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Australian Indigenous Ministries

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Cedric and Betty Tennyson with their grandchildren at Corella
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Our God is Able



by Ruth Freudigmann

Corella Creek is a small community on the Barkly Tablelands. *Cedric and Betty Tennyson* are a Christian couple who have lived in this community for many years. They have faithfully preached God's Word to their family and neighbours and have seen some of them come to know the Lord Jesus as Saviour. They organised and hosted an Easter Convention this year and Cedric baptised ten people that weekend.

Speaking God's Word to the younger generation is important to Cedric and Betty so they began with their grandchildren. Every morning they gathered the children, opened the Bible and shared a story showing what God expects of us in our lives. Cedric would pray, committing the children to God for the day and then send them all to school.

Betty also started a Sunday school where she would teach them Christian songs, tell Bible stories and help them memorize God's Word. All the children in the community came and had a happy time.

Gradually the daily devotional group began to grow and now all the young ones in the community meet at the Tennyson home for a Bible story and prayer before school. This has had a profound effect on the children's lives. Bad language has stopped and they are eager to help about the place. They are pleased and happy to go to school too.

Cedric tells the story of a young boy who lived with his mother in Tennant Creek. In town he wandered the streets every day getting into a lot of trouble. He did not attend school nor would he do any kind of work to help at home. His language was extremely foul and his mother did not

know what to do. The mother is a relation of Betty so she packed up and moved herself and son to Corella.

The boy continued to be out of control, lazy, and foul mouthed, but the Corella children would put their fingers in their ears so they could not hear him and raise their hands to tell him to stop. He wanted to be with the other children so attended the Bible story and prayer time before school and Sunday school at the Tennyson home. He would then go to school with his new friends.

Six months has gone past and now the troubled boy is first to arrive at Betty and Cedric's place each morning.

His bad language is gradually dropping away. He is more helpful about the community and is happy to go to school. Cedric and Betty pray for this young boy and look forward to the day when he gives his life to Jesus.

God's Word says when we walk with wrong company our lives get in a mess (Psalm 1) so let us join them in praying for this boy and all the children at Corella Creek.

To God be the glory great things He has done and is doing.



Forty Three faithful years

Throughout the past forty three years *Rob Smith* from the Rockhampton Aim Church has been teaching Religious Education in the state school — and he has no plans to retire yet! We thank God for such dedication and faithfulness in sharing God's Word with countless children and young people over so many years. Please pray that the Lord will use the ministry of RE in the schools to draw many into His kingdom.





In Tune with God's Word

'Ruth, could you make some copies of this Christian song for us?' It was a simple and not unusual request from some of the ladies in the Tennant Creek AIM Church.

Concern was raised when the words were read, so Ruth decided to use it as a study. The tune was possibly very appealing, but were the words in tune with God's Word?

The cold southeasterly wind had been howling all day long. But late in the afternoon a group of 23 ladies from a wide age range gathered at the church for Ladies Meeting. Though a smaller group, the men met at the same time.

"Is that what the Bible teaches? Can you think of a verse in the Bible that teaches that? Can you think of a verse that shows the wrong teaching in that line?" These were some of the questions they considered as they worked their way through the song.

Throughout the meeting a number of the ladies showed an impressive knowledge of Scripture — often quoting the verse and where it could be found without looking it up. They pointed out many defects in the song compared with Biblical teaching and found the relevant Scriptures concerning the problem areas. They could not only point out the wrong teaching in the song, but could give God's teaching that would have made it Biblically correct.

Thank God for this lesson in checking things against Scripture and for the spiritual maturity evidenced in so many of the ladies there.

And thank God for the 12½ years *Eugen and Ruth Freudigmann* have spent with the people. They have been faithful to teach God's Word and have had the joy of seeing so many grow in their walk with Him as they have taken that teaching in. And as Ruth has said, *'The rest is in the hands of God.'*

She further shares: *'Time has come for us to move on with God and leave the local church in Tennant Creek. Soon we will drive out of town for the last time.'*

We are in awe of what God has done in the lives of the people and we are confident that He will continue to change lives through His Word and build His church.

Pray for the church leaders as they fulfil new and different roles like coping with the business side of the church.

You have prayed and supported the Church family for many years so please continue to do so as we leave them. Loss of any kind is not easy.'



Tennant Creek ladies' study

Celebrating a century



On the 13th of August *Mrs Muriel Bowen* will be celebrating her 100th birthday. To put that into perspective, AIM was only in its 9th year of ministry when she was born!

Challenged, inspired, deeply grateful and humbled were my reactions as I sat with Mrs Bowen to hear of her years in AIM. Her reaction regarding the conditions 'back then' was simply, *'I suppose conditions were a bit rough. But I don't like to dwell on those things because they are not important. We were there to serve the Lord and He wonderfully provided for our every need.'*

Her ministry with AIM began as a single worker in 1935, with plans to marry Ken already in place. When sent to Barmah NSW she shared a two-room (kitchen and bedroom) hessian bag house with another worker. While here she celebrated her 21st birthday.

They went by rowboat across the river to the church in Cummeragunja. It was a ministry of reconciliation and healing as the church had suffered a split prior to their arrival. They rejoiced to see God's work in bringing the people into one united body again.

She and Ken married in May 1936 then went to Woorabinda for four years. Here they had a two-bedroom house made of bark — a real step up! Missionaries were not allowed to live on communities (settlements in those days) so travelled in by horse and sulky from the cattle station until they were able to buy their first car. During their time in Woori they saw many people come to faith in Christ and grow strong in the Lord. A work of God was done among the children too.

From there they went to work in Cherbourg and lived in nearby Murgon. Fuel was rationed because of the war which made it necessary at times to use bicycles. The war years also meant they were not able to have a furlough for seven years.

The church in Cherbourg was very active with five Christian Endeavour groups, Bible study classes, Scripture in the school, visitation, open air meetings and a Sunday school of over 200 children. Attendance at the church was 300-400. They were thrilled and thankful for the many people who were faithful in taking part in the ministries of the church.

After Cherbourg it was on to Fingal where they could live among the people. This made for a very busy time for Mrs Bowen having daily contact with people coming with various needs and requests whilst running her own

household, raising her children plus caring for those of working mothers, along with taking part in ministry and supporting her husband in his.

When they arrived they found the church had suffered a split from another group coming in. They rejoiced to see this healed and the believers become one again during their time.

Their youngest daughter contracted encephalitis during their ministry at Fingal. Sadly this left her with some damage to the brain, epilepsy, and loss of memory. They saw her go from being above average in school to falling below. Mrs Bowen said, *'It was a really sad thing for us, but she has handled life well right through since then.'*

Ten years of ministry were spent at Singleton where she was thrilled to see students she had known from her previous areas of ministry. Her time was filled with being a wife and mother, leading a couple of lectures, inspecting student rooms, college cooking two days a week, and making college and choir uniforms for the girls.

She was 'Mother Bowen' to the students and each was greatly loved by her — and her by them. She rejoiced to see them grow and mature in the Lord. She knew most had only been given up to Year 4 education. Seeing them take lectures, sit exams and pass as well as work in Singleton and make friends there was a real thrill to her. She prayerfully followed them in their ministry and keeps in touch with many today.

Mrs Bowen testifies of having experienced *'God's faithfulness in all things throughout those years and right through to today. He has been faithful. He has never let me down and I am so grateful to Him.'*

She is still driving and is able to live on her own. **We thank God for her and her ongoing interest, prayers and support of AIM. HAPPY 100th MRS BOWEN!**



QCC Celebrates 30 years



Folk from Inala, Cherbourg, Palm Is, Townsville and Rockhampton met to celebrate God's faithfulness to the Qld Church Council and churches. The gathering took place over the June long weekend in Townsville.

Respecting The Past

Thanks to God was given for the faithful servants who helped establish and run the Qld Church Council over the years. Their vision was to see the Aboriginal people take responsibility for running their own churches, supporting and encouraging one another and reaching the next generation with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Some of the newer members of the Qld work were very thankful to have former Chairman *Bill Power* share the beginnings, purpose, and progress of the Council. It helped them to understand how it works and how they and their churches fit in to it all.

Securing The Future

In looking to the future they were reminded that God's mercy is new every morning and that His faithfulness is great to all believers. They were challenged to walk in love, forgiveness and obedience to God's Word so that they might know God's continued blessing.

There is encouragement in moving forward with a number of the younger generation accepting the responsibility of reaching out with the Good News.

Pastor Emmanuel shared the following challenge during the meetings:

***Thirty years on we say 'Thank You Lord'.
To God alone be all the glory, praise,
and honour for what has been
accomplished so far.***

While we honour the past, we have a future to take hold of with the help of the Holy Spirit of God. We need dedicated and deeply committed Indigenous workers and leaders. The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few. But Christ is the one building His church and the gates of hell will not be able to prevail against it.

- Let us continue to grow spiritually mature and healthy congregations

- Let us be committed to building healthier relationships
- Let us build our capacities and secure resources
- Let us be proactive and creative in reaching the present generation and the next



Ladies' convention



Forty women from all over Queensland as well as Gilgandra and New Zealand enjoyed the dinner hosted by Cherbourg AIM for the opening of the annual Ladies' Convention on 2nd May. After that we had a powerful time of praising and worshipping the Lord.

Pastor Willie Moses of Cherbourg opened the event with a message on the widow's oil in 2 Kings 4. We were challenged to be willing to trust God, empty ourselves and be available for God to use to reach out in each community. That devotion set the benchmark for all of us to be available for God's Spirit to work in and through us.

Our guest-speaker was *Cecily Hill*, a Maori pastor who had also been a missionary in an Indian orphanage for eight years. She visited last year with a group which did outreach in Cherbourg for two weeks. After their visit the Lord spoke to four of us individually to ask Cecily to be our speaker. She offered willingly to pay her own airfares and travelled with three Samoan missionaries. One is married to the pastor who brought a ministry team last year. God powerfully used her own testimony of brokenness and healing to reach out to our women and allow the Spirit of God to heal them emotionally, spiritual and physically.

A highlight of our weekend was the Cherbourg young girls. They so graciously served the elders by working in the kitchen, at the meal tables and making beds for them.

The great talent from each centre was expressed at the concert night. During our closing service we included the men who had brought delegates and covered the convention in prayer. We are thankful for this ministry of *Pastor Willie Moses, Pastor Apenisa Rabai, Pastor Emmanuel Fave and brother Rodney Bird*. The church men and boys assisted the local church ladies with the Sunday luncheon as part of our pre-Mother's Day celebration.



Mother of the year

Joy White has been a community leader and one of the Christian leaders in the Bagot Victory Church (Darwin). Her early Christian teaching came through AIM workers and friendship and fellowship is still kept with many within AIM. This year she was named 'Mother of the Year' for the Northern Territory.

Joy was nominated and was chosen because of her tireless work in caring for children in need. Like so many Aboriginal women, Joy not only raised her own family, but has always had an open heart and home for other young ones who have needed help, care and some extra guidance in their lives.

How many has she taken in and helped over the years? She has never kept count — she has just kept caring and sharing with them whether for short or long periods of time.

Congratulations Joy and thank you for your tireless love and care which continues to touch many lives.



We also acknowledge and thank all the women and families who continue to stretch out a meal when another needy one turns up, makes room for another to sleep safe, takes time to care and continues to sacrifice their own wants and needs in order to help and share with others — especially children and young people.

big problems???

...BIGGER God!



by Jono Wright

There will be no surprises when I say that ministry is no walk in the park. Sometimes you cruise along on auto pilot and at other times you carry a pretty heavy load.

People come along to church or have a conversation in the street and express great interest in the good news and the Lord only to turn and walk off along the 'wide road' again. It leaves you wondering what we said or did or what we could have said or done differently. People have real BIG problems, but God offers real BIG solutions.

On top of the unrelenting struggle that is going on for people's souls there is the constant battle against false teaching. We hear stories of different 'extreme Christian fringe groups' travelling through and the sects and cults that try to bring down the work of the Lord by sowing division and confusion. False teachers are either adding things to the Gospel that God never mentioned or taking away from it by teaching a different Jesus. In Camooweal we are studying through Ephesians 6:10-20 so that tends to sharpen your awareness of the workings of the devil and his demons.

You see people in their blindness and

the wider impact that has on families and on the life of the town and school. It makes you pray all the more for revival and spiritual awakening.

On the front wall of the Camooweal church building are the words 'Jesus is the answer'. **Pray for places like Camooweal that the Christians will rise to the challenge to pray and act to make sure others at least have the knowledge of Jesus to know where their answer lies. And pray that God will work with power to build His church and bring liberation to the blind, the lost, and the weary.**



Jono, Tjanara, Elijah, Manoah, and Grace Wright

Office

changes



After several months of learning the ropes, *Peter Smith* has taken over the responsibilities in the AIM Office. Peter is the son-in-law of *Trevor Leggott*. Welcome to AIM Peter, and thank you for what you have already and will continue to do in service for the Lord through AIM.

Our thanks to *Jenni Alley* for her years of faithful work in the office. While she will be very much missed from this role, we are glad to see her having more time for her important role as mother to her three young children. We appreciate her ongoing help and support of *Rob* with his Mission Awareness Tours and in sharing at various mission conferences.

With The Lord



On the 16th of May former worker *Ethel Caddy* went to be with Christ. Her connection with AIM had extended throughout most of her 91 years. Her older sister *Win* had been an AIM missionary and at the age of nine Ethel spent several months with her on the field.

Some years later *Win* began a Young Women's Movement in Brisbane which Ethel joined. Becoming secretary/treasurer brought about her first contact with *Wes* when she sent him support from the group. She was to meet him for the first time when she was at Bible College in Sydney and he was doing deputation there.

Ethel began her work with AIM in 1946. After a short time in NSW she was sent to Darwin. She relieved a worker at the Retta Dixon Home for several months then helped in Berrimah and Belyuen.

She travelled across the harbour to Belyuen on a supply boat where she had to make a seat amongst the meat, bread, and other supplies that were onboard. Once when the director *Mrs Long* was accompanying her the waters were very rough. She grabbed Ethel and holding her tightly said, 'I don't want to have to give an account for you to Mr Caddy' as the two were by then engaged.

Her marriage to *Wes* took place at the Retta Dixon Home in 1947. They had a short time ministering in Katherine and Darwin before going south. Over the years they ministered in places such as Dubbo, Peak Hill, Moree and Cherbourg. Time was spent at Singleton College where Ethel did her share of taking lectures as well as getting

in the provisions, keeping the accounts, and putting her dressmaking skills into practice. Time and interaction with students brought mutual enjoyment.

For two years *Wes*, Ethel, and *Esther Mackintosh* travelled with caravans and visited the field offering Bible studies and training. It was during this time that Ethel met a Christian lady named *Mary* in one of the Top End communities. *Mary* was from another place and didn't speak any of the local languages. Ethel encouraged her to use the little bit of English she and the others could understand and begin telling them about Jesus. It was a great thrill to Ethel to find later that *Mary* had done just that and had gone on to have a fruitful ministry for the Lord in several areas.

The Caddy's resigned in 1980 and *Wes* began pastoring Baptist churches. Ethel remained interested and supportive of the work of AIM throughout her long life. She was a member of the Brisbane Auxiliary and served as president for a number of years. She began an AIM prayer group on the Sunshine Coast, and maintained contact with numerous missionaries and Aboriginal Christians. She saw considerable changes in the Aboriginal situation over the years and was always thrilled to see the Christians having more responsibilities.

We give thanks for the life and service of Ethel. Well done, good and faithful servant.

Knox knitting group

In April last year a knitting group was formed at the Knox Presbyterian Church in Wantirna Vic. They meet weekly to create small items which they give to groups such as Salvation Army and Children and Migrant Services to share among folk who may be in need.



Over 500 items have created by the group. Among their creations have been beanies which have been given to AIM for distribution in some of our cold and windy desert areas. Thank you ladies!



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