John Flynn and Charles Duguid: Contested Narratives of the Inland.

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Contents

Summary

"Central Australia was (and is) both a mythical and contested landscape." So begins David Trudinger's chapter in the book, *Passionate Histories: Myth, Memory and Indigenous Australia*. This thesis delves into that contested landscape with an examination of the contested history of the Rev. John Flynn (1880-1951). Flynn is memorialised in monuments across this country for his crucial role in the establishment of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the Australian Inland Mission (now Frontier Services) and a host of other achievements. His numerous biographies outline his many virtues and services to the Inland and he is often referred to as Flynn of the Inland. However, there are others who remember him as someone who excluded Aboriginal people from the services he created and who made disparaging comments about them. This multifaceted story and how it is told and remembered is explored at length in this research.

This thesis also explores the story of Dr. Charles Duguid (1884-1986). Duguid was a significant leader in the Presbyterian church at the same time as Flynn. He is credited with the founding of the Ernabella Mission and he contested Flynn's attitudes and actions towards Aboriginal people. His story provides an illuminating comparison but his attitudes and actions are also multilayered and complex.

As the current minister of the Alice Springs Uniting Church that owns and gathers in the John Flynn Memorial Church building, I feel a great connection to Flynn and a responsibility to his great legacy. However, as someone who has lived in Central Australia for almost 14 years, walking alongside and learning from First Nations people, I am filled with sorrow when I read some of the remarks made by Flynn about them and realise the impact his arrival, as well as my ongoing presence here, has on their lives.

This thesis wrestles with how to hold these multifaceted stories together. It asks, is there a way to honour the history of people like Flynn, who seemed to live with the best of intentions, without dishonouring First Nations people? Can we hear and include the stories of Aboriginal people without disrespecting people like Flynn? Can these stories be told together? I reflect on these questions theologically by drawing on the contested narratives of the Bible. Acknowledging the stories that have been used to justify colonisation and

violence against First Nations people I also discuss stories that contest these actions, stories that hold before us a different understanding of land, land ownership and how to respond to people already living in it.

This research was inspired by The Uluru Statement of the Heart that asks for truth telling about our nation's history. The Christian faith of which I am a part claims that it will set us free.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed: *Emily Hayes*

Date: 29/10/2022

Acknowledgements

I would like to begin by acknowledging the First Nation's authors of The Uluru Statement of the Heart. I think this statement is one of the most gracious, generous and beautifully constructed documents I have read. This Statement and its offer to "walk together in a movement of the Australian people for a better future" was a major inspiration to do this work. I would also like to thank all the First Nations people who have been willing to walk together with me, to share their stories and struggles and teach me about their language and culture. I am particularly thankful to the Cavanagh mob for inviting me into their family.

I also acknowledge the hard work and legacy of the Rev. John Flynn and Dr. Charles Duguid, who are the focus of this thesis. I recognise that much of this work concentrates on their shortcomings and silences and the ways their stories have silenced others. The time has come for this. None the less I am inspired by their determination and faith. I am honoured to be the minster of the Alice Springs Uniting Church and to carry on the work of those who have gone before me, albeit, asking questions about what this looks like now. I am so grateful to the current members of the church, in particular the church council, who have supported this work, and who inspire me in their own work for justice in our town. I am also grateful to the Uniting Church of Australia and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. Their commitment to walking together over a forty year journey, that has not always been easy, is an encouragement to me.

There are many people who have lent me and pointed me to resources I would not have otherwise had – the Uniting Church History Centre, John Lamont, David and Margaret Hewitt and Judith McKay. Some of these people have questioned and critiqued this work. This is not always an easy thing to do or hear, but I believe this work is stronger for it.

I am eternally grateful to my supervisors Tanya Wittwer and Lee Levett-Olson. I could not have done this without thier wisdom. And to my conversation partners in this work, in particular Celia Kemp, Keith Castle, Kieran Finnane and Lisa Stefanoff.

When one engages in a large research project one realises how much those closest to you also have to sacrifice in order to enable you to do it. So despite the cliché my deepest thanks goes to my family – to my mum and sister for all the help, my children and to my husband Martin, my greatest support and the love of my life.

Introduction

In May 2017, Australia was invited by its First Nations peoples "to walk with them in a movement of the Australian people for a better future."[1] This invitation was given through a statement we now know as "The Uluru Statement from the Heart."

A core component of the statement is captured in the Yolŋu word and concept Makaratta,

> Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.
>
> We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.[2]

In a podcast series titled the Makaratta Way, Yolŋu man Rev. Dr. Djiniyini Gondarra OAM, discusses the Makaratta peace making process with author Richard Trudgen. They say, "Often Balanda [non Aboriginal people] think Aboriginal law is all about "payback" or revenge, but these are just English language terms applied to final acts, such as spearing, and do not take into account the many steps that have led up to it."[3] These steps include a process of investigation of the truth of what happened and the perpetrator of violence is required to face the family of the person they have hurt or even killed. To come together and be forgiven does require something of the perpetrator but

> these steps in Yolŋu law are all to do with achieving mägaya, the big peace, that should be created . . . the consequences for one's actions, the original Australian law says, is that you have to face the Makarrata peace-making process and ceremony, which is not payback, but bäyarra law. A law where you are forgiven and forgotten, reconciled in front of witnesses. Justice is not only done but seen by all to be done.[4]

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[1] "Uluru Statement from the Heart," *Final Report of the Referendum Council, 2017,* Referendum_Council_Final_Report.pdf (referendumcouncil.org.au).

[2] "Uluru Statement from the Heart," 2017.

[3] Djiniyini Gondarra, "The First Makaratta Way," interview by Richard Trudgen, *Djambatjmarram,* 101. The First Makarrata Way - Djambatjmarram.

[4] Gondarra, Interview.

The prompt dismissal of the statement's generous invitation and proposals, by the government of the time, was deeply troubling to me and to many others, who have longed to walk alongside Aboriginal people in a movement for a better future. And while I recognise that the statement does not have universal support from Aboriginal people, I know many who were deeply hurt and disillusioned by this rejection. Many of them have continued to advocate for the statement's proposals and in May this year, the newly elected government committed to progressing the statement's proposals, including enshrining a voice to parliament. Currently, there are discussions happening at a national level about a referendum on this issue.

None the less, since 2017 I have wondered if there was a way I could personally respond to the statement. In 2021, I read Elaine Enns and Ched Myers' book *Healing Haunted Histories*. They claim this book "tackles the oldest and deepest injustices on [the North American] continent. These violations inhabit every intersection of settler and indigenous worlds, past and present, and have generated wounds that are inextricably woven into the fabric of our personal and political lives."[5] I believe this is also true for Australia.

Their book outlines a process they call a "discipleship of decolonization." This process invites all "settlers" to research our familial and communal histories, the lands from which they came and the lands they inhabited and find out about how their inhabitation of this land impacted on the people already living there.

It is important to do this because our history has very real impacts today. These impacts play out daily in Aboriginal disadvantage and disempowerment. As a person of privilege amongst this I need to acknowledge that many benefits I have received have come at a great cost to Aboriginal people.

It is important to do this because in the telling of our nation's history we have privileged stories of white people, particularly white men. In doing this the stories of Aboriginal people have been silenced or they have been given minor or dependent roles in the narratives of our pioneers. Indigenous stories need to be told as well. We need to learn

[5] Elaine Enns and Ched Myers, *Healing Haunted Histories* (Eugene OR: Cascade Books, 2021), 25, Kindle.

about places from their point of view instead of the current practice of dating them from when white people discovered them or did something on them.

It is important to do this because the Uluru Statement has asked us to. It is a way of standing in solidarity with Aboriginal people who should not have to carry the burden of telling the difficult stories on their own. It is a way non-indigenous people can do our work and tell our stories, without colonising research spaces that Aboriginal people are in and telling stories that are theirs to tell. In a Background Briefing episode called, "The ghosts are not silent," Noongar writer Claire Coleman says,

> I think everyone should look into the history of their own family. Aboriginal people do it all the time, we look into our histories to try and find out what happened to us. And I don't think it's too much to expect that colonisers do the same thing, look into and make the effort to find out what's in their past.[6]

This thesis is my attempt to do this by researching one of my spiritual ancestors, the Rev John Flynn (1880-1951). I am the minister of the Alice Springs Uniting Church. This congregation owns and gathers in the John Flynn Memorial Church weekly for worship. This building was built in 1956 as a memorial to Flynn under the guidance of his successor Rev. Fred McKay. It is a well-known, heritage listed building in the centre of town and so many people simply refer to us as the Flynn Church. As the place I was called, formed and ordained for ministry, this church has shaped who I am. Its story, and the story of its namesake, have become part of my story and I feel a great commitment to its legacy.

This legacy is significant. Flynn was dedicated to making the outback a less lonely, safer and more habitable place for settlers of the inland. In many ways he achieved this mission, particularly for the crucial role he played in the founding of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS). He was also the founder of the Australian Inland Mission (A.I.M.), now Frontier Services, and served as its superintendent for almost 40 years. During that time the A.I.M. placed hospitals, hostels, nurses and "patrol padres" throughout remote Australia who offered health and pastoral care to isolated settlers. Flynn is often referred to as "Flynn of the Inland" and he is remembered for his role in "opening up" the country and supporting

[6] Sam Carmody, "The ghosts are not silent," Sept 19, 2021, in *Background Briefing,* Sydney: ABC Radio National, 6:30.

the pioneers of the inland. His contribution is considered so significant he is depicted on the Australian $20 note.

I have lived in Alice Springs for 14 years and I acknowledge it is only possible because of the work of people like Flynn in "opening up" this country. However, my relationships with First Nations peoples and support for the Uluru Statement of the Heart, have forced me to look more deeply into the impact this opening up had on Aboriginal people.

This thesis compares Flynn's story with Dr. Charles Duguid (1884-1986) with whom Flynn had an ongoing conflict. Duguid accused Flynn and the A.I.M of racism and of misappropriating funds that were meant for Aboriginal people. Dr. Duguid was an influential leader in the Presbyterian Church at a similar time to Flynn. He served as moderator of the South Australian Synod in 1935. At the same time that Flynn was involved in campaigning for and establishing hospitals and flying medical services for settlers in Central Australia, Duguid was campaigning for the rights of Aboriginal people and the establishment of a mission that would provide a buffer between the Pitjantjara people and the white settlers who were taking advantage of them. This was achieved in 1937 with the establishment of the Ernabella Mission. This mission was founded on the principle of freedom. Duguid said, "there was to be no compulsion nor imposition of our way of life on the Aborigines, nor deliberate interference with tribal custom."[7]

I recognise as do Enns and Myers, that "in speaking as a white person to a predominantly white audience I am yet again centring white people and the white voice."[8] I also recognise that this research is predominantly focused on the stories of white men. These are the stories that serve this research purpose but I believe this research also offers something of a critical examination of "the great man" theory of history and contributes to the ongoing conversation about the need for more diverse perspectives in our telling of history. My aim is to understand this history and continue to ask critical questions about the intended, as well as unintended, consequences of our ancestors' arrival, along with our own ongoing presence here, on First Nations people. Within this history there are stories of

[7] Charles Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,* (Adelaide: Rgby Limited, 1972), 115.

[8] Enns and Myers, *Healing Haunted Histories,* 47.

mistreatment, contempt or simply an unacceptable silence about Aboriginal people. There are also stories that inspire and sustain me in the ongoing work for justice in this place.

In Chapter 1, I examine Flynn's heritage and what influenced him. Drawing on Flynn's biographies, I ask where did his family come from and to? What structural forces were at play? What hardships and benefits did they face and how might this have shaped Flynn? I then look at Flynn's own life. Where did he grow up? What hardships did he endure? What privileges or advantages did he enjoy? How did he come to Central Australia and what did he achieve? I explore the role of Flynn's biographers in the building of a mythology around Flynn. I note how Aboriginal people and their experiences and perspectives are silenced by this. I attempt to counteract this by finding out about the Aboriginal people who were on the lands on which he lived and worked and how all this impacted on them. I explore his influence in the colonial project.

In his 1972 biography, *Doctor and the Aborigines* Duguid claims Flynn told him, "you are only wasting your time with damn, dirty niggers."[9] Since then, much has been written about what Flynn said or did not say about Aboriginal people and what he did or did not do and why. I delve into this contested debate at the end of the chapter. I examine Flynn's own comments about Aboriginal people which I take predominantly from the Inlander magazine that Flynn wrote, edited, and published from 1913 to 1927. His comments are varied and at times do show compassion and interest in Aboriginal people but at other times he demonstrates complete disregard for them. I explore the ways these are defended and justified by his successors.

In Chapter 2, I explore Duguid's story asking the same questions about what influenced him and what impact he had on Aboriginal people. As a contemporary of Flynn's he is an illuminating comparison. I explore the conflict they had, particularly around a bequest Duguid believed was misappropriated by Flynn and the A.I.M. To do this I examine Duguid's autobiographies as well as minutes and reports from the Assembly meetings of the 1930's that they both attended.

[9] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,* 100.

How do we hold these multifaceted stories together? This is a question that is being asked around the world as nations deal with their histories that include great discoveries and innovations but also slavery, genocide, apartheid and colonisation. In 2006, Brown University issued a report on its historic relationship to the slave trade. This report sought to answer the complex questions, "How do we reconcile those elements of our past that are gracious and honourable with those that provoke grief and horror? What responsibilities, if any rest upon us in the present as inheritors of this mixed legacy?"[10]

The purpose of this thesis it not to condemn nor absolve Flynn or Duguid but to answer these questions. For me this work is a profoundly theological task and Chapter 3 is a theological reflection on these questions. Acknowledging that the Bible has been used to justify colonisation and violence against First Nations people, in this chapter I explore some biblical texts that critique the history of the settlement of these lands. These stories contest these actions, these stories hold before us a different understanding of land, land ownership and how to respond to people already living in it.

The stories of Flynn, Duguid and their conflict are certainly not unknown but I believe my perspective at this time and in this place and my theological reflection on the story is distinctive. As a minister of a local congregation I hope this exploration can encourage my church community to think about why it is important that we do the work of wrestling with our history. As Enns and Myers say, "it is necessary for all Christians, who would follow a Jesus who was executed by a colonial state; reckon with the long and lamentable history of colonizing Christendom; and care about a future for the church as 'a House for all peoples.' "[11] I also hope that it encourages Christians across the country to do the same With a referendum on a voice to parliament coming I think this is timely.

[10] BA Allen et al. *Slavery and Justice: Report of the Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice* (Rhode island: 2006), https://slaveryandjustice.brown.edu/sites/default/files/reports/SlaveryAndJustice2006.pdf, 4.

[11] Enns and Myers, *Healing Haunted Histories,* 44.

Chapter 1

John Flynn

John Flynn was born in 1880 in Moligual, in rural Victoria. Max Griffiths in his 1993 biography, *The Silent Heart: Flynn of the Inland,* says this about the place: "twenty years earlier, the gold rush had brought a human tidal wave to places like Moliagul, but by the time John Flynn was born the rush was over and the tide had receded, leaving behind it a number of small settlements destined to become backwaters of civilisation."[12] W Scott McPheat's 1963 biography, *John Flynn Apostle to the Inland,* simply said, "it owed its existence to gold."[13] Moliagul is also the land of the Djadjawurrung clan of the Kulin nation, for them this land certainly does not owe its existence to gold. They say, "For us, Djandak (country) is more than just a landscape, it is more than what is visible to the eye; it is a living entity which holds the stories of creation and histories that cannot be erased. Our Martinga kuli [Ancestors] looked after this Country and it is for this reason, we are duty bound to look after it for the future generations."[14]

John was the third child to his parents Thomas and Rosetta Flynn. McPheat outlines their ancestry in much detail. Thomas, who was born in 1852, migrated to Australia as a young child with his widowed mother, Cecilia, and Cecilia's brothers whose engineering business had collapsed. They came from England where they had been living but they were originally from Ireland and Scotland. Cecilia was a Catholic but on arrival in Victoria, Thomas attended the Methodist Sunday school. As an adult he continued to worship in the Methodist church and became a lay preacher.[15]

Rosetta was born in Melbourne in 1853. Her parents Anthony and Rosetta Lester had migrated from Ireland the year before with her maternal grandparents, who had charted the family their own ship. The family settled in Sydney setting up an importing business but Anthony was drawn to the goldfields around Melbourne and so his wife went with him.

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[12] Max Griffiths, *The Silent Heart: Flynn of the Inland* (Kenthurst: Kangaroo Books, 1993), 3.

[13] W. Scott McPheat, *John Flynn Apostle to the Inland* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd: 1963), 25.

[14] "Giyakiki | Our story", Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, last modified 2021, https://djadjawurrung.com.au/giyakiki-our-story/.

[15] McPheat, *John Flynn Apostle to the Inland,* 23-26.

He did not prove successful as a goldminer but as an educated man he was approached by some settlers who asked him to start a school which he did. He remained a teacher for 25 years. Despite a Church of England background, they also became Methodists and so it was at the Dunolly Methodist Church that Thomas and Rosetta met in 1874 and were married two years later.[16]

McPheat only gives scant details as to the reasons for why John Flynn's ancestors migrated to Australia. He mentions that Cecilia's brother's business collapsed during the Crimean War and that Anthony had joined his in-laws on impulse.[17] Enns and Myers suggest four basic types of migrant - colonists, opportunists, distressed immigrants or forced relocation.[18] It seems that Thomas' family were either opportunists or distressed immigrants. "An opportunist's migration involves some degree of political and or economic mobility, privilege and agency"[19] whereas "distressed immigrants are pushed or pulled by forces beyond their control."[20] The collapse of Cecilia's brother's business may have led them to seek opportunities elsewhere or perhaps the consequences were so dire they felt the need to migrate to Australia for any chance at economic stability. Rosetta's family were most certainly opportunists. That they were able to charter their own ship to Australia and set up a business on arrival indicates they had ample financial means available. Enns and Myers suggest opportunists are characteristic of secondary and subsequent migrants under a colonization project. [21]

Flynn's ancestors were predominantly Irish. However, the family did not fit the "conventional representations of Irish emigrants in colonial Australia as predominantly rural, poorly skilled and impoverished"[22] The Irish and Scots were the two largest and culturally most influential European minorities in Australia. "Many among them embodied

[16] McPheat, *John Flynn Apostle to the Inland,* 23-26.

[17] McPheat, *John Flynn Apostle to the Inland,* 23-24.

[18] Enns and Myers, *Healing Haunted Histories,* 103.

[19] Enns and Myers, *Healing Haunted Histories,* 103.

[20] Enns and Myers, *Healing Haunted Histories,* 103.

[21] Enns and Myers, *Healing Haunted Histories,* 104.

[22] Lindsay J Proudfoot and Dianne P Hall, *Imperial Space: Placing the Irish and Scots in colonial Australia*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press: 2011), 2, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt155jfkg.7.

a culturally complex and ambiguous role in the Australian colonies as agents either of British imperialism or colonial nationalism and sometimes both."[23]

John Flynn's mother, Rosetta died in 1883, when he was just two years old, following the birth of her 4th child who also passed away. After her death John and his elder brother and sister went to live with their maternal grandparents and aunts and uncle. However, after 4 years they returned to their father in Victoria. He attended school and spent the rest of his childhood and teens in Victoria. He finished school in 1898. The family did not have the money for him to go to University so he became a junior teacher. At this time his brother died of tuberculosis.

In 1903 John Flynn began training to become a Presbyterian minister. While his parents had met and got married in a Methodist church in 1891, his father was transferred to the Sunshine State School and the nearest church was Footscray Presbyterian Church and so the family joined this church. The varied denominational backgrounds of John Flynn's parents, and openness within both families to joining churches of different denominations, demonstrated an ecumenical spirit. It seems this was passed on to their son. As a Presbyterian minister he was always committed to working with and alongside people from any religious background and the A.I.M. was involved in a number of ecumenical projects.

Flynn's calling to the ministry was not taken lightly or hurriedly and seems to be based on a deep and earnest faith. In a letter to his father, written in Nov 1901, he says this,

> I will be 21 this day fortnight, and I have been thinking that I should give you my thoughts concerning the future. It is four or five years since I first got the idea of becoming a minister. Since then of course my views have changed considerably, but the more I think the more I see the grandeur and beauty of Christianity, and the hollowness of human life considered as complete in itself.[24]

He began his training for the ministry through the home mission system rather than the more traditional route of theological college. The home mission system placed students in rural parishes who could not afford a full time, fully trained minister. Flynn was placed firstly in the Otways. Griffiths describes it as

[23] Proudfoot and Hall, *Imperial Space: Placing the Irish and Scots in colonial Australia,* 4.

[24] Flynn, John, "Letter to his Father." In *John Flynn: Apostle to the Inland,* Scott McPheat (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd: 1963), 31.

> a region of rich soil which is famous for raising sheep. But a part of that region consists of a rugged, heavily timbered area called the Otway Ranges, whose inhabitants were chiefly engaged in timber cutting, clearing the hills for the development of more grazing land and living in camps or small settlements alongside the timber mills.[25]

The Otways is also the land of the Gadubanud peoples; the new inhabitants and their timber cutting and clearing had a big impact on their lives. The Otways is a site of one of Victoria's massacres in 1846. An article on the Gadubanud in the Aboriginal history journal says, "for them, the Otway region was indeed a living larder."[26] However, "the arrival of Europeans in the Otway region during the late 1840s led to the violent disruption of Aboriginal society and ended a long-standing system of land management."[27]

The home mission system suited Flynn's financial situation as well as his temperament. His practical skills and down to earth personality were valued amongst these predominantly pioneering communities. It also seems to have played a role in his formation. McPheat tells us, "18 months among the hard-working, hard-swearing, hard-drinking settlers in the Otways, taught Flynn a great deal about pioneers."[28] The type of ministry he practised here was echoed by that of the patrol padres he would later place across outback Australia. He was also not much of an academic and he struggled to apply himself to university courses. Despite his academic struggles, Griffiths tells us, "among the leading figures in the Presbyterian Church there were men who recognised that John Flynn had unique gifts which the church could not afford to lose. It was a result of their wisdom rather than his scholastic achievements that Flynn eventually completed his training and became eligible to be accepted as an ordained minister."[29]

Much more has been written about Flynn's early life but in this very brief summary I have outlined some significant hardships in his life. He was only two years old when he lost his mother in childbirth along with his infant sister, which led to him being separated from his

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[25] Griffiths, *The Silent Heart*, 10.

[26] Lawrence Niewójt, "Gadubanud society in the Otway Ranges, Victoria: an environmental history," in *Aboriginal History,* vol 33 (2009), 22. http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/p74631/pdf/ch0847.pdf

[27] Lawrence Niewójt, "Gadubanud society in the Otway Ranges," 21.

[28] McPheat, *John Flynn Apostle to the Inland,* 35.

[29] Griffiths, *The Silent Heart*, 11-12.

father for 4 years. He was 19 when his 22-year-old brother, said to be adored by John, died of tuberculosis. McPheat said these losses "had given John Flynn an unusual sensitivity."[30] And while it was certainly not uncommon at that time to die of these causes it also seems likely that these losses heightened his awareness of the lack of medical care in the outback and his interest in enabling access to good to medical care. However, it must be acknowledged this sensitivity was reserved for white men like him. While he was learning a lot about pioneers and settlers who were clearing the lands, there is no awareness of the first people's whose lands where been cleared and the impact this had on them.

Flynn's father was a teacher and so while the family did not appear to be particularly wealthy, Flynn was not without privilege. At that time the ability to pursue higher education at all was mostly reserved for those of a particular race, gender, class and social standing. Despite struggling academically, he was able to garner support from people who offered him a more flexible route to ordination. In his own words, "they had to let down the sliprails to get me through."[31] His exceptional communication skills, willingness to work hard and warm personality no doubt played a part in this. However, it is also likely his father was known in the education department where Flynn started his career and in the church where he was a lay preacher.

Flynn was ordained as a Presbyterian Minister in 1910. Once ordained he volunteered for and was appointed a position in the Smith of Dunesk Mission in Beltana in the Northern Flinders Ranges, South Australia. Griffiths describes Beltana as "one of the few small settlements that lay on the railway line from Port Augusta north to Oodnadatta. . . this railway was the sole lifeline for people who dared to venture further out into the unknown and take up pastoral holdings or engage in prospecting." Still today Wikipedia describes it as a town "known for continuing to exist long after the reasons for its existence had ceased. The town's history began in the 1870s with the advent of copper mining in the area, construction of the Australian Overland Telegraph Line and The Ghan railway."[32] This is also the land of the Adnyamanthantha people. For them the town's history certainly did not start in the 1870's. In her book *Anaditj,* Adnyamanthantha woman, Rev. Dr. Denise

[30] McPheat, *John Flynn Apostle to the Inland,* 29.

[31] Griffiths, *The Silent Heart,* 12.

[32] "Beltana," Wikipedia, last modified 1 April 2022, Beltana - Wikipedia.

Champion, refers to archaeological discoveries that place her people in the Flinders ranges 49000 years ago."[33]

Flynn's biographers point to a letter that that may have influenced his decision to take the position in Beltana. This letter was written in 1909 by a woman living outside of Darwin named Jessie Litchfield. It was addressed to the wife of Rev. Hugh Kelly who published a weekly Presbyterian newspaper but placed in Flynn's hands on the recommendation of Rev. Donald Cameron, a man who seemed interested in influencing Flynn's future. This letter describes some of the challenges of living in the Northern Territory and expresses a particular concern for the sexual relationships between white men and Aboriginal women whom she calls "lubras". She says, "of the whites, fully 500 of the men keep lubras or use them as they want them, and nearly all have half caste illegimate children, whose only future in life is prostitution. There is no law against this evil, and there are no missionaries to teach the people right from wrong."[34] She urges the church to send a missionary.

In his position with the Smith of Dunesk mission, Flynn travelled across remote Australia visiting pastoral stations. It was in this position that he became more aware of and more concerned about the isolation and lack of services, particularly medical ones, for settlers in outback Australia.

In 1912 Flynn was appointed by the Presbyterian church to travel to Northern Australia, to find out more about the situation there. He wrote a report that year entitled *Northern Territory and Central Australia: A call to the church.* This report begins with a description of Darwin. It says the population of Darwin is 978 and is made up of 374 Europeans, 81 Japanese, 442 Chinese and 81 other.[35] However, there is no mention of the people of the Larakkia nation, Darwin's First Nation's people. It is a bold document. It outlines a radical vison for the future of the Northern Territory and the church's role. It thinks outside the box of the way ministry was done at the time and dares governments to the do the same.

[33] Denise Champion, *Anaditj* (Port Agusta: Denise Champion, 2021), 16.

[34] Litchfield, Jessie, "Letter to Editor." In W. Scott McPheat, *John Flynn Apostle to the Inland* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd: 1963), 41.

[35] John Flynn, *Northern Territory and Central Australia: A Call to the Church* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1912), 7.

It is open minded and ecumenically spirited but Aboriginal people are given no role in this vision for the Northern Territory and Central Australia.

However, Rev. Fred McKay, who worked closely with Flynn and then succeeded him as superintendent, says Flynn was commissioned to write two reports, one on the white settlers who were opening up the country and one on the Aboriginal situation. He says Flynn concentrated on the report on the white settlers as that was where his interest lay but he did write the report on the Aboriginals calling the church to do something. He didn't outline a plan though as he did not believe this was his charter. McKay claims Flynn handed the report to the Foreign Mission Board but that they shelved it.[36] This report is not included in the reports nor the minutes of the General Assembly of 1912 and Flynn's other biographers do not mention it.

The Presbyterian General Assembly of that year responded enthusiastically to the other report and promptly formed the A.I.M and appointed Flynn as superintendent, a position he was to remain in for 39 years. There is no doubt that what Flynn was able to achieve during this time was monumental. His most well-known achievement is the founding of the Aerial Medical Service in 1928. This service later became a national service known as the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS). However, during this time Flynn also established 15 hospital/nursing hostels that provided not just medical services but social support to the people of the outback. He also placed patrol ministers across the inland. These ministers travelled vast distances to bring practical, pastoral and spiritual support to "scattered pioneers,"[37] many who according to Flynn had been "untouched by any church since ever the country was first populated by whites."[38] In 1939 he did a three-year term as moderator of the Presbyterian church and in his final years he established a retirement home called Old Timer's in Alice Springs. Just one of these would be an achievement for most people but Flynn was determined to create "a mantle of safety" over all of outback Australia and he worked tirelessly to achieve this. This legacy continues. The RFDS now provides 24/7 emergency care across 80% of Australia including remote Aboriginal

[36] Fred McKay, "Fred McKay interviewed by Alec Bolton," interview by Alec Bolton, *Trove,* May 9-13, 1988, Canberra, Session 3, 53:22-59:49. Fred McKay interviewed by Alec Bolton [sound recording]. [nla.obj-216031865] | Digital Collection - National Library of Australia

[37] Flynn, *Northern Territory and Central Australia: A Call to the Church* 26

[38] Flynn, *Northern Territory and Central Australia: A Call to the Church* 26

communities. In 2020 and 2021 they flew 112,839 people in need of medical services.[39] On an almost weekly basis I meet with someone at the hospital who came in on the Flying Doctor from the Anangu, Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) lands. And Frontier Services currently has 14 bush chaplains, both Indigenous and non-indigenous, providing pastoral and practical support to farmers, miners, Aboriginal communities and others doing it tough across rural and remote Australia.[40] These chaplains are some of the most exceptional ministers I know.

There is no doubt these achievements have contributed to the opening up of outback Australia, something I, as a current resident of Alice Springs, benefit from greatly. With the existence of hospitals women felt safer to move their families into the centre, or even start families here. "Flynn was breaking the silence that had so long kept the inland at arm's length from the rest of the country. Without that effort, the development of the Australian outback might have been placed at considerable risk."[41]

However, what did this mean for Aboriginal people? The opening up of this country for white people and their cattle meant the desecration of waterholes, food sources and sacred sites needed for survival and the transfer of culture and ancient knowledge. This forced them off their ancestral lands.

The University of Newcastle's colonial massacres map shows 21 massacres across the NT, Northern WA and Qld also happened during Flynn's time as superintendent.[42] To be very clear Flynn was not involved in these massacres. However, not a single edition of the Inlander, a magazine Flynn published to educate the people of Australia on the plight of the outback, mentions these massacres.

1910 also marked the beginning of the stolen generations. From this time to the 1970's anywhere between 1 in 3 and 1 in 10 Aboriginal children were removed from their families. Most of these children were so called "half caste" children, deserted by their white fathers,

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[39] "Emergency Medical Retrieval," Royal Flying Doctor Service, 2022, Aeromedical Emergency Retrieval | Royal Flying Doctor Service

[40] "Bush Chaplaincy," Frontier Services, 2022, Bush Chaplaincy - Frontier Services

[41] Griffiths, *The Silent Heart: Flynn of the Inland*, 39

[42] The University of Newcastle, "Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia, 1788-1930, 2022", Centre for 21st Century Humanities, Centre For 21st Century Humanities (newcastle.edu.au)

the living evidence of exploitation of Aboriginal women across the Frontier. Flynn might have been creating a mantle of safety for white settlers but it seems their growing presence was not making Aboriginal people safer. When it came to outback massacres and the abuse of women the silence remained.

Despite the silence on these issues Flynn did at times write about Aboriginal people in the Inlander. These writings contain moments of compassion for the sufferings of Aboriginal people and regret for the role white people played in this situation. However, they were also often paternalistic and ignorant of what was really happening for Aboriginal people. Fred McKay makes the point in his interviews that everyone was like that at the time. "We were paternalists,"[43] he admits. However, there were also times when Flynn's comments about Aboriginal people went beyond paternalism. They can only be described as callous and indicate a complete disregard for the humanity of Aboriginal people. I will outline these comments now. I quote them at some length as I think it is important to get the full context. Without context the meaning can change, and I will also discuss incidents when this has occurred later.

In the first edition of the Inlander that was published in 1913 Flynn describes "coming across a camp of blacks at Horseshoe Bend."[44] He says, "the conditions of these blacks is not what one would like to see but one must not fly to hasty conclusions about causes and remedies. Among the white residents there is a general feeling of kindliness towards the natives, and the distribution of clothes, rations and tobacco runs into much money which can at times ill be spared."[45] He goes on,

> thus partly to ensure the workers getting enough themselves, and partly out of genuine pity, the whites deal out rations in many cases far more lavishly than mere justice demands. All this does not alter the fact that things are not as they should be, and the kindness is at best of that quality in which domestic animals share. The residents cannot do more however. They are there to look after their own interests, and sometimes find all they can do to struggle against adverse circumstances of drought and other handicaps.[46]

[43] Fred McKay interview by Alec Bolton, "Fred McKay interviewed by Alec Bolton."

[44] John Flynn, "Our Land: Central Australia" *The Inlander,* Vol 1, No. 1 (Nov. 1913), 10.

[45] Flynn, "Our Land: Central Australia," 10

[46] Flynn, "Our Land: Central Australia"

The ambivalence we encounter here continues to mark Flynn's writings. On one hand he acknowledges things are not as they should be but then seeks to justify the white residents because they were there to look after their own interests. He describes a general feeling of kindliness but then describes "the kindness is as best of that quality in which domestic animals share."

It also shows blindness to Aboriginal people. At this time there was much violence occurring between the white pioneers and Aboriginal people particularly Aboriginal women. In the shocking words of Henry Reynolds, "Aboriginal women were preyed on by any and every white man whose whim it was to have a piece of 'black velvet' wherever and whenever they pleased."[47] This is something Jessie Litchfield had alerted Flynn to. Despite later claims that the magazine "publicized the needs of the people and northern Australia's potential for development, which he [Flynn] argued could only be effected by providing security for women and children,"[48] the Inlander was silent on the security needs of Aboriginal women and their children.

The 1914 November edition is mostly dedicated to Wyndham. Flynn writes the opening article in which he enthusiastically introduces the reader to Mr Campbell saying, "we are fortunate in being able to introduce the subject with an article by Mr. Campbell, now of Mildura, Victoria, who spent some years at Wyndham."[49] Mr Campbells' article about Wyndham is accompanied by a photo of 13 Aboriginal men chained together by chains around their neck with the accompanying caption "I would like to say that while the chaining of prisoners by the neck seems cruel, nevertheless when you think it out it is the best method of securing them and much more comfortable than to be chained by arms and legs."[50]

Flynn did not say this, he just published it, but in the 1915 article he gives his own opinion on the chaining of Aboriginal people,

[47] Henry Reynolds, *With the White People* (Ringwood, Vic: Penguin Books, 1990).

[48] Graeme Bucknall, "Flynn, John (1880-1951), Australian Dictionary of Biography, Biography - John Flynn - Australian Dictionary of Biography (anu.edu.au).

[49]John Flynn, "Our Wide Nor West" *The Inlander,* Vol 1, No. 4 (Nov. 1914), 151.

[50]A.J. Campbell, "Life at Wyndham" *The Inlander,* Vol 1, No. 4 (Nov. 1914), 151.

> when we put the chains round the necks of those blacks we did a noble thing in one sense, we admitted our responsibility to lead the black man for evil practices into the things that are good and true. But we do so easily tire of being noble and once he has served his time for stoushing a poor Chinaman we turn the black man adrift to make his way unaided to virtue, or sink again to evil, whichever he pleases as fast as he cares.[51]

The idea that chaining Aboriginal people is noble is not simply paternalism. It is cruel and lacks the understanding of a common humanity that Flynn had purported to on the previous page when he said,

> It should be quite unnecessary at this late day for us to point out that the black man as a member of the human family has a right to increasing opportunities of self development. We who so cheerfully sent a cheque for £100,000 to Belgium to help a people pushed out by their own inheritance by foreigners – surely we must just as cheerfully do something for those whom we clean handed have dispossessed in the interests of a superior culture. . . .
>
> Both Church and State have done much at times to help aborigines; but it must be admitted that, viewed as a whole, our efforts have been terribly amateurish. Our benediction on the blacks has been like the curate's famous eggs - good in parts. Our efforts need to be increased, improved and systematised.[52]

In the 1916 Inlander, Flynn includes an article accredited to a woman named Sybil that makes a radical suggestion for the naming of the Northern Territory. She says "I may as well anticipate the inevitable, and suggest that the naming be not made an opportunity of immortalizing any battlefield in Europe, or any General operating thereon, but the humble and peculiar people who were its original inhabitants."[53] It seems this suggestion is still radical as it is yet to be taken up. This article also argues that white settlers need to,

> change the effect of our boosted civilization from evil to good . . . for it is the only opportunity left us of preventing what we have allowed to go on so long the extermination of a people, a primitive and backward race may be; I do not know. For who is to judge between one people and another, only the One whose test of a people is in what manner do they carry themselves towards "the least of these—my brethren." At the last there is no other test.[54]

[51] Flynn, "About our Aboriginies", 28.

[52] Flynn, "About our Aboriginies", 27.

[53] Sybil, "An Untamed Territory" *The Inlander,* Vol 3, No. 1 (1916), 36.

[54] Sybil, "An Untamed Territory" 37-38.

Sybil's writing shows that in 1916 there were people who wrestling with the killing of Aboriginal people and calling settlers to change their ways so as to prevent their complete demise. While Flynn published her words, it seems he did not share her opinion. 8 years later, when he again wrote of First Nations People. In the 1924 Inlander he suggested the problem was disease and the loss of will to live.

> What of our Aborigines? Their part in the future Australian picture seems likely to be small indeed, as may be inferred from the tabulated figures. What their original numbers can never be known. Although, in the main, they were treated with kindliness by pioneers, their simple ways left them peculiarly susceptible to minor diseases contracted from our own race, while influenza, consumption, and social diseases have taken a terrible toll. In a few corners of the continent are tribes which survive unimpaired, and their future may be brighter; but the ways of the Aborigine are inscrutable—some say the root evil is loss of will-to-live in the midst of invaders.![55]

Disease certainly killed large numbers of Aboriginal people and their will to live was no doubt impacted on by the invaders. However, massacres and murder also played a big role in the severe decline of Aboriginal people and Flynn again remains silent on this.

This 1924 edition marked the Centenary of Northern Australia. Flynn dated this centenary from September 1824 when a crew led by Captain Brewer established Fort Dundas on Melville Island. "How lonely these pioneers must have felt," Flynn commented, "their nearest neighbours were a few colleagues who have landed at this time around Brisbane."[56] These islands however were actually inhabited by the Tiwi people who were in fact much closer than Brisbane. For them the island is called Yermalner[57] and in 1924 it was much older than a century. They had lived on it for tens of thousands of years.

Flynn's article begins with 10 pages on the population of Northern Australia and his concern that the lack of white people there leaves Australia very vulnerable, "Have you ever wakened to the fact that independently of the North there are no securities in the

[55] Flynn, "The Centenary of North Australia", 21.

[56] John Flynn, "The Centenary of North Australia" *The Inlander,* No. 1 (Sept. 1924), 4.

[57] "Bathurst and Melville Islands, Northern Territory: Tiwi Country", The National Museum of Australia, Bathurst and Melville islands, Northern Territory | National Museum of Australia (nma.gov.au)

South. History is whispering to us even now, occupy continentally or lose continentally,"[58] he says.

Much has been written defending Flynn's legacy with Aboriginal people. In December 1972 the Frontier News published an article titled, "About our Aborigines and what Flynn of the Inland REALLY said."[59] This article was written in response to a speech made by Sir Mark Oliphant, the Governor of South Australia. In this speech the Governor claimed that Flynn refused to have anything to do with Aboriginal people and thought they should be allowed to die out. Oliphant was responding to the claim that Flynn had said, "you are only wasting your time among so many damned, dirty niggers."[60] This article culls together what it calls some representative comments from the Inlander.

From the 1913 article it quotes, "I believe the Church will not carry conviction among the white residents of Central Australia, either thoughtful or careless, until it does something for the blacks, especially for the half-caste." It however leaves off the sentence directly following this one, "but we cannot enter into this difficult problem here."

The article also quotes from the 1915 edition of the Inlander in which Flynn suggests that "We who so cheerfully sent a cheque for £100,000 to Belgium to help a people pushed out by their own inheritance by foreigners – surely we must just as cheerfully do something for those whom we clean handed have dispossessed." However, it does not mention the quote on the next page in which he suggests the chaining of Aboriginal people was noble.

It goes on to attribute a quote from the 1916 article, that was in fact written by Sybil, to Flynn.

Finally, it quotes the 1924 article but leaves off the sentence, "What of our Aborigines? Their part in the future Australian picture seems likely to be small indeed, as may be inferred from the tabulated figures." Doing this significantly changes the tone of the quote.

Flynn's earlier two biographers say nothing about Flynn and Aboriginal people. In Ion Idriess hagiography, *Flynn of the Inland,* they appear only as dangerous savages who spear

[58] Flynn, "The Centenary of North Australia", 21.

[59] The Australian Inland Mission Frontier Services, "About our Aborigines and what Flynn of the Inland REALL said, *Frontier News,* Vol 75 (Dec 1972), 4-5.

[60] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines*, 100.

the white man and their cattle. They speak in "guttural tones"[61] but they are certainly not heard. McPheat also says very little about them, though it could be argued the silence speaks loudly.

Griffiths in his biography does address the claims that Flynn was racist and did not adequately respond to Aboriginal people. He defends Flynn based on the fact the A.I.M. nurses and the RFDS did in fact provide medical care to Aboriginal people and any racist views he expressed were representative of the people of the time,

> There is no evidence of discrimination, so far as medical treatment was concerned. Indeed, the early records of the Flying Doctor Service indicate that the greater number of patients treated and evacuated were Aborigines. . . . If there was a racism present in the thinking and working of Flynn and his colleagues, it was a reflection of the attitude which was abroad in the whole community.[62]

Griffiths also reproduces the photo of 13 Aboriginal men chained together around their neck from the 1914 article. Under this photo Griffiths writes, "'Rotten!': Flynn's comment on the plight of the Aboriginies"[63] However, as I discovered, this is not what Mr Campbell's article actually said. Rather it suggested this chaining was not cruel because it was better than been chained by the legs.

In 2016 Everald Compton wrote another biography on Flynn called, *The Man on the Twenty Dollar Note: Flynn of the Inland*. He too addresses the claims of racism but says Flynn had no mandate to care for Aboriginal people,

> Within the Presbyterian Church, Flynn had no charter to minister to Aboriginal people whatsoever. Even so, if we can be totally frank, it may well be that the white man's attitude to Aboriginal people in Flynn's era unconsciously rubbed off on him more than it should have done and, without malice he may have thought of them as people without a viable future.[64]

McKay in a series of interviews in 1988 argues along the same lines that Flynn had a clear conscience about Aboriginal people. He acknowledges he did not do anything practical for them but this was because it was not his charter: that work belonged to another

[61] Ion Idriess, *Flynn of the Inland,* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson Limited, 1939).

[62] Griffiths, *The Silent Heart: Flynn of the Inland*, 167.

[63]Griffiths, *The Silent Inland*.

[64] Everald Compton, *The Man on the Twenty Dollar Note,* (Australia: Everald Compton, 2016), 204

committee.[65] However, I do not think Flynn had a mandate to start an aerial medical service either. It was his vision, and it is remarkable that despite starting with limited support, he pushed the church and then the government to make this vision a reality.

Maisie McKenzie, two years later, in a biography titled *Fred Mackay: Successor to Flynn of the Inland,* also gives an account of the controversy that arose in 1972 when Duguid's book was published and Oliphant made his speech. She tells how Fred used the opportunity to let the Australian people know the real facts of the matter by writing the article "About our Aborigines and what Flynn of the Inland REALLY said."[66] The A.I.M. then shared Flynn's writings about Aboriginal people with Sir Mark Oliphant. "They spoke for themselves"[67] she said. However, as this thesis has uncovered, this article consistently left parts out of quotes, which changed their meaning. It also left out all the negative comments. This is not Okay in an article claiming to tell people, "what Flynn really said about Aboriginal people."

In 1980 Oliphant became chairman of a public appeal for the flying doctor. "In this way he was doubtless expressing the issue was closed"[68] McKenzie argues. But it was not closed. In 2003 Hains wrote another article, "Inland Flynn: Pioneer? Racist? Or product of his time?" examining Duguid's accusation of racism. In this article she describes Flynn as man "quick to point out injustice to Aboriginal people, and slow to do anything about it"[69] and the A.I.M. as an organisation that "had forged an alliance with a deeply racist white settler culture."[70] Despite this she contends any characterisation of him as someone who had nothing to do with Aboriginal people and thought they should die out, is untrue and unfair. While his "humanitarian vision was incomplete and corrupted by that incompleteness, this should do more than encourage moralistic historical judgment,"[71] she argues. "How many of us would have had the imagination and boldness to do more?"[72], she asks. While, I agree with Hains that we do need to be careful about "moralistic historical judgement," I also

[65] Fred McKay interview by Alec Bolton, "Fred McKay interviewed by Alec Bolton."

[66] Maisie McKenzie, *Fred Mackay: Successor to Flynn of the Inland,* (Queensland: Boolarong Press, 1990), 154-156.

[67] McKenzie, *Fred Mackay: Successor to Flynn of the Inland,* 157.

[68] McKenzie, *Fred Mackay: Successor to Flynn of the Inland,* 157.

[69] Brigid Hains, "Inland Flynn: Pioneer? Racist? Or product of his time?" *Eureka Street,* (May 2003), 34.

[70] Hains, "Inland Flynn: Pioneer? Racist? Or product of his time?", 33.

[71] Hains, "Inland Flynn: Pioneer? Racist? Or product of his time?", 34.

[72] Hains, "Inland Flynn: Pioneer? Racist? Or product of his time?", 34.

think we need to be careful about trying to cover up things in order to maintain a flawless narrative.

David Trudinger's 2010 chapter, "Dymythologising Flynn, with Love: contesting missionaries in Central Australia in the twentieth century," is less sympathetic to Flynn. He compares Flynn's attitudes and actions with his contemporaries Robert Love, Charles Duguid and Friedrich Albrecht. His article claims these men all challenged Flynn and the A.I.M in regards to Aboriginal people. Though none of these men could be said to have completely clean hands in regards to Indigenous people, clearly Flynn's views were not shared by all people in his realm at the time.[73] Trudinger suggests that in "aiding and abetting attempts to resist Duguid's efforts to attach resources clearly misappropriated to European uses to an Aboriginal cause and to establish a Mission for Aborigines John Flynn was pursuing policies directly inimical to Indigenous welfare."[74]

This history, it seems is still not well known and acknowledged. On the back of Everald Compton's 2016 biography on Flynn it says this,

> The Royal Flying Doctor Service is a revered legend of the development of Australia as a caring nation. However, few Australians are aware of the man who founded it – John Flynn – usually known as Flynn of the Inland. Flynn who died in 1951, is regarded by historians as one of Australia's greatest sons.
>
> It is a story that every Australian should read, and it's powerful drama has been captured by veteran author Everald Compton.
>
> Flynn has been his role model in life ever since he first learned about him at a bush Sunday School in 1936. His fervent prayer is that many who read, "The man on the Twenty Dollar Notes" will choose to follow in Flynn's footsteps as the future pioneers of Australia as the finest nation on earth.

So while I am acutely aware of the pitfalls in judging people of the past with present knowledge and values, I think there are also pitfalls in putting aside present knowledge and values when it comes to deciding who we name as "Australia's greatest sons." No telling of history has ever been completely objective. All Flynn's biographers had their bias,

[73] David Trudinger, "Dymythologising Flynn, with Love: contesting missionaries in Central Australia in the twentieth century," *Passionate Histories: Myth, Memory and Indigenous Australia,* (Canberra: Australian National University, 2010), Passionate Histories: Myth, Memory and Indigenous Australia (anu.edu.au).

[74] Trudinger, "Dymythologising Flynn, with Love: contesting missionaries in Central Australia in the twentieth century, 155.

something Compton readily admits to. We must be willing to critique our ancestors' words and actions that do not align with current principles and understandings of history. Aboriginal historian Victoria Grieve-Williams believes these, "critical family histories will become invaluable in the inevitable decolonisation of the Aboriginal people of the land now known as Australia."[75]

[75] Victoria Grieve-Williams, foreword to *Unsettling Australian Histories: Letters to Ancestry from a Great Grandson ,* by David Denborough (Adealide: Dulwich Centre Foundation, 2020).

Chapter 2

Charles Duguid:

Charles Duguid was born in Scotland to Jane and Charles Duguid in 1884 (just 4 years after the birth of John Flynn). His father, like Flynn's father, was a teacher who became a headmaster. It was his maternal grandfather however, who had the most influence on Charles' future career. He called the opening chapter in his memoirs, "Doctor's Grandson."[76] This chapter outlines Duguid's childhood in the fishing town of Saltcoats. He describes his family as educated, cultured, well known and comfortable. And yet this family always looked out for others less fortunate.[77] Duguid tells stories of his father spending "his evening in teaching old people in the slums to read and write"[78] and his family's ongoing advocacy for the poor. One time a young Duguid intervened in the arrest of a woman, Maggie, who was causing a disturbance. He said to the police, "Why don't you arrest Maggie's husband instead? Put him gaol for idleness! He's never done a day's work in his life, while Maggie works hard at cleaning and washing to keep the family alive. It's no wonder she tries to forget it all in drink."[79]

On finishing school, Duguid went straight to university, in 1902, to study medicine, like his grandfather. He writes extensively about his first experiences as young doctor in Glasgow.[80] These experiences treating people living in extreme poverty, women experiencing domestic violence, and miners were obviously formative for the now Dr Duguid.

He travelled to Australia in 1911 as a ship's surgeon. On this voyage he met an Australian woman Irene Young. This romance made him determined to migrate to Australia which he did, and they were married in 1912. Drawing again on Enns and Myers four basic types of migrant - colonists, opportunists, distressed immigrants or forced relocation – Duguid was an opportunist (although clearly not all people fit neatly into these categories). He and

[76] Charles Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,* (Adelaide: Rigby Limited, 1972), 1-8.
[77] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,"* 1-8.
[78] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,* 5.
[79] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,* 4.
[80] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,* 9-21.

Irene eventually settled in Adelaide where they set up a medical practice and had a son.[81] Adelaide is the land of the Kaurna people and to them this area is known as *Tarntanya* which means red kangaroo place. Though when Duguid arrived this was not something that concerned him at all. As he put it, "my awakening was to come later."[82]

Duguid and his family survived the war years during which he served in Egypt as a surgeon. However, in 1927 Irene passed away. This left Duguid the sole parent of their now 13-year-old son. He remarried Phyllis Lade 3 years later and it was with her that he began his involvement with Aboriginal people and the fight for their future, a fight that they would continue for the rest of their lives.[83]

The story of how Duguid first became involved with Aboriginal people and the beginnings of the Ernabella Mission is a story that changed slightly over the years as Duguid honed the narrative. Clearly, he was a man who knew the power of storytelling and so this honing enhanced his ability to garner support from others including government, church and community leaders which enabled him to better support Aboriginal people. However, it also enhanced his image as a visionary. He has been described as arrogant and keen on building his own "great man of history" image, so perhaps this was also a factor in the honing.[84]

In his first book about Aboriginal people, *No Dying Race,* published in 1963 Duguid says his concern was aroused in 1928 when "a wholesale shooting of weak, drought-stricken aborigines had taken place in the Northern Territory following the death of a white man."[85] However, Duguid was certainly not the only one whose concern was aroused. These shootings, now known as the Coniston massacres, were reported around the globe and they prompted a response from churches, humanitarian organisations, governments and individuals. In November of that year, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria wrote to the Prime Minister urging him to suspend those involved from their duty, make an inquiry into the killings and adopt a humanitarian policy toward Aboriginal

[81] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,* 22-58.

[82] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,"* 83.

[83] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines."*

[84] Sitarani Kerin, "Doctor Do-Good'? Charles Duguid and Aboriginal Politics 1930's-1970's (PhD diss., The Australian National University, Canberra, 2004), 17.

[85] Charles Duguid, *No Dying Race,* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1963), 19.

people.[86] The London Based Anti-Slavery society also wrote to the Prime Minister about the affair expressing their "painful surprise" when they read about the deliberate and indiscriminate killing of Aboriginal men, women and children by police officers. And to make matters worse these officers had been exonerated.[87] This massacre is reported as the last "official" massacre in Australia. Reynolds suggests this was due to the "concern about International opinion."[88]

Duguid then mentions a woman missionary from Arnhem Land. This woman, whom Duguid treated for leprosy not long after the Coniston massacres, told him about the treatment of Aboriginal people by white men in the north. He says he found her description "incredible."[89] He also recounts this woman's influence in his 1972 memoirs. However, in this book she is the one who first stirs his concerns about Aboriginal people and he is far more unrestrained in his description of what she told him and his reactions.

> I was shocked by her grim picture of what was happening to Australia's native people. Among many other things she told me it was common for Aboriginal women to be raped by white intruders who beat up the husbands if they tried to rescue their wives. I found her stories hard to believe and she would urge me to go north and find out the truth for myself.[90]

While the language is quite different, this calls to mind the letter Flynn received from Jessie Litchfield that is said to have inspired him to take the position at Beltana.

It was 5 years however before Duguid would head north to see for himself. He says it was the case of Takiar [Dhakiyarr Wirrpanda] that strengthened his conviction to go.[91] Dhakiyarr was a Yolŋu man accused of the murder of police officer, Albert McColl. McColl and a group of policemen were sent to Arnhem Land to investigate the murder of five Japanese people at Caledon Bay. On their way they came across a group of Yolŋu women,

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[86] Henry Reynolds, *The Whispering in our Hearts Revisted* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2018). ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.flinders.edu.au/lib/flinders/detail.action?docID=5603858, 100.

[87] Henry Reynolds, *The Whispering in our Hearts Revisted,* 100.

[88] Henry Reynolds, *The Whispering in our Hearts Revisted,* 101.

[89] Duguid, *No Dying Race,* 20.

[90] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,"* 94.

[91] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,"* 95

including Dhakiyarr's wife, who they are said to have tied to a tree. Dhakiyarr attempted to free her and in the process he speared and killed McColl. Dhakiyarr was then convinced by missionaries to go to Darwin where he was arrested. A trial ensued and Dhakiyarr was sentenced to death by hanging. This story made national news and protests ensued as to the fairness of the trial. There was an appeal in the High Court at which the sentence was quashed and Dhakiyarr was released. However, on release he disappeared. Neither he nor his body was ever found.[92]

It is striking that Dhakiyarr was able to garner the interest and the support of the Australian public at this time. This was the first time the case of an Aboriginal person had been heard in the High Court. It is said that, "the Court's decision overturning the jury's verdict and the judge's sentence affirmed the right of Aboriginal people to a fair trial in Australian courts."[93] It was 5 years after the Coniston massacre. This massacre, which is said to be the last documented massacre of First Nations, had also gained public attention as highlighted above. The 2004 documentary, "Dhakiyarr vs the King" suggests this could have been because, "people in Australia were getting sick and tired of the killing at that time."[94]

This documentary tells the story of this incident through the eyes of Dhakiyarr's descendants. According to them this is the story of "the meeting of two laws that did not recognise each other."[95] They say, "the police came here with their law but they did not recognise our law."[96] According to them Dhakiyarr was acting in accordance to the laws of his Dhudi Djapu clan when he sought to rescue his wife from men who had trespassed on his land. When he went with the missionaries to Darwin he was expecting he would face a Makarrata ceremony. Rather he faced the white man's court, but he was not treated fairly in accordance with that law either. He did not understand a word they were saying nor what was happening to him. The judge did not allow him to speak and advised the jury to find him guilty. On realising that he was not to be given a fair trial, even the missionary, Frank Gray, who had brought him expressed regret for having done so. While he was

[92] "Yolgnu Elder Dhakiyarr Wirrpanda – High Court Case" National Archives of Australia, 2010, Yolgnu Elder Dhakiyarr Wirrpanda – High Court case | naa.gov.au.

[93] "Yolgnu Elder Dhakiyarr Wirrpanda – High Court Case".

[94] *Dhakiyarr vs the King,* directed by Tom Murray and Alan Collins, (Film Australia, 2004), ABC iview.

[95] Murray and Collins, *Dhakiyarr vs the King.*

[96] Murray and Collins, *Dhakiyarrr vs the King.*

eventually to receive a fair hearing from the High Court who released him, he was never to make it home. His descendants have been haunted by not knowing what happened to him and not being able to bury him on his country and enact their ceremonies for him.[97]

However, in 2003, 70 years after his disappearance his descendants were able to get some healing. In Darwin's court they placed nine Larrakitj poles to commemorate the case. They performed a Wukidi ceremony to guide his spirit`s return to his ancestral lands[98]. McColl's family were also in attendance. Yolŋu acknowledged that this family too had lost a member at the hands of their ancestor. They all speak of a shared pain between the families. This moving event highlights to me the importance of telling stories truthfully.

Historian Ted Egan, the NT administrator at the time, who had researched the incident, said he had heard from 4 people that a policeman shot Dhakiyar. He had not been able to prove or disprove these testimonies but it confirmed what the family already believed.[99] And what it seems Duguid believed also when he wrote, "According to law he should have been taken home by the police. Instead, he was left to find his own way and was never seen again – or at least not by anyone who was going to talk about it. I have little doubts as to how he met his death."[100]

Duguid never made it to Darwin on that first trip north in 1934. Due to a medical emergency he was waylaid in Mbantua on the lands of the Central Arrenrte people, known as Alice Springs.[101] However, his time there proved significant. There he met the Patrol Padre of the A.I.M., Skipper Partridge. Duguid claimed Partridge told him that Aborigines have "never been good and never will be. The best they've the right to expect is a decent funeral."[102] While other ministers were more compassionate, Duguid believed the attitudes of the white residents of Alice Springs had seeped into the church, with the Methodist minister saying to him, "my heart often bleeds for the natives, but if I interfered on their behalf the cattle stations would be closed to me."[103] One person whose work

[97] Murray and Collins, *Dhakiyarr vs the King.*
[98] "Dh'a'kiyarr Wirrpanda" Monument Australia, 2010, Dh'a'kiyarr Wirrpanda | Monument Australia.
[99] Murray and Collins, *Dhakiyarr vs the King.*
[100] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,"* 95.
[101] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,"* 95-97.
[102] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,"* 97.
[103] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,"* 97.

Duguid praised was Pastor Albrecht of the Lutheran mission at Hermannsburg. Hermannsburg is the name given to the mission by the German missionaries. However, the local Arrenrte people have known it as Ntaria for tens of thousands of years. It was Albrecht who encouraged Duguid to go to the Musgrave Ranges in Northern South Australia to see what was happening there.[104]

On returning to Adelaide from Mbantua, Duguid claims, in his memoirs, to have met with Flynn. Duguid was impressed with the A.I.M.'s work amongst the settlers. He says in the book, "the A.I.M. did a splendid job for the white community, especially for the white women who lived such hard and isolated lives in the outback. Its hostels, always staffed by two fully trained nursing sisters, have given valuable medical service where no other existed."[105] However, he wanted to discuss his concerns about the comments made by the patrol padre, Skipper Partridge, about Aboriginal people. Duguid alleged that it was at this meeting that Flynn told him, "The A.I.M is only for the white people. . . you are only wasting your time with so many damned dirty niggers."[106]

In 1935 Duguid made his first trip to the Musgraves Ranges, the lands of the Pitjantjatjara people. There he met a young man Gilpin who acted as his guide and translator. Gilpin took him to meet the Pitjantjatjara people. Of this meeting Duguid wrote,

> He led me into the country of the Pitjantjatjara tribe, which had lived amongst the spectacular scenery of the Musgrave Ranges since time immemorial. They were a fine people with a striking dignity, living naked and with few possessions amid the rocky hills and escarpments of the Ranges, wandering their tribal territory in the constant search for food and water, and yet contented and virile.[107]

At this time contact between the Pitjantjatjara people and the settlers was minimal but Duguid was sure that they would not be left alone for much longer. Already there were white men encroaching on the area, taking advantage of the people through dogging and the abuse of women. On the way back Duguid says that the plan for the Ernabella mission began to form his in head.[108] However, as Kerin, in her PhD thesis, "'Doctor Do-Good'?

[104] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,"* 104.
[105] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,"* 100.
[106] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,"* 100.
[107] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,"* 110.
[108] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,"* 115.

Charles Duguid and Aboriginal Politics, 1930s-1970s," points out this is not entirely how things happened. Before Duguid travelled the Musgrave Ranges he was elected as moderator of the South Australian Synod. In this role he was already campaigning for a mission in the Musgraves Ranges, using his inaugural address to announce his plan for a mission there.[109]

It is clear from his writings that his encounters with Pitjantjatjara people were significant to Duguid. However, that the inspiration for the formation of the mission came to him after meeting them is not the full truth. This likely enhanced the narrative and thus his ability to garner support for the mission from others but is also enhanced his own image and credibility. While Ernabella did go on to become "widely regarded as one of the least oppressive and most culturally sensitive missions ever established in Australia,"[110] Kerin argued that, "the great casualty of this whole process has been context."[111] As I have outlined, Duguid's thinking about Aboriginal people and concepts for the mission were formed in a climate of changing attitudes to Indigenous people in the church and in Australia as a whole. He was not a lone visionary, uniquely ahead of his time who managed to convince everyone else. Rather he was part of, and influenced by, a larger movement.

In 1936 Duguid took the proposal for a "New Aboriginal Mission Station in North-West of South Australia"[112] to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. Quoting from a letter to the churches of Australia from the Anti Slavery society in London he appealed to the church to,

> make a united effort. . . to do all that is possible to sweep away old wrongs and injustices, to make generous reparations for the past, and to secure not only protection but also appropriate educational and moral uplift for the very considerable remains of a race which is not only most ancient, but also endowed with remarkable and attractive qualities of mental and moral character.[113]

[109] Kerin, "Doctor Do-Good'?",21.

[110] Kerin, "Doctor Do-Good'?", 23

[111] Kerin, "Doctor Do-Good'?", 28.

[112] Presbyterian Church of Australia, Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. 1936, Iluminate, Camden Theological Library, Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia | Illuminate (recollect.net.au) Australia.

[113] Presbyterian Church of Australia, Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Assembly.

The motion was eventually passed but not without some debate. The Rev. W.C. Radcliffe first moved that the words, "with the consent of the majority of the State Assembly"[114] be added. Duguid claims this amendment would have "postponed the project and by doing so killed it."[115] Given that it would have taken a year for all the state assemblies to meet and discuss the issue and that there would not necessarily be support for the mission at all the State Assemblies, this is indeed possible. Duguid also claims that Flynn spoke in favour of this amendment. However, Flynn's support is not recorded in the minutes. Rather the minutes record that the amendment was withdrawn and that Flynn moved that the Board be authorised to take appropriate steps towards ensuring adequate care of the aborigines in Central Australia."[116] Duguid claims this was Flynn trying to pose as a friend to the natives.[117] What his motives were is ultimately unresolvable, but it is not clear why he could not just have supported Duguid's motion as it was and needed to add this.

At this same meeting however, Duguid also took an opportunity to comment on the A.I.M. He moved a motion "that until such times as the Federal Government builds a Public Hospital at Alice Springs the A.I.M Hostel admit or treat anyone in medical need irrespective of colour."[118] However, the minutes record, "Dr. Duguid withdrew his amendment, intimating that after consultation with the Rev. John Flynn, he would later give notice of a substantive motion."[119]

Again, what his motives were is ultimately unresolvable, but these minutes certainly point to conflict, and reflect that the church, like the society as a whole, was changing. Money, also, played a part in this conflict. In particular, the fight over the Smith of Dunesk bequest. This bequest was named after the Scottish woman, Henrietta Smith of the Dunesk estate, who had donated a large sum of money to the Presbyterian Church of South Australia for Aboriginal people. However, since 1912 this money had been used to fund the A.I.M. In his inaugural address as moderator Duguid revealed,

[114] Presbyterian Church of Australia, Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Assembly.
[115] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,"* 121.
[116] Presbyterian Church of Australia, Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Assembly.
[117] Kerin, "Doctor Do-Good'?," 52.
[118] Presbyterian Church of Australia, Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Assembly.
[119] Presbyterian Church of Australia, Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Assembly.

> the Presbyterian Church's own misappropriation of money intended for Aborigines. Long entrusted with a Bequest in the name of Mrs Smith of Dunesk intended 'entirely for the education and evangelisation of the Aborigines', the Presbyterian Church, having transferred the proceeds of this Bequest to the Australian Inland Mission (AIM) -a mission that 'is, and has always been, for the white pioneer population; never at any time in the interests of the natives' - was arguably as guilty of 'misused power' as any white settler.[120]

Duguid had heard the name of the Bequest at Synod meetings before, but he never paid attention until Mary Bennet, another well-known Aboriginal rights campaigner of the time, told him something of its history. She informed him in a letter,

> Mr [J.R.B.] Love told me at Kunmunya. . . that the AIM was originally founded by the misappropriation of the legacy left by Mrs Henrietta Smith of Dunesk to found a mission to the Aboriginals. This large sum of money was left to the Presbyterian Free Church of South Australia. The Presbyterian Church of South Australia sent Mr Mitchell to institute a mission, NOT TO THE ABORIGINALS, but to the squatters, who by taking all the natives' country, and working it often under compulsion, with unpaid native labour, have done more to compass the extermination of the Aborigines than any other agency.[121]

Trudinger suggests that this use of the money does not reflect well on the Presbyterian Church as whole, but particularly Flynn. He says that considering Duguid's revelations it was "incumbent on [Flynn] to react. That he reacted the way he did suggests a strategy of subtle resistance to Ernabella, possibly confirmed by his behaviour at the 1936 Assembly."[122]

In 1937 Duguid achieved his aim of establishing a mission in the Musgraves with the establishment of the Ernabella mission. He was granted 20 pounds from the Smith of Dunesk Bequest (an amount equalling less than 10 percent of the total funds available), with the AIM receiving the remainder. He continued to pursue this money and each year he was able to acquire more for Ernabella. By 1941 he had secured three quarters of the bequest for Ernabella.[123] However, the fight was bitter and dirty and in his pursuit of it

[120] Kerin, "Doctor Do-Good'? Charles Duguid and Aboriginal Politics 1930's-1970's," 21.

[121] Mary Bennett, "Letter to Duguid," 7 October 1934, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 11. Quoted in Kerin, "Doctor Do-Good'? Charles Duguid and Aboriginal Politics 1930's-1970's," 54.

[122] Trudinger, "Dymythologising Flynn, with Love: contesting missionaries in Central Australia in the twentieth century," 155.

[123] Kerin, "Doctor Do-Good'? Charles Duguid and Aboriginal Politics 1930's-1970's," 50.

Duguid made very public personal attacks on the A.I.M. and its board. He did gain some supporters including a former A.I.M. nurse Jean Finlayson, who in a letter to the Presbyterian Messenger described Duguid as "the only man I have known who has had the courage to fearlessly declare what we all know to be the absolute truth regarding the natives, the white man, and the AIM."[124] However, Kerin argues this pursuit became about more than securing money for Ernabella; it became about Duguid as well. In her words,

> Although funding was a major and ongoing concern at Ernabella, the lengths Duguid went to, to secure the full proceeds of the Smith of Dunesk Bequest were, in many ways, disproportionate to the anticipated end result. . . Duguid's relentless pursuit of the full amount, even after Ernabella was granted three-quarters of the total, suggests that for him, the battle was about more than money, or even honour. In the end, it was about winning. Having denounced the AIM, its founder and its members, and subjected the Presbyterian Church to intense scrutiny, both historically and in the present, Duguid was determined to prove his cause right; to win at almost any cost, be it peace within the Church or his own spiritual life. [125]

The mission was founded on the principles Duguid said to have discussed with his wife on his return from his first trip to the Musgraves.

> The most basic was the conception of freedom. There was to be no compulsion nor imposition of our way of life on the Aborigines, nor deliberate interference with tribal custom. We believed that medical help should be offered at the outset, that only people trained in some particular skill should be on the mission staff and that they must learn the tribal language. As the economy of the mission developed responsibility should be passed onto the Aborigines as soon as possible.[126]

These words convict us. We still have not made this a reality. And they convict Duguid himself. While he always spoke respectfully of the Pitjantjatjara people and paid homage throughout his books to those who assisted him, he failed to give account of their leadership in the process.

His initial acceptance of and support for the removal of half-caste children from their Aboriginal mothers also needs to be acknowledged. According to Kerin, he believed that half caste children were half white, thus their proper place was in white society and so it

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[124] Jean Finlayson, "Letter to the editor," *Messenger*, 8 January 1937, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 4. Quoted in Kerin, "Doctor Do-Good'? Charles Duguid and Aboriginal Politics 1930's-1970's, 54.

[125] Kerin, "Doctor Do-Good'?," 57.

[126] Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines,"* 115.

was appropriate to take them and educate them in a way that would enable them to take their place in this society. However, in the 1950's he changed his position on this after visiting the Aborigines Inland Mission in Darwin. He repented saying,

> There was a time when I considered it in the interests of the half-caste children to bring them into our civilisation under mission care and I voted that way in a Mission Board decision. The tribal mother of that child was inconsolable and although she has had full-blood children since, she still sorrows for the loss of that child . . . Never again has any half-caste child been removed from its full blood mother in that part of the country.[127]

He also failed to give full account of the non-indigenous people who influenced him. He was the hero of his story, a story he carefully honed. While he alienated some quarters of the Presbyterian Church he also received much accolade from his supporters. While he certainly has nowhere near the number of monuments, memorials and biographies as Flynn he did receive an O.B.E. in 1970 and does now have a plaque in North Terrace in Adelaide amongst other well-known South Australians. His fellow Aboriginal rights campaigner Joan Strack wrote to him in 1940, "I feel that your name should be spelt "Doo good" for it is so much loved by the Aboriginal people of Australia"[128] and the Governor of South Australia, Mark Oliphant, in the forward to Duguid's memoirs wrote, "the awakening interest of government and people generally in the welfare of the Australian Aborigines is due in great part, to the continued efforts on their behalf of Dr. Charles Duguid."[129] Winifred Hilliard who wrote the book, *The People in Between,* about the history of Ernabella and the Pitjantjatjara people said he, "had the knowledge and wisdom to see where earlier missionary efforts had gone astray."[130] Robert Scrimgeour has argued that the,

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[127] Charles Duguid, "The Aborigines of Darwin and the Tropic North," *The Advertiser Printing Office*, 1951, Adelaide. Quoted in Kerin, "Doctor Do-Good'? Charles Duguid and Aboriginal Politics 1930's-1970's," 126.

[128] Joan Kingsley Strack, "Letter to Charles Duguid, 8 May 1940, Duguid Papers, National Library of Australia MS 5068, Series 1. Quoted in Kerin, "Doctor Do-Good'? Charles Duguid and Aboriginal Politics 1930's-1970's," 2.

[129] Mark Oliphant, foreword to *Doctor and the Aborigines,* by Charles Duguid.

[130] Winifred Hilliard, *The People in Between: The Pitjantjatjara People of Ernabella,* (Great Britain: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1968), 93.

> "name of one man stands out in the founding and development of [Ernabella mission], that of Dr Charles Duguid: he was 'the driving force behind Ernabella's establishment'; he was the one who believed the mission 'should act as a 'buffer station' to cushion the cultural shock' of contact with white society; and he was the one who devised the 'revolutionary' principles on which the mission was founded."[131]

While there is certainly truth in some of this it drowns out the voices of other significant activists at the time that influenced him. These voices include Frederic Wood Jones and John Burton Cleland who were in fact the first ones to first conceive of a buffer area for Aboriginal people[132]; Mary Bennett who first told him about the Smith of Dunesk money and; A.P Elkin who in 1934 advised missionaries,

> Rather than brand Aboriginal religion as 'devilish', they should 'build upon' it, for in Aboriginal society, as in 'most primitive societies', religion was 'one of the most important cohesive factors' and could not be lost without the disintegration of that society. Missionary success—defined in terms of Christian conversion but without the total obliteration of the Aborigines' own social and religious life—demanded 'knowledge of the native language and view of life, together with patience and conviction.[133]

There were also the countless other unnamed activists who expressed deep concern about what happened at Coniston and took to the streets in support of Dhakiyarr.

In 1968 Hilliard wrote, "without necessarily justifying them, it should be remembered that the missionaries were people of their times."[134] Duguid and Flynn were also people of their times and yet they were both, in their own ways, able to challenge some the prevailing worldviews. Duguid, in particular, did this for Aboriginal people. So without justifying them, as said in the previous chapter I think there are also pitfalls in putting aside present knowledge and values when it comes to the telling of history, I acknowledge that they did

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[131] Robert Scrimgeour, *Some Scots were here,* (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1986), 193, quoted in Kerin, "Doctor Do-Good'? Charles Duguid and Aboriginal Politics 1930's-1970's," 23.

[132] Kerin, "Doctor Do-Good'?," 34-35.

[133] A.P. Elkin, *Missionary Policy for Primitive Peoples*, (Morpeth: St John's College Press, 1934),8 (reprint from The Morpeth Review, No. 27), quoted in Kerin, "Doctor Do-Good'? Charles Duguid and Aboriginal Politics 1930's-1970's," 38.

[134] Hilliard, *The People in Between: The Pitjantjatjara People of Ernabella,* (Great Britain: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1968), 91.

not have the benefit I have, of being able to draw on the accumulated wisdom of the last 70 years.

None the less, in 2022, in light of this wisdom and of the Uluru Statement, I believe we need to tell our history differently. The time has come to include all stories, even if they do not reflect well on institutions and people we hold dear. We need to find a way to hold the elements of our history that are gracious and honourable alongside those that provoke grief and horror. Finally, we need to ensure our telling of history does not continue to silence the voices of those history silenced, particularly first nations people, who have lived successfully with the land for many tens of thousands of years, and that their law, language and culture continue to be strong.

Chapter 3

Theological Reflection

My wrestle with the contested narrative of John Flynn began when a woman who had just started coming to the church asked me about Adelaide House. She had recently moved to Alice Springs to work for an Aboriginal health service and as part of her orientation she had been told that Aboriginal people were not treated there. She was really dismayed to hear this. It did not fit with her experience of our church or what she was learning about the Uniting Church. Her questions led to me find out more. I discovered that while her orientation did not tell the whole story of Adelaide House, at times Aboriginal people were assisted by the nurses, at its inception, the official policy of this hospital, along with the other A.I.M. hospitals, was that it was for white people only.

At this time I was completing my formation for ministry in the Uniting Church but I, like this woman found myself struggling with this history. I began asking, "how do I reconcile all the good Flynn achieved with this discriminatory policy?" And, "how can we as a church worship and walk together with Aboriginal people in a building that is a memorial to someone who excluded them?" This thesis is part of my ongoing wrestle with these questions in the church I now lead.

As a person of the Christian faith, I have always turned to the Scriptures when grappling with a problem. They rarely provide a straightforward solution but almost always some insight. I found the books of Samuel helpful at that time. David is the central character of these books. He is the king Israel anticipates, and his rule is the highpoint of the Israeli monarchy. He becomes a central character of the Hebrew Scriptures as a whole. The Messiah is promised to David's line and in times of hardship the people cling onto this promise. And yet the books do not hide his deep flaws. Alongside the story of David and Goliath we get the story of David, Uriah and Bathsheba. Alongside his great conquests and victories we get the stories of David's children and the rape of his daughter Tamar by her brother. The bible, nor the God of Israel, in any way endorse this, and yet they hold it before us as a warning. People of faith throughout the centuries have held the paradox of these

stories, finding comfort or strength in the fact that sacred Scripture does not hide from negative human experiences.

In this theological reflection I reflect briefly on the role the church has played in the history of colonisation and violence against First Nations people and some of the narratives from the Bible that have been used to justify it. These narratives also influenced Flynn and Duguid. However, these Biblical narratives have been contested in the church and in the Bible itself and so I also discuss some alternate narratives in Scripture that give a different account of land, land ownership and how to respond to people already living in it. I seek to hold the paradox in these stories. Doing this has given me a way forward in holding the paradox in the stories of my own spiritual ancestors – John Flynn and Charles Duguid – and perhaps even in myself.

The history of the spread of Christianity is long and complex. Initially, it was an anti-imperialist, grass roots movement that proliferated organically and peaceably, through the agency of communities themselves. The message was one of liberation from the Roman Empire. However, that began to change with the conversion of Emperor Constantine, who made Christianity the religion of the Empire in the fourth century. The power of the now institutionalised church grew. Its ideology became increasingly aligned to the power structures of the state. Its spread became entangled with colonisation and imperialism.

A millennium after Constantine this alliance was further solidified by what become known as the Doctrine of Discovery. While this phrase was not used until the nineteenth century the basis of this doctrine are three papal bulls written in the fifteenth century that "gave Christian governments moral and legal rights to invade and seize Indigenous land and dominate Indigenous peoples."[135] First in 1452 Pope Nicholas V issued "Dum Diversas" authorising the King of Portugal to enslave Muslims and other pagans. This bull essentially justified the Portuguese slave trade. Three years later he issued "Romanus Pontifex" as a follow up. This bull sanctified the seizure of non-Christian lands and the enslavement of the non-Christian people there, by the Catholic nations of Europe.

[135] Sarah Augustine, *The Land Is Not Empty: Following Jesus in Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery,* (Newburyport: Herald Press, 2021). ProQuest Ebook Central. Accessed September 30, 2022, 20.

Finally, in 1493, Pope Alexander VI issued "Inter Caetera." This bull also gave the Church's authorization to Christian nations to invade non-Christian lands, take their land and enslave and convert their people. It also stated that if one Christian nation had discovered and established dominion over another land then another Christian nation was not entitled to this land. Written by a Spanish pope, on Columbus' return from his first voyage, this bull protected his discovery.

The Bible was used to justify this doctrine. In her book, *The Land Is Not Empty: Following Jesus in Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery,* Sarah Augustine explains how this works,

> An important premise of the Doctrine of Discovery goes like this: God made a covenant with Israel, God's chosen people. With the coming of Jesus, God's chosen people became the Church, the body of Christ. The church thus becomes the new chosen people, who have a covenant with God, and who are justified and empowered to go into the promised land – that is lands around the globe that were uninhabited by a Christian Prince.[136]

We can hear the influence of this thinking in Flynn's nationalistic agenda. In a 1922 edition of the Inlander, the opening article was titled, "The New Game for Young and Old. Painting Australia Red." This title refers to the fact that at the time, countries of the British Empire were painted red on world maps. The article opens,

> Our idea may be sensed by a glance at the map presented to readers in this issue: we refer to effective British Occupation. In the highest sense, effective British occupation includes:
> Adequate numbers of citizens all over Australia, justifying by their presence our assertion of ownership.
> Social privileges such as time and opportunity for bright recreation and sport of various kinds: provision for safety of life signified by the Red Cross.
> Above all, Culture. What is real Culture? Surely it is just a keen appreciation of eternal things.[137]

As a Native American, Christian woman Augustine discusses how alienated she feels from much of the Old Testament, in particular the Exodus story, which she calls a genocide story. She says, "While the commandments in Deuteronomy 5 make clear the wrongness of

[136] Augustine, *The Land Is Not Empty,* 76.

[137] John Flynn, "The New Game for Young and Old. Painting Australia Red." *The Inlander,* Vol. 7 No. 1 (June 1922), 8.

murder and theft, chapter 6 and 7 make a clear justification and program for genocide."[138] Deuteronomy 7: 1-7 declares,

> When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are about to enter and occupy and he clears away many nations before you — the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you — and when the Lord your God gives them over to you and you defeat them, then you must utterly destroy them. Make no covenant with them and show them no mercy. Do not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for that would turn away your children from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly. But this is how you must deal with them: break down their altars, smash their pillars, cut down their sacred poles, and burn their idols with fire. For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession.

These words are certainly shocking and it cannot be denied that they have been used to empower the murder of First Nations people. They are particularly discouraging for Indigenous Christians, like Augustine, who often identify as part of the native nations listed here to be destroyed. She says she has struggled to "square this message, this ongoing story, with the good news of the gospel."[139] She has found a way forward in the writings of George Tinker that have encouraged her to bring her own old testament (the story of her people) to the story of Jesus, asking what the Gospel of Christ means in her context. She says, despite some of the hard messages in the Bible, she remains a Christian because she is compelled by the mandate of Jesus found in Luke 4. She loves Him and clings to the hope he proclaims, good news for the poor, the release of prisoners and liberation for the oppressed.[140]

Old Testament theologian Walter Brueggemann describes the Bible as "a sustained contestation over truth in which conventional modes of power do not always prevail."[141] He explains how this works,

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[138] Augustine, *The Land Is Not Empty,* 76.

[139] Augustine, *The Land Is Not Empty,* 77.

[140] Augustine, *The Land Is Not Empty.*

[141] Walter Brueggemann, *Truth Speaks to Power : The Countercultural Nature of Scripture,* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 2013), 6.

> In the Old Testament, official truth is carried by the urban elites of dynasty and temple and eventually by the scribal class. And in the New Testament, the same truth is variously carried and sustained by the scribal community that is allied with other establishment parties. In both testaments, however, there is another truth. In the Old Testament, that other truth is carried by song, oracle, and narrative that continually subvert official truth. In the communities that produced the text, that subversion must have been both valued and enjoyed, and that subversive potential continues to be operative in the rereading of the texts. In the New Testament, that counter-truth is carried by Jesus and his followers, a community that regularly and with great risk subverts and bewilders the establishment and so turns the "world upside down" (Acts 17:6).[142]

Thus, while acknowledging texts like Deuteronomy 6 and 7 have provided justification for abhorrent violence against First Nations people, I will now look briefly at some texts that contest Deuteronomy 6 and 7. Firstly, I will look at three texts from the Hebrew Scriptures - Genesis 14:17-24, Genesis 26:17-33 and 1 Kings 21:17-19 - and then one from the Gospels -Luke 9:1-6. These texts critique the Doctrine of Discovery and the way our ancestors entered and colonised this land; and provide an alternative to the belief that economic progress is always good, no matter the cost and Christian imperialism is always Godly. These texts also demonstrate to me Brueggemann's claim that in the Bible,

> truth, unlike establishment power that is visible, is characteristically elusive and contested because the claims made for truth are variously endorsements of or subversions of established power. The occupants of power are, of necessity, always seeking out versions of truth that are compatible with present power arrangements. Conversely, outsiders to present power arrangements are always proposing a counter-truth that will permit and legitimate counter-arrangements of power. [143]

In Genesis 14:17-24 and 26:17-33 we find two stories of our ancestors of the faith, Abraham and Isaac, encountering other people and other traditions in the land. Firstly, in Genesis 14 Abraham, who was still Abram, encounters King Melchizedek of Salem in the land of Canaan. The story tells us he was a priest of God Most High, who brought out bread and wine and blessed Abram. Abram does not reject this blessing, but rather gives Melchizedek one-tenth of what he had. Despite being an outsider to the Abrahamic line,

[142] Brueggemann, *Truth Speaks to Power,* 4

[143] Brueggemann, *Truth Speaks to Power,* 4.

this King Melchizedek is considered so significant that the author of Hebrews suggest that Jesus was "designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek" (Heb 5:10). Rev. Dr. Denise Champion says this story has been significant to Aboriginal people,

> Uncle Bill Hollingsworth, the first chair of National Congress at the time when Congress and the Uniting Church entered into Covenant, would talk about us as a royal priesthood, a holy nation after the order of Melchizedek. . . . There's something important about why he has been included. He holds knowledge that is older than Abraham's story.[144]

In Genesis 26 Abraham's son Isaac entered the land of Gerar and his servants dug some wells. However, "the herders of Gerar [who were already in that land] quarrelled with Isaac's servants saying, 'the water is ours.' " (v 19) So Isaac's servants dug another well, the herders of Gerar again quarrelled with them and so they dug another one. This third time the herders of Gerar "did not quarrel and so [Isaac] called it, Rehoboth, saying, 'Now the Lord has made room for us and we shall be fruitful in the land.' " (v 22)

Central Land Council Lawyer, in a sermon this year brought my attention to how in arid Central Australia, water has also been fought over. When the pastoralists came and established cattle stations here, their cattle took over the ancient waterholes on which Aboriginal people depended for survival. These sites and the water itself are sacred to Aboriginal people. They hold cultural knowledge that helped them navigate their way in a dry, desert land. These waterholes provided water to drink but also food. With the diminishment of their own food sources they killed the cattle and in turn were killed. Many of Australia's most well-known and brutal massacres happened around water – the Myall Creek massacre, the Waterloo Creek massacre and the Coniston massacre.

Australian law has not recognised the claims of First Nations people to water. As the headline of a 2020 article in The Conversation declared, "Australia has an ugly legacy of denying water rights to Aboriginal people. Not much has changed."[145] The article explains that,

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[144] Champion, *Anaditj,* 10.

[145] Lana D Hartwig, Natalie Osborne and Sue Jackson, "Australia has an ugly legacy of denying water rights to Aboriginal people. Not much has changed," *The Conversation,* July 24, 2020, Australia has an ugly legacy of denying water rights to Aboriginal people. Not much has changed (theconversation.com).

> under colonial water law, rights to use water, for example for farming, were granted to whoever owned the land where rivers flowed. This link between water use and land-holding remained in place until the end of the 20th century. As a result, Aboriginal people, whose traditional ownership of land (native title) was only recognised by the Australian High Court in 1992, were largely denied legal rights to water.[146]

These days, while traditional ownership is recognised and "32% of Australia's landmass is under some form of Native Title, First Nations people hold less than 1% of Australia's water licences."[147] In April last year the Northern Territory government granted a groundwater extraction licence to Fortune Agribusiness that will enable it to extract 40,000 megalitres of water per year for its station located about 300 kms North of Alice Springs. Aboriginal people in the neighbouring community of Ali Curung are now fearful of their future. Josie Douglas from the Central Land Council says Aboriginal people "are now asking themselves: 'What's the point of having land rights if the land we want back becomes unliveable because the water's running out or polluted?'"[148]

In contrast to all this, Isaac walked away from wells due to the claims of ownership by the herders of Gerar who were there before him. Eventually, Isaac dug a well and the herders did not quarrel with him. He named this well Rehoboth saying, "Now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." Isaac and these herders recognised that water was a gift from God to be shared. They were able to make room for each other so that all could be fruitful. Kaytete and Alyawarre woman Rosie-Anne Holmes from Ali Curung wants the same thing of Fortune Agribusiness. She says "the company needs to share the water" so that her family may have a future on their land.

I will now turn to the book of Kings and the story of Naboth's Vineyard narrated in 1 Kings 21. In this story King Ahab requests the vineyard of his neighbour Naboth. The King promises to pay Naboth well or to give him a better vineyard but Naboth refuses saying, "the Lord forbid that I should give you my ancestral inheritance." (v 3) Naboth is referring to Deuteronomy 19:14, "You must not move your neighbour's boundary marker, set up by

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[146] Hartwig, Osborne & Jackson, "Australia has an ugly legacy of denying water rights to Aboriginal people"

[147] Gemma Pol, "First Nations Water Right and Activism," Common Ground, accessed 5 Oct 2022, First Nations Water Rights and Activism (commonground.org.au)

[148] Samantha Jonscher, "Sacred Sites and water Rights," *ABC News,* Oct. 8 2021, Sacred sites and water rights - ABC News

former generations, on the property that will be allotted to you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you to possess." For his refusal, King Ahab's wife has Naboth killed and Ahab takes possession of the field. The prophet Elijah is then called by God to tell Ahab that because of this evil, disaster will be brought upon him and his descendants.

Enns and Myers point out that for most contemporary people Ahab's proposition seems highly reasonable, in fact generous and Naboth's stubborn refusal seems unreasonable.[149] Shaped by the idea that the value of land is measured in how much it can be sold for, if I was presented with the opportunity to swap my home for a better one, I would most likely take it. Naboth, however was shaped by a very different notion of land value. Enns and Myers say,

> his perspective lies in the Hebrew term nahala (v. 3). Poorly translated as "possession" or "inheritance," it rather connoted a sense of ancestral stewardship of land that is understood as a gift from the Creator, its use contingent upon an intergenerational enduring covenant relationship.[150]

This view of the land, and way of relating to it, is strikingly similar to that of First Nations who speak not of owning land but of the land owning them. Ellen Davis calls the story of Naboth, "an emblematic tale of two economic systems or cultures in conflict, each with different principles of land tenure."[151] This tale also find voice in in Kev Carmody and Paul Kelly's song, "This Land is mine." This song was written for the movie, "One Night the Moon" that tells the true story of a station owner's refusal to accept help from an Aboriginal tracker in the search for his missing daughter. This song opens with the station owner singing,

"This land is mine, all the way to the old fence line
Every break of day, I'm working hard just to make it pay
This land is mine, I signed on the dotted line
Campfires on the creek bed, bank breathing down my neck
They won't take it away, they won't take it away,
They won't take it away from me."

[149] Enns and Myers, *Healing Haunted Histories,* 187.

[150] Enns and Myers, *Healing Haunted Histories,* 188.

[151] Ellen Davis*, Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture : An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 111. Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture : An Agrarian Reading of the Bible: EBSCOhost (flinders.edu.au)

And the tracker responds,

"This land is me, rock, water, animal, tree
They are my song, my being's here where I belong
This land owns me, from generations past to infinity
We're all but woman and man, you only fear what you don't understand
They won't take it away, they won't take it away
They won't take it away from me."[152]

For Naboth unfortunately the worldview of land possession triumphs in this particular battle. Using the effective strategy of divide and conquer, Jezebel recruits local leaders, who likely feared for their own safety, to stone Naboth to death. However, his resistance will not be silenced. Ahab and Jezebel's old nemesis, the prophet Elijah, appears once again to speak truth to their power. On behalf of God Elijah asks, "Have you killed, and also taken possession?" (v 19) This is a succinct summary of the colonisation of this land. Ahab is contrite and thus avoids the disaster that was pronounced against him but it is not enough to save his sons. Enns and Myers note in this we encounter "an important dialectical realism that we often find in the biblical narratives." That is,

> Personal efforts to "turn around" are meaningful, even among the powerful, but by themselves they do not change political systems . . . As narrated later in 2 Kings 9, the Omrid dynasty indeed expires in the next generation. As for Jezebel, her sons bleed to death on the very ground of Naboth's village and the queen herself is thrown out of a place window by her own attendants. The violence of colonisation's murder and dispossession ultimately consumes it perpetrators: divine judgement as historical consequences.[153]

The final contesting narrative that I will examine is found in Luke 9:1-6. In this passage, Jesus sends his disciples out "to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom and to heal." (v2) He instructs them in how to do this saying, "take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money - not even an extra tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there and leave from there. Whenever they do not welcome you, as you are leaving that town shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." (v3-5)

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[152] Kevin Carmody and Paul Kelly, "This land is mine," recorded 2007 on *Cannot Buy my Soul,* C.D.

[153] Enns and Myers, *Healing Haunted Histories,* 192

Jesus' instructs his disciples to take nothing, to receive the hospitality of locals and then to leave. If they are not welcomed, they are also to leave, shaking the dust off their feet. How different this is to how our ancestors colonised this country and the world. They brought with them not good news and healing but all their cultural paraphernalia. Assuming the locals had nothing to offer, they did not accept their hospitality but rather built their own houses. And they stayed. If they were not welcomed, they did not leave but forced themselves and their way of life on the local people.

It is not always easy holding the often violent and nationalistic narratives in the Bible alongside ones such as these that critique violence. Knowing the Bible has been used as justification for further violence and oppression makes it harder. But Rene Girard famously called the Hebrew Scriptures a "text in travail." In his book, *Compassion or Apocalypse? A comprehensible guide to the thought of Rene Girard*, James Warren explains what this means. He says, "these texts display competing notions about God: what God is like, what God does, how God acts and so on."[154] The Bible narrates the story of a people who are coming to know their God and themselves as the people of God. Perhaps not everything that is attributed to God in the Bible, is actually God. There are moments when understanding leaps forward, and there moments when it steps back. This is the journey of faith we are all on, and God is present in it. But Warren argues, "there is a trajectory to revelation, a point towards which this internal scriptural struggle is striving; but it doesn't come to full fruition until we read certain sections of the New Testament and learn about God as wholly love."[155] This is the love we encounter in Jesus, who chooses to die by violence rather than commit it.

Likewise, it is not easy to hold all our great respect for someone with the reality of their failings. But the biblical narrative is filled with flawed characters —Abraham, Sarah and Hagar, Jacob, Rachel and Leah, David, Peter, Martha and Paul — who despite their failings, play significant roles in the story of God amongst us. Not everything they do and say is necessarily endorsed by God. Sometimes their journeys serve as warning. Genesis 22 narrates the story of the so called "command to sacrifice Isaac." This story could have been

[154] James Warren, *Compassion or Apocalypse? A comprehensible guide to the thought of Rene Girard,* (Ropley: John Hunt Publishing Limited, 2013), 127. ProQuest Ebook Central - Reader

[155] Warren, *Compassion or Apocalypse?,* 127.

read as an endorsement of child sacrifice, but what actually happened was the eventual extinction of the practice, across ancient Israel.

The characters of the Bible do not always behave better than anyone else did in their time. However, what the redactors of the book enabled the people to do was look honestly and unflinchingly at their history and repent. There are calls for celebration and praise but also lament. We now dare to call this sacred, the Word of God.

The stories of the Bible and the people in it must be interpreted in light of Scripture as whole. Perhaps we could say the characters of the Bible too are people in travail, as we are. This understanding helps me to reconcile those elements in my own history that are gracious and honourable with those that provoke grief and horror.

Conclusion

In September 2021 Radio National's Background Briefing aired a story called "The Ghosts are not Silent." This program was put together by reporter and novelist Sam Carmody, from the town of Busselton in the Southwest corner of Western Australia. Busselton is named after the pioneer John Garrett Bussell and Sam is a descendent of his. Growing up this was a cause of great pride for him. However, this begins to change when he is told that a member of the Bussell family shot an Aboriginal girl. This led Sam on a journey to find out the true history of his ancestors. He speaks with other descendants of the Bussell family, local historians and Noongar traditional owners. He slowly pieces together the story of a violent manhunt and gruesome massacre in which his ancestors participated. Sam's journey is documented for background briefing and the importance of this journey is summed up by Noongar elder, Wayne Webb who said this to Sam,

> For us, it helps us heal, in a way, by having yourself come to us as a family, and we hope that, that's exactly it, that it reconciles with yourself, that it helps to heal yourself, helps to fill in those knowledge gaps that may have been missed and that's how we walk together. And I really stress that, walk together into the future by sitting down, talking about these things and even talking about the most uncomfortable things. It can be uncomfortable a lot of the time but it's just about acknowledgement, and by doing that, like I say, I think it's a healing journey on both ends then.[156]

I believe that this work of familial and communal research belongs to all Australians. All our ancestors played a part in the colonial story that we need to understand if we, as a nation, are to find the healing Wayne speaks of. I hope that this thesis contributes to that.

This research has explored some of the story of John Flynn. As the current minister of the John Flynn Memorial Uniting Church, he is an important spiritual ancestor to me. His role in Australia's history is significant. The RFDS, the A.I.M. (Frontier Services) and the Old Timer's nursing home in Alice Springs have saved, enriched and improved the lives of many across Australia, non-indigenous and Indigenous people alike. Flynn played an essential role in the beginnings of these organisations and I truly hope we continue to tell this story. I truly hope we will continue to be inspired by his tenacity, his ability to take enormous

[156]Background briefing, 41.19. Sept 2021

risks for the things that were important to him and, his desire to see the Kingdom of God lived and not just preached among people.

However, with the knowledge and understanding we have today and in light of the Uluru Statement's call for truth telling we need to be aware of how our ancestor's stories impacted on the stories of First Nations people. I believe that if we cannot do this, the whole story will just become irrelevant for future generations. Thus, in this thesis I have held Flynn's rich legacy against some of the deeply racist and offensive comments he made about Aboriginal people. I have argued that we need to be more open about these. They should not be excused by or hidden amongst the more ambivalent ones.

I have named the First Nations people, the traditional custodians, of the lands on which Flynn lived and worked. While Frontier Services is now present in Aboriginal communities, at the time, the A.I.M. did very little to improve Aboriginal safety and well-being, despite using money that was given for their welfare. We need to educate ourselves about their story as well as the violence they experienced, and the stealing and desecration of their land that occurred at the time. Something the Inlander magazine did not seek to do. Rather, Flynn constructed a narrative of brave pioneers who mostly treated Aboriginal people with kindliness. He told the story of their struggles against heat, isolation and economic hardship for the sake of the nation but was silent on the killings and sexual abuse of Aboriginal people. Flynn might have been creating a mantle of safety for white settlers but it seems their growing presence was not making Aboriginal people safer.

However, there were white people at the time, such as Dr. Charles Duguid, deeply concerned about the effects of white settlement on Indigenous people. In this thesis I have also explored some of his story. He was a contemporary of Flynn's and his words provide an illuminating comparison.

> There were no beasts of burden in Australia, no animals that could supply milk for human use, and no fruits or vegetables or grain that could be cultivated for human consumption, and yet these people grew and multiplied and were healthy and happy until the white man came along. Then the signal mistake was made, that is still being made in general principle – we never sought their co-operation.[157]

[157] Presbyterian Church of Australia, Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

These words were spoken 85 years ago and yet we still often make this signal mistake.

Finally, I reflected theologically on these stories. I explore the ways the Bible has been used to justify colonisation and the difficulty this causes for Aboriginal people. However, recognising that the Bible is a book that is always in dialogue with itself and a place where truth is contested I delve into some biblical texts that critique the history of the settlement of these lands. I believe this important. As Rev. Dr. Denise Champion says, "colonisation affects the whole population - black and white." Truth is a way forward for us all. Jesus dared to suggest that it will set us free."[158]

Even at this point I am still figuring out what to make of all this. It is not easy to hold all this and determine where to here from her. But I will finish with a quote of great insight from Flynn himself from the 1927 Inlander. Perhaps he would have been more ready to acknowledge his failings than we are. "We Australians who, lightheartedly, for four generations have been reading to Aboriginies the move aside clause will be called upon to render an account of our stewardship – God knows how soon."[159]

I think that time has now come. It is a both a challenging time and a time of great hope, a time to, in the words of the Uluru Statement "walk together in a movement of the Australian people for a better future."

[158] Champion, *Anaditj, 63.*

[159] John Flynn, "Central Australia" *The Inlander,* No. 19 (Oct. 1927), 52.

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