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## 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.<sup>1</sup>

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 statement<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendices Ten and Twelve for background on McPherson.

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

<sup>3</sup> 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

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.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup> 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.

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Spirit and speaking in tongues, and Andrews felt her behaviour in Australia proved his point. See Burgess et al, 1988, p.317. See also Frodsham, *Smith Wigglesworth: Apostle of Faith*, 1971 and *With Signs Following*, 1946.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

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.<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Sun News-Pictorial* 21 September 1922.

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

<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup>

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.<sup>11</sup>

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 instance, she writes favourably of the ministry of Smith

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix Twelve.

<sup>10</sup> J.Lancaster, 'Open Letter,' 9:1 February 1923, p.17.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

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.”’<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup>

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.<sup>15</sup> 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 press his dissociation with their doctrines and practices.<sup>16</sup> 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

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<sup>12</sup> See also GN 15:8 August 1924, p.20.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> Nellie Mather, ‘His Thrilling Touch,’ GN 15:12 December 1924, pp.12ff; see also Jordan, 1970, pp.39ff.

<sup>15</sup> J.Lancaster, ‘Truth and Love,’ GN 22:4 April 1931, p.10.

working with Charles Greenwood (1891-1969) at the Sunshine Gospel Mission (est. 1916) and then establishing the Pentecostal Church of Australia.<sup>17</sup>

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.'<sup>18</sup> 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.'<sup>19</sup>

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.'<sup>20</sup> 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.'<sup>21</sup>

### **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 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

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<sup>16</sup> *Age* 12 October 1922. For background on Horne see Appendix Ten..

<sup>17</sup> See Chapter Nine and Appendix Ten on Greenwood and Valdez.

<sup>18</sup> GN 16:4 April 1925, p.18.

<sup>19</sup> GN 16:5 May 1925, pp.10,11.

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

<sup>21</sup> GN 18:10 October 1927, p.10.

1910, she had been ‘the first to carry the “Latter Rain” message to Adelaide,’<sup>22</sup> 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’.<sup>23</sup> 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 blessing were outpoured until the workers present could not stand before the glory of the Lord, but fell prostrate at His feet.<sup>24</sup>

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

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<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> GN 18:6 June 1927, p.10.

<sup>24</sup> GN 17:8 August 1926, p.10.

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.<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup>

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.<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup>

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

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

<sup>26</sup> GN 18:7 July 1927, p.18.

<sup>27</sup> GN 17:10 October 1926, p.19.

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

that had not assisted the unity of our work for God' they desired 'forever to put aside.'<sup>29</sup>

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.'<sup>30</sup> 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.'<sup>31</sup>

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 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

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<sup>29</sup> GN 18:6 June 1927, p.12.

<sup>30</sup> GN 18:6 June 1927, p.12.

<sup>31</sup> 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.

enriching time. There were several family reconciliations, many were healed and over the next two months, three baptismal services were held.<sup>32</sup> 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.<sup>33</sup>

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)<sup>34</sup>, 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 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

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<sup>32</sup> GN 18:7 July 1927, p.10.

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

<sup>34</sup> 1 Corinthians 13 contains Paul’s celebrated passage on divine love.

other churches.<sup>35</sup> 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'<sup>36</sup> — 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.<sup>37</sup>

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.'<sup>38</sup>

### **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

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

<sup>36</sup> GN 19:6 June 1928, p.10.

<sup>37</sup> GN 19:6 June 1928, p.15.

<sup>38</sup> M.Brawner, 'Shibboleth,' GN 21:7 July 1930, p.11.

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!<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup>

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.

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<sup>39</sup> GN 18:8 August 1927, p.10.

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

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.<sup>41</sup>

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.<sup>42</sup> 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.<sup>43</sup> 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 such a devilish thing as division, so that this glorious work may go right ahead throughout the whole of Australia and the world.’<sup>44</sup> In Geelong, also, there was a split in the ranks. By the middle of 1929, they had fully recovered and were

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<sup>41</sup> GN 20:5 May 1929, p.16.

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

<sup>43</sup> GN 20:5 May 1929, p.16.

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

doing better than ever, with some 50 people attending regularly. But it was a traumatic time.<sup>45</sup> 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.<sup>46</sup>

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 re-affirming 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.<sup>47</sup>

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 parting was a wrench.'<sup>48</sup> 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

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<sup>45</sup> GN 20:5 May 1929, p.13.

<sup>46</sup> 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.

<sup>47</sup> GN 20:5 May 1929, p.16.

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

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.<sup>49</sup> 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.<sup>50</sup>

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’<sup>51</sup>

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

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<sup>49</sup> GN 22:5 May 1931, pp.10, 14.

<sup>50</sup> GN 22:5 May 1931, p.12.

<sup>51</sup> GN 21:9 September 1930, p.11.

<sup>52</sup> 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.

could teach them and that often the greatest victories came out of times in the desert.<sup>53</sup>

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.<sup>54</sup>

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.<sup>55</sup> 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 ...

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<sup>53</sup> GN 22:5 May 1931, p.14.

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

<sup>55</sup> F.Lancaster, personal interview, 18 December 1993.

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.'<sup>56</sup>

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.<sup>57</sup>

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 millionaire's home,' reported the *Sun News-Pictorial*, 'was a Christmas dinner

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<sup>56</sup> GN 21:10 October 1930, p.15.

<sup>57</sup> GN 22:2 February 1931, p.10.

enjoyed more.<sup>58</sup> 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.<sup>59</sup>

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.<sup>60</sup> 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 hand, some landlords were themselves in need. Unable to collect rent or evict tenants, they, too, slid into debt. Owning property did not necessarily

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

<sup>59</sup> GN 16:2 February 1925, p.9.

<sup>60</sup> GN 22:8 August 1931, p.12.

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.<sup>61</sup>

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.<sup>62</sup> In 1931, between 140 and 180 unemployed men were coming daily to the Hall where they received ‘both material and spiritual food.’<sup>63</sup> An average of 700 free lunches were given weekly, and clothing was made available where possible.<sup>64</sup> At times, men were given overnight accommodation, one young man being so urgently in need he was given the best of the staff bedrooms.<sup>65</sup>

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 clothes away. One man was left only with the trousers he stood up in.<sup>66</sup> ‘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’

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

<sup>62</sup> GN 24:4,5 April-May 1933, pp.8f.

<sup>63</sup> GN 22:2 February 1931, p.10.

<sup>64</sup> GN 22:5 May 1931, p.11.

<sup>65</sup> GN 22:10 October 1931, p.10.

<sup>66</sup> GN 23:9 September 1932, p.8.

Cornell supervised activities.<sup>67</sup> 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.<sup>68</sup>

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.<sup>69</sup> 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.<sup>70</sup> 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.<sup>71</sup> 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.<sup>72</sup> 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.<sup>73</sup> 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 prayer meeting. Enough cake was left over to give 200 men a piece each on New Year’s Day.<sup>74</sup>

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

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<sup>67</sup> 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.

<sup>68</sup> GN 23:3 March 1932, p.10 (‘Yes, and I have to thank you, Mother, for all your love and kindness’).

<sup>69</sup> GN 22:8 August 1931, p.12.

<sup>70</sup> GN 22:3 March 1931, p.11.

<sup>71</sup> GN 23:7 July 1931, p.10.

<sup>72</sup> GN 22:5 May 1931, p.10.

<sup>73</sup> GN 22:10 October 1931, p.11.

<sup>74</sup> GN 23:2 February 1932, p.10.

her need was discovered and food was taken to her, it was too late.<sup>75</sup> 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.<sup>76</sup>

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.’<sup>77</sup> 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 men,’ said Lancaster, ‘and we are glad.’<sup>78</sup> Other men were too embarrassed to remove their outer garments because their ragged trousers were too revealing.<sup>79</sup>

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

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<sup>75</sup> GN 22:3 March 1931, p.10.

<sup>76</sup> GN 22:12 December 1931, p.10.

<sup>77</sup> GN 23:3 March 1932, p.10.

<sup>78</sup> GN 22:10 October 1931, p.10.

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

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.<sup>80</sup> 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.<sup>81</sup>

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.<sup>82</sup> There were also regular requests for such simple items as wool, cotton, needles, boot-laces, razors, socks, tea, sugar and the like.<sup>83</sup>

### **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

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<sup>80</sup> GN 22:12 December 1931, p.11.

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

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

<sup>83</sup> GN 22:4 April 1931, p.11; GN 22:11 November 1931, p.10.

learned to identify them.<sup>84</sup> 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.<sup>85</sup>

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.<sup>86</sup>

As at St Barnabas' in Sydney, where Arthur Stace ('Mr Eternity') turned to the Lord in 1930,<sup>87</sup> 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.<sup>88</sup> 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

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<sup>84</sup> GN 24:4,5 April-May 1933, p.8.

<sup>85</sup> GN 22:2 February 1931, p.10.

<sup>86</sup> 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)

<sup>87</sup> 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.

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

testimony to the other unemployed men at the midday meal.<sup>89</sup> 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.<sup>90</sup> 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.<sup>91</sup> Another was preaching regularly on Sunday mornings in rural Victoria; another was distributing tracts near Ballarat.<sup>92</sup> 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 to stand for Christ. He himself became a worker at the Hall.<sup>93</sup> 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.<sup>94</sup> One letter must have touched Lancaster's heart . It came from a young man who had now found

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<sup>89</sup> GN 22:5 May 1931, p.11; GN 22:8 August 1931, p.12.

<sup>90</sup> GN 23:8 August 1932, p.8.

<sup>91</sup> GN 22:8 August 1931, p.12.

<sup>92</sup> GN 23:4 April 1932, pp.11f.

<sup>93</sup> GN 23:7 July 1932, p.11; GN 23:8 August 1932, p.8..

<sup>94</sup> GN 23:2 February 1932, p.10.

work on a farm and signed it, 'From your son in Christ.'<sup>95</sup> 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.<sup>96</sup>

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.'<sup>97</sup> 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 ...<sup>98</sup>

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 better applied to evangelising Victoria and thus building up the AFM, and, incidentally, bringing in more money.<sup>99</sup> 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

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<sup>95</sup> GN 23:5 May 1932, p.11.

<sup>96</sup> GN 23:3 March 1932, p.11.

<sup>97</sup> J.Mullin, personal interview, n.d.

<sup>98</sup> GN 22:9 September 1931, p.10.

<sup>99</sup> GN 23:2 February 1932, p.11.

to work with her till the day she died.<sup>100</sup> 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.<sup>101</sup> 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 —

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.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> 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).

<sup>101</sup> 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.

<sup>102</sup> GN 23:2 February 1932, pp.11,19.

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.<sup>103</sup> There were blessings in profusion; three people received the Spirit, including an 80-year-old woman, and there were many visions and revelations.<sup>104</sup>

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.<sup>105</sup> 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.<sup>106</sup> 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 Philippi (Phil 4:19), and so, as a mission, we have decided to wait upon God, camping, as it were, at His gate ...<sup>107</sup>

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

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<sup>103</sup> GN 23:3 March 1932, p.20.

<sup>104</sup> GN 23:5 May 1932, p.11.

<sup>105</sup> GN 23:6 June 1932, pp.10f; GN 23:7 July 1932, p.13..

<sup>106</sup> GN 24:4,5 April-May 1933, p.8.

<sup>107</sup> 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)

<sup>108</sup> GN 23:4 April 1932, p.11.

<sup>109</sup> GN 23:11 November 1932, p.8.

<sup>110</sup> GN 23:8 August 1932, p.III.

### 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.<sup>111</sup>

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 continued.<sup>112</sup> 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.<sup>113</sup> The official reason for death was given as diabetes-mellitus and high blood pressure.

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<sup>111</sup> GN 23:8 August 1932, pp.1f; GN 23:9 September 1932, pp.1f; GN 23:10 October 1932, pp.6f, 12.

<sup>112</sup> GN 24:9 September 1933, p.8.

<sup>113</sup> 'Sister' Ethel Wordsworth claimed to have heard strange noises as if 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.

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.<sup>114</sup> 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 regain all the furnishings.<sup>115</sup> 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.<sup>116</sup> There were many grateful letters from readers for the continuance of the magazine.<sup>117</sup>

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.’<sup>118</sup> Meetings were relocated in the Forester’s Hall, Richmond, under the name

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<sup>114</sup> GN 25:3 March 1934, p.19.

<sup>115</sup> H.Martin and J.Cavill, ‘An Open Letter,’ GN 25:4 May 1934, p.19.

<sup>116</sup> 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.

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

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

Good News Mission.<sup>119</sup> The numbers were evidently small, the annual memorial supper in 1936 being held at Cavill's home.<sup>120</sup> The Mission continued as a small group into the 40s under the leadership of William Salisbury when it finally closed.<sup>121</sup>

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.<sup>122</sup>

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.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> GN 26:6 June 1935, pp.19f.

<sup>120</sup> GN 27:4 April 1936, p.9.

<sup>121</sup> 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

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

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

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.’<sup>124</sup> 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,<sup>125</sup> but this was insufficient reason to overlook heretical beliefs. The same Spirit was also given to lead us into truth.<sup>126</sup> Reconciling these two perspectives has been a challenge for the Christian Church since its inception. It was a particular challenge for a movement that derived its *raison d’etre* from the ministry of the Spirit.

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<sup>124</sup> Lloyd Averill, personal communication, n.d.

<sup>125</sup> Galatians 5:22 — ‘But the fruit of the Spirit is love ...’ (NIV).

<sup>126</sup> John 16:13 — ‘When he, the Spirit of Truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth’ (NIV).