this page number is actually out of order in the magazine. It should be 15). For further details on Brawner see Chapter Twelve and Appendix Ten.

⁴⁷ GN 20:5 May 1929, p.16.

parting was a wrench.’⁴⁸ In a sense, it simply regularised what really had not changed. The leadership had always been hers. And so was the burden. During that same year, Lancaster, now 72 years old, again suffered a time of ill health. She was so downcast that, like Elijah, she prayed that God would take her life. ‘I was here and saw it,’ said Council member Edwin Ridgway, ‘and she looked like dying.’ But in answer to prayer, she was raised up again.⁴⁹ By the time of the 1931 conference, she could say that the Lord was ‘working gloriously’ and that the Good News Hall congregation had greatly increased. However, there were still potential tensions. In her secretarial report, Winnie Andrews, noted —

We are sorry to say that some who have been officers of the Mission have been working in a way detrimental to the work of the Mission; and the Pledge of Loyalty passed at last Easter Conference has proved of inestimable value in showing who are loyal and who are not.⁵⁰

The Pledge was simple enough. It included the new, simplified statement of faith, and required delegates to ‘solemnly promise by God’s grace’ —

- to accept the Doctrinal Basis of the AFM
- to be loyal to the AFM
- to work for the upbuilding of the AFM
- to make the AFM their place of worship
- to refuse to listen or take part in attacks on the work
- to voluntarily withdraw if they ever ceased to be ‘in harmony or sympathy with the AFM’⁵¹

New applicants for ordination also agreed to submit to a six months’ probationary period.⁵² All the delegates at the 1931 conference willingly

⁴⁸ GN 20:5 May 1929, p.24; GN 21:6 June 1930, p.10..

⁴⁹ GN 22:5 May 1931, pp.10, 14.

⁵⁰ GN 22:5 May 1931, p.12.

⁵¹ GN 21:9 September 1930, p.11.

⁵² No formal qualifications were needed for ordination; generally it took the form of laying on of hands by a group of elders and praying for the person concerned and then commissioning them for the work of the ministry. This would normally be done in a public service. This description is based on my own personal experience in Pentecostal churches from 1958, which were probably similar. I am not aware of any extant records of the exact nature of ordination services in the 1920s and 1930s.

subscribed to the Pledge. In the reports from various assemblies, several talked of 'dry times' when few new people were added to their numbers. Philip Adams commented that God allowed them to wander in the dry places so he could teach them and that often the greatest victories came out of times in the desert.⁵³

Davey Jack, a Scotsman who was baptised in the Spirit at Good News Hall in 1924, and was now leading a group at Korumburra, affirmed his loyalty to the AFM, but still reserved the right to ask questions and to disagree with decisions made by the Executive Council. He was freely offered access to all information and given 'perfect freedom in criticising everybody and everything he desired,' but the President and the Council were finally answerable to God and God alone. Jack was invited to close the conference in prayer and was later elected Chairman of the Advisory Council. But three years after this, he joined the newly-founded Apostolic Church and was sent to Flowerdale, Tasmania, and thence to Hobart, where he ministered faithfully for the new denomination.⁵⁴

On 22 August 1930, Alfred Lancaster passed away. As far as is known, the first mention of him in the pages of *Good News* was an expression of thanks from 'Mrs Alfred Lancaster' and family for the condolences of their friends. The note also goes to some pains to affirm that Alfred Lancaster was indeed a Christian. It seems plain that over the years he had shared little in his wife's manifold activities. According to his grandson, he was 'a quiet, dear old gentleman' who used to enjoy playing bowls and, towards the end of his life, did the stapling for the magazine.⁵⁵ He attended the meetings at the Hall. Lancaster's note of grief at her loss was real enough —

We sometimes drive him (death) away for a time with the prayer of faith, but back he comes and renews his attack until finally he carries his victim off in triumph.

His, however, is but a brief victory, and those kind friends, whose loving words have so helped us ... will be glad to know our loved one's end was peace ...

⁵³ GN 22:5 May 1931, p.14.

⁵⁴ GN 22:5 May 1931, p.14; GN 22:6 June 1931, pp.10f; RE 2:6-7 November-December 1934, p.133.

A few hours before he closed his eyes to earth, in answer to his daughter's remark, 'Safe in the arms of Jesus, Daddy,' he answered, 'Yes, and no one can take me out.'⁵⁶

The end of 1930 marked the 21st anniversary for Good News Hall. Lancaster was in a celebratory mood. She felt something like 'the exultation which rises in the breast of a maiden who has been arbitrarily repressed and wronged during her minority.' The previous 21 years had seen much hardship and opposition. But they had come through successfully —

Truly the Spirit of Glory and of God rests upon us today after twenty one long years of being reproached for the Name of Christ our Beloved Redeemer — the Son who shared the glory of the Father before ever the world was; and Who — because He loved Righteousness and hated iniquity — has received an everlasting throne and a sceptre of righteousness. We bow the knee before Him and cry with Thomas, 'My Lord and my God ...'

Whilst the enemy is still pulling down and destroying with cruel falsehoods the Work of the Lord ... we are still praising God and praying that He will enlighten the eyes of those who are being overthrown in the race for the Prize of the High Calling.⁵⁷

There is a mixture of gain and pain here. On the one hand, the blessing of God was continuing upon them; on the other, the work of the enemy was relentless. The statement also reflects Lancaster's ongoing, but evidently ineffective, battle to prove herself orthodox and her unwavering and unflinching commitment both to her Saviour and to the Scriptures.

Welfare work

One of the outstanding features of Lancaster's work was her care and concern for the poor and needy. From the beginning, there was always an open door at Good News Hall for those in distress. On Christmas Day 1924, over one hundred men partook of a free Christmas dinner at the Hall, and 'in no

⁵⁵ F.Lancaster, personal interview, 18 December 1993.

⁵⁶ GN 21:10 October 1930, p.15.

⁵⁷ GN 22:2 February 1931, p.10.

millionaire's home,' reported the *Sun News-Pictorial*, 'was a Christmas dinner enjoyed more.'⁵⁸ Such work was never allowed to supplant the primary task of evangelism. After the meal, there was a concert and then Thomas Lennon, Florrie Mortomore and John Cavill all gave 'breezy addresses' which were well received. That night, there was an evening meal and another address by Lennon, as a result of which seven men professed conversion. It was not all celebration. Some of the men were so dirty that afterwards the Sisters had to scrub the Hall in preparation for ensuing services.⁵⁹

The real social work began at the beginning of the next decade with the onset of the Great Depression. Unemployment rose to 19 per cent in 1930 and by 1932 had scaled to well over 30 per cent. As husbands and fathers were commonly the only wage-earners, the loss of work savagely affected family well-being. Dole queues lined the city streets; beggars drifted along the footpaths. People hawked home-made products from door to door. Others tried to earn a few pence by chopping wood or gardening. Sometimes women or children could get work as salary rates were considerably lower for them. Some older children's education was curtailed as a result. Thousands of unemployed dwelt in jerry-built encampments. Thousands of others wrapped a few essentials in a swag and, in a desperate search for jobs, took to the roads — where stock often wandered as well, set loose by farmers who could not afford to tend them. Politicians, both federal and State, seemed helpless. Hopelessness gripped many people. And those who were employed were often apprehensive about the threat of losing their jobs. In other cases, their working hours were reduced through labour rationing schemes. There were some food distribution programs, but they were inadequate for families. And they did not provide clothing or blankets and nor did they pay mortgage or servicing costs. Later money was offered but it was only a few shillings a week and too little for survival.⁶⁰ Avoiding landlords and bailiffs became a terrible game of hide and seek for many people. To lose could mean forfeiting house and home. On the other

⁵⁸ *Sun News-Pictorial* 26 December 1923, quoted in GN 15:2 February 1924, p.20.

⁵⁹ GN 16:2 February 1925, p.9.

⁶⁰ GN 22:8 August 1931, p.12.

hand, some landlords were themselves in need. Unable to collect rent or evict tenants, they, too, slid into debt. Owning property did not necessarily mean prosperity. Some marriages and child-births were postponed. Many people relied on charitable organisations for their survival.

‘Few can realise the mental strain to which these men are subjected,’ wrote Lancaster. For some, suicide was their only resort. Others became so desperate they deliberately broke the law in order to get a bed in gaol. Others turned to Communism. Some became mentally unbalanced.⁶¹

From 1931 to 1933, Good News Hall undertook a regular and ongoing program of providing food, clothing and basic needs for the poor. People from as far away as New Zealand sent clothing and goods. Members walked through the city parks and streets offering to help the unemployed. Mothers brought their children to Queensberry Street and there found clothing and compassion. Vegetables and food were also made available.⁶² In 1931, between 140 and 180 unemployed men were coming daily to the Hall where they received ‘both material and spiritual food.’⁶³ An average of 700 free lunches were given weekly, and clothing was made available where possible.⁶⁴ At times, men were given overnight accommodation, one young man being so urgently in need he was given the best of the staff bedrooms.⁶⁵

Several of the women managed to provide meals from vegetable scraps scrounged from the market and from donated bread and other food. They even made a palatable coffee from boiled wheat. They always prayed before each meal. They spent long hours repairing damaged and worn clothing or making new singlets, shirts and socks. At times, women’s clothing was restyled for men. On more than one occasion, members of the congregation gave their own

⁶¹ GN 22:9 September 1931, pp.10f; GN 22:10 October 1931, p.10; GN 23:6 June 1932, p.10..

⁶² GN 24:4,5 April-May 1933, pp.8f.

⁶³ GN 22:2 February 1931, p.10.

⁶⁴ GN 22:5 May 1931, p.11.

⁶⁵ GN 22:10 October 1931, p.10.

THE ALTAR.



WHERE GOD HAS BLESSED HUNDREDS OF
HUNGRY SOULS.

— from *Good News* 17:10 October 1926, p.10

clothes away. One man was left only with the trousers he stood up in.⁶⁶ 'Sister' Alice MacCleary and 'Sister' Celia Casey were the mainstays of this work, but 'Sister' McLennan, 'Sister' Mary Self, 'Sister' Jones, 'Sister' Le Suers, 'Sister' Moysey and others were also involved. After a few months, 'Brother' Cornell supervised activities.⁶⁷ To lonely and needy men, it was a comfort to have someone they could call 'Sister' and another who was a Mother to them all.⁶⁸

Often, there was no money to pay for food or clothing. One of the workers sold some books so she could buy flannel to make singlets.⁶⁹ On other occasions, somehow or other, God provided. 'The secret will be found,' said Lancaster, 'in the household's prayers.' Often, workers slipped away to some quiet place to cry out to God for some urgent need.⁷⁰ On one occasion, Casey had no money to buy food at the market. They prayed and that night a man felt impressed to pay a printing debt and so the food was obtained.⁷¹ By April 1931, Lancaster could report that their deficit was 'less than when we started to feed the men' and that the congregation had grown significantly.⁷² By mid 1931, however, the Father had 'seen fit' that they should be over 100 pounds in debt. Nevertheless, they still offered to guarantee 25 pounds bail for a young family man, trusting God to meet the need if it arose.⁷³ On Christmas Day, they could not do much because of escalating printing and other bills. But they did make a huge Christmas pudding and each man was given a handkerchief and a Christmas card inviting them to receive Christ as Saviour. New Year's Eve was, as usual, marked by a short celebration followed by an open air rally and an all night

⁶⁶ GN 23:9 September 1932, p.8.

⁶⁷ GN 22:2 February 1931, p.10; GN 22:5 May 1931, p.11; GN 22:8 August 1931, p.12; GN 22:9 September 1931, p.10; GN 22:12 December 1931, pp.10f; GN 25:3 March 1934, p.20; Jim Mullin, personal interview, n.d.

⁶⁸ GN 23:3 March 1932, p10 ('Yes, and I have to thank you, Mother, for all your love and kindness').

⁶⁹ GN 22:8 August 1931, p.12.

⁷⁰ GN 22:3 March 1931, p.11.

⁷¹ GN 23:7 July 1931, p.10.

⁷² GN 22:5 May 1931, p.10.

⁷³ GN 22:10 October 1931, p.11.

prayer meeting. Enough cake was left over to give 200 men a piece each on New Year's Day.⁷⁴

Heart rending tales appeared regularly in *Good News*. Early in 1931, a young mother whose baby had died, came once to the Hall. She was dying of starvation, but her young husband was too proud to beg for help. Finally, when her need was discovered and food was taken to her, it was too late.⁷⁵ Footwear was in particular demand. There were stories of men in desperate need who could not be adequately fitted —

One man came in for a pair of shoes and said, 'My size ought to be easy to fix up, I only take fives.' But there is no need to search; we know there are no fives or sixes. He also is on the needy list, still unsupplied; so he is unfortunate ...

Another decent-looking young man called in one afternoon, asking for a pair of boots. He said he had just walked from Sydney. He was hungry-looking, and going by his boots one would think he had walked from Queensland, so old and broken were they. As we were unable to supply the need we promised him the first pair of sevens and prayed that a bundle of boots would soon arrive.⁷⁶

Occasionally, there was a lighter note. One man wore two pairs of trousers because although both were holed, together they covered him. A young man's coat was in urgent need of repair. One of the brothers offered his own until it could be fixed. Two days later, when the young man was expected to return for his own coat, now looking almost new, he failed to show. 'He finds brother's coat more to his liking,' noted Lancaster, 'and is no more honest than old mother Eve who stole what belonged to someone else.'⁷⁷ On another occasion, one man left his old hat and took a better one. Later another man took the first man's hat and left his. Then a third man did the same. 'So one hat serves three

⁷⁴ GN 23:2 February 1932, p.10.

⁷⁵ GN 22:3 March 1931, p.10.

⁷⁶ GN 22:12 December 1931, p.10.

⁷⁷ GN 23:3 March 1932, p.10.

men,' said Lancaster, 'and we are glad.'⁷⁸ Other men were too embarrassed to remove their outer garments because their ragged trousers were too revealing.⁷⁹

In late 1931, an unbeliever argued outside the Hall for hours with three men against the existence of God. The Sisters invited him in. Shortly afterwards, they prayed for a young man with a throbbing headache and a woman with severe toothache. In both cases there was instant relief. Then during the meeting, several people fell to the floor under 'the mighty power of God' and lay prostrate for some time. Lancaster suggested to the sceptic that this was just 'Nature'. But he was a changed man. His experience outweighed his scepticism. That very night he was baptised and expressed his determination to seek out men whose faith he had previously shaken and win them back to God.⁸⁰ Another man, whose home was a disused railway carriage, needed to visit his mother 20 miles away but could not walk because of an infected leg caused by wearing shoes that were too small. They prayed for him and provided new shoes. Within hours he was well. A few days later the other leg was infected. This, too, was healed. Soon he testified publicly to his healing and found several weeks' work.⁸¹

The stories were multiplied. A young man collapsed at the door after seeking work for two weeks. Another fainted from weakness inside the Hall. Another's case and clothing had been stolen. Another needed ninepence to send a telegram to apply for a job in the country. Even a piece of soap was prized by many. So the workers prayed for it. Next day, two hundred weight of reject soap was offered to them. They boiled it down, cut it up into cakes and proudly gave it to all who were in need.⁸² There were also regular requests for such simple items as wool, cotton, needles, boot-laces, razors, socks, tea, sugar and the like.⁸³

⁷⁸ GN 22:10 October 1931, p.10.

⁷⁹ GN 22:11 November 1931, p.10; GN 23:1 January 1932, p.10..

⁸⁰ GN 22:12 December 1931, p.11.

⁸¹ GN 23:1 January 1932, pp.10f. This man was probably Frank Bryan, a former Communist. See GN 23:7 July 1932, p.11.

⁸² GN 22:8 August 1931, pp.12f; GN 22:12 December 1931, p.10.

⁸³ GN 22:4 April 1931, p.11; GN 22:11 November 1931, p.10.

The judgement of God

Lancaster and her helpers saw the Depression as an expression of the judgement of God. It was at such a time that men learned righteousness and it was exciting to see the Holy Spirit softening men's hearts and to observe those who once blasphemed God now responding to His love. They also interpreted their own activity in the light of the parable of the Good Samaritan. These needy people were their neighbours. They counted it a privilege to help them. They knew very well there were some who preferred to live on handouts and had no intention of seeking work, but those who worked among the poor soon learned to identify them.⁸⁴ In answer to those who saw many of these people to be imposing on the work of evangelism, Lancaster wrote —

Improvident! Perhaps some were, but our Lord never stipulated that only the frugal and careful should be fed. It was enough for Him that they were hungry ... Perhaps a percentage of them may deserve it, but if we see a drowning man we do not wait to ask how he got into the water, but hasten to get him out ...

It is when the judgements of the Lord are in the earth that men will learn righteousness, and the bright spot in the midst of this misery is to watch the wondrous Holy Spirit at work softening men's hearts, melting away their prejudices, and revealing to them as the God of love that great, noble, merciful, and gracious Being whom they formerly reviled and cursed as the tyrannical Author of their misery ...

Those of our readers who have a little of the love of God for lost humanity shed abroad in their hearts will keep on praying for a mighty harvest of souls to be the outcome of the present commercial depression.⁸⁵

According to an article by an American writer published in *Good News*, the remedy for business depression was found in the words of 2 Chronicles 7:14 — in humility, prayer and repentance.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ GN 24:4,5 April-May 1933, p.8.

⁸⁵ GN 22:2 February 1931, p.10.

⁸⁶ W.E.Henson, 'God's remedy for business depression,' GN 23:5 May 1932, pp.12f; 2 Chronicles 7:14 — 'If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.' (NIV)

As at St Barnabas' in Sydney, where Arthur Stace ('Mr Eternity') turned to the Lord in 1930,⁸⁷ every opportunity was taken to preach Christ to those who were being helped. After each midday meal, there was an address or two, and people were invited to receive Christ. Many were the testimonies of those converted and baptised.⁸⁸ It must have been a glad day, for instance, when one man demanded to be baptised that very afternoon, and then a few days later gave his testimony to the other unemployed men at the midday meal.⁸⁹ One young man who was converted and baptised in the Spirit had found work in the country and was conducting regular Sunday services there; another, who six months previously had cared only for gambling, was now witnessing for Christ, even to the point of conducting prayer meetings in the gardens in the mornings with other men who had slept out for the night.⁹⁰ Another spoke to the men at lunchtime and said, 'I hear some of you men are saying we converts only came here for what we could get. That is quite true, and so did you! But I got what I came here for, and more; for I got Jesus. I'm glad I came!.' He went on to say how he had just had a job offer in the country at four pounds a week.⁹¹ Another was preaching regularly on Sunday mornings in rural Victoria; another was distributing tracts near Ballarat.⁹² Frank Bryan, a confessed Communist, expressed his amazement that such a change could occur in a human life. Formerly repelled by what he saw as hypocrisy in the church, he was won over by contact with 'Mother,' what he described as her 'sympathetic and broad-minded interest in my ideals and aims' and the evidence he saw of a church not interested in material profit but in acting as Jesus would have done. Now, weeks later, he was healthier than he had been for a long time and determined

⁸⁷ G.Rees, 'Eternity: the Unknown Man Who Wrote It,' pamphlet, n.d.; Lawrence Johnston, *Eternity*, documentary film; *Telegraph* 3 May 1995, p.10; *Bulletin*, 9 May 1995, p.88. It should be noted that the ministry at St Barnabas' was on a larger scale than that at Good News Hall, but in terms of the gospel, was similar in spirit and aim. See Breward, 1993, p.125; Judd, and Cable, 1987, pp.196ff; Piggin, 1996, pp.88f.

⁸⁸ GN 22:7 July 1931, p.10; GN 22:8 August 1931, p.12; GN 22:9 September 1931, p.10.

⁸⁹ GN 22:5 May 1931, p.11; GN 22:8 August 1931, p.12.

⁹⁰ GN 23:8 August 1932, p.8.

⁹¹ GN 22:8 August 1931, p.12.

⁹² GN 23:4 April 1932, pp.11f.

to stand for Christ. He himself became a worker at the Hall.⁹³ The physical needs were serious enough, but the spirit of Pentecost was still the final answer.

In answer to the challenge, 'Do all the converts stand?' the response was simple. 'Of what Mission could it ever be said that the converts all stood?' True, there had been two or three 'disastrous failures,' but there were many who were going joyfully on in their new-found faith.⁹⁴ One letter must have touched Lancaster's heart. It came from a young man who had now found work on a farm and signed it, 'From your son in Christ.'⁹⁵ Indeed, at the end of 1931, Lancaster could claim that men who had found Christ through the relief program were planting the seed of the Gospel in Sale, Lindenow, Tallangatta, Lake Tarral, Camperdown, Bunyip, Wandin, Noble Park, Byrneside, Warburton, Mirboo, Cockatoo, Avenel, Pakenham, King Island and several suburbs of Melbourne. Not only was the Gospel talked about, but so was Good News Hall. Men came there from hundreds of miles' distance seeking help.⁹⁶

In spite of these reports, not all the people at the Hall approved of the welfare work. Some felt the assembly itself was being neglected and that it was suffering financially. But Lancaster's answer was simple: 'It's what the Lord would do.'⁹⁷ On one occasion she wrote —

Is it worthwhile? If you could see the changed and happy faces of many of these dear men who accepted Jesus as their Saviour, followed Him through the waters of baptism, and see others filled with the Holy Spirit, you would say: 'yes, a hundred times.'

They come in sad and weary, sometimes despairing of life, but as they listen to the Gospel message, hope rises within their hearts ...⁹⁸

It was not enough. At a 1931 AFM Council meeting, one of the members expressed the view that the funds being spent on the unemployed would be

⁹³ GN 23:7 July 1932, p.11; GN 23:8 August 1932, p.8..

⁹⁴ GN 23:2 February 1932, p.10.

⁹⁵ GN 23:5 May 1932, p.11.

⁹⁶ GN 23:3 March 1932, p.11.

⁹⁷ J.Mullin, personal interview, n.d.

⁹⁸ GN 22:9 September 1931, p.10.

better applied to evangelising Victoria and thus building up the AFM, and, incidentally, bringing in more money.⁹⁹ Everyone else present agreed. Given the membership of the Executive Council, this vote of no confidence seems strange. At that time, it included Philip Adams, Winnie Andrews, Charles Anstis, J. Anstis, Edith Anstis, Mina Brawner, Harold Martin, Jotham Metcalfe, Charlie Kajewski, Edwin Ridgway, Ernest Tooth, Ivor Warburton and Tom Warburton. Most of these people were utterly loyal to Lancaster and continued to work with her till the day she died.¹⁰⁰ Perhaps some — Martin from Brisbane, for example, or Edie Anstis from Perth — were not present at the meeting. It is also possible that Lancaster was referring to the local Victorian Advisory Council. These were M. Anstis, John Cavill, J. Deacon, G. Holroyd, Davey Jack, Jim Mullins [sic] and ‘Brother’ Johnson.¹⁰¹ Jack had already expressed some criticism of proceedings. But here, too, there were loyal souls such as John Cavill and George Holroyd. Whatever the explanation, this unanimous expression of disagreement with Lancaster’s work with the poor was the last straw. She had suffered criticism for over 20 years from outside the movement. Now, this attack from inside proved terminal. From the beginning, she said, she had never wanted to build an organisation. Her reluctance to do so initially was no secret. She believed that to abandon the needy would in fact be hindering the work of evangelisation. So she took the only course of action that seemed honourable to her. On 23 January 1932, she called a meeting of the Good News Hall Assembly to discuss ‘the relationship of the Assembly to the A.F.M.’ Individuals were free to make their own choice, but with the vastly increased activities of the church together with the editing of *Good News*, occupying her fully, she would be resigning her position with the A.F.M. of Australasia. She felt she could serve God better outside of its activities —

⁹⁹ GN 23:2 February 1932, p. 11.

¹⁰⁰ Ridgway was one of the early members at the Hall. He was baptised in the Holy Spirit probably before 1920. In his *Ask for the Old Paths*, c. 1946, he refers to having been baptised in the Spirit some 30 years previously (p. 43).

¹⁰¹ GN 22:5 May 1931, p. 15. Jim Mullin told me forty years later that he felt the welfare work had become a distraction from the real mission of evangelism.

We have been impelled to obtain liberty for ourselves to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit by sending in our resignation ... This has not been done in any spirit of controversy ... therefore, by God's grace, we have not (and shall not) ask a single person to resign from the 'A.F.M.', neither will we annex any 'A.F.M.' worker or evangelist, or try to hinder by word or deed the activities of the A.F.M., though the same loving fellowship will be shown to all as in the past, and we will still gladly extend a helping hand to both assemblies and individuals. The only difference so far as we are concerned will be a clerical one.¹⁰²

For the rest of that year, *Good News* continued to include a listing of the same churches. Instead of an Easter Conference, however, there was a Prayer Convention at Good News Hall, with the usual Memorial Supper.¹⁰³ There were blessings in profusion; three people received the Spirit, including an 80-year-old woman, and there were many visions and revelations.¹⁰⁴

As the winter of 1932 approached, the situation of many became worse. There were 70 men requiring boots, 80 needing shirts, more than 30 in need of trousers with many others waiting for socks or underwear.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, women and children were now suffering hunger and privation. Mothers starved themselves to feed their families. Children had no clothes for school. Often, they were cold and sick.¹⁰⁶ As the demands were growing so the debts were mounting. The Hall was closed for three days of prayer and fasting. No meals were served to anyone, members or mendicants. In her original style, Lancaster explained to an enquirer —

Sufficient help to feed these needy men is not forthcoming, and as we are getting more deeply into debt each month, and the men keep increasing in numbers, it has become needful to lay siege to the courts of heaven for a cheque on the Bank of

¹⁰² GN 23:2 February 1932, pp.11,19.

¹⁰³ GN 23:3 March 1932, p.20.

¹⁰⁴ GN 23:5 May 1932, p.11.

¹⁰⁵ GN 23:6 June 1932, pp.10f, GN 23:7 July 1932, p.13..

¹⁰⁶ GN 24:4,5 April-May 1933, p.8.

Philippi (Phil 4:19), and so, as a mission, we have decided to wait upon God, camping, as it were, at His gate ...¹⁰⁷

If only Spirit-filled Christians around Australia had been more generous, there would have been plenty for all.¹⁰⁸ Or, if only those they had helped who were now employed gave ten per cent of their earnings.¹⁰⁹ Meanwhile, *Good News* would only be printed as funds were available.¹¹⁰

Remarriage

In the midst of all this, on 15 June 1932, at the age of 74, Jeannie Lancaster remarried. Her new husband, Richard Hocking, seems to have appeared unexpectedly at the Hall: there is no extant reference to him being involved prior to this time, although he was evidently known as an active helper in other mission centres. Baptist minister Gordon Bennett, an old friend of Lancaster's, expressed some surprise at being asked to officiate. However, he was reassured by the fact that 'the whole matter had been planned in the atmosphere of prayer and in the interests of the Lord's work.' It was plain that the burden of the work at the Hall was too much for Lancaster and this union would enable the two to devote their united efforts to the ministry.

Hocking quickly made his presence felt. On three occasions he wrote the lead article for *Good News* and a few rather pretentious poems of his were printed. He had a lucid, but grandiose style, but his writings lacked the warmth and affection for Jesus that characterised Lancaster's approach.¹¹¹

The work was taking its toll in more ways than one. Weekend meetings were 'rich in blessing,' but the numbers had dropped and there were now few in attendance. Nevertheless, the welfare work and the open air meetings

¹⁰⁷ GN 23:3 March 1932, p.11; Philippians 4:19 — 'And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.' (NIV)

¹⁰⁸ GN 23:4 April 1932, p.11.

¹⁰⁹ GN 23:11 November 1932, p.8.

¹¹⁰ GN 23:8 August 1932, p.III.

¹¹¹ GN 23:8 August 1932, pp.1f, GN 23:9 September 1932, pp.1f, GN 23:10 October 1932, pp.6f, 12.

continued.¹¹² The thriving Pentecostal Church of Australia congregation at Richmond Temple was a probable lure for those who wanted a more regular kind of church with orthodox evangelical doctrines.

Jeannie Lancaster died suddenly on 6 March 1934 at the age of 75. Until a few hours before her death she was working ‘in the service for others.’ Some of her loyal supporters feared there had been foul play. Hocking had mistakenly believed, they alleged, that she had accumulated considerable wealth over the years.¹¹³ The official reason for death was given as diabetes-mellitus and high blood pressure.

Harold Martin, pastor of one of the Brisbane assemblies, paid tribute at her funeral to ‘the consecrated life and service of dear “Mother”.’ Baptist pastor Gordon Bennett, who had stood by her faithfully for many years, spoke at the grave of her Christian character and selfless devotion to her calling.¹¹⁴ Given the extent of her ministry and its widespread effects, it is surprising that a relatively small item in *Good News* reports her death. But then, perhaps, that is how she would have liked it. On 7 March, she was buried as she had lived, self-effacing, uncelebrated and without acclamation, in the Fawkner Cemetery, Victoria, in an unmarked grave.

Lancaster’s death clearly caused considerable trauma and disruption to the ministry. There was no *Good News* in April and in May, the August 1928 issue was re-issued with a new cover. There was evidently a mortgage on the Hall — perhaps Lancaster herself had financed its original purchase and the estate demanded settlement — and there was possibly still money owing from the heavy financial drain during the height of the Depression. Although an attempt was made to raise the necessary funds, the Hall had to be sold. John Cavill and Harold Martin were able to rent the Hall back from its new owners and to

¹¹² GN 24:9 September 1933, p.8.

¹¹³ ‘Sister’ Ethel Wordsworth claimed to have heard strange noises as of someone being strangled as she passed the Hockings’ door that day and another suspected poison at the hands of her husband — F.Lancaster, personal interview, 18 December 1993; I.Warburton, personal interview, n.d. These stories were conveyed to me by several other interviewees as well.

¹¹⁴ GN 25:3 March 1934, p.19.

regain all the furnishings.¹¹⁵ So they resolved to continue the ministry, including the publishing of *Good News*. At Lancaster's death, Martin left Queensland for Melbourne, where he became secretary of the work and editor of the magazine.¹¹⁶ There were many grateful letters from readers for the continuance of the magazine.¹¹⁷

The reprieve was not for long. The following year, the congregation was given notice to quit the Hall as it was to be turned into 'a place of amusement.'¹¹⁸ Meetings were relocated in the Forester's Hall, Richmond, under the name Good News Mission.¹¹⁹ The numbers were evidently small, the annual memorial supper in 1936 being held at Cavill's home.¹²⁰ The Mission continued as a small group into the 40s under the leadership of William Salisbury when it finally closed.¹²¹

With Lancaster's withdrawal and subsequent death, the Apostolic Faith Mission ceased to function and the few churches which had remained in fellowship with Good News Hall forged new alliances with the Pentecostal Church of Australia or the Apostolic or Foursquare Churches. Many well-known families in today's Pentecostal movement trace their origins to Good News Hall.¹²²

¹¹⁵ H.Martin and J.Cavill, 'An Open Letter,' GN 25:4 May 1934, p.19.

¹¹⁶ H.Martin, 'It Came to Pass,' GN 25:11 November 1934, p.10. Months later he told how eight years previously he had seen himself in a vision cutting paper to wrap meat, and realised it was for the 'meat of the Word.' When he entered the Good News Hall printing room, he recognised it as the place he had seen in the vision. Now, as editor, he was literally cutting paper in the print room.

¹¹⁷ GN 25:12 December 1934, p.19; 26:5 May 1935, pp.19f; GN 27:4 April 1936, p.19..

¹¹⁸ The following year, the Hall was once again used as a Pentecostal meeting place under the leadership of Mina Brawner. See Chapter Twelve.

¹¹⁹ GN 26:6 June 1935, pp.19f.

¹²⁰ GN 27:4 April 1936, p.9.

¹²¹ William Salisbury was a wood machinist by trade and an 'exhorter rather than a preacher.' Meetings were held above a shoe store in Albert Street, Brunswick. Some Good News Hall identities continued to attend including Jim Cavill, Jim Self, Tom and Ivor Warburton, Charles Mortomore and Irene Loutit. There was an annual foot washing service where, on one occasion, the Warburton brothers were reconciled after an argument through washing one another's feet. See Averill, 1992, pp.21f and L.Averill, personal interview, 20 November 1990 and personal communication, 28 March 1992

¹²² For example, the following families — Lancaster, Buchanan, Douglas, Mortomore, Peters, Swensen, Enticknap, Conwell, Deacon, Sharman, Priest.

Perhaps the best example of how Lancaster was seen by her associates is found in the words of Gordon Bennett at her wedding day —

During all the years I have known her she has distinguished herself by her devoted, self-sacrificing work for her Lord and Master. This has called for much faith, and spiritual heroism, which has often been put to the test by the changing circumstances and the many disappointments that one meets with, even in the Lord's work.

Being misunderstood, misrepresented and even opposed by those who have professed friendship and love, certainly means the testing of one's faith in God ... Our Sister ... has been subjected to these things; yet the work God has entrusted to her, to pioneer Pentecost in Australia and establish a centre, has continued to grow, souls have been saved, hearts cheered and the spiritual life of many a child of God has been nourished and strengthened by the Lord through the sanctified services of our dear Sister.¹²³

Through all the criticism and conflict Lancaster endured, a spirit of love was evident. To quote Lloyd Averill, 'They weathered many storms and their opponents admit that they showed real Christian love despite any alleged errors.'¹²⁴ In her 26 years of ministry, Lancaster remained true to her own understanding of the Scriptures. Some of her views were unorthodox and unpopular, but she was not the kind of person who would change for the sake of expediency. Yet she was neither judgmental nor aggressive; for her, love was more important than doctrine. Her faith was expressed in actions as well as words. In many ways, this was the intrinsic spirit of Pentecost.

Regrettably, others who claimed to be filled with the same Holy Spirit were less charitable. The first fruit of the Spirit might be love,¹²⁵ but this was insufficient reason to overlook heretical beliefs. The same Spirit was also given to lead us into truth.¹²⁶ Reconciling these two perspectives has been a challenge for the

¹²³ A.G.Bennett, 'A Wedding,' GN 23:7 July 1932, p.18.

¹²⁴ Lloyd Averill, personal communication, n.d.

¹²⁵ Galatians 5:22 — 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love ...' (NIV).

¹²⁶ John 16:13 — 'When he, the Spirit of Truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth' (NIV).

Christian Church since its inception. It was a particular challenge for a movement that derived its *raison d'être* from the ministry of the Spirit.



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