

“We Grew up this Place”: Ernabella Mission 1937-1974¹

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Abstract: For many Aboriginal people the missionary experience has been a defining one. Therefore Christian missions comprise an important aspect of the debate about the history of contact between Aborigines and colonisers. The revisionist contact histories that emerged in the latter decades of the twentieth century generally failed to look closely at missionary/Aboriginal encounters and promulgated the stereotypical and often simplistic assessment of missions and missionaries as the arch dispossessors of Aboriginal cultures. This case study of the Presbyterian Mission at Ernabella in the far north-west of South Australia reveals the specific and unique features that are glossed over by such generalisations. There is evidence at Ernabella of minimal intervention in tribal life, of dynamic, diverse and creative responses on the part of Aboriginal people and missionaries in preserving the vitality of religious life through periods of rapid change. Starting from the premise that Christianity was regarded as important by Aboriginal people rather than a foreign imposition, a more nuanced aspect of contact history is revealed that goes beyond the assumed crude binarism in respect to Aboriginal beliefs and Christianity. It is one that fits better with the lived reality of many Aboriginal people who embrace multi-layered approaches to spiritual life and regard the mission times and their relationship with missionaries in a positive light.

Keywords: Missions, Ernabella, Aborigines, Postcolonialism

Introduction

Since the earliest colonial times there have been over two hundred Christian missions to Aborigines across Australia—some were short-lived with others lasting for up to a hundred years.² For many Aboriginal people, then, the encounter with missions has been a defining experience and is significant to a broader understanding of contact history. Much of the literature assessing Aboriginal/missionary interactions, particularly from the latter decades of the twentieth century, by and large renders missions and missionaries as complicit in the destruction of Aboriginal societies and their belief systems resulting in a complete irruption to traditional life. Aboriginal people are depicted as one-dimensional victims of a hegemonic assault on their culture that could not be withstood. The entry in the *Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia* under Missions described them as akin to “concentration camps”, and in 2011 Sarah Maddison described mission practices as genocidal. According to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC), people were swept up and

mostly coerced to “come in” to the missions.³ Assessments in a similar vein are evident in other fora, such as a painting in the National Gallery of Victoria by West Australian artist Julie Dowling, entitled *Goodbye White Fella Religion* (2009). The painting represents the Catholic mission on Bathurst Island in the 1920s and the curatorial explanation describes the work as subversive. It shows Tiwi children expelling Christianity in the form of “a robed cleric”, because missionaries “outlawed customary ritual and marriage practices” and silenced culture.

However, a closer examination shows that such generalised assessments gloss over the complexities of the day-to-day interactions that occurred between missionaries and Aborigines. In regards to the Bathurst Island Mission there is a more complex story than the painting depicts, given that Tiwi women themselves had requested intervention in the polygynous marriage practices.⁴ The painting tells a partial story about the relationship between Tiwi people and the missionaries and marginalises those Tiwi who regard themselves as having the Christian faith.

Over thirty years ago, the Superintendent of Ernabella Mission from 1958 to 1972 Bill Edwards,⁵ critical of such generalisations about mission work, challenged researchers to broaden their understanding of missions and missionaries. There is now a body of research that examines this relationship through an intercultural framework. These studies question the boundedness of cultures and recognise cultural similarities *and* differences that are “reshaped in interaction”,⁶ and complicate the orthodox understanding of the relationships between missionaries and Aborigines.⁷ This article responds to Edwards’ challenge and seeks to contribute to this body of work. Through a close reading of the archival material from the Presbyterian Mission at Ernabella it examines the interface between the mission and the Western Desert people who called Ernabella home. In the face of this evidence it can be argued that Aboriginal people exercised agency and engaged with the mission in complex ways. If the discourse is shifted from one that regards Christianity as an imposition that destroyed Aboriginal cultures to one where Christianity is an important element in the lives of Aboriginal people, we can better see this agency and the development of complex and respectful relationships where both missionaries and Aborigines were changed in the process.

First contacts

Ernabella Mission was situated in the far north-west of South Australia, the country of Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people, two groups of the large Western Desert language bloc who now call themselves Anangu.⁸ The mission lay on the edge of the Central Australian reserve that had been gazetted in 1920 by the Commonwealth Government for the sole use of Aboriginal people whose country lay within this area. The 1921 census (Aboriginal people were not included in the census until after 1967) described the Western Desert as virtually uninhabited and as arid “sparselands”.⁹ While there was both contact and conflict with outsiders who ventured into the Central Reserve to explore for minerals or to collect dingo scalps, for the most part the remoteness of the region and its undesirability for other than marginal development meant that Anangu were able to continue to live in their country relatively unimpeded when compared to other frontiers.¹⁰

Ernestine Hill, writing of her travels in central Australia in the 1930s, suggested that it was not until the collecting of dingo scalps that colonisation in this area began.¹¹ It was the dogging trade that provided a major impetus for the establishment of the mission at Ernabella. The interactions between doggers, as the dingo hunters were known, and Anangu were significant. Doggers relied on the skills of Anangu to collect the scalps which were then

exchanged for rations, clothing and other goods.¹² Some doggers cohabited with Anangu women,¹³ numbers of Anangu were attracted to doggers' camps, and on occasions groups of Anangu travelled with the doggers with some setting up as doggers in their own right.¹⁴ Pitjantjatjara elders Andy Tjilari and Jacky Tjupuru, who had spent their early childhood in their traditional country before moving to Ernabella Mission, related their stories of first contact with doggers in the 1930s to Bill Edwards in 1973. They told of their initial fear of horses and camels which they first thought were "evil spirits".¹⁵ But nevertheless despite this fear they were interested in what these men were doing.

There were varying perceptions held by authorities and others about the nature of the relationship between doggers and Anangu. In 1935, Adelaide doctor and Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, Charles Duguid, travelled to the Musgrave Ranges and was horrified to see that "nearly all white men ... were living with native women".¹⁶ Writing to the Adelaide newspaper *The Advertiser*, Duguid claimed that doggers had trespassed "far into the aboriginal reserve with impunity, and have done so for years" with the growing number of children of mixed descent irrefutable evidence of this.¹⁷ On the other hand there were those such as the Reverend Love, who was to become Superintendent of Ernabella Mission in 1941, who regarded the relationship between Anangu and doggers in a more favourable light and identified economic benefits for Anangu. However, he qualified this with a strong recommendation that the Central Reserve should remain an area protected from "unauthorized intrusion" in order to "save a splendid and interesting people".¹⁸ Ernabella Mission was to play a crucial role.

The dogging trade in central Australia was in some ways a forerunner to the pastoral industry which brought the first permanent settlers to the region and relationships of interdependence developed between pastoralists and Anangu. Even though pastoral development was limited in the vicinity of Ernabella itself and was always marginal in the Musgrave Ranges, a number of pastoral stations were established on the edges of the Western Desert from the late 1880s in the more hospitable areas where desert people had traditionally sought refuge in times of severe drought. Jacky Tjupuru tells of his puzzlement when he first encountered sheep and how he mused that they must be some kind of echidna, this being the only animal he could relate them to.¹⁹ Contact with the pastoral industry did not necessarily spell doom for the survival of hunter-gatherer societies as A. P. Elkin had predicted,²⁰ but there is no doubt that the introduction of sheep and cattle grazing had considerable impact on Aboriginal cultures and societies.

In these arid areas pastoral enterprises were labour intensive because of their dependence on surface water (this was particularly so prior to the sinking of wells and bores). Flocks had to be moved every few weeks and each night the sheep had to be herded into safe enclosures. As well as being reliant on the labour provided by Anangu, pastoralists were also reliant on local knowledge of the country, pointing to a mutual dependence. Hedley Finlayson wrote in 1936 that Aboriginal "groups have attached themselves, more or less permanently, to each of the settlers", with the women doing the shepherding and yarding to protect against dingoes and the men continuing to hunt. He also paints an evocative image reminiscent of "the more rural of the Biblical patriarchs" on the move to new pastures. Leading the procession came the older children and women driving the sheep, followed by the adults with the horses, camels and donkeys with the camp equipment; next came the young men carrying their spears and then "bringing up the rear on a stocky pony, and shouting stentorian directions ... comes the solitary, bearded white man". Finlayson concluded that this suited the local people whose "nomad spirits rise gleefully" on moving days.²¹

Engagement with doggers and pastoralists indicates that people in this area were responding to new circumstances and, to a certain extent, living on both sides of the frontier. The frontier here was not a non-permeable boundary between settled and Aboriginal Australia. It could be argued that in some ways relationships forged between Anangu, doggers and pastoralists prepared Anangu for their interaction with the mission. Dogging continued to be an important economic activity for local people up to the 1960s,²² and pastoralism became the economic mainstay of Ernabella Mission.

From bush to mission

In 1936 the Presbyterian Church purchased the Ernabella lease of 500 square miles in order to establish a mission. Faced with a 41% decline in the “full blood” population and a 24% increase in the “half-caste” population between 1929 and 1936, South Australian authorities believed that “full bloods”²³ were on the path to extinction and expected that missions such as Ernabella would play a significant role in managing them until their imminent demise. However, Ernabella missionaries and Duguid disagreed with the official view. Indeed they believed that the mission would prevent the extinction of Aboriginal people in this area. They still adhered to nineteenth century humanitarianism that regarded Aborigines as human beings, albeit human beings who needed to be evangelised in order to realise their equality with others and firmly believed that Aborigines had a future in the Australian nation. Duguid saw the mission as providing both a refuge and a buffer zone, a spatial distancing as it were between the North-West Reserve, where Anangu were still living as hunter-gatherers, and the growing white settlements to the east. It was not to be a final solution but a place where Anangu could be prepared for their “recognition as citizens of Australia” and only until such time as they were ready to engage with the wider society.²⁴

Ernabella mission was to take an unusual approach to evangelising even though the overriding aim of the Mission was “to win the Aborigines to Christ and His way of life”.²⁵ Reverend Love was adamant that tribal life should be maintained and evangelism and education would occur “within the tribe”. He advocated that there must be a “sympathising with and understanding their own laws and customs (although not believing that all of the latter ought to be perpetuated)”,²⁶ a view which underpinned the whole period of the operation of Ernabella Mission. In 1937 Duguid, with the benefit of hindsight and mindful of disasters which had befallen other Aboriginal groups, believed that this mission would be different. He stated that at Ernabella there “was to be no compulsion or imposition of our way of life on the Aborigines, nor deliberate interference with tribal custom”.²⁷ There would be no “attempt to civilise and Christianise ... in one fell swoop”.²⁸ Reflecting on her 32 years at Ernabella until her retirement in 1986, Deaconess Winifred Hilliard believes that Duguid’s vision did indeed inform mission policy and the work of missionaries throughout the entire mission period.²⁹ The reality of retaining tribal integrity and evangelising was not without tensions as Superintendent Taylor’s comments in 1938 demonstrated when he expressed the opinion that the retention of tribal life was only viable in the short term with the transformation of “the meaning of their ancient customs” as an eventual necessity.³⁰

The RCIADIC’s assessment of Aborigines as being “swept up” onto missions implies that there was little choice in the matter and that coming in from the bush to missions was contrary to cultural practices. Even where some agency in the process is acknowledged, it is qualified. Anthropologist William Stanner argues that while people in the Daly River area of the Northern Territory during the 1930s did make choices to come in, they took the easiest

option and adopted a “parasitic role”. Therefore they were to blame because they “cooperated in their own destruction”.³¹

When pre-contact settlement and mobility patterns of Western Desert societies are taken into consideration, the process whereby Anangu came in to Ernabella Mission can be better understood. People across the whole Western Desert were connected politically, economically, socially and spiritually to a wider social grouping along the complex network of Dreaming tracks and were affiliated with not one but several Ancestors. They were allied to country in complex and multifaceted ways based on shifting, negotiated and dynamic attachments.³² Norman Tindale argued that in the Western Deserts, unlike other parts of the continent, membership of land holding groups was not defined by discrete territories based on dialects. He found that Pitjantjatjara people from the Mann Ranges further to the west had moved eastwards into the Ernabella area during the 1914-1915 drought and had stayed.³³ Migrations had long played an essential role in coping with the exigencies of living in extremely arid regions with irregular rainfall.³⁴

Rather than regarding coming in as a catastrophic event over which people had little control, and one which led to the collapse of desert societies, it can be argued that the process was culturally consistent with the long tradition of mobility in response to change and one for which cultural protocols were already in place. Highly mobile desert people moved towards settlements and missions such as Ernabella for a range of social and economic reasons as well as a sense of curiosity and interest in new goods. As Andy Tjilari said, he was intrigued by the “new” ways and saw it as a “time of learning” from the white men.³⁵

While the clearing of people from areas in the deserts in order to test missiles at Emu and Maralinga in the 1940s and 1950s suggests that there is some validity to the “swept up” hypothesis, Patrol Officers say that they were employed to warn people of danger but not to forcibly remove them to settlements. Indeed some Aboriginal groups remained in the deserts throughout the testing program. Extrapolating from this incident as being representative of the process of coming in masks rather than elucidates the complex and diverse motivations behind the decisions to leave the bush. As Patrol Officer Jeremy Long noted, “dispossession and dispersal was not the experience of all Aboriginal groups”.³⁶

At Ernabella Mission the process of coming in occurred over generations. Hilliard has pointed out that once the first missionary, the Reverend Taylor arrived at Ernabella, “there was no need to go out and lure the people into the Mission, they came” because they saw the missionaries as “their friends and not their exploiters”.³⁷ In her history of the Ernabella art centre, Ute Eickelkamp recorded the life stories of Ernabella people which accord with Hilliard’s account. Nura Rupert’s parents and brother remembered their first meeting with Duguid and Walter McDougall, Acting Superintendent of Ernabella, and following them to the mission where “Anangu helped [with] setting up the mission”.³⁸ As another Ernabella resident, Wally Dunn recalls, people went to Ernabella “to start to grow up a community”.³⁹ Nganyintja Ilyatjari whose family was one of the first to move to Ernabella, saw the mission as providing care for people and a refuge from the “evil white men” who were mistreating young Aboriginal women in the Central Reserve.⁴⁰

It would appear that initially at least, the mission was regarded as another resource to be used opportunistically, in the same way as doggers’ camps and pastoral enterprises were used. Ernabella missionaries reported that people only used the mission during times of scarcity. Ernabella resident Alec Minutjukur recalls that even after the Mission was established “we

come and go, walk, we didn't stay here [Ernabella Mission]".⁴¹ In the early mission years this largely continued to be the case and mission staff encouraged people to remain as independent as possible. In the May 1942 *Ernabella Newsletter* concern was expressed that children were being left at the mission while parents went on hunting trips. Missionaries disapproved of this practice as they believed that this threatened "tribal solidarity" which they aimed to conserve rather than undermine.⁴² This went against the perceived wisdom of the time as to the most effective way to evangelise, where children were to be kept *away* from tribal life rather than allowing them to become immersed in it. By December 1944, seven years after the mission was established, the Superintendent reported in the *Ernabella Newsletter* that "all of the people at Ernabella are nomadic and don't stay for long. Let them continue to be nomadic".⁴³

By 1946 Duguid was able to write in his report for the Presbyterian Board of Missions that Ernabella was operating as he had envisioned, that is as "a 'Buffer State' between the Reserve, the Home of the Aborigines and the outside world".⁴⁴ However it can be argued that the creation of a buffer zone while beneficial can also be counterproductive. In hindsight, it can be seen that while a buffer zone created a safe space, it also established boundaries. Even though it was intended that such boundaries were to be temporary they became more entrenched over time, thus widening rather than closing the gap between people at the mission and the wider society. Whether Anangu conceived of the aims of Ernabella Mission in the same way as the Presbyterian Church and the South Australian Aboriginal Protection Board is not clear, as the perceptions of people who associated with the mission in the early years were seldom recorded at the time. Negotiations over the boundaries of the mission were between government authorities and the Church, and not the local people.

Accommodation, compromise and opportunism in response to changing circumstances can be identified as informing the decisions to associate with the mission. Even though it appears that initial moves were not regarded as out of the ordinary for Anangu, the demands of a settled life on the mission were. They could not have foreseen the radical changes which were to occur over the next decades as people became increasingly reliant on the mission.

"Hunters become herders"⁴⁵

Pastoralism played significant economic, social and even spiritual roles throughout the life of the Ernabella Mission. At the time of the purchase of the Ernabella lease in 1936 by the Presbyterian Church it was running 2000 sheep and goats.⁴⁶ As discussed earlier, local Pitjantjatjara people had been working for pastoralists and once the mission was established they continued to work as shepherds at outlying sheep camps. In the days before fencing, sheep had to be yarded at night and local families would shepherd them, camping at each well and being provisioned with rations each week from the mission.⁴⁷ This work afforded the opportunity for regular association with country and the maintenance of tribal obligations. Shepherds would work for three months at a time and were then encouraged to go on "walkabout". The mission provided regular supplies allowing shepherds and their families to spend more time in their country.⁴⁸ The importance the mission placed on accommodating and maintaining tribal life was also evident in the provision of work for young initiates in the construction of windmills and wells which allowed them to work away from the mission. This was so that young men could be isolated during initiation as required under traditional Law.⁴⁹

In 1943 Superintendent Love expressed his hope that through shepherding people would come to Christianity. He noted the nexus between shepherding and Christianity, writing that

“to those shepherds will come readily an understanding of the great messages of Bible truth in Psalm 23 and John 10”.⁵⁰ The image printed on baptism certificates shows the Ernabella church with a flock of sheep in the foreground and in the distance the traditional country of the Musgrave Ranges, drawing a connection between work, worship and traditional life. Not only was the sheep enterprise crucial for the mission economy and for evangelising, but it was regarded as important in affording training opportunities and employment in sheep husbandry for local people. Superintendent Love reported that shepherds see their work as “a real co-operative fellowship with the white man” and by 1946 shearers at Ernabella were being paid award wages. By 1949 local people had developed such a level of competence that they were practically running the Ernabella enterprise themselves.⁵¹ At the same time Ernabella people were working seasonally on cattle stations to the east.⁵² So despite the intention of the South Australian Chief Protector to keep tribal Aboriginal people isolated, Ernabella people were already living and working on both sides of the frontier.

Eight years after the start of the mission, a reflective question was posed in the April 1945 *Newsletter*—“Is it Satisfactory?” It was noted that the task was increasingly challenged by the “quickly changing conditions ... and the contrary influences which work upon the life of the natives”.⁵³ Circumstances had changed in Central Australia following the Second World War and the Guided Missile Testing Range project had “opened up the inland”.⁵⁴ The idea of a change in economic activity was mooted and Superintendent Love wrote that they will “have to become producers as well as consumers”. On the whole, he concluded that progress had been good and that people were being prepared for future contact with the wider society, and the eight years of missionary work had been worthwhile.⁵⁵ By 1947 it was noted that the “people are seeking more civilized ways” and there was a gradual shift towards a more settled life,⁵⁶ but as visiting anthropologist, R. C. Seegar observed in 1948, “tribal life [was] not being destroyed”.⁵⁷

The Ernabella School

In June 1940 the first school building was completed and although rudimentary it was an improvement to holding classes in the creek bed during the winter months. Missionaries at Ernabella regarded the school as important not only for evangelising but for preparing people for life outside the mission, thus reflecting the belief that Anangu had a future in the wider society. At the same time the school operated in accord with the original aim of the mission that there would be minimal interference in tribal life and that traditional culture would be maintained.

The language policy at Ernabella, while not unique, was still unusual in the Australian mission context. Ian Duckham has pointed out that at Mt Margaret mission in the West Australian desert, missionary Rod Schenk was unable to find local words for Christian concepts. By 1923 he had abandoned any thought of using the vernacular and English was to be the language for “teaching the Gospel”.⁵⁸ In contrast, Ernabella school teacher Trudinger asserted that the development of literacy in the vernacular among the students was central to achieving the aim of introducing and gaining acceptance of Christianity.⁵⁹ There was collaboration between the students and the teacher and as Nura Rupert recalled, the children first taught Trudinger the Pitjantjatjara language, and then he taught them how to write it.⁶⁰ Five years later he reiterated this approach and wrote in his School Report that “[w]hen belief in Christ and His Gospel ultimately comes, it will of course be felt and thought out and expressed in the native’s own language”. Trudinger firmly believed that tribal integrity depended on respecting and maintaining the use of the vernacular, but resisted English literacy as it forced children to “think in a foreign language”.⁶¹ Superintendent Love, however, took a more pragmatic approach and advocated for a bilingual policy as he believed

that restricting education to the vernacular, as Trudinger intended, would limit and disadvantage Ernabella people in the long term. He certainly supported the use of the vernacular language as a means to maintaining a strong tribal integrity but he also argued that literacy in English was essential to meet the “encroaching Westernism”.⁶² In 1944 some compromise was reached to this impasse when at the request of the Presbyterian Board of Missions, English was introduced as a second language. Pitjantjatjara was retained as the first language and Church services continued to be conducted in Pitjantjatjara.⁶³ Two years later, it was reported that a hymnal with fifty translated hymns was ready for printing and that the first translation of the Gospel of St Mark was completed.⁶⁴

Trudinger reported that the curriculum differed from a “normal whites” school yet it appeared to be reasonably ambitious considering that school was held in the mornings only. “Writing, reading and spelling, arithmetic, hygiene, drawing, singing, gardening, woodwork and sewing, geography and Nature Study” were all taught in Pitjantjatjara with good progress being reported.⁶⁵ From an initial attendance of twenty five children in 1940, there were two hundred children enrolled by 1943 with an average daily attendance of forty five,⁶⁶ despite there being no compulsion to attend. As Love pointed out, children attended “according to the wandering of the parents”⁶⁷ and this irregular attendance was sanctioned by the mission as it indicated that tribal life was being maintained.⁶⁸ In December 1943, Trudinger reported that interest in literacy had grown and now “old men who are head of the tribe are most interested in the paper talk”.⁶⁹ The number of children literate in Pitjantjatjara had grown from thirty in 1941 to eighty in 1945.

The school at Ernabella, when considered in the wider context of the provision of education for tribal Aboriginal people at the time, can be seen as progressive. It was the only school in South Australia where English was not the official language.⁷⁰ Both educators and Aboriginal Protection Boards considered the Ernabella School to be “An Educational Experiment”, the title of an article Trudinger wrote for *The Messenger* on 17 June 1942.⁷¹ The outcomes certainly challenged the assumptions of the time about the educability of Aboriginal children. As an Education Department official observed in 1944, decades before this was widely understood, Ernabella School demonstrated that “primitive nomads” could be educated—they did not need to first become “anglicized” and they were capable of achieving standard outcomes.⁷² The school exercise book from Ernabella among Duguid’s papers in the National Library of Australia has pages of beautifully formed and neat cursive handwriting, illustrated with carefully drawn and coloured figures. The only difference to work produced in other schools at that time was that it was written in Pitjantjatjara rather than English.⁷³

According to the mission narrative, by all accounts children appeared to be enthusiastic and eager to attend school. It is difficult to reconcile the story of the school contained in the mission records with claims such as those made by Phyl and Noel Wallace that the school “contributed more to cultural destruction than any other introduced activity”.⁷⁴

The middle years

The early 1950s were described as a “time of consolidation and expansion”.⁷⁵ Superintendent Trudinger wrote that Ernabella was considered to be a “tribal home”.⁷⁶ As the years progressed ideas for the establishment of a settled “Native Village” were mooted. In September 1950 it was hoped that a “self-respecting community with a Christian atmosphere” would become established.⁷⁷ Whether people at this time saw themselves as actually residents of the mission is unclear but the relationships formed with missionaries speak of accommodation and adaptation to changing circumstances. Nonetheless the mission had

become entrenched in Pitjantjatjara life and conversely Pitjantjatjara life was embedded in the mission.

In 1951 Trudinger reported that most of the people went out into the Reserve and “contacted, for a big corroboree, a section of the Pitjantjatjara Tribe as yet untouched out there. These came in with the others at the end of August”.⁷⁸ In 1952 “walkabouts” were still encouraged⁷⁹ and in the final *Newsletter* for this period, fifteen years after the establishment of the mission, Trudinger stated that “tribal sanctions have not been interfered with”, people were still living in camps, “bush skills” had been maintained and “clothing has not been encouraged”. He maintained that all decisions were made by the people themselves.⁸⁰ This does indicate that Ernabella had been able to remain true to its original aim of evangelising without intervening in traditional ways.

However in March that year, it was reported that changes would have to be made and successful evangelising would necessitate “revolution in life for both individual and tribe”. The missionaries appeared to be regarding tribal life through a more pragmatic lens than Duguid’s earlier vision of “non- interference” and some traditional beliefs were regarded as detrimental to the future of Ernabella people. The September 1952 *Ernabella Newsletter* carried the title, “The Problem of the Primitive”, with a story of how beliefs about the causes of illness had led to unrest. After the death of a child from tetanus, the family sought revenge under tribal Law from the person suspected of causing the death. Trudinger believed that such beliefs were an impediment to the development of a Christian community and that they were preventing people from exercising a “full life”.⁸¹ In order to survive in the modern world Ernabella people had to “quickly bridge the mighty cultural gap” in accord with the South Australian Government’s proposed new assimilatory approach.⁸²

Cultural changes did occur, initiated by local people themselves. New ways of doing things were adopted and some old ways discarded. As Andy Tjilari pointed out, the presence of the mission meant that they were able to put the “bad things behind them”, realising that the world of their ancestors had changed dramatically, and that some of the old traditional practices were making it difficult to cope with the different world that lay ahead.⁸³ Rituals that had previously been held in traditional country were now performed closer to Ernabella itself, authenticating new sites in the process.⁸⁴ Births were occurring at the mission clinic, potentially impacting on and changing aspects of the complex reciprocal kin roles that accompanied the birth of a baby. In November 1961 twins were born at the mission and this was the first time on record that both babies had been allowed to survive.⁸⁵

In his 2012 monograph to mark the 75th anniversary of the establishment of Ernabella Mission by the Presbyterian Church, Edwards writes of Ernabella as *A Place of Relationships*. This presents a very different picture to that of the orthodox assessment of missions as places of incarceration that resembled concentration camps.⁸⁶ Running through all of the mission years there are stories told by Ernabella residents and missionaries of close, trusting relationships with little evidence of resistance to the mission unlike missions such as Doomadgee, North Queensland where resistance was clearly identified.⁸⁷ Each annual report from Ernabella indicated that missionaries enjoyed the “goodwill” of the local people. Nganyintja Ilyatjari, who grew up and lived at the mission, recollected in 1984 that with the arrival of Duguid and the missionaries at Ernabella a “new life came into us that has not happened from any other white person”.⁸⁸

Communication was obviously enhanced because all mission staff were required to learn the local language. Staff were invited to ceremonies and gladly attended. They visited the camp where local people stayed when visiting the mission on a daily basis. Nursing Sister during 1949, Ruth Dawkins, was struck by the friendliness of the people and enjoyed warm relationships particularly with the young girls and the children who would come home with her from the camp. She wrote often of children visiting her house and of “tucking” them up for the night. During men’s ceremonies it was normal for women and children to camp in front of her house.⁸⁹

The friendly and close relationships between local people and mission staff were reported on by visitors to the mission.⁹⁰ A visitor in 1943, Deaconess Harris, expressed surprise that people were at the mission even though the season was good and there was an abundance of bush food.⁹¹ Numbers in contact with the mission steadily increased from 190 people on Christmas Day in the first year (1937) to an estimate of between 500 and 1000 people using the mission during 1944.

Staff at Ernabella tended to remain for long periods particularly from the 1940s giving stability to the mission. Ron Trudinger was at Ernabella from 1940 to 1957, Bill Edwards from 1958 to 1972, John Bennett spent 25 years overseeing the sheep enterprise, and Deaconess Winifred Hilliard coordinated the Ernabella Craft centre (now Ernabella Arts) from 1954 to 1974 and continued to work for Ernabella Arts until 1986. There is little doubt that long-term commitments by missionaries were important to people living on missions.⁹² Hilliard told me in 2007 that she wished to be buried at Ernabella near the people she continued to regard as friends and family,⁹³ and indeed in March 2012 her burial service was held in the Ernabella Uniting Church. When Dr Duguid died in Adelaide in 1986, he was buried in the Ernabella Cemetery following a request made in 1972 by Ernabella residents. The people referred to him as *tjilpi*, a respectful term for old man and said that he was “one of us”.⁹⁴ Former Superintendent Edwards was invited back to Ernabella in 1975, by then a self-managing community, as Minister of the Pitjantjatjara Parish. The respectful relationship between Edwards and Ernabella people can be seen in his approach to evangelising—he said it was not completely one-sided and he “learnt more about the Old Testament through [his] contact with Pitjantjatjara people than perhaps [he] learnt in theological college”.⁹⁵ He recently described his relationship with senior Law man Andy Tjilari, who he met in the 1950s, as a “close colleague and lifelong friend”. Edwards wrote that they taught “each other the deeper aspects of our respective cultures”.⁹⁶ Missionaries such as Edwards were interested in and valued traditional cultures, rather than regarding them as an impediment to missionising. Among the mourners at Edwards’ funeral in the Pilgrim Uniting Church in Adelaide on August 3, 2015 were many Pitjantjatjara people. The Ernabella Choir had travelled 1500 kilometres from Ernabella to honour Edwards by singing at the service. The older members of the choir first met Edwards when they came to Adelaide to sing for Queen Elizabeth during her Australian tour in 1954, and in this sense were bringing to a close their long association and connection with Edwards. The emotional outpouring at the funeral service was testament to the high regard in which he was held by Ernabella people. Their deep affection for him and sadness at the loss of a man they regarded as a dear friend was unmistakable.

From early on missionaries at Ernabella had encouraged and facilitated the ongoing relationship of people with their traditional country. They recognised that the mission was situated on Aboriginal land, and as Superintendent Love pointed out in 1942, the mission was “occupying part of their country” even though he believed it was “for the benefit of all”.⁹⁷

This acknowledgement of prior ownership, unusual for its time and not widespread for at least another three decades, must have shaped the relationships at Ernabella in multiple and particular ways. Given the patterns of migration that people from the Musgrave Ranges were following during the early decades of the twentieth century, there is the likelihood that people would not have been able to stay on their traditional land if the mission had not been established. Later during the campaign leading to the *Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act 1981*, Anangu looked to the church to act as advocates and missionaries played integral roles in the campaign.⁹⁸

“It came to pass”⁹⁹

There is no doubt that a firm belief in the missionary endeavour underpinned mission policy. It was hoped from the outset that “a centre of Christian fellowship and service” could be established alongside the maintenance of traditional life.¹⁰⁰ In 1942 Superintendent Love appeared quite relaxed that particularly during the first decade people seemed to show no interest in Christianity even though they attended church services. He expected that change would be generational.¹⁰¹ There were occasional reports of what were perceived to be evidence of progress in evangelising, giving missionaries a glimmer of hope. In May 1943 Love reported on a burial ceremony where part of a spear was placed upright in the ground which he was told was to allow the spirit of the deceased to “Go Jesus”. Those at the burial agreed to pray with Love, who hoped that they were coming to a Christian understanding of death.¹⁰² Visiting Anthropologist Rev. G. Werner, visiting Ernabella in 1949, was full of praise for the mission work at Ernabella and expressed similar sentiments. He observed that he found a community in preparation for transition where the new will “eventually entirely displace the old”.¹⁰³

A pivotal moment came in January 1951 when thirty four young people attended a Summer Bible School for which they had saved the money over the previous months. However, not all Pitjantjatjara people were as keen and there was some tension and opposition. As Trudinger wrote, “some of the young Christians have come in for quite a bit of mild persecution—trying to burn their Gospels etc—but this is only to be expected. I expect even more opposition after they are baptised”.¹⁰⁴ Trudinger did not give any explanation for such opposition, but neither did he express surprise. In 1952 he reported, “the first fruits of the 15 years of the mission” had been realised as twenty one young people were ready for Baptism. On November 9, 1952 at 4.30 p.m. they were baptised in front of 400 people in the newly completed and dedicated Church, accompanied by hymns sung in Pitjantjatjara. “It came to pass on this day that Christianity had caught up with people who had remained unchanged for those 20 centuries”, the *Ernabella Newsletter* reported.¹⁰⁵

Wally Dunn has said “[w]e’re interested in God’s story. God, and my history underneath, both—*kutjara*”,¹⁰⁶ suggesting that people were engaged in innovative intellectual processes to understand the Christian story within a traditional framework.¹⁰⁷ However, anthropologist Aram Yengoyan has proposed that being Christian *and* traditional is an impossibility for Pitjantjatjara people, partly because they perceive their universe as unchanging.¹⁰⁸ Claims to Christianity by people who adhere strongly to traditional life have been regarded with a degree of scepticism about the authenticity of their claims.¹⁰⁹ This unsettles the notion of fixed and bounded cultural identities. Stuart Hall argued that such people are believed to “float ambiguously in some unstable, dangerous, hybrid zone of indeterminacy in-between”.¹¹⁰

Such scepticism about the ability of Christianity and traditional Law to coexist is still evident as a report in *The Australian* newspaper in January 2015 demonstrates. It tells of a proposal by local Aboriginal people to erect a 20 metre high LED-lit cross on top of Hats Hill about 230 kilometres west of Alice Springs, as a potent symbol of Christianity for people in the region. The site is surrounded by a number of spiritually important Dreamings. Even though this proposal was supported by community members, traditional owners and the Central Land Council, the article notes that the project could “prove controversial” because of its proximity to sacred sites.¹¹¹ This implies that there can be no rapport between Christianity and Aboriginal spirituality and discounts Christianity itself as a legitimate expression of Aboriginality.

“Still we got Anangu way”¹¹²

Statements by Ernabella people, nonetheless, particularly older people, contest the Christian or “traditional” binary, and regard Christianity as one important element among many which make up their whole repertoire of religious experience and identity. Christianity did not subsume traditional beliefs.¹¹³ At the same time as Pitjantjatjara men were giving the address at church services at Ernabella and holding services while away from the mission in the early 1950s, there was evidence of enhanced ritual activity in the area.¹¹⁴ Edwards has noted that as Ernabella gradually became home, at least in the sense of a place where services and goods could be accessed, people still regarded totemic sites as home in a traditional sense, and visited them whenever possible.¹¹⁵ Ernabella people find curious the proposition that missionaries destroyed their spirituality. Such a claim fails to explain the phenomenon whereby those generations who have grown up without missionary influence, and since the missions were handed over to Aboriginal councils in the 1970s, are often the ones who are not interested in traditional ways.

At Ernabella, and on many other former missions, elders of the church are also senior traditional custodians who continue to engage in a vibrant and dynamic traditional life. Christian people at Ernabella are not marginal to their community, but rather they are central figures and leaders in both Christianity and the Law. They have forged contemporary identities through a dialogue between Christian faith and the *Tjukurpa*,¹¹⁶ reworking and redefining Christianity in a manner that suggests an expanding rather than shrinking world view. This is clearly evident in the Ernabella Choir that formed an integral feature of mission life from the outset and has continued throughout the post-mission period. The story of the choir (*Ankula Watjarira*) was televised in 2004 and opens with the choir singing a Christian hymn in Pitjantjatjara (*Ilkaritjanyaya*—the Lord of Heaven Confess) as the camera pans across the country surrounding Ernabella. The narrator, Ernabella elder Gordon Ingkatji, draws a direct connection between the land and the singing, as if the choir is “singing the country” as Pitjantjatjara people have always done—the genre may be different but the purpose of expressing relationship to country remains. Long time choir member and church elder Andy Tjilari is a senior Lawman, custodian and songman, and traditional healer (*Ngangkari*) respected by both Anangu and western medical practitioners for his healing powers, and as mentioned earlier a friend and colleague of former Superintendent Bill Edwards. Many other choir members are also important Law people.

Conclusion

Duguid’s vision was interpreted differently by the Ernabella superintendents who followed, but his central aim that involvement with the mission would be voluntary continued. Despite the overarching goal of evangelising, Ernabella’s approach appeared to be in some ways the antithesis of what was widely regarded as essential to its achievement. There was no overt

policy to foster a desire for Western-style clothing and housing, rationing was not used as a means of developing dependence on the mission, local languages were encouraged rather than discouraged, and all mission staff were expected to learn the local language. The spatial layout of the mission was not arranged to segregate Aboriginal people from mission staff. Neither were children separated from their families, but instead the family unit was encouraged. From the earliest days there was a strong emphasis placed on the maintenance of traditional life. Superintendent Love believed from the outset that nomadic, tribal people could be Christians.¹¹⁷

Once the mission era ended the interest in Christianity did not diminish at Ernabella but continued to grow and develop innovative forms. The Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship (AEF) evolved during the late 1960s with national conventions held throughout the Pitjantjatjara Lands, including at Ernabella in 1982 where local evangelists took leading roles.¹¹⁸ That Christianity and the mission times are regarded as intrinsically important is further demonstrated by the recent renovation and re-dedication of the Ernabella Mission Church, which was instigated and driven by the community itself.¹¹⁹

Ernabella remains a powerful place of memory, home and country and is important to contemporary Anangu identity. This expression of identity can be seen in many areas including the production of art and craft that started in 1948, and which continues successfully today. Women say that the direction of the art and craft business was determined by them, particularly in relation to the type of crafts and the distinctive designs for which Ernabella has become well known. Anangu recall mission times favourably and express gratitude towards missionaries.¹²⁰ Ernabella elder Kawaki Thompson noted in 2011 that by the end of the mission era people had developed the skills to engage with the wider economy and society. He said, “[w]e had good living. We were strong people, smart people, standing on our own feet.”¹²¹ Elsewhere Aboriginal leaders have publicly stated that their communities were in fact functioning much better during the mission era and have requested that churches become involved again.¹²² Such sentiments have been dismissed as nostalgic reflection and as people not recognising their own subjugation, partly because it does not fit the orthodox discourse.

As a case study the Ernabella story offers new and nuanced insights into the history of contact between missions and Aboriginal people. It unsettles the orthodoxy that the introduction of Christianity irrevocably destroyed Anangu beliefs and resulted in acculturation. It demonstrates that Christianity has an important place in the history of Anangu, and adherence to Christian faith is an agentic response that fomented a fusion of beliefs to form distinct identities.

Notes

¹ I am deeply grateful to the late Rev. Dr William H. (Bill) Edwards, former Superintendent of Ernabella Mission, for his generosity in sharing his memories and reflections of his life’s work. He was the initial inspiration for this research. Thanks to the Uniting Church Assembly Archivist for permission to access the Presbyterian Church archives held in the Mitchell Library. Thanks also to the helpful comments of the two anonymous referees. And finally thanks to the people of Ernabella, whose story this is.

² David Horton, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander History, Society and Culture* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1994), 1301.

³ Horton, *Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia*, 706; Sarah Maddison, *Beyond White Guilt: The Real Challenge for Black-White Relations in Australia*, (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2011), 52-53; Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, "The Importance of History", *National Report*, Vol. 1. 1.4.3 (Canberra: AGPS, 1991). See also, Anne Pattel-Gray, *The Great White Flood: Racism in Australia* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998); Zohl de Ishtar, *Holding Yawalyu: White Culture and Black Women's Law* (North Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 2005); Phyl and Noel Wallace, *Killing me Softly* (West Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1977).

⁴ Julie Dowling 2009, Arts Gallery of Victoria, *Goodbye White Fella Religion*; F.X. Gsell, *The Bishop with 150 Wives: Fifty Years as a Missionary* (London: Angus & Robertson, 1955); C.W.M. Hart and A.R. Pilling, *The Tiwi of North Australia* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1979).

⁵ William H. Edwards, "The Gospel and Aboriginal Culture," *Interchange*, 24 (1978), 195. William H. (Bill) Edwards has published under William H. Edwards and Bill Edwards. For consistency and clarity I have used William H. Edwards.

⁶ See Francesca Merlan, "Explorations towards Intercultural Accounts of Socio-Cultural Reproduction and Change," *Oceania*, 75.3 (2005) 167-182.

⁷ Peter Latz, *Blind Moses: Aranda Man of High Degree and Christian Evangelist* (Alice Springs: IAD, 2014).; William H. Edwards, *Mission in the Mulgraves: Ernabella Mission 1937-73, A Place of Relationship*, (Black Forest, SA: Uniting Church Historical Society SA, 2012); Patricia Grimshaw and Andrew May, eds. *Missionaries, Indigenous peoples and Cultural Exchange* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010); Robert Kenny, *The Lamb Enters the Dreaming: Nathanael Pepper and the Ruptured World* (Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2007); Peggy Brock, ed., *Indigenous Peoples and Religious Change* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Tony Swain and Debra Bird Rose, eds., *Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions* (Bedford Park, SA: The Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1988).

⁸ Anangu is a Pitjantjatjara word meaning "person" and is a self-referential term to identify speakers of the Western Desert language bloc.

⁹ G. Taylor, "The Frontiers of Settlement in Australia," *The Geographical Review*, XVI.1 (January 1926), 2, 25.

¹⁰ Hedley H. Finlayson, *The Red Centre: Man and Beast in the Heart of Australia* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1936), 66.

¹¹ Ernestine Hill, "Dingo-Farming in the 'Desert': New Australian Industry: Breeding Wild Dog for his Scalp", *The Advertiser* 28 March 1935, 10.

¹² Finlayson, *The Red Centre*, 143.

¹³ Ronald, M. & Catherine H. Berndt, *From Black to White in South Australia* (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1951), 173.

¹⁴ Diana Young, "Dingo Scalping and the Frontier Economy in the North-west of South Australia" in *Indigenous Participation in Australian Economies*, ed. Ian Keen (2010), 93, http://epress.anu.edu.au/indig_participation/pdf/whole.pdf , accessed 9 June 2011.

¹⁵ Cited in Christobel Mattingley & Ken Hampton, eds., *Survival in our Own Land*, (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 1988), 8.

¹⁶ Charles Duguid, *No Dying Race* (Adelaide: Rigby Ltd., 1963), 29, 19. See also Rani Kerin's biography of Charles Duguid for details of his activism and campaigning for Aboriginal people. Rani Kerin, *Doctor Do-Good: Charles Duguid and Aboriginal Advancement, 1930s-1970s* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2011).

¹⁷ Charles Duguid, "Life in the Musgraves," *The Advertiser*, 28 July 1936, 20.

¹⁸ J.R.B. Love, *Report on Ernabella Mission* (Melbourne: Brown, Prior, Anderson, 1937), 10-11.

¹⁹ Cited in Ute Eickelkamp, *Don't Ask for Stories: The Women from Ernabella and Their Art* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1999), 1.

²⁰ A. P. Elkin, "Reaction and Interaction: A Food Gathering People and European Settlement in Australia," *American Anthropologist* 53.2 (1951), 164.

²¹ Finlayson, *The Red Centre*, 137-39.

²² Young, "Dingo Scalping."

²³ See E. J.B. Foxcroft, *Australian Native Policy: Its History, Especially in Victoria*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press & Oxford University Press, 1941), 157. Even though Aboriginal people were not counted in the Census until after 1967, they were still recorded by authorities, using the terms "full blood" and "half-caste". At the time it was considered important to distinguish Aboriginal people by descent as it was believed that their biology determined their needs and ultimately their futures. Today these terms are considered to be pejorative descriptors and are not used.

²⁴ Duguid, *No Dying Race*, 48, 175.

²⁵ J.R.B. Love, "Ernabella, a Mission Station," *Ernabella Newsletter*, May 1943, 1.

²⁶ Love, *Report on Ernabella Mission*, 10-11.

²⁷ Charles Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1972), 115.

²⁸ Duguid to Hudd, 14 August 1936, Papers of Charles Duguid, MS 5068, Series 10, Subseries 1, NLA.

²⁹ Winifred Hilliard, 12 May, 2007, Pers. Comm.

³⁰ H. L. Taylor, *Statement of Policy and Principles* (Presbyterian Church of Australia [hereafter PCA], 1938)1, 3, Mitchell Library [hereafter ML] MSS 1893, Add-on 1173, Box 2502.

³¹ W. E. H. Stanner, *White Man got no Dreaming: Essays 1938-1973* (Canberra: ANU Press, 1979), 5.

³² See Charles P. Mountford, *Ayers Rock: Its People, their Beliefs and their Art* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1965); T. G. H. Strehlow, *Songs of Central Australia* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1971); Peter Sutton, *Country: Aboriginal Boundaries and Land Ownership in Australia*, Aboriginal History Monograph 3 (Canberra: Aboriginal History Inc. 2005); Norman. B. Tindale, "The Pitjandjara" in *Hunters and Gatherers Today*, ed. M.G. Bicchieri (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 1972), 217-65; Annette Hamilton, "Descended from Father, Belonging to Country: Rights to Land in the Australian Western Desert" in *Politics and History in Band Societies*, eds E. Leacock & R. Lee (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 94-8; Scott Cane, *Pila Nguru: The Spinifex People* (Fremantle, WA: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2002).

³³ Tindale, "The Pitjandjara," 228.

³⁴ See Peter Veth, "Cycles of Aridity and Human Mobility" in *Desert Peoples: Archaeological Perspectives*, eds P. Veth, M. Smith & P. Hiscock (Carlton, Vic.: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 100-15.

³⁵ Cited in Eickelkamp, *Don't Ask for Stories*, 1.

³⁶ Jeremy Long, "Leaving the Desert: Actors and Sufferers in the Aboriginal Exodus from the Western Desert," *Aboriginal History* 13.1 (1989), 34, 9.

³⁷ Winifred Hilliard, *The People in Between: The Pitjantjatjara People of Ernabella* (Adelaide: Rigby, Seal Books, 1968), 97.

³⁸ Cited in Eickelkamp, *Don't Ask for Stories*, 9. Ernabella was not the only place that was developed in this cooperative manner. For example, over 70 years earlier in the 1860s, on the Yarra River in Victoria, Aboriginal people settled at a traditional camping site called

Coranderrk intending to develop the land and become farmers. Subsequently the Government gazetted the area as a reserve and by the mid 1870s it was prospering and self-sufficient. See Richard Broome, *Aboriginal Australians* (North Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), 72.

³⁹ Wally Dunn, cited in Eickelkamp, *Don't Ask for Stories*, 18.

⁴⁰ Cited in Mattingley & Hampton, *Survival in our Own Land*, 255. Nganyintja's account was translated from Pitjantjatjara by Nancy Sheppard in 1972.

⁴¹ Cited in Eickelkamp, *Don't Ask for Stories*, 17.

⁴² *Ernabella Newsletter*, May 1942, 4.

⁴³ *Ernabella Newsletter*, December 1944.

⁴⁴ Charles Duguid, *Ernabella Revisited* (Melbourne: Australian Presbyterian Board of Missions, 1946), 11.

⁴⁵ *Ernabella Newsletter*, September 1953, 2

⁴⁶ Hilliard, *The People in Between*, 96.

⁴⁷ Ruth Dawkins, *Ernabella Letters: Extracts of Letters Written from "Ernabella" in the Musgrave Ranges 1949-1950* (Uniting Church of Australia, 1994), 6.

⁴⁸ J.R.B. Love, *Ernabella Mission: Report for Year Ending 30/6/1942*, 2. PCA, ML MSS 1893, Add-on 1173, Box 2502.

⁴⁹ Walter MacDougall, *Ernabella Mission Annual Report to June 30th 1945*, 10. PCA, ML MSS 1893, Add-on 1173, Box 2502.

⁵⁰ *Ernabella Newsletter*, May 1943, 1.

⁵¹ *Ernabella Newsletters*, October 1946, 1, 5 and December 1949, 5.

⁵² William H. Edwards, "Patterns of Aboriginal Residence in the North-west of South Australia", *Journal of the Anthropological Society of South Australia*, 30. 1 (1992), 10.

⁵³ J.R.B. Love, "Is it Satisfactory?" *Ernabella Newsletter*, April 1945, 1.

⁵⁴ *Ernabella Newsletter*, December 1948, 2.

⁵⁵ *Ernabella Newsletter*, April 1945, 4.

⁵⁶ *Ernabella Newsletter*, April 1947, 1.

⁵⁷ *Ernabella Newsletter*, April 1948, 4.

⁵⁸ Ian Duckham, "Visionary, Vassal or Vandal? Rod Schenk-Missionary: A Case Study in Western Desert Missions," *Limina*, 6 (2000), 49.

⁵⁹ Trudinger's Annual Report on the school in W. B MacDougall, *Report on Ernabella to 30/6/1940*, 2. PCA, ML MSS 1893, Add-on 1173, Box 2502.

⁶⁰ Nora Rupert, cited in Eickelkamp *Don't Ask for Stories*, 11.

⁶¹ R.M.Trudinger, *Report on the Ernabella Mission School*, June 1945, 2, 1. PCA, ML MSS 1893, Add-on 1173, Box 2502.

⁶² J.R.B. Love, *Ernabella Newsletter*, December 1948, 2.

⁶³ J.R.B. Love, *The Policy of Ernabella, 1944*. PCA, ML MSS 1893, Add-on 1173, Box 2502.

⁶⁴ *Ernabella Newsletter*, April 1947, 3; *Ernabella Newsletter*, November 1947.

⁶⁵ Trudinger's Annual Report on the school in W. B. MacDougall.

⁶⁶ *Ernabella Newsletter*, May 1943.

⁶⁷ J.R.B. Love, *Report for the period from March 1st 1941 to June 30th 1941*, 1. PCA, ML MSS 1893, Add-on 1173, Box 2502.

⁶⁸ J.R.B. Love, *Ernabella Mission: Report for Year Ending 30/6/1942*, 2. PCA, ML MSS 1893, Add-on 1173, Box 2502.

⁶⁹ R. M Trudinger, *Ernabella Newsletter*, December 1943, 3.

⁷⁰ *Ernabella Newsletter*, October 1944.

⁷¹ R. M. Trudinger, "An Educational Experiment", *The Messenger*, 17 June, 1942.

⁷² *Ernabella Newsletter*, October 1944.

- ⁷³ No author or date, Papers of Charles Duguid. MS 5068, Series 10, Subseries 1, NLA.
- ⁷⁴ Wallace & Wallace, *Killing me Softly*, 32. Wallace and Wallace spent time at Ernabella and surrounding areas gathering material and photographs for their books *Killing me Softly* and *Children of the Desert* (West Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, Australia, 1977).
- ⁷⁵ *Ernabella Newsletter*, December 1950.
- ⁷⁶ *Ernabella Newsletter*, December 1952, 4.
- ⁷⁷ *Ernabella Newsletter*, December 1948, 4.
- ⁷⁸ Trudinger to Coombes, 15 November 1951. PCA, ML MSS 1893, Add-on 1173, Box 2503, Folder 6(i).
- ⁷⁹ *Ernabella Newsletter*, March 1952, 2.
- ⁸⁰ *Ernabella Newsletter*, December 1952.
- ⁸¹ R.M. Trudinger, *Ernabella Newsletter*, September 1952, 2 and December 1952, 2.
- ⁸² *Ernabella Newsletter*, March 1952, 1, 2.
- ⁸³ Andy Tjilari, 2 June, 2010, Pers. Comm.
- ⁸⁴ See also Helen Payne, "Residency and Ritual Rights" in *Problems and Solutions: Occasional Essays in Musicology Presented to Alice M. Moyle*, eds J.C. Kassler & J. Stubington (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1984), 11. This study showed the ways in which sites are claimed by Ernabella women through musical performance rather than through the traditional channels.
- ⁸⁵ William H. Edwards, 30 January, 2012, Pers. Comm.
- ⁸⁶ William H. Edwards, *Mission in the Mulgraves*.
- ⁸⁷ David Trigger, *Whitefella Comin'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
- ⁸⁸ Nganyintja Ilyatjari, "Letter to Nancy Shepherd, March 1984" in *Survival in our Own Land*, eds Mattingley & Hampton, 255.
- ⁸⁹ Dawkins, *Ernabella Letters*, 11, 14-15.
- ⁹⁰ J.B. Cleland, "Professor J B Cleland's report," *Ernabella after Eight Years* (Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, 1946), 4.
- ⁹¹ Deaconess Harris, "A Visitors' Impression of Mission Work at Ernabella", *Ernabella Newsletter*, May 1943, 5-6.
- ⁹² This was evident at Hermannsburg Mission further to the north in Western Arrernte country where there was an outpouring of grief at the death of missionary Carl Strehlow who had been at the mission for twenty eight years. He was called their *ingkata*, "the great rockplate" that anchored the mission site. See T. G. H. Strehlow, *Journey to Horseshoe Bend* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1969), 22.
- ⁹³ Winifred Hilliard, 11 May, 2007, Pers. Comm.
- ⁹⁴ William H. Edwards, "Duguid, Charles (1884-1986)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (National Centre of Biography, Australian National University). <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/duguid-charles-12440>, accessed 30 May 2015.
- ⁹⁵ "Ernabella: No Ordinary Mission", *Compass*, Television Programme, ABC Television, Sydney, 22 April, 2011.
- ⁹⁶ William H. Edwards, "A Personal Journey with Anangu History" in *Ngapartji Ngapartji: In turn in turn: Ego-histoire, Europe and Indigenous Australia*, eds Vanessa Castejon, Anna Cole, Oliver Haag & Karen Hughes (Canberra: ANU Press, 2014), 43.
- ⁹⁷ J.R.B. Love, Ernabella Mission: Report for Year Ending 30/6/1942, 2.
- ⁹⁸ William H. Edwards, "Pitjantjatjara Land Rights" in *Aborigines, Land and Land Rights*, eds N. Peterson & M. Langton (Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1983), 295.
- ⁹⁹ *Ernabella Newsletter*, December 1952.
- ¹⁰⁰ J.R.B. Love, *Report on Ernabella Mission*, 1937, 3.

¹⁰¹ *Ernabella Newsletter*, May 1942, 3; J.R.B. Love, *Ernabella Mission: Annual Report to June 30th, 1945*, 3. PCA, ML MSS 1893, Add-on 1173, Box 2502.

¹⁰² J.R.B. Love, *Ernabella Newsletter*, May 1943, 3.

¹⁰³ G. Werner, *Ernabella Newsletter*, June 1949, 3.

¹⁰⁴ Trudinger to Coombes, 17 January 1951. PCA, ML MSS 1893, Add-on 1173, Box 2503, Folder 6(i).

¹⁰⁵ *Ernabella Newsletter*, December 1952.

¹⁰⁶ Wally Dunn, cited in Eickelkamp, *Don't Ask for Stories*, 30. *Kutjara* is a Pitjantjatjara word meaning two or a pair, indicating that the Dreaming and Christianity are important. Cliff Goddard, *Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara to English Dictionary* (Alice Springs: Institute for Aboriginal Development, 1992) 49.

¹⁰⁷ See Peggy Brock, "Setting the Record Straight: New Christians and Mission Christianity" in ed. P. Brock, *Indigenous Peoples and Religious Change* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 125. Moses Tjalkabota was an Arrernte evangelist who travelled throughout Arrernte country in the early decades of the twentieth century taking the Christian Gospel to his people. In her reading of his life story Brock found that changes in religious beliefs and practices were occurring from processes "within indigenous societies, rather than an imposition from outside".

¹⁰⁸ Aram A. Yengoyan, "Religion, Morality, and Prophetic Traditions: Conversion among Pitjantjatjara of Central Australia" in R. W. Hefner, ed., *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and anthropological perspectives on a great transformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 233-258.

¹⁰⁹ J. Robbins, "Continuity Thinking and the Problem of Christian Culture: Belief, Time and the Anthropology of Christianity", *Current Anthropology*, 48.1 (February 2007), 5-38.

¹¹⁰ Stuart Hall, "The Spectacle of the Other," in Stuart Hall, Jessica Evans and Sean Nixon, eds, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage, 2003), 236.

¹¹¹ Amos Aikman, "No bluff, Duncan wants a light to lead a second coming", *The Australian*, 20 January, 2014, 3.

¹¹² Wally Dunn, cited in Eickelkamp, *Don't Ask for Stories*, 30.

¹¹³ See Robert Kenny, *The Lamb Enters the Dreaming*, 336. As Kenny has demonstrated in his account of evangelist Nathanael Pepper in nineteenth-century Victoria, the adoption of Christianity "was not necessarily a capitulation to Europeaness". There is no indication that Pepper, after his conversion, saw himself as less Aboriginal or no longer part of his Aboriginal community.

¹¹⁴ William H. Edwards, *Annual Report 1966*. PCA ML MSS 1893, Add-on 1173, Box 2506.

¹¹⁵ William H. Edwards, 17 January, 2012, Pers. Comm.

¹¹⁶ A Pitjantjatjara word for the Dreaming.

¹¹⁷ J.R.B. Love, *The Policy of Ernabella 1944*. PCA, ML MSS 1893, Add-on 1173, Box 2503.

¹¹⁸ Max Hart, *A Story of Fire, Continued: Aboriginal Christianity*, (Coromandel, SA: New Creation Publications, 1997).

¹¹⁹ "Ernabella: No Ordinary Mission", 2011; J. Nicholls, Paper Tracker Edition No 2 (Adelaide: Uniting Care Wesley, August 2007).

www.papertracker.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=74&Itemid=50, accessed 24 June 2011.

¹²⁰ See Edwards, *Mission in the Mulgraves*, 51.

¹²¹ Kawaki Thompson, cited in "Dreams and Dust", *The Advertiser*, 12 November, 2011. www.adelaidenow.com.au/ipad/dreams-and-dust/story-fn3o6wog-1226191494932, accessed 14 December, 2011.

¹²² Lowitja O'Donoghue, in J. Walker, "Challenges to Churches and Next Generation. It's Up to You: O'Donoghue", *The Australian*, 28 May, 2008, 8.

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