

Confidential

ABORIGINES INLAND MISSION
OF AUSTRALIA
MISSION MANUAL

A summary of the aims, structure, principles and methods of operation of the
AIM, together with information about the Aboriginal people and the history
of the Mission.

REMINDERS ABOUT THIS MANUAL

IT IS FOR THE 'INNER CIRCLE'

The AIM Mission Manual is not meant for everyone in the wide AIM family or casually interested in the work of the Mission.

A copy is issued to every **member** of the Mission, as defined in the Constitution:

- Missionaries
- Associate Missionaries
- Management Committee members
- Administrative Council members
- State Representatives

For these men and women in the 'inner circle' are the only ones who need a clear statement of the Mission's organisation, aims, principles and methods of operation.

In addition, all **Candidates** will be given a copy to study during the Candidates Orientation Course and to use during their probation. For this information will be of great assistance to them if they eventually become Missionaries.

KEEP IT CAREFULLY

It is a **valuable** handbook. Don't leave it lying around where it may be lost or damaged.

It is also a **confidential** document. The information it contains is not to be passed on to anyone outside the Mission family without the approval of Headquarters.

KEEP IT UP-TO-DATE

From time to time revisions of sections of the Manual, or new material, will be prepared and distributed from Mission HQ. The holder of each Manual is responsible to insert all update sheets in his copy, and destroy all sheets they replace.

RETURN IT

Every Mission Manual remains the property of the Aborigines Inland Mission at all times. When a member retires or resigns from the Mission, he is to return his copy to HQ.

- Aborigines Inland Mission of Australia
- PO Box 21
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CONTENTS

- 1 ***INTRODUCTION***
 - 1.1 *History of the Manual*
 - 1.2 *Purpose of the Manual*
 - 1.3 *Use of the Manual*
 - 1.3.1 Page and Section Numbering
 - 1.3.2 Revisions
 - 1.3.3 General Arrangement of Topics
 - 1.3.4 Appendices

- 1.3.5 Abbreviations
- 1.4 *The Aborigines Inland Mission of Australia*
 - 1.4.1 Milestones of Mission Work in Australia
 - 1.4.2 Highlights of AIM History
 - 1.4.3 Special Ministries
 - 1.4.3.1 Darwin Bible College
 - 1.4.3.2 Mission Publications of Australia
 - 1.4.3.3 Audio and Video Cassette Ministry

2

THE MISSION

- 2.1 *Purpose*
 - 2.1.1 Evangelising
 - 2.1.2 Discipling
 - 2.1.3 Planting Churches
 - 2.1.4 Transferring Responsibilities
 - 2.1.5 Training Leaders
 - 2.1.6 Establishing Church Councils
- 2.2 *Sphere of Operations*
- 2.3 *Constitution*
- 2.4 *Membership*
- 2.5 *Organisation and Administration*
 - 2.5.1 Management Structure
 - 2.5.2 Management Committee (Mission Officers)
 - 2.5.2.1 Purpose
 - 2.5.2.2 Appointment
 - 2.5.2.3 Responsibilities
 - 2.5.2.3.1 President
 - 2.5.2.3.2 Vice President (s)
 - 2.5.2.3.3 Executive Secretary
 - 2.5.2.3.4 Treasurer
 - 2.5.3 Field Council
 - 2.5.3.1 Membership
 - 2.5.3.2 Term of Office
 - 2.5.3.3 Election Procedure
 - 2.5.3.3.1 Timing
 - 2.5.3.3.2 Nominations
 - 2.5.3.3.3 Voting
 - 2.5.3.3.4 Casual Vacancies
 - 2.5.3.4 Duties
 - 2.5.3.5 Officers
 - 2.5.3.5.1 Field Supt.
 - 2.5.3.5.1.1 Election
 - 2.5.3.5.1.2 Duties
 - 2.5.3.5.2 Area Supts.
 - 2.5.3.5.2.1 Election
 - 2.5.3.5.2.2 Duties
 - 2.5.3.5.3 Training Supt.
 - 2.5.3.5.3.1 Appointment
 - 2.5.3.5.3.2 Duties
 - 2.5.3.5.4 Field Secretary
 - 2.5.3.5.4.1 Election
 - 2.5.3.5.4.2 Duties
 - 2.5.3.6 Meetings
 - 2.5.3.6.1 Frequency

- 2.5.3.6.2 Agendas
 - 2.5.3.6.3 Travel Costs
 - 2.5.4 Administrative Council
 - 2.5.4.1 Membership and Nominations
 - 2.5.4.2 Duties
 - 2.5.4.3 Meetings
 - 2.5.4.4 Officers and their Roles
 - 2.5.4.4.1 Minutes Secretary
 - 2.5.4.4.2 Deputation Secretary
 - 2.5.4.4.3 Property Manager (s)
 - 2.5.4.4.4 New Workers' Counsellor
 - 2.5.4.4.5 Prayer Convenor
 - 2.5.4.4.6 Promotion and Publicity Officer
 - 2.5.4.5 Committee etc.
 - 2.5.4.5.1 MPA Council
 - 2.5.4.5.2 Candidates' Committee
 - 2.5.4.5.3 Holding Company
 - 2.5.4.6 State Representatives
- 2.6 *Finance*
 - 2.6.1 How Funds are Raised
 - 2.6.2 Team Support
 - 2.6.2.1 What it is
 - 2.6.2.2 How it Works
 - 2.6.2.3 Support Figures
 - 2.6.3 Personal Gifts
 - 2.6.4 Special Projects
 - 2.6.5 The Source of All Gifts
 - 2.6.6 Mission House Rents
 - 2.6.7 Property Insurance
 - 2.6.8 Housekeeping Expenses
 - 2.6.9 Travelling Expenses
 - 2.6.10 Annual Financial Reports
 - 2.6.11 Dealing with Financial Shortage
 - 2.6.12 Opportunities for Secular Work
 - 2.6.13 Income Tax
 - 2.6.14 Purchase of Vehicles
 - 2.6.15 Retirement Assistance
- 2.7 *Workers*
 - 2.7.1 Candidates
 - 2.7.1.1 Application Process
 - 2.7.1.2 Applicants who have Served as Pastors
 - 2.7.2 Probationers
 - 2.7.2.1 Orientation and Deputation
 - 2.7.2.2 First Appointment
 - 2.7.2.3 End of Probation
 - 2.7.3 Missionaries
 - 2.7.3.1 Declaration
 - 2.7.3.2 Appointment
 - 2.7.3.3 Responsibilities
 - 2.7.3.4 Missionary Pastors
 - 2.7.3.5 Leave of Absence and Secondment
 - 2.7.4 Associate Missionaries
 - 2.7.4.1 Workers for MPA

- 2.7.4.2 Volunteers for Practical Service
- 2.7.4.3 Workers with Restrictions on their Ministry
- 2.7.5 Associate Workers
 - 2.7.5.1 Appointment
 - 2.7.5.2 Service
- 2.7.6 Recognised AIM Pastors
- 2.7.7 General Information
 - 2.7.7.1 The Ministry of Women
 - 2.7.7.2 Authority to Celebrate Marriages
 - 2.7.7.3 Relaxation Times
 - 2.7.7.4 Holidays, Furlough and Leave
 - 2.7.7.5 Conferences
 - 2.7.7.6 Engagement and Marriage
 - 2.7.7.7 Resignation
 - 2.7.7.8 Retirement
- 2.8 *Property*
 - 2.8.1 Vehicles
 - 2.8.2 Rental of a Mission House
 - 2.8.3 Purchase of Land or Residence
 - 2.8.4 Erection of a New Mission House
 - 2.8.5 Erection of a Church Building
 - 2.8.6 Alterations and Additions to Mission Buildings
 - 2.8.7 Maintenance of Mission Property
 - 2.8.8 Disposal of Mission Property
 - 2.8.9 Guidelines for Building Projects Costing More Than \$1000
 - 2.8.9.1 Prepare an Outline of the Proposal
 - 2.8.9.2 Submit the Proposal to the AC
 - 2.8.9.3 Prepare detailed Plans and Specifications
 - 2.8.9.4 Submit Detailed Plans to the AC
 - 2.8.9.5 Proceed with the Project
- 2.9 *Communication*
 - 2.9.1 Supt. to Missionary
 - 2.9.2 Missionary to Supt.
 - 2.9.3 Missionary to Supporters
 - 2.9.4 HQ to Workers
- 2.10 *Relationships*
 - 2.10.1 General
 - 2.10.2 Between Mission and Government
 - 2.10.3 Attitude to Charismatic Movement

3

THE FIELD

- 3.1 *The People*
 - 3.1.1 The Aborigines
 - 3.1.2 Special Factors Affecting Work Among Aborigines
 - 3.1.2.1 Location
 - 3.1.2.2 Lifestyle
 - 3.1.2.3 Needs
 - 3.1.2.4 Radical Movements
 - 3.1.3 Approaching the People
 - 3.1.4 Land Rights
- 3.2 Mission Centres
 - 3.2.1 Aims of Mission Centre Work
 - 3.2.2 Establishment of a Centre
 - 3.2.3 Use of Vehicles

- 3.2.4 Outreach Work
- 3.2.5 Records and Reporting
- 3.2.6 Visitors to Mission Centres
- 3.3 *Churches*
 - 3.3.1 What Kind of Churches?
 - 3.3.1.1 Character
 - 3.3.1.2 Organisation
 - 3.3.2 Establishing a Local Church
 - 3.3.2.1 Stages
 - 3.3.2.2 Essential Requirements
 - 3.3.2.2.1 A Special Meeting Place?
 - 3.3.2.2.2 Sufficient Christians
 - 3.3.2.2.3 Regular Meetings
 - 3.3.2.2.4 Leadership
 - 3.3.2.2.5 Rules (Constitution)
 - 3.3.2.3 Qualifications for Membership
 - 3.3.2.4 Preparation
 - 3.3.2.5 Establishment
 - 3.3.2.6 Forms of Worship
 - 3.3.3 Leadership in a Local Church
 - 3.3.3.1 Secretary and Treasurer
 - 3.3.3.2 Elders
 - 3.3.3.3 Deacons
 - 3.3.3.4 Church Leader
 - 3.3.3.5 Pastor
 - 3.3.3.5.1 The Role of a Pastor
 - 3.3.3.5.2 Calling a Pastor
 - 3.3.3.5.2.1 Preparing the People
 - 3.3.3.5.2.2 Considering Suitable Men
 - 3.3.4 Operating a Local Church
 - 3.3.4.1 Links with the Mission
 - 3.3.4.2 Spiritual Ministry
 - 3.3.4.2.1 Regular Meetings
 - 3.3.4.2.2 Outreach and Visitation
 - 3.3.4.3 Business Meetings
 - 3.3.4.3.1 Members Meetings
 - 3.3.4.3.2 Annual Meeting
 - 3.3.4.4 Church Finance
 - 3.3.4.4.1 Teaching about giving
 - 3.3.4.4.2 Handling Church Monies
 - 3.3.4.4.3 Other Sources of Finance
 - 3.3.4.5 Church Property
 - 3.3.4.5.1 Ownership
 - 3.3.4.5.2 Care and Maintenance
 - 3.3.4.5.3 New Buildings and Land
 - 3.3.4.5.4 Alterations and Extensions
 - 3.3.4.5.5 Disposal
 - 3.3.4.6 Records
 - 3.3.4.7 Reporting
 - 3.3.5 Helping a Church in Difficulties
 - 3.3.6 Relationships
 - 3.3.6.1 Church with Mission
 - 3.3.6.2 Pastor with Mission

- 3.3.6.3 Church with Other Organisations
 - 3.4 *Special Ministries*
 - 3.4.1 Initial Establishment and Affiliation
 - 3.4.2 Relationships
 - 3.4.3 Reporting
 - 3.4.4 Public Relations
 - 4 *ADDITIONAL READING*
 - 4.1 The Australian Aborigines
 - 4.2 History of Missions
 - 4.3 The Church on the Mission Field
- APPENDICES*
- 1. General Information about Aborigines — Past and Present
 - 2. AIM Constitution
 - 3. AIM Field Map and Directory
 - 4. AIM Organisation Chart
 - 5. Mission or Church?
 - 6. Guidelines on Marriage Matters
 - 7. Pattern for a Church Constitution
 - 8. MPA Catalogue
 - 9. Report Forms
 - 10. Church Records
 - 11. Responsibilities of Area Superintendents
 - 12. Tax Returns

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 HISTORY OF THE MANUAL

From the inception of the AIM, its Council members and Missionaries needed information about the way the Mission was organised and how it operated. During the first 70 years, various documents were prepared at different times. These included:

- The Constitution of the Mission
- Principles and Practices of the Field Council
- Roles and Responsibilities of Councils and Staff
- Straight Paths for Your Feet

In addition, many decisions were made in Council meetings and at Mission conferences which affected the way the Mission operated. But often this information became buried in minute books and was in danger of being forgotten.

Then in 1977 the mammoth task of preparing this Manual was undertaken by members of the Management Committee. Information was drawn from the above sources, sorted out and arranged. Extra material was written as necessary.

After countless hours of detailed work, the finished product was distributed.

Inevitably, as the situation on the Field and in the Australian Christian community changed over the years, various changes had to be made in the Mission's structure and methods of operation. Some of these changes led to revisions of parts of the Manual. However, the Management Committee was fighting a losing battle. Eventually the Manual became so out-of-date that only a thorough re-write would rectify the situation.

This became all the more obvious after a completely rewritten Constitution was accepted by the Field and Administrative Councils in 1991.

At last this important but long-delayed project has been completed.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

The AIM Mission Manual is a reference book about Mission policies and practices, and also has much helpful background information.

It is issued to all members of the Mission and is to be kept as a handy authority on all questions relating to the operation of the Mission. New members are urged to carefully study their copy soon after they receive it. All of us should re-read it from time to time in order to keep the information

fresh in our minds.

As members of the AIM we all belong to a team called by Christ to do a specific task. *Every sports team functions best when each member sticks to the accepted rules. It will be just the same for us.*

No doubt some of the things set down in this book have not been thought out as well or set down as clearly as they might have been. But they are the 'rules' we have accepted as the basis on which we will work together.

Unfortunately, one of the greatest hindrances to the work of Christ in the world is friction between His servants. And as most of us are strong-willed people, problems can easily arise in the AIM, as in other organisations. For example, you may be tempted to ignore the principles set down in this handbook and do things your own way. But that can only lead to confusion.

If the Lord has directed you to serve Him within the framework of the AIM, surely He expects you to adhere to its policies as well (even though they may not be perfect).

1.3 USE OF THE MANUAL

1.3.1 Page and Section Numbering

The Manual has been written and set out in a way that makes revision easy. For this reason, the usual method of numbering pages in order has not been used. Instead, the top right-hand corner of each page carries the number of the particular section, or sub-section, being dealt with on that page. This allows pages to be added or removed without having to renumber the pages.

If more than one section appears on a page, the number of the *first section heading* on the page is used. If there is no section heading on the page, the most recent number is used with a figure in brackets indicating the page sequence. For example if a section extends over three pages, the page numbers would appear like this:

Since most sub-sections are short, this should not happen often.

The method used to identify sections is based on numbers as follows:

Firstly each main section is given a number. For example, the INTRODUCTION is Section 1. Every sub-heading in the INTRODUCTION will commence with the number "1". Sub-sections are then numbered in the same way. Section 1.2 refers to the second sub-section in Section 1.

Some sections of the Manual contain a large number of topics so that sub-sections themselves must be divided. This is done in the same way. The final result can be seen in the CONTENTS section.

1.3.2 Revisions

In addition to the page number, each page has a four figure number at the bottom right hand corner to show the date that the page was last revised. The first two figures indicate the month, and the last two, the year.

0292 means "revised February 1992"

As a result it is easy to identify sections which have recently been updated, and others which may be in need of revision.

As pages are revised, or new sections are added, they will be sent to you. You should insert them in the Manual and remove and destroy any pages which have been replaced. The Manual has been produced in loose-leaf form to make it easy to remove and insert such pages.

1.3.3 General Arrangement of Topics

A full list of items included in the Manual is included in the CONTENTS section.

There are four main sections, plus appendices. The four sections are:

INTRODUCTION

This short section describes the purpose and use of the Manual and gives a brief historical introduction to the work of the Mission.

THE MISSION

This section covers the principles and practices which govern the overall work of the Mission.

The main sub-headings indicate the topics considered:

- Purpose
- Sphere of Operations
- Membership
- Organisation and Administration
- Finance
- Workers
- Property
- Communications
- Relationships

Some Field matters, particularly some of those relating to Mission personnel, or which are under the control of the Administrative Council, are also included in this section.

THE FIELD

This section commences with a discussion of the people among whom the Mission works, and continues by considering in detail the establishment and operation of Mission Centres, Churches and Special Ministries.

ADDITIONAL READING

This last section contains a list of publications which have been used in preparing the Manual, or which give generally helpful additional information. Some of them are required reading for new Candidates.

1.3.4 *Appendices*

Some topics are particularly long and detailed. They also contain a lot of information that is just background material. If this information was all put in the main body of the Manual, the book would become too crowded and fairly clumsy to use. So we have put these things in as 'extras' (as appendices) at the back. For example, the Mission Constitution is in Appendix 2. Pages with appendices all start with the letter 'A' and are numbered in sequence. Page A.3.4 is the 4th page in Appendix 3.

1.3.5 *Abbreviations*

Alternatives such as 'he/she' and 'him/her' may be required in various places for the sake of accuracy. But as they are clumsy expressions (particularly when constantly repeated) for the sake of brevity we have generally used the masculine pronoun only.

So when 'he' or 'him' occurs, it is to be taken as including women. For we acknowledge that they play an equally important role in the work of the AIM.

The names of the various governing bodies of the Mission occur frequently. To save space, we have usually abbreviated them:

- MC means Management Committee
- AC means Administrative Council
- FC means Field Council.

Also, 'Superintendent' is abbreviated to 'Supt.', and the context should indicate which one is being referred to.

'HQ' means the Mission Head Office.

1.4 *THE ABORIGINES INLAND MISSION OF AUSTRALIA (AIM)*1.4.1 *Milestones of Mission Work in Australia*

*See also 'Bringing Christ to Aboriginal Australia' published by MPA.

Rev Richard Johnson, who came out with the First Fleet in 1788, tried to reach Aboriginal people with the gospel. Rev Samuel Marsden of Parramatta (west of Sydney) became involved in similar attempts in the early 1800s, though he was more interested in the Maoris

of New Zealand.

The first successful program was commenced by Lancelot Threlkeld of London Missionary Society in the 1820s. He befriended a tribe in the Lake Macquarie area (near Newcastle), learned their language and translated Luke's Gospel. But problems between him and Marsden caused him to abandon his efforts.

All early attempts to bring the gospel to Aboriginal people seem to have collapsed by the 1840s.

Moravians from Germany set up a work in Victoria in 1849, but without success. They returned home. But a few years later another two German missionaries tried again. At Ebenezer in Western Victoria they started a farm and school, and commenced daily services. The first known Aboriginal convert in Victoria came to the Lord in 1860 at Ebenezer. His name was Nathaniel Pepper. He became a spiritual leader among his own people.

The CMS and Presbyterians became active in Aboriginal mission work in the mid 1800s. They established centres in Victoria, WA, SA, and NSW.

In 1870 Lutherans travelled to the isolated area now known as Hermannsburg, in the NT. They doggedly persevered in the face of great difficulties, and established a work that continues until today.

In 1893 a Christian Endeavour group became interested in the Aborigines living at La Perouse on the south side of Sydney. Their Convenor became the first missionary to work among these people. Then ill-health forced her to leave.

After a period of regular visitation, Miss Retta Dixon became the first resident missionary there in 1896. She served at first under the La Perouse Aborigines Mission Committee. For almost 10 years she not only carried on a successful work on that Reserve, but also reached out to some 26 camps along the southern coast of NSW.

As the original name was no longer appropriate, it was changed to the Australian Aborigines Mission. Later on this organisation was renamed the United Aborigines Mission (UAM).

1.4.2 *Highlights of AIM History*

Miss Retta Dixon felt that God was leading her to resign from the AAM. Heavy on her heart was a burden to reach Aboriginal people in other parts of the country. In 1905 she moved to the small country town of Singleton, inland from Newcastle. There, with a small but dedicated group of friends, she formed the Aborigines Inland Mission of Australia on August 1 1905.

Soon afterwards Retta Dixon married L. W. Long, and for some 20 years they served as co-Directors of the rapidly expanding work of the AIM.

Until that time almost all missionary activity among Aborigines had been confined to coastal areas. The Longs and their fellow workers were concerned to reach people in the inland as well (as the name of the Mission implies).

The work spread rapidly. Within two years some Aboriginal missionaries had been set apart to reach their own people. (They were called 'Native Workers'.) God richly blessed their ministry.

Within ten years the Mission had reached out to the Port Stephens area (north of Newcastle), the New England district and down the Murray River in NSW. Workers had also travelled across the border into Victoria, over to Western Australia and as far north as Herberton, north Queensland.

In 1910 the Mission Headquarters was moved from Singleton to Sydney. Mission Councils were also set up in Brisbane and Melbourne.

After Mr Long's untimely death in 1928 Mrs Retta Long carried on as Director of the AIM. Those were very difficult times. The notoriously poor support of Aboriginal missions was made worse during the Great Depression. (In those days, Aborigines weren't held in as much favour by the Australian community as they are today. Those who worked among them were often despised and ignored — even by some who professed to follow Christ.)

The AIM commenced work in the Northern Territory in 1936, but the bombing of Darwin and Katherine during the Second World War caused the evacuation of our workers. AIM

activities in the area came to almost a complete standstill.

Before the Japanese attack, some AIM missionaries had begun to care for part-Aboriginal children. When they returned to Darwin in 1946 that work was developed still further. For over 30 years it formed a very large part of the AIM programme in the Territory. In later years it was expanded to include full-blood children and even some needy European youngsters.

This ministry was named the Retta Dixon Home (RDH) after the Mission's founder. At first it operated in government buildings on the Aboriginal Reserve in Bagot Road. Then in 1960 it was transferred to new cottages built on leased land nearby.

Due to changes in government policies and in the social situation of Aboriginal people, the Home ceased to function in 1980.

Mrs Retta Long continued as Director of the Mission until 1953. Her son, Rev E.C. Long, was then appointed to this position. He led the AIM during a period of growth which included branching out into new areas of ministry.

Singleton, the birthplace of the AIM, was the home of a very effective Bible college operated from 1945 until the end of 1972. (It developed from a tiny college established at Port Stephens before World War 2.) Several hundred young Aboriginal men and women from the AIM and other missions were trained there. Most did a two-year course, but some stayed for a further Pastor's course.

A number of the graduates later became AIM missionaries. At times during the late 1950s and the 1960s we had as many Aboriginal workers as those of European descent. But with the formation of the Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship in 1970, this trend ceased.

In 1960 Mission Publications of Australia was commenced. (See Section 1.4.3.2)

For some years in the 1950s and 1960s the Director ran a regular radio programme for Aboriginal listeners. An aerial outreach, with a single-engined plane owned by AIM Missionary Lloyd Lanyon, was established at Moree in 1973 .

When Mr Long laid down his responsibilities in 1972, the structure of the Mission was altered. Instead of almost all responsibility resting on the shoulders of one man (the Director), a Management Committee was set up. It was composed of the Officers of the Mission, with a President (not a Director) to lead them. Rev Ben Ewing was elected the first President in 1972. He served until 1980. Those who followed him in this role were: Mr E.A. Collins, a former Missionary (1980-85); Rev. Stan Ingham (1987-91); and Mr Howard Miles, a former Missionary (1991—).

The Management Committee continues to co-ordinate the work of the Mission. A Field Superintendent (who is also a member of the MC), now supervises the work on the Field on behalf of the Field Council.

1.4.3 *Special Ministries*

Over the years, a number of specialised activities have been developed as departments of the Mission. It will be obvious from what was stated in the previous section that some of them have ceased to operate. These include the Retta Dixon Home, the Aerial Outreach and the Singleton BTI. Others continue. They are:

1.4.3.1 *Darwin Bible College*

Due to changing circumstances, the Field Council decided in 1972 that the BTI at Singleton was to be closed. They intended to open another training college closer to a large Aboriginal population.

Attempts to find a suitable alternative location proved fruitless. As a temporary measure, the Field Council set up a mobile training programme. Three of the teaching staff (Ethel and Wes Caddy and Esther Mackintosh) spent two years travelling throughout the Field. They held intensive courses lasting two or three weeks at most of our centres.

Although this experimental programme proved to be very effective, the FC felt that a residential course was the better option.

After the Retta Dixon Home was closed, the Council decided to use three of those buildings to accommodate a training college for Aboriginal Christians in the north. So the

Darwin Bible College (DBC) commenced operations in 1981 under the leadership of Max Schenk.

The RDH buildings had been severely damaged by cyclone Tracy in 1974. As they continued to deteriorate, it was clear that DBC needed a new home. In 1986 steel-framed, cyclone-proof buildings were erected at Humpty Doo, just south of Darwin. DBC classes recommenced there the following year.

The DBC curriculum and teaching methods have been specially designed to assist students with little formal educational background. The basic Bible knowledge course is divided into four-week units, so students can attend college for the length of time suited to their ability and circumstances. For non-readers this is usually one unit at a time, but others have attended for several months of continuing study.

Also, once or twice a year the staff conduct concentrated training programmes for local Christians at various AIM centres in the north.

Esther Mackintosh, as Training Supt, had been closely involved in the establishment of DBC. After the Schenks left the Mission, she was appointed principal.

A local committee has been formed to help guide the staff. It is made up of people with a background in education and/or Aboriginal work.

1.4.3.2 *Mission Publications of Australia*

In 1938, Missionaries at the newly-established AIM Training College beside Port Stephens saw a need for Sunday school lessons suitable for Aboriginal children. So they began preparing and distributing simple materials for use on AIM centres.

After the College was moved to Singleton, a separate Sunday School Department was set up there. For 14 years various Missionaries at the BTI were involved in this ministry. The lesson notes and workbooks were typed, duplicated and assembled by the students and staff.

By the late 1950s the lessons had been up-graded and were being sent to many Sunday schools outside AIM — both Aboriginal and 'white'.

In 1959 Mission leaders decided to set up a separate Literature Department. It was to meet not only the growing demand for Sunday school lessons, but the need for other types of Christian literature brought about by the increasing literacy of Aboriginal people. God led the Director to negotiate with leaders of the United Aborigines Mission. This led to the establishment of Mission Publications of Australia as the joint literature arm of the UAM and AIM. (It continues to work under a joint council, not the Field Council of the AIM.)

A small printshop was erected at La Perouse, and the Sunday school lesson ministry was transferred there from Singleton. Howard and Evelyn Miles were the first members of the MPA staff. Printing operations commenced early in 1961.

The quarterly lessons were gradually re-written and produced in a more attractive format. Various tracts, booklets and magazines were also produced — mostly in easy English. Teams from churches around Sydney assembled most of these materials.

The demand for MPA material lessons continued to grow, and it even spread to Mission centres overseas. Within nine years it became obvious that MPA would have to move to another location. So land was obtained at Lawson in the Blue Mountains and new buildings were erected. The entire operations were transferred there in 1971.

Larger equipment was installed, and as the outreach of MPA literature continued to grow, the workforce climbed to over 30.

A wide range of Christian literature is now available from MPA. Almost every MPA publication has been specially written for Aboriginal readers. There are three different types of Sunday school lessons, three free magazines, and many kinds of Bible teaching and evangelistic literature.

*A catalogue of available materials is in the Appendix. More up-to-date copies may be obtained from MPA, Box 21 Lawson 2783.

1.4.3.3 *Audio and Video Cassette Ministry*

When cassette players and later, VCRs, spread through outback Australia, a further means of reaching the people became available. In 1984, with the approval of the Field Council, Andy Gough decided to take up this challenge. In the years since then he has obtained the necessary equipment and produced many tapes — especially videos. He also retails Christian cassettes from other sources.

2. THE MISSION

2.1 PURPOSE

Since Aboriginal missionary groups were first set up, most of them have tended to be heavily involved in medical, educational and other kinds of social welfare programmes. However, the AIM has always seen spiritual ministry as its most important task. As set out in the Constitution, this involves six main thrusts.

2.1.1 *Evangelising*

This has had top priority in the past, and is still important. For although most people of Aboriginal descent now have some knowledge of the gospel, there are many areas where people need to learn of Christ. And of course there is always a new generation of children who know almost nothing of Him.

Missionaries involved at the larger centres, and in established churches, are urged not to become bogged down with local responsibilities, but to maintain outreach in the 'regions beyond'.

2.1.2 *Discipling*

The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19,20 emphasises the need to carry on a programme of discipleship training. Just getting people to 'make a decision for Christ' doesn't adequately meet our Lord's requirements. They must be taught to obey His Word and to live as Christians should.

2.1.3 *Planting Churches*

Long before most other groups working with Aborigines saw this need, AIM pioneers set out to plant active local (indigenous) churches. We must still make this a major aim.

These churches are not to be places where race is an essential qualification for membership. Believers of non-Aboriginal background are to be welcomed. However, AIM churches should be of such a character that Aboriginal people feel at home and are free to exercise their spiritual gifts.

2.1.4 *Transferring Responsibilities*

Aboriginal Christians who know the certainty of new life in Christ can reach fellow Aborigines much more effectively than 'professional' missionaries. So local people should always be actively encouraged to take increasing responsibility in evangelising and teaching others.

We hinder Aboriginal believers spiritually if we don't allow them and expect them to take up such responsibilities. And we also show lack of confidence in the Holy Spirit's ability to work in them as he has worked in us.

Many of us are strongly tempted to reserve a central place in the life of a local church for ourselves. We should guard against that wrong attitude. Instead, we should deliberately set out to prepare the local Christians to carry on without our leadership.

2.1.5 *Training Leaders*

If the Aboriginal Church is to be truly independent of the Mission, it must have adequate leadership. All local Christians who show leadership potential should be given opportunities to gain experience. They should be encouraged to use their spiritual gifts, and taught leadership skills.

Obviously, there is a limit to what an individual missionary can teach in a local situation. The Mission's Training Superintendent should be consulted. Also, steps should be taken to encourage the potential leaders to undertake a course of training at an appropriate Bible College.

We should all realise that the AIM Bible College and other training activities are not just unimportant 'extras'. They are essential ingredients in our overall programme.

2.1.6 *Establishing Church Councils*

Our long-term aim is to see Aboriginal leaders establish and operate Church Councils or similar groups capable of supervising and helping the various AIM churches. Eventually, such Councils should take over the entire responsibility for the leadership of God's work among Aboriginal people.

In the Appendix you will find an article called 'Church and Mission' which sets out the differences between these two groups, and the Biblical way for spiritual responsibilities to be shared between them.

2.2 *SPHERE OF OPERATIONS*

The AIM has worked in a number of States at different periods through its history. Since the 1960s we have concentrated on Queensland, the Northern Territory and parts of NSW.

In the NT and north Queensland we work almost entirely among semi-tribal people. (None of them, however, still follow a purely traditional lifestyle.) Further south, we work mostly among people of part-Aboriginal descent.

We endeavour to co-operate with other evangelical missions. We recognise the areas where they work and try not to encroach on them.

In particular, we have a close relationship with our sister mission, the UAM (United Aborigines Mission). A field map showing the centres operated by UAM and AIM is in the Appendix.

2.3 *CONSTITUTION*

The AIM Constitution is the main legal document of the Mission. It sets out the basic rules governing the organisation and activities of the Mission, and such things as the membership and responsibilities of the various councils.

These rules are to be carefully followed at all times.

A copy of the Constitution is included in the Appendix, for your information. And as you read through the Manual, you will find that various sections amplify and explain statements in the Constitution.

2.3.1 *Alterations to Constitution*

To keep pace with changing circumstances and needs, the Constitution may need to be amended from time to time. The way this is to be done is set out in that document, however, one further point needs to be made.

Whenever a postal ballot is to be held in relation to a proposed amendment, the **reasons** for the change should be explained to those involved, to enable them to make an informed decision.

2.4 *MEMBERSHIP*

* See Clause 5 of the Constitution

Many people — both of European and Aboriginal descent — work side by side in various activities of the AIM. However, only the following are recognised formally as members of the Mission.

- Missionaries in full standing (not Candidates or Probationers)
- Associate Missionaries
- Associate Workers
- Management Committee members
- Administrative Council members
- State Representatives

Of course the Mission 'family' includes many others, from prayer supporters to retired Missionaries to members of Auxiliaries to Pastors and members of AIM churches. They loyally play their part in the overall programme, but are not under the authority of the various Mission councils and do not have a vote in the decision-making processes of the Mission. So we cannot regard them as being members of the Mission body.

Many Aboriginal Christians find this hard to understand. They regard themselves as belonging to the AIM. From time to time some have wanted to become more involved in the administration of the Mission. (A few have served on the AC and MC because of the contribution they could make as individuals, not just because of their racial background.)

In the plan of God a mission such as the AIM, and the Aboriginal Church, have different roles. We

need to keep them clearly in mind in order to avoid confusion over this important subject.

2.5 ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION

*See Sections 6 to 10 of the Constitution

2.5.1 Management Structure

Management of the Mission is shared by three bodies:

— *Management Committee*, composed of the Executive Officers of the Mission, together with the Field Superintendent.

(In this Manual it is referred to as the MC).

— *Field Council*, composed of up to seven missionaries, together with the members of the MC.

(In this manual it is referred to as the FC.)

— *Administrative Council*, composed of up to 10 men and women from Evangelical churches outside the AIM, together with the members of the MC.

(In this Manual it is referred to as the AC.)

The duties of these groups are set out in later sections and in the Constitution.

A *Field Superintendent and Area Superintendents* may also be appointed to carry out supervisory and/or pastoral roles among the Field workers. (See 2.5.3.5.1/2 for details)

An organisation chart of the Mission is included in the Appendix.

2.5.2 Management Committee (Mission Officers)

2.5.2.1 Purpose

The MC has been established to enable the FC and AC to work in close liaison, and to save unnecessary duplication and delay in the conduct of Mission business.

2.5.2.2 Appointment

The Executive Officers of the Mission (who form the Management Committee) are to be elected at a joint meeting of the FC and AC, as set out in Clause 7 of the Constitution.

2.5.2.3 Responsibilities

2.5.2.3.1 President

- Initiate Mission policy in liaison with the FC and AC.
- Work with the Executive Secretary in ensuring that such policies are implemented.
- Stimulate the missionary vision of all members of the Mission.
- Act as a senior Pastor to the workers of the Mission.
- Make occasional visits to the Field.
- Chair meetings of the MC, AC and FC.
- Encourage fellowship/liaison with other evangelical missions.
- Write important letters on behalf of the Mission, as determined by the Councils.

2.5.2.3.2 Vice President (s)

- Assist the President to carry out his responsibilities.
- Help to ensure the smooth and efficient operation of the Mission.
- Exercise oversight of specific areas of Mission administration, as determined from time to time.

2.5.2.3.3 Executive Secretary

- Carry responsibility for the efficient operation of AIM HQ.
- Deal with all correspondence passing through the office.
- Supervise all office staff and any voluntary workers.
- Bring to the attention of the AC and MC any specific needs and problems.
- Make sure the decisions of the MC and AC are carried out.
- Liaise between the Candidates Committee and prospective workers.
- Register the names of workers approved as marriage celebrants.
- Liaise with the Field Supt, Church Councils and State Representatives.
- Record minutes of the meetings of the AC and MC.
- Act on behalf of the Treasurer (when requested) in maintaining cash books, paying accounts and in communicating with the Auditor.

2.5.2.3.4 *Treasurer*

- Make sure adequate records are kept of all Mission finances and financial transactions.
- Prepare regular financial reports as required.
- Monitor the financial position of the Mission and make recommendations to the MC and AC on all financial matters.
- Monitor costs of capital projects.

2.5.3 *FIELD COUNCIL*

2.5.3.1 *Membership*

The FC consists of up to seven Missionaries nominated and elected by their fellow Missionaries, together with the members of the Management Committee.

The FC also has power to invite up to three representatives from AIM Churches to attend Council meetings. They will be given full membership privileges at such meetings.

2.5.3.2 *Term of Office*

Members will serve for a period of four years. The terms will be staggered, so that up to half the members will complete their term every two years.

Retiring members are eligible for re-election, provided they are under the age of 65 at the time of the election.

2.5.3.3 *Election Procedure*

2.5.3.3.1 *Timing*

Elections will take place at the Workers Conference and the Mission and Church Conference. These are held in year 2 and year 4 of the cycle of conferences, as set out in Section 2.7.7.5.

2.5.3.3.2 *Nominations*

FC members should, as far as possible, be drawn from various parts of the Field. So unless other circumstances indicate otherwise, not more than one person from a particular place should be nominated.

Missionaries aged 65 or more are not eligible for nomination.

Nominations should be submitted (preferably by letter) to the Field Council Secretary or the Executive Secretary before the conference at which the election is to take place.

2.5.3.3.3 *Voting*

All Missionaries and Associate Missionaries may vote, except those who are on extended leave, and Associates at MPA. Probationers and retired Missionaries are not eligible to vote.

If it is necessary to conduct the election by postal ballot, the result must be declared to all workers not later than 14 days after the closing date of the ballot.

Successful nominees will take their place on the FC immediately after the results have been declared.

2.5.3.3.4 *Casual Vacancies*

If a casual vacancy occurs on the FC, the MC may call for nominations from the Missionaries to fill the vacancy. Voting will be conducted by postal ballot, or at a conference, as set out above.

2.5.3.4 *Duties*

The Field Council is responsible to ensure the efficient operation of the ministries of the AIM, and the proper placement and supervision of all Field personnel.

The area of its authority does not extend to established AIM Churches and their Pastors and members. However, the FC may give advice and encouragement to the Churches, and assist them when they ask the Mission for help.

The duties of the FC are set out in Clause 9B of the AIM Constitution.

2.5.3.5 *Officers*

2.5.3.5.1 *Field Superintendent*

A Field Supt. may be elected to supervise the work on the entire Field. He/she

will serve for a term of four years, and after serving, he/she will be eligible for re-election.

The Supt. will be an ex-officio member of both the MC and AC, with full voting rights.

2.5.3.5.1.1 *Election*

He/she will be elected by the missionary body from the members of the Field Council, at the time of FC elections. (See Section 2.5.3.3.1.)

Nominations will be called for after the results of the FC election have been declared.

To be successful, the nominee must receive a 2/3 majority of the votes cast.

2.5.3.5.1.2 *Duties*

The Field Supt. is responsible to co-ordinate the Field work of the Mission on behalf of the FC, and to serve as a senior Pastor to all Missionaries and Pastors.

Specific duties include:

1. Making regular contact with all workers by phone or letter.
2. Visiting all centres at least once a year, to meet Missionaries and Pastors and assess the overall needs.

These visits should be made by arrangement with the appropriate Area Supt. (if there is one), and be carried out in company with him.

3. Giving advice to AIM Churches, as requested.
4. Arranging Conferences in association with the Area Superintendents.
5. Assisting the Area Supts. by liaising with them and helping them in making decisions.
6. Assuming some of the duties of the Area Supts. when those positions are vacant.
7. Implementing Mission policies concerning all aspects of work on the Field, including Special Ministries.
8. Assessing the performance of all Mission members working on the Field, and making recommendations to the FC regarding placement, further training etc., as required.
9. Acting as the main contact between the Field and the MC and AC, making needs known to both groups, recommending solutions and implementing their decisions.

2.5.3.5.2 *Area Superintendents*

A senior Missionary may be elected to supervise the AIM programme in a State, or a combination of States, or some other section of the Field. He/she will be known as an Area Supt.

Each Area Supt. will be elected by the Missionaries from the members of the FC. He/she will serve for a period of four years and will be eligible for re-election.

Area Supts. are accountable to the Field Supt. and the FC for the way they carry out their responsibilities.

2.5.3.5.2.1 *Election*

This election will be carried out as for the Field Supt. (See Section 2.5.3.5.1.1.)

2.5.3.5.2.2 *Duties*

Their responsibilities include:

1. Supervising the work of Missionaries in their area.
2. Counselling Pastors and members of AIM Churches, when requested.
3. Making recommendations regarding development of the work.
4. Reviewing the use of personnel to make sure they can be as effective as possible.
5. Planning of State and Area conferences.
6. Supervising and encouraging new workers.

The list of responsibilities is amplified in the Appendix.

Note: When no Supt. has been appointed for a particular area of the Field, members of the FC who live in the area may be asked by the FC or the Field Supt. to supervise new workers or deal with local problems.

2.5.3.5.3 *Training Superintendent*

2.5.3.5.3.1 *Appointment*

A Missionary with suitable gifts, training and experience may be appointed as Training Supt.

This appointment will be made by the FC and is to be for a period of four years. After serving for that period, he/she will be eligible for re-appointment.

2.5.3.5.3.2 *Duties*

The Training Supt. is to have the oversight of all aspects of Mission programmes for training adult Christians in Bible knowledge and leadership skills.

His/her responsibilities include:

1. Supervising the activities of the Darwin Bible College and any similar establishments set up by the Mission.
2. Giving counsel to the staff of such colleges regarding the curriculum and teaching methods.
3. Planning and initiating programmes to give specific training opportunities to Christians in local AIM churches. (However, the normal church Bible study meetings do not come under the supervision of the Supt.)
4. Recommending and/or circulating among the staff books or other printed materials which would improve their teaching ability.

2.5.3.5.4 *Field Secretary*

2.5.3.5.4.1 *Election*

At the first meeting of the FC after the election of new members, the members of the council may elect from their own number someone to serve as Secretary of the FC. He/she is to be known as the Field Secretary and is to serve for a term of four years, and is also eligible for re-election after that period.

2.5.3.5.4.2 *Duties*

1. Attend to all correspondence received and issued by the FC (unless other arrangements are made in specific instances).
2. Assist the Field Supt. in the preparation of agendas for FC meetings.
3. Notify FC members of coming meetings, and distribute the agendas at least three weeks before each meeting.
4. Prepare and distribute minutes of all FC meetings.
5. Make sure all decisions of the FC which relate to the Field are brought to the notice of the appropriate personnel.
6. Pass on to the AC all decisions and requests relating to its sphere of responsibility.

2.5.3.6 *Meetings*

2.5.3.6.1 *Frequency*

One 'full' FC meeting (as it is called) is held each year, and every member is expected to attend. The date of this meeting is set from year to year, depending on current circumstances and needs.

Additional meetings may be held during conferences, and at other times, provided the requirements of Clause 13 of the Constitution are met.

A joint meeting of the FC and AC is held at least once a year to promote fellowship and deal with matters of great importance. The election of Mission Officers is held at such a joint meeting every three years.

2.5.3.6.2 *Agendas*

All members of the Mission are invited to draw the attention of the FC to opportunities, needs or other matters. All submissions should be made to the Field

Supt. or the FC Secretary, so that they can be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

A full agenda should be sent to each member at least three weeks before every meeting. This will give members unable to attend time to comment on the items to be discussed.

2.5.3.6.3 *Travel costs*

The Mission undertakes to pay all travel costs involved in the yearly full council meeting. Members are expected to cover the costs involved in attending all other meetings of the FC.

2.5.4 *ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL*

2.5.4.1 *Membership and Nominations*

The AC consists of up to 10 members (who serve for an indefinite period) together with the members of the MC.

Membership is by invitation. When a vacancy exists on the Council, any member of the Mission may nominate someone thought suitable to fill it.

Details of the qualifications for membership, and the procedure to be followed, are set down in Clause 10A of the Constitution.

2.5.4.2 *Duties*

The AC is responsible for the business, administrative and promotional activities of the Mission, and is to make sure they are carried out efficiently.

Details of its duties are given in the Constitution.

2.5.4.3 *Meetings*

The AC is to meet at least bi-monthly. The President (or his nominee) will act as Chairman, and the Executive Secretary (or his assistant) will be the Secretary.

2.5.4.4 *Officers and their Roles*

The AC may appoint some of its members to be responsible for specific aspects of its work. Such officers of the AC may include:

2.5.4.4.1 *Minutes Secretary*

1. To prepare and circulate minutes of each Council meeting.
2. To deal with correspondence and undertake other duties as delegated by the Executive Secretary.

2.5.4.4.2 *Deputation Secretary*

1. To plan (and if possible engage in) deputation meetings across Australia on behalf of the Mission. This is to be done in co-operation with State Representatives, Auxiliaries etc.
2. To arrange with the FC for the release of Missionaries suitable for involvement in specific deputation opportunities.
3. To arrange for audio-visuals/videos to be prepared (in co-operation with the Promotion Officer).
4. To report to Council the results of deputation activities.
5. To plan and arrange deputation meetings for Missionaries and Probationers in need of Team support.
6. To arrange for suitable Council members to accompany Probationers to deputation meetings.

2.5.4.4.3 *Property Manager(s)*

1. To keep records of all Mission properties. (Also properties owned by the churches, if possible.)
2. To make sure that all Mission properties are adequately insured.
3. To offer advice to AIM Church leaders regarding the care and development of their properties.
If requested, to work with the leaders in planning improvements etc.
4. To arrange for the maintenance of Mission properties in all parts of the Field, as approved by the AC.

The Property Manager has authority to spend up to \$750 on repairs and renovations without the prior approval of the AC.

Note: In this context, 'property' is defined as land and buildings, including fixtures.

5. In consultation with the FC, to plan additions and alterations to existing structures, and have plans prepared for any new buildings to be erected.

All plans must be submitted to the AC for approval.

*See details of the procedure in Section 2.8.9.

The Property Manager is responsible to ensure that all approved building work is completed satisfactorily. However, he is not expected to do the actual work.

2.5.4.4.4 *New Workers' Counsellor*

1. To encourage Probationers by establishing links of friendship and contacting them regularly by phone or letter.
2. To give pastoral counsel, but not to give advice on matters relating to the Aboriginal people. (This is the responsibility of Field Council members.)
3. To report to the MC and AC concerning the new worker's progress, problems and prayer requests.

2.5.4.4.5 *Prayer Convenor*

To encourage greater prayer support for the work and workers of the Mission by:

1. Arranging prayer meetings, prayer conferences etc. at various places (through Mission HQ).
2. Maintaining regular contact with existing AIM prayer groups, and making sure they are supplied with fuel for prayer.
3. Actively promoting the formation of new prayer groups.
4. Arranging for the insertion of articles on prayer in The AIM, from time to time.

2.5.4.4.6 *Promotion and Publicity Officer*

To bring the work and needs of the Mission before the Christian public in challenging ways, including:

1. Organising promotional rallies in various towns. (The Deputation Secretary should be involved in planning such functions.)
2. Arranging for the preparation of audio-visuals and videos on different aspects of the work of AIM.
3. Helping to prepare promotional literature, in co-operation with the staff of MPA.
4. Preparing publicity material on selected projects.
5. Preparing news releases. (Any item prepared for release to the media should be cleared by HQ before being distributed.)

2.5.4.5 *Committees etc.*

The AC has power to set up small committees and any other similar groups it feels are required to carry out its duties. They will have specific areas of responsibility and will include:

2.5.4.5.1 *MPA Council*

The MPA Constitution authorises equal representation of the two parent Missions on the MPA Council. The members required to represent AIM will be appointed annually by the AC. They will have liberty to vote according to their conscience at all Council meetings.

2.5.4.5.2 *Candidates Committee*

A Candidates Committee will be appointed annually to assess the suitability of every person applying for missionary service. It should include the President and/or the Executive Secretary, and the New Workers' Counsellor.

The Committee will study all application papers, interview the candidates and recommend to the AC whether or not they should be accepted.

* *Note:* In the case of Candidates who live a long way from Sydney, the Committee may arrange for the interview to be conducted by a State Rep. or some other qualified person.

The Committee should consult with the Field Supt. and/or Area Supts. for their assessment of the candidates' suitability before making any recommendation to the AC.

2.5.4.5.3 Holding Company

Directors and Members of the AIM Property Holding Company will be appointed as required by the Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association.

2.5.4.6 State Representatives

For many years, State Advisory Councils operated in Qld, Victoria and Tasmania, but eventually were disbanded. The AC now appoints State Representatives. They are mission-minded individuals or couples residing outside NSW who are willing to officially represent the AIM in their State.

Details of their appointment and duties are set out in Clause 11 of the Mission's Constitution.

Missionaries planning deputation visits to a State where such a representative has been appointed should contact him/her for assistance in setting up their programme of meetings.

2.6 FINANCE

2.6.1 *How Funds are Raised*

The AIM operates as a 'faith' Mission. It has no body behind it which guarantees its support, nor does it guarantee any worker that he will receive a regular salary (or any money at all).

Mission Councils and workers alike must look to the Lord to supply all our needs in answer to prayer. For this reason we rely heavily on such Scriptural promises as Philippians 4:19.

It is our policy to refrain from making direct appeals for money. Primarily, we *pray* — and then *trust* the Lord to prompt friends with a knowledge of our activities to send the finance needed.

However, to make such financial involvement possible, we believe it is consistent with 'faith principles' to take certain practical steps.

After praying:

- We carry on a programme of deputation at various churches, giving news of current activities and needs.
- We make specific needs of the work and the workers known through 'The AIM' magazine and other literature.
- We encourage people to become involved in the 'Team Support' of our workers.

2.6.2 *Team Support*

Most full-time Missionaries and Associate Missionaries of the AIM receive the bulk of their financial support through our Team Support programme.

2.6.2.1 *What it is*

A group of Christians are linked together as a team to support an individual Missionary or a Missionary family. (Often, but not always, these people are personal friends of the Missionary, and perhaps members of his home church.) They promise to share definitely and regularly in his life and work on the Field.

Their support is expressed in three equally important ways:

- *loving interest*, indicated by letters sent and phone calls made to their missionary.
- *specific prayer* for him and his needs.
- *monthly* (or periodic) financial *gifts*.

The team members must know enough about their missionary and his work to feel vitally involved with him in his ministry. So the worker must regularly *share information* with his team through letters, phone calls and occasional visits (during holidays etc).

He will tell them about:

- experiences and needs of himself and his family

- blessings and needs in his work
- specific items such as the need for guidance in future planning

2.6.2.2 *How it Works*

If you are a newly-accepted Probationer, you should send to Headquarters the names and addresses of those who have agreed to join your support team.

Before you go to the Field, and at the start of each year following, the team members are sent a small Team Support Card by the Mission office. They then return it to the office each month (or after whatever period they choose), together with their gift for your support.

- * Support for a new worker should start arriving at least a month before he takes up his full-time service with the Mission.

The office acknowledges that the gift has been received by sending a receipt back with the card to the supporter. Then, before the end of each month, the total amount received on your behalf is sent to you by cheque. The office also supplies a complete list of the names and addresses of the donors, so that you can personally acknowledge them.

You will probably have difficulty saving up enough money to pay for such big expenses as income tax and holidays. If you wish, you may ask HQ to make a deduction for these items from your monthly support. This money will be kept until you ask for it.

2.6.2.3 *Support Figures*

Details of the amounts required for the support of single workers, married couples and children are available from HQ.

These figures are revised by the AC from time to time. They are arrived at by considering the cost of:

- personal needs
- housekeeping
- transport
- education
- outreach work etc.

Mission Councils realise that the figures agreed on are really target amounts — they are often not reached. (And in any case, some people can live more cheaply than others.)

However, new workers must have been promised at least 60% of the total support figure before proceeding to the Field.

2.6.3 *Personal Gifts*

Gifts for birthdays and Christmas are usually sent direct to the Missionary. However, if such personal gifts are sent to HQ they will be forwarded with the regular monthly support.

2.6.4 *Special Projects*

Building projects and other items of major expenditure should not be mentioned to supporters before preliminary approval for the project has been given by the appropriate Mission Council.

- * See Section 2.8.1 — 2.8.9 for more information.

Gifts designated for approved projects will not be considered as Team Support, even when they are given by a worker's own team. They will be held at HQ until required.

2.6.5 *The Source of all Gifts*

We should always recognise that our support comes primarily from the Lord. He does use human agencies to meet our needs, but our expectation should be from Him — not the Mission or our Team Supporters.

We need to trust God to raise up a full team for us. Then we must trust Him to enable those supporters to give regularly. So, while the Mission works on the principle of Team Support, it is still very much a 'faith' Mission. Our faith is in the One Who has promised to supply every genuine need of His obedient and trusting people.

The same principle applies to items given to help us in our missionary work. Most of them come to us simply because we are missionaries. (Very few items of equipment would be given to us, for example, if we were not in full-time service for Christ.) So we should

recognise that every item we receive really comes from *Him*, it belongs to *Him* and is to be used for *His* glory.

2.6.6 *Mission House Rents*

The Mission endeavours to erect or purchase houses for the comfort and convenience of its Missionaries. This is not always possible, nor is it always advisable. As a result, some Mission houses are rented buildings.

Where a house is rented, the AC seeks to pay the rent from HQ each month. We can all assist by praying that sufficient money will be available to cover this large expense.

2.6.7 *Property Insurance*

All buildings owned by the Mission, and most AIM church buildings and manses, are insured against loss by fire etc. The policy also covers such items as burglary, public risk and so on.

Missionaries and Pastors serving in AIM churches and fellowships should encourage the local people to refund to HQ the amounts involved in insuring their properties.

2.6.8 *Housekeeping Expenses*

When sharing a home with other workers, it is best to have a mutual understanding about sharing housekeeping expenses and dividing the household 'chores'.

When you first arrive, ask what your share of the expenses will be. Then prayerfully seek from the Lord the amount you require week by week. Such expenses should have first call on any money you receive.

The figure required will vary from centre to centre. And it won't only cover food costs. Other things such as fuel for the car (for trips to buy supplies), freight on parcels, electricity, phone and cleaning materials will have to be included. Then from time to time there will be the cost of repairs etc., needed to keep the Mission house in good order.

2.6.9 *Travelling Expenses*

Each new worker should receive some Team Support money before proceeding to the Field. This will help to cover travelling expenses to the first appointment.

Each Missionary (or group of workers) is asked to meet the cost of travel involved in carrying on the work of his centre. As Aboriginal people are usually scattered, a lot of travelling — and hence expense — is involved. This is another need we will have to bring to the Lord.

If you don't have a vehicle of your own, but share one belonging to a fellow-Missionary, make sure you also share in its running costs. These will include not only petrol, but wear of tyres, regular maintenance, repairs, registration, insurance etc. Your fellow-worker may not like to mention these things, so make sure they are discussed and that you pay your fair share.

2.6.10 *Annual Financial Reports*

At the end of each financial year, all Missionaries and Associate Missionaries are required to report the total amount of their income to Headquarters. (Forms will be sent from HQ for this purpose.)

These figures are not required because of a desire to pry into any worker's private affairs. (No details of sources or specific amounts are asked for.) The purpose is to enable the MC to:

- Give an accurate accounting to the Christian public of the monies entrusted to the Mission as a whole for its ministry.
- Be aware of any workers who are in financial need, so that additional members may be recruited for their support teams.

2.6.11 *Dealing with Financial Shortage*

* Adapted from an article by the Founder

It is a blessed experience to depend upon God for the supply of all needs, and to see how wonderfully He works for His children. He is faithful. We may safely rely on Him.

But sometimes it may seem that the Lord is not answering our prayers about a particular need. (It may be a financial need, but could be physical weakness, some difficulty in the

work in our area, and so on.) The cause of the problem could be in our own attitude. Here are some questions we should ask to see if we are at fault.

1. Am I really *expecting* God to supply my need? Do I give up praying if the answer doesn't come straight away? Do I turn to my own way of getting the money I need — by taking a job, expecting deputation meetings to provide what I need, or depending on people rather than on the Lord?
2. Am I *definite* in my prayer — stating the exact amount or particular need before the Lord? (This isn't because God needs to know, but it helps us to determine exactly what we are expecting from God.)
3. Is God really *first* in everything? Or have I become so involved in His work that He is being pushed out? Is there anything else which takes His place — family, a particular friend, or even the people I am working among?
4. Do I make sure I return to God an *offering* from everything I receive? Do I do so cheerfully and systematically? I must remember that the promise in Philippians 4:19 (about God supplying my needs) was made to obedient, faithful, sacrificial givers, not to selfish, careless, disobedient Christians.
5. Have I become *lazy* in my work? Perhaps I need a new vision of what can be done in my area. Is there a special visitation programme or some other outreach venture which could be started? (Show God that you mean business!)
6. Am I faithful in *thanking* those whom God uses to supply my needs? Do such letters get written promptly?
7. Am I *careful* in the use of everything the Lord supplies to me? If there is more than is needed immediately, do I waste the surplus, or save it as the Lord's provision for some unexpected need later on?
8. Do I remember to *praise* and thank the Lord when He answers my prayers for help?

2.6.12 *Opportunities for Secular Work*

The above article (2.6.11) was written many years ago. Its insistence that AIM personnel must trust only in the Lord (see point 1) is still very necessary. Members of the current missionary team still need to be able to say, 'My expectation is from Him' (Psalm 62:5 KJV). However, some comments on the words 'Do I turn to my own way... by taking a job?' may help you to avoid misunderstanding the present attitude of the Mission.

The Bible clearly indicates that at times the Apostle Paul worked to support himself. His income from making tents (Acts 18:3,4) supplemented the gifts he received from various supporting churches. Yet he is recognised as the greatest missionary of all time. This must mean that it is not against Biblical teaching for God's servants to work sometimes to support themselves. On the other hand, an organisation such as the AIM couldn't operate efficiently if all its workers spent most of their available time and energy in secular employment. So what is the answer to this seeming contradiction?

The Mission believes that men and women who are accepted to serve as full-time workers should be prepared to devote *all their available time to the ministry* in which they are involved. If they run into financial difficulties, they are not to rush around looking for some secular job. Instead, they are to look to the Lord to provide for them. And they are also advised to ask themselves questions such as those in Mrs Long's article.

After taking these steps, they may then find that a small job opportunity is brought to their notice at just the right time. Like many other Missionaries in the past, they may feel that this is of the Lord. Could they accept it as such?

In assessing whether or not they should make use of the opportunity to earn some finance, they should decide whether the job would:

- hinder them from carrying out their regular missionary programme
- involve them for more than a few hours each week
- last for more than (say) a month

If the answer to such questions is negative, it could be all right for the Missionary to accept the opportunity. But if more than just a few hours would be involved, he should discuss the

situation with the Field Supt. or Area Supt. before making a decision.

2.6.13 *Income Tax*

Most Missionaries must lodge an income tax return each year. The Appendix contains information which will help you to complete your form.

2.6.14 *Purchase of Vehicles*

The AC seeks to provide financial assistance to workers involved in buying a vehicle for their own use. Such assistance is not guaranteed — it is only available when funds permit. It may take the form of a cash grant and/or an interest-free loan.

Those wishing to avail themselves of this practical assistance should contact the Executive Sec. as soon as possible — before any decision has been made. Time will be required for him to bring the matter before the MC and AC for consideration.

2.6.15 *Retirement Assistance*

The AC has set aside funds which may be drawn on to assist full-time workers when they retire from the Mission. No specific amount is guaranteed or even promised. The AC considers each case on its merits, and in the light of the amount in the Retirement Assistance Fund at the time.

Both Missionaries and Associate Missionaries may benefit (except that members of the MPA staff who would otherwise qualify are excluded from the scheme, as MPA has its own fund for the same purpose).

To qualify, workers must be at least:

60 years old (single women and widows)

65 years old (single men)

65 years old (husband of a married couple)

and have completed at least 10 years of service in AIM. (In the case of married couples, this figure refers to the husbands' service.)

2.7 *Workers*

2.7.1 *Candidates*

* See Section 14 of the Constitution

2.7.1.1 *Application Process*

Anyone desiring to serve the Lord as a full-time Missionary of the AIM should apply to the AC through the Executive Secretary or an AIM State Representative. A *Preliminary Questionnaire* will be sent to the person concerned, to obtain basic information about him.

When a married person makes an enquiry about serving as a missionary, he/she will not be considered unless an individual application is received from both husband and wife.

Normally, only men and women who have completed at least a two-year course of study at a recognised Bible College would be accepted. However, other training, together with experience in some form of Christian service, may in certain circumstances be considered sufficient preparation.

All Candidates are required to endorse the Mission's aims, Statement of Faith and Team Support programme.

If it is apparent that an applicant has had very little experience in practical Christian work, but otherwise seems suitable for service in the AIM, the Candidates Committee of the AC may set aside the application for the time being. The person concerned will be encouraged to obtain such experience in his local church (or elsewhere) and then proceed with the application.

If the applicant appears to be suitable, *formal application papers* and forms for a *medical report* will be sent to him from HQ. Also, the Candidates Committee will arrange for a personal interview. The person concerned will be encouraged to visit Sydney for this purpose. But if it is more suitable, one of the State Reps, or some other qualified person may be asked to conduct the interview.

In addition, a questionnaire entitled 'Request for information' is mailed to referees named by the applicant. It includes questions relating to personality, temperament, gifts etc.

These help us to gauge an applicant's suitability.

The Candidates Committee will be involved in all stages of the application process. The members must ensure that the proper procedure is followed. In particular, they must always consult with the Field Supt., and/or Area Supts. regarding the suitability of all applicants. They must then report their findings to the AC, and the Council will decide whether or not the applicant is to be accepted as a Missionary on probation.

2.7.1.2 *Applicants who have served as Pastors*

Sometimes a person who has been serving as a Pastor of an AIM Church decides to apply to become an AIM Missionary. The FC has decided that in such instances, the normal application procedure will be shortened, as the person involved is already known to the Mission. However, if his application is accepted, he will have to do a Candidates Course (if necessary, leaving his centre for a period). This course may also be shortened to suit the circumstances of the case.

2.7.2 *Probationers*

2.7.2.1 *Orientation and Deputation*

After a Candidate has been accepted as a Probationer, he/she has to complete a Candidates' Orientation Course, under the guidance of the Training Supt. (or his/her appointee). He must also undertake a programme of deputation meetings to obtain promises of prayer and financial support. As far as possible, an experienced Missionary, or Mission Officer, or member of the AC will accompany the new worker to all such meetings. As most people are reluctant to talk about their financial needs, it is suggested that the person who accompanies the Probationer should outline the Team Support programme, and challenge people to join his team of supporters.

2.7.2.2 *First Appointment*

The Field Council (or, if necessary, the MC) will appoint the new worker to serve for a probationary period of at least nine months at a Field centre. (The Candidates Course and period of deputation usually last about three months, making a total preparatory period of 12 months.)

When possible, each Probationer will be appointed to a centre where there is an experienced Missionary. He will be expected to work under the guidance of that Missionary. If such an appointment is not possible, a Probationer may be appointed to work alone. But he will be placed under the supervision of an experienced worker chosen by the FC — preferably one serving in a nearby location. This Missionary is to correspond with the Probationer, or phone him regularly. Where possible, he is also to make personal visits.

The Field Supt. and/or Area Supt. will give over-all guidance to new workers.

The Probationer is expected to maintain regular contact with the New Workers' Counsellor of the AC. But this Counsellor is not an authority figure. His role is to give pastoral counsel and encouragement, not to give instruction on how the Aboriginal people are to be ministered to, etc.

2.7.2.3 *End of Probation*

At the end of this probationary term, the Field Supt. is to make a recommendation to the Field Council concerning the fitness of the Probationer for the work. The FC may then recommend to the AC that the Probationer is to be accepted as a Missionary in full standing, or it may extend the probation for a further period.

2.7.3 *Missionaries*

2.7.3.1 *Declaration*

Before being accepted as a Missionary in full standing, every worker will be required to sign a formal declaration that he agrees with the Mission's aims and Statement of Faith, he will follow the rules set out in the Constitution and this Manual, and will obey those in authority over him.

2.7.3.2 *Appointment*

Once he is a fully accredited Missionary, he is expected to serve willingly and cheerfully

wherever the FC directs. The Council may ask him to take up an appointment in any part of the Field, or in one of the Special Ministries. Or it may request that he undertakes a period of deputation work on behalf of the Mission.

No missionary will be appointed indefinitely to any centre without his wholehearted agreement. However, in a case of special need he may be required by the FC to give temporary help at any centre.

Any missionary who is unhappy about serving at a particular centre to which he has been appointed should notify his Area Supt. or the Field Supt. as soon as possible. The FC will then consider another appointment.

2.7.3.3 *Responsibilities*

A Missionary is expected to remain where he has been appointed unless compelled to leave by circumstances of great emergency. Permission to leave must be obtained from his Area Supt. or the Field Supt. Also, arrangements must be made for the work to be carried on in his absence.

It is understood that a Missionary will give all of his time to the work of the Mission, as to the Lord. He will not engage in any regular outside occupation except as agreed by the Field Supt. or the FC. (See 2.6.12.)

Each Missionary is urged never to lose sight of the aims of the Mission, as set out at the front of this Manual. He should seek to reach out through his entire area with a strong evangelistic thrust. But he must also work toward establishing a strong, independent Aboriginal Church. He should aim to hand over to the local Christians before too many years, so freeing himself to move to another centre.

Each Missionary is expected to send regular reports to HQ and his prayer partners, as mentioned in Section 2.9.

2.7.3.4 *Missionary Pastors*

* See Section 3.3.3.5 for information about Pastors who are not AIM Missionaries.

No Missionary is to take over the leadership of an established AIM church on his own initiative, and simply because of his status as a Missionary. However, the FC may appoint him to serve as a Pastor to a *fellowship* that has been established by the Mission. And an *established AIM Church* may call him to serve as its Pastor.

Before he can accept a call to Pastor an independent AIM Church, he must receive the approval of the Field Council.

While serving in this role he may be referred to by the title 'Pastor', but he will retain his status as a Missionary. He will also retain all the privileges he enjoys as a Missionary, including Team Support (if necessary). However, holidays etc. will be the subject of an agreement between the Pastor, the Church and perhaps the Field Supt.

At the conclusion of his term of office as Pastor, the Missionary may be given another appointment by the FC. Or he may be called to the pastorate of another AIM Church, or one associated with us in some way.

If the FC decides to appoint additional workers to a centre where a Pastor is already serving, they will only do so after consultation with the Church and Pastor, and with their agreement.

2.7.3.5 *Leave of Absence and Secondment*

Any Missionary who wishes to undertake secular work for an extended period (for example, a year or more) will have to *resign* from the Mission in order to do so.

If the period is to be less than one year, he may ask for *leave of absence*.

If the Missionary desires to work for a Christian organisation outside the AIM, but does not want to sever his connections with us, he may ask to be *seconded* to that organisation. Such a secondment may be granted for up to 12 months, with the opportunity for his case to be reviewed at the end of that period.

If a Missionary wants to work for another group within the AIM family (as a Pastor of an AIM Church, or to serve under one of the Church Councils, etc.) he may ask the Field Council to *release* him for that purpose. The FC may release him for up to three years,

with the possibility of extension at the end of that period.

Workers seeking leave of absence or secondment will not be eligible for Team Support. Those released to serve within the AIM family may continue to receive Team Support if the Church or Council is at first unable to provide full support for them. But this should be seen as a temporary measure only.

2.7.4 *Associate Missionaries*

Men and women who wish to serve full-time in certain specified roles may apply to become Associate Missionaries.

The basic difference between a Missionary and an Associate Missionary is that the former may be moved anywhere and asked to do any job by the Field Council. The Associate Missionary is accepted for a particular type of work, and usually at a particular place.

When a married person applies to become an Associate Missionary, his/her application will not be considered unless his/her spouse is in agreement.

Three main groups of people may become Associate Missionaries of AIM:

2.7.4.1 *Workers for Mission Publications of Australia*

Those with necessary skills in printing and publishing may apply to join the staff of MPA. The MC will deal with these applications, taking into account the advice of the Manager of MPA.

Successful applicants will serve under the direction of the Management of MPA, not the FC or Field Supt. of AIM.

The living allowance provided by MPA to its workers is recognised as taking the place of the normal Team Support required by Field workers.

Associate Missionaries of AIM will serve at MPA only for as long as the MPA Management is satisfied with their performance. If the Management decide that a particular person's work is unsatisfactory, they will advise the MC accordingly so that his/her service can be terminated.

The same procedure will be followed when an AIM Associate Missionary wishes to resign or retire from the MPA staff.

2.7.4.2 *Volunteers for Practical Service*

Men and women who volunteer to serve full-time erecting buildings, maintaining properties, working in an office or doing other ancillary jobs for the Mission may also become Associate Missionaries.

Each application will be processed by the MC, which will confer with the Field Supt. before making a decision about it. Details of those accepted will be reported to the next FC meeting.

Such workers must successfully complete a probationary term of six months before their acceptance is confirmed.

2.7.4.3 *Workers with Restrictions on their Ministry*

Sometimes applicants for full-time spiritual ministry may not be able to serve as missionaries in full standing, because of restrictions imposed by age, health, physical disabilities or lack of training. But they may be considered suitable to serve in a specific role at a particular place, so they too may become Associate Missionaries.

All such applications will be processed by the MC, which will confer with the Field Supt. before making any decision about them. Details of those accepted will be reported to the next FC meeting.

All workers in this category must successfully complete a probationary term of six months before their acceptance is confirmed. They will be eligible to serve at just one location, and possibly for a specified period.

Associate Missionaries are eligible for the same Team Support, holidays and other privileges as Missionaries in full standing. (However, when elections are held, associates at MPA are not eligible to nominate or vote.) They will be provided with a copy of the Mission Manual, and will be asked to undertake a short orientation course.

Each one will be required to sign a declaration indicating that he agrees with the

Mission's Statement of Faith and aims, that he will work in accordance with the rules set out in the Constitution and this Manual, and that he will obey those set in authority over him.

Termination of service will be handled by the MC in consultation with the appropriate Supt. The AC and FC will be advised accordingly.

2.7.5 *Associate Workers*

2.7.5.1 *Appointment*

Men and women following their own occupations who desire to do spiritual work among Aborigines in their district may be linked with the Mission by the Field Council as Associate Workers.

Associate Workers will be appointed for a probationary period of six months. After that time their appointment may be confirmed by the Field Council or the Management Committee, but only on the recommendation of the appropriate Area Superintendent.

Associate Workers are accepted only for the district where they work. If they move elsewhere, their link with the Mission will be reviewed. The decision about their status will depend on whether they will be able to continue an effective ministry in their new location.

Associate Workers will be given a copy of the Mission Manual when they commence their probation. They will be required to sign a declaration that they accept the Mission's doctrinal basis and will work and teach in line with the Mission's doctrinal statement, Constitution, and this Manual.

2.7.5.2 *Service*

Associate Workers will work under the supervision and direction of the Superintendent of their area of the field. If there is a Missionary in the place where they wish to work, that Missionary will be regarded as the senior worker.

They will be expected to give adequate opportunities for local Aboriginal Christians to develop and use their gifts.

No Associate Worker should be appointed in an area where an AIM Church has been established. Instead, Christians desiring to assist in spiritual ministry should be encouraged to become members of that Church and work as its representatives.

If a new Church is formed in a place where an Associate Worker has been serving, the worker's official link with the Mission will cease. From that time the worker will be encouraged to join the Church and work as its representative, rather than the Mission's representative.

*** Note:* The last two rules are aimed at strengthening the authority and independence of local AIM Churches.

2.7.6 *Recognised AIM Pastors*

Anyone serving as a Pastor of an AIM Church who is not already a member of the Mission (such as a Missionary) may ask to become a 'Recognised AIM Pastor'. If he wishes to have this formal link with the Mission, he must approach the FC through the appropriate Supt.

If his application is approved, it will not make any change to his service as a Pastor. He will not come under the authority of the FC, but will continue to be responsible to the members of his Church.

His name will be included with other AIM Pastors in such publications as the Field Directory, and supporters of the Mission will be encouraged to pray for him.

Official recognition as an AIM Pastor may be withdrawn if he moves away from the doctrinal position of the Mission, or if he is guilty of wrong conduct.

When his term as a Pastor comes to an end, his status with the Mission will be reviewed. If he is not called to serve another AIM Church, he will no longer be looked on as Recognised AIM Pastor.

2.7.7 *General information*

2.7.7.1 *The Ministry of Women*

In the light of extensive and sometimes divisive discussion on this subject at the present

time, it is important that AIM personnel agree on what the Scriptures teach about the ministry of women.

There is no doubt that both men and women have been made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26,27), and all believers are equal in God's eyes (Galatians 3:28).

The Holy Spirit was poured out on all believers (Acts 2:17), and we believe that he gave gifts to both men and women for the spiritual development of the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12: Ephesians 4 etc.)

We believe that both men and women are responsible to carry out the Great Commission and to exercise their spiritual gifts for the benefit of the body of believers. Therefore we recognise that both men and women have a contribution to make in the ranks of the AIM, according to their call from God and in relation to their individual gifts and abilities.

Each individual's ministry should be encouraged and exercised on the basis of gifts, not gender.

2.7.7.2 *Authority to Celebrate Marriages*

Any application for authority to celebrate marriages must be made by Headquarters to the appropriate Government Department, and not by the individual Missionary. Such application shall be made only when approved by the AC.

An authority to celebrate marriages is normally applied for only in the case of Missionaries in full-standing. However, in exceptional circumstances the Field Council may recommend to the AC that an application be made on behalf of a Probationer or Associate Missionary, or Recognised AIM Pastor.

A person who is an authorised marriage celebrant must comply with the conditions of registration and with the requirements of the Marriage Act.

2.7.7.3 *Relaxation Times*

All workers are to take at least one day off each week. Some very conscientious Missionaries may feel that this is impossible. They become so weighed down with their responsibilities, and perhaps by constantly ministering to the needs of the people, that they give up trying to take time off. This is a short-sighted attitude. Regular periods of relaxation are necessary for continuing physical and spiritual vitality.

In some outback areas, places suitable for such relaxation are far away. Yet if workers stay at home their rest is constantly interrupted by a stream of visitors. In such situations, an alternative to a weekly day off needs to be found. One suggestion is for workers to take say four days away every month, at a time when it won't interfere too much with their regular schedule. Such a period could give time to travel to a worthwhile location.

If you are in a place where the needs are constant, you will need to plan ahead. And you will need to guard your relaxation periods. Only cases of extreme emergency should be allowed to interfere with them. If you don't adopt such an attitude, you will very likely 'crack up' before long.

2.7.7.4 *Holidays, Furlough and Leave*

Missionaries and Assoc. Missionaries are entitled to up to six weeks holiday each year. (This is to compensate for the stress and isolation under which most of our workers serve.) A minimum of two weeks must be taken, in order to preserve fitness.

Alternatively, three weeks local holiday may be taken each year for two years, followed by twelve weeks extended leave (furlough) at the end of the third year.

Overseas Missionaries are entitled to six months' furlough, plus travelling time, every four years. (i.e. They may take three weeks local leave each year for three years, and six months' furlough in the fourth year).

Holiday arrangements should be made with the Area (or Field) Supt.

It is suggested that Missionaries should refrain from taking deputation meetings during holidays, in order to get as much rest and relaxation as possible. However, workers may ask the Field Council for extra leave in order to undertake a programme of deputation meetings.

If a Superintendent becomes aware that a worker is undergoing a time of severe strain, he

may arrange for that person or family to have a time of special leave, in order to recuperate.

The Mission does not grant long-service leave in the normal sense of that term. In its place, after each five years of service, workers are encouraged to apply to the Field Supt. for special leave in order to undertake a course of study to improve their effectiveness on the Field. This study could take the form of a refresher course of 4-6 weeks duration at a Bible College.

2.7.7.5 *Conferences*

Because of the scattered nature of our work, and the isolation of many of our centres, it is essential for Field Personnel to meet their fellow workers from time to time. A period spent in fellowship, discussion and listening to teaching from the Word of God promotes the renewal of their physical and spiritual well-being, and the unity of the Mission family. And other members of the Mission receive inspiration and encouragement from meeting those they have prayed for.

For these reasons, the Mission holds one or more conferences each year, at locations reasonably central for the workers involved. They are arranged in a four-year cycle, as follows:

- Year 1.. Area Conferences for missionaries (One in the NT and one in the East)
- Year 2.. Combined Missionary Conference
- Year 3.. Area Conferences (As for year 1)
- Year 4.. Mission and Church Conference

Because of our desire to distinguish between the roles of the Mission and the Church, as a general rule Church delegates are only invited to the Mission and Church Conference every fourth year. (Selected leaders may be invited to the other conferences for special reasons.)

All missionaries are expected to attend a conference each year, as family responsibilities permit. In the case of a couple with a family, at least one of the parents is expected to attend. But as there are usually facilities for children at the locations selected, parents are encouraged to attend with their family.

The members of the MC are eligible to attend all conferences as delegates. Members of the AC, and State Reps. are also invited to all conferences. But they would only be observers at those designed for the missionaries and other Field workers.

2.7.7.6 *Engagement and Marriage*

Great caution is needed on the part of Mission personnel considering either engagement or marriage. The decisions they make will affect not only their personal lives, but their ministry as well.

An accepted Candidate, Probationer or Missionary who is considering becoming engaged should discuss the matter with the Field Supt. or the Executive Secretary before taking any step that would lead to marriage.

Couples serving in the AIM are both regarded as full-time workers. If they have children, the wife will of course have responsibilities in the home. But she is expected to become involved in work among the Aboriginal people as much as her family duties allow. (This is one reason why both husband and wife have to pass through the normal application process and be accepted as Missionaries in their own right.)

An unmarried Candidate, Probationer or Missionary of either sex, whether engaged or otherwise, will normally be expected to defer marriage until the completion of the probation of the partner who last enters the work. If there are special circumstances, due consideration will be given to them by the FC, upon the application of the parties concerned.

2.7.7.7 *Resignation*

Any member of the Mission who wishes to leave the work before reaching the age of 60 should formally resign from the Mission. He should put his resignation in writing and send it to the Executive Secretary at least two months before it is to take effect.

The Secretary will report the matter to the MC and the Field Supt. (and, if possible, to the FC). The MC will then forward the letter of resignation to the AC for finalisation.

Any Associate Worker who is judged by the FC to have been inactive for six months will be considered to have resigned. He will be so advised by the Exec. Secretary.

2.7.7.8 *Retirement*

The normal retiring age for members of the Mission is 65 years, as set out in Section 16 of the Constitution.

The appropriate Council and the MC should be advised in advance when a member is approaching that age.

When a married couple is involved, in certain circumstances it will be possible for the older partner to retire before the younger one.

When a Missionary reaches the age of 65 but does not wish to retire, he may apply to the MC to be re-classified as an Associate Missionary.

Before any decision is made, he will be required to submit a statement from his doctor advising whether the doctor considers him fit for the task.

If the MC agrees to the Missionaries request, he will be able to continue to serve in a particular place for a specified time, before his case is again reviewed.

The procedure to be followed for retirement of members of the MC and AC is set out in the Constitution.

If the Mission has contributed financially toward the purchase of property for use in the work (such as a car or a projector) and the worker concerned resigns or retires within two years from the date of purchase, he must refund to the Mission a reasonable proportion of the amount it contributed.

Financial assistance may be given to retiring workers as set out in 2.6.15 of this Manual.

All members who leave the Mission by either resignation or retirement are required to return their copy of this Manual to HQ before they leave.

2.8 *Property*

The AC is responsible for all matters relating to Mission property. In making decisions and carrying out other aspects of this important task, the Council relies on information from local workers that is sent through the Supt. or the FC.

2.8.1 *Vehicles*

The only vehicles purchased by and belonging to the Mission are those used by Mission Officers and Special Ministries such as the Darwin Bible College.

A Missionary's own vehicle is his responsibility. Even though it will be used in the work of the Mission, he is responsible for selection and purchase, repairs and running costs.

Mission HQ will be happy to give advice regarding such things as purchase, sale and insurance of vehicles. In an emergency, it may also forward spare parts needed by workers in remote locations. It may even be able to help with the provision of some finance toward the purchase of new or replacement vehicles. (See 2.6.14.)

HQ will always be ready to make transport needs known to the supporters of the Mission.

2.8.2 *Rental of a Mission House*

When the Mission commences work in a new area, a suitable home will normally be rented to accommodate the Missionaries. (It is not usual to either buy or build a residence until after a work has been well established.)

The Field Supt. and/or the Property Manager of the AC are responsible to investigate available properties. (In earlier times the local Missionary was usually called upon to do this, but the Mission now tries to make sure that experienced people are involved in such negotiations.)

HQ will finalise the arrangements with the estate agents, and will pay the rent each month.

2.8.3 *Purchase of Land or Residence*

No local Missionary has authority to commit the Mission to the purchase of either land or buildings in his area, although he may assist by finding out the availability and prices of suitable places. Also, he should never announce any building project to prayer partners etc.,

until the scheme has been approved by the AC.

When a worker at an established centre feels that the Mission programme would benefit if we owned a permanent residence there, he should consult the appropriate Supt. The Supt. in turn will normally pass on the request to the MC and the FC for consideration, and for recommendation (or otherwise) to the AC.

If the idea is approved the Property Manager will try to make an on-the-spot assessment of the situation. Then he will advise the AC of any suitable houses available to purchase, or whether it would be better to purchase land and build a home suited to our requirements. If the latter is his recommendation, he will also supply the AC with details and prices of available blocks of land.

The AC (not the local worker) is responsible for providing finance for any new Mission house. Local funds ear-marked for that purpose should be sent to HQ. HQ will also make the need for the building known to the Lord's people.

2.8.4 *Erection of a New Mission House*

If the AC decides to erect a new home to accommodate our workers, the Property Manager will have over-all responsibility for the project. He will negotiate with local Councils and other authorities. He will see that adequate plans are prepared (in consultation with the local Missionary). He will make arrangements for the tradesmen required — either voluntary or paid workers. Finally, he will make sure the house is erected in accordance with the approved plans.

The local Missionary may also be involved in the building project, provided this does not prevent him from doing his primary job, and as long as he has had some building experience. Also, local Aboriginal Christians could be encouraged to play a part.

As in Section 2.8.3, the AC is responsible to provide finance for the project, though they would always be grateful for any money available locally.

* The procedure to be followed in projects such as these is set down in Section 2.8.9.

2.8.5 *Erection of a Church Building*

It is not Mission policy to first erect a church building in a new area and then start meetings in an effort to put it to use. However, after a work has been established and a group of believers has been raised up, there is usually need to erect a meeting place for them.

When considering this situation, we must keep in mind that a work may prosper for a time, and then fall right away. Also, once buildings are put up, they are there to stay. One of the sad facts of our present work is that we have empty churches in some places, and elsewhere there are people longing for a place of worship.

These facts are noted simply to remind us that it is not wise to rush into a building project.

Perhaps meetings could be held in a school or a public hall until a living Church is firmly established and able to bear such things as building costs.

Because of special circumstances, a situation might arise in which we believe that the Mission should erect a church building where there is no formed Aboriginal Church. If this occurs, the procedure set out for the erection of Mission houses will be followed.

When an established AIM Church decides to erect a church building (or a manse), the Mission is available for advice. It may also help by providing some finance and recruiting tradesmen volunteers.

The procedure to be followed is set out in Section 3.3.4.5.

Any buildings so erected are not Mission property. They belong to the local Church, even though the buildings may be held in trust for them by the Mission's Holding Company.

2.8.6 *Alterations and Additions to Mission Buildings*

If alterations or extensions to existing Mission houses are considered necessary, the Property Manager should be notified through the Area Superintendent. He will assess the need and, if the scheme is approved by the AC, he will see that the necessary plans are prepared and that the work is done satisfactorily.

(Alterations to churches are not the responsibility of the Mission, but the Property Manager is available for advice and assistance.)

2.8.7 *Maintenance of Mission Property*

It is the responsibility of each Missionary to endeavour to keep Mission property in good repair. Not only does this save costly expenditure in the long term, but it is a good testimony. (In fact, it is good practice to try not only to maintain the property, but also to improve it.)

Some workers are not practical people. They may feel they are unable to do much more than hammer in a nail. Even though you may fit into that category, you can at least use your eyes. Watch for things that need attention. Then take action, as set out here:

1. If it is an emergency, such as a burst water pipe, inform HQ by phone. Then arrange for a local tradesman (if there is one!) to carry out immediate repairs.
2. If it is not an emergency, and would be easy to fix, perhaps one of the local Christians could be asked to attend to it.
3. If it is not an urgent job, but would involve spending a fairly large sum of money (such as painting the house), contact the Property Manager through HQ. He may be able to arrange for the necessary funds and perhaps even for friends of the Mission to do the work voluntarily.

The Property Manager has authority to approve jobs costing up to \$750 without the delay involved in approaching the AC.

Generally speaking, local Mission or Church funds are expected to bear the cost of minor repairs. The Mission will try to assist with major items.

2.8.8 *Disposal of Mission Property*

If a Missionary feels that there would be no lasting benefit in retaining property in a certain area, he should consult with the appropriate Supt. After the Supt. has assessed the situation, he should take the matter to the FC. (Or to the MC if the situation calls for prompt attention.)

After all aspects of the work in that area have been considered, and the Council agrees that the property should be disposed of, the AC is to be advised accordingly.

The AC has the responsibility of placing such properties on the market and dealing with enquiries. The Directors and Members of the Property Holding Company are the only ones with the necessary authority to sign legal papers on behalf of the Mission. (This is *not* the responsibility of any individual missionary.)

* Disposal of Church property is dealt with in Section 3.3.4.5.5.

2.8.9 *Guidelines for Building Projects Costing more than \$1000*

This section mainly covers the procedure to be followed in the erection of new buildings and in extensive alterations to existing buildings. However, certain aspects cover other things involving the expenditure of large sums of money.

Remember that the initial request for undertaking such a project must go to the FC. Only after it approves of the scheme should it pass to the AC for implementation.

The high cost of buildings and building work, together with the need for good stewardship, make it necessary for the Mission to have clear guidelines to follow. They will help to make sure that things are done in an orderly way.

There are five main steps or stages. Each one must be completed before the next one is started, unless prior approval has been given by the AC.

2.8.9.1 *Prepare an outline of the Proposal*

Set out briefly on paper the following information:

1. What the project is. (And if it is a building, where it is to be erected.)
 - * Also supply a rough sketch of any building.
2. Where the money required may come from.
3. Who will do the work.

2.8.9.2 *Submit the Proposal to the AC*

1. The AC will decide *in principle* whether to proceed, and whether any changes are required.
2. The AC may also approach the relevant local authority to find out their attitude to

the proposal.

2.8.9.3 *Prepare Detailed Plans and Specifications*

1. The Property Manager will then arrange for detailed plans to be drawn, and for the specification to be prepared.
2. With the Treasurer, he is also to prepare a detailed estimate of the cost.
3. He is to prepare a timetable listing amounts of money required at various stages.
4. A person suitable for administering funds spent at the location is to be nominated.

2.8.9.4 *Submit Detailed Plans to the AC*

The AC accepts them (or otherwise) and decides when the job is to commence.

2.8.9.5 *Proceed with the Project*

1. Negotiate with councils, banks etc. as required.
2. Arrange insurance cover.
3. Provide a monthly progress report, setting out jobs done and money spent.
4. Prepare a revised budget for submission to the AC, if the project is seen to be running over the estimates.
5. The person responsible for administering funds locally must submit a monthly income and expenditure report to the Property Manager.

2.9 *Communication*

We who serve in the AIM are members of a team. And one of the secrets of successful teamwork is regular communication. If nobody knows what anyone else is doing, the team will never be successful.

Because our work is scattered over such a vast area, we don't have very many opportunities for personal contacts with one another. Generally, we have to communicate either by mail or by phone. Phone calls have the advantage of speed. And they are popular with most of us, because we find it much easier just to call someone than to write him a letter. But phone calls have one disadvantage — they leave no permanent record. So it is easy for those involved to forget what was discussed and decided. Letters and written reports are much better in the long term.

2.9.1 *Superintendent to Missionary*

The various Superintendents are to keep in regular contact with those for whom they are responsible. A once-a-month phone call and a once-a-year visit should be regarded as the minimum.

2.9.2 *Missionary to Superintendent*

A Missionary's normal line of approach to the Councils of the Mission is through one of the Superintendents.

A regular written report should be prepared and sent to HQ — preferably once each month. Report sheets are provided from HQ for this purpose. (see also Section 3.2.5.). HQ in turn is to pass copies to HQ Field Supt.

Reports should indicate prayer points and needs, together with indications of blessing from the Lord. Those in authority need such information if they are to gain a clear picture of the work, and pray effectively and make correct decisions.

If an emergency arises, the worker concerned should contact the appropriate Supt. But if he cannot be reached, the worker should contact Mission HQ immediately. However, Missionaries should not usually expect HQ staff to handle matters which are really the responsibility of the Supt.

If a direct appeal has been made to HQ, as a matter of courtesy, HQ should advise the Supt. of the details.

Big projects such as the purchase of, or repairs to, a building should be discussed with the Supt., who will in turn pass on the details to the FC.

2.9.3 *Missionary to Supporters*

Members of a worker's support team must be regularly supplied with information for prayer if they are going to function properly. A regular news/prayer letter should be sent out — at least every three months. Some people find cassette tapes are effective, too.

* See 'Escape from Drearyville', published by MPA.

Copies of such letters should also be sent to HQ, the members of the MC and AC, fellow Missionaries and the various Mission prayer groups.

The editor of 'The Aim' should be included in the list. Also, articles, news items etc. should be sent to him from time to time for insertion in the magazine.

2.9.4 *Headquarters to Workers*

Items of important news, such as decisions made at AC and MC meetings which affect those on the Field, will be sent out by HQ from time to time.

Also, efforts will be made to notify our members about important events before they are announced to the general public.

2.10 *Relationships*

2.10.1 *General*

It is essential that the whole Mission family should work in harmony not only with individual members, but also with outside bodies. This is God-honouring, and a good witness to the community in which we work.

In all of our relationships we should aim for a spirit of co-operation.

- between individual workers
- between Field and Administration
- between Mission and governmental authorities
- between the Mission and its supporters
- between the Mission and Local AIM Churches
- between the Mission and other Christian bodies

Specific relationships are detailed in Sections 2.9.2, 3.3.6 and 3.4.2 and Section 2.4 and Appendix 4, which cover the Mission's organisational structure, show the overall relationships between the various parts of the Mission.

2.10.2 *Between Mission and Government*

All workers are expected to carry out the injunctions of Romans 13:1 and 2, and 1 Peter 2:13 and 14.

Every effort must be made by each Missionary or other worker to observe the regulations made by the Commonwealth, State and/or local authorities responsible for the welfare of the Aboriginal and Islander people.

Should an appeal against any action of the authorities or the police, or a request to them on behalf of the Aborigines or Islanders be deemed necessary, the Missionary must refer the same to the Executive Secretary or Field Superintendent. He will initiate whatever representations are to be made.

No Missionary shall personally retain any remuneration from the Government for services rendered.

2.10.3 *Attitude to Charismatic movement*

In recent years there has been an increasing awareness of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and especially the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of the Church. Some believers have placed particular emphasis on such gifts as tongues, prophecy and healing.

This issue is commonly called a "charismatic" emphasis (although strictly speaking, all gifts of the Spirit are charismatic, since the word is derived from a Greek term meaning 'gift of grace').

We believe that the clear testimony of Scripture is that the sovereign God gives various gifts to believers for the purpose of building up the Church. No single gift is a sign of the baptism or fullness of the Holy Spirit. In particular, we believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the experience of every believer at conversion and that the evidence of the fullness of the Spirit is found in the fruit of the Spirit and not in signs such as tongues and healing.

We believe that God's gifts are given to meet the specific needs in the church at the time they were given. The gifts of the Holy Spirit listed in the New Testament should not all be considered as necessarily available to the Church today. While God undoubtedly is still the God of miracles, the miraculous signs of the apostles are not the right of every believer.

It is our desire to work in fellowship with all truly born-again believers. We are also mindful of the importance of avoiding confusion and possible conflict in our work. For this reason, it is our

policy to only accept as workers those believers whose doctrinal position accords with that of the Mission. Brothers and sisters whose doctrinal position has a strongly “charismatic” emphasis are encouraged to serve with others who are likeminded.

This stance is taken, not in judgement, but in the interest of maintaining harmony within the ministry of AIM.

3. *THE FIELD*

3.1 *THE PEOPLE*

Note: More detailed information about the Aborigines, their history, culture and present conditions is given in Appendix 1 at the back of this Manual.

3.1.1 *The Aborigines*

The people among whom we work are the descendants of the original inhabitants of Australia. Estimates of their numbers vary. The total is said to be about 200,000 these days. This means that only about one Australian in every 73 is of Aboriginal descent. So they are just one of the many small minority groups in our multi-cultural society. (They are outnumbered by the Yugoslavs, Asians and many other groups.)

People officially classed as Aborigines may be further sub-divided. About one-third of them are 'full bloods' and are mostly located in the Northern Territory and the northern parts of Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. They still follow a partly traditional lifestyle.

The other two-thirds are people of mixed racial background. They generally live in the southern part of the continent, and their lifestyle is more European than Aboriginal.

3.1.2 *Special Factors Affecting Work Among Aborigines*

3.1.2.1 *Location*

Although their numbers are so small, they are spread over most of this huge country. Thousands live in the capital cities and major towns, but the rest are widely scattered. Often they live in small groups in isolated and even arid areas.

Anyone wishing to reach these people for Christ has to be prepared to cope with isolation and loneliness and to travel vast distances, just to minister to small groups.

3.1.2.2 *Lifestyle*

Most Aboriginal people now live in homes similar to those occupied by other Australians. They enjoy modern conveniences such as refrigerators, radios, TV, videos, telephones and motor vehicles. However, their cultural values and attitudes to various aspects of daily living (e.g. money, time, possessions) are often vastly different from those held by Australians of European background.

Also, Aboriginal people who have been exposed to European culture for longer periods have been changed by that exposure. For example, those living in cities and towns in the eastern States have very different lifestyles and values from those in more traditional, isolated communities in north Queensland and the Northern Territory. Therefore, different methods and approaches are required by Missionaries, depending on the area in which they are working.

3.1.2.3 *Needs*

Social and moral problems have affected Aboriginal people in varying degrees around the nation. Many have been demoralised and degraded by such things as liquor, drugs, gambling and unemployment.

The tragic results are very evident. It is easy for Missionaries to become immersed in concern for these issues and in ways to deal with them. In so doing, they may lose sight of the deeper spiritual issues. Then they may fail to minister to the spiritual needs of the people.

3.1.2.4 *Radical movements*

The whole Aboriginal scene has become very politicised in recent years. Radical groups (some of which were influenced by the 'Black Power' movement in the USA) have become active. Two of the worst long-term results have been the stirring up of strong

'anti white' feelings, and great bitterness over events in the past. This is very evident in cities such as Brisbane and Sydney.

Missionaries need to steer clear of political issues and/or arguments as much as possible.

And they must demonstrate sincere Christian love in the face of prejudice and hatred.

3.1.3 *Approaching the People*

Our approach to the Aborigines should show not only the love of Christ in our hearts, but also the respect we have for them as people.

Their cultural background and aspects of their current way of life differ from those of Australians of Caucasian descent. But this doesn't mean that white culture and white people are better than Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal people. (Unfortunately, in earlier days some over-zealous missionaries were inclined to down-grade and despise all elements of Aboriginal culture. Some customs were clearly bad, but not all.)

Aborigines are part of the one great human family so they should be approached as equals, with respect for them and for their race. Any 'patronising' attitude — treating them as children — is easily noticed. It will cause offence and prevent us from reaching them with the gospel.

When Aborigines are converted, we should give them every opportunity to develop and use their God-given abilities. We should never feel that Missionaries are the only ones capable of effectively serving Christ. (See Section 3.3 for a further development of this theme.)

3.1.4 *Land Rights*

As indicated in 3.1.2.4, the Mission does not encourage AIM workers to become involved in political issues. However, in recent years there has been so much talk about Land Rights that it was felt we needed an official statement of our attitude to this important but divisive subject.

This matter stirs the emotions of many people. But very little agreement has been reached — even about what the term 'land rights' really means, quite apart from what goals should be aimed for.

In 1983 the following statement was accepted by the FC as expressing the attitude of the AIM. By design, it is only general, not specific.

3.1.4.1 *AIM Statement*

The AIM recognises the prior occupancy of Australia by Aboriginal people.

Because they have been dispossessed, we recognise that various groups of Aborigines have legitimate claims which should be carefully considered.

We believe people living in a tribal or pastoral situation on land historically theirs should be given secure tenure of that land. They should also have control over its development and use, and a share of any profits which may arise from it.

We believe tribal and semi-tribal Christian Aborigines may need to be reminded that 'the earth is the Lord's', and that they should worship the Creator, not His creation. They should also be encouraged and helped to make use of any land given to them.

We believe it is not possible to take exactly the same action on behalf of de-tribalised and urban Aborigines and part Aborigines. However, secure tenure should be given to residents of reserve lands (where they don't already have it).

Control of such areas should be in the hands of elected local Councils of Aborigines. Where this is impossible or inappropriate, the control should be vested in such groups as Regional Land Councils or Land Trusts composed of Aborigines selected from their local areas.

Because Aborigines are Australian citizens, all rules and laws applicable to the general Australian community should also apply on any lands granted to Aborigines.

3.2 *MISSION CENTRES*

It is always necessary to establish some sort of base from which workers of the Mission can reach out to people in a particular town or area. But it is important to realise that the establishment of a centre is just a means to an end, not an end in itself.

3.2.1 *Aims of Mission Centre Work*

Mission centres are set up solely to achieve the objectives of the Mission. This means that a Missionary appointed to such a centre should aim to:

- Reach all the Aboriginal people in his area with the gospel.
- Plant a living, active Church (or Churches) in the area.
- Train the believers in knowledge of the Word and in ways of Christian service.
- Encourage the believers to exercise their spiritual gifts and reach out to their own people.

3.2.2 *Establishment of a Centre*

When a Missionary is sent to a new area, the normal practice is to rent a flat or a home until the work is firmly established.

After the work has grown and it seems advisable to buy or build a home to serve as a Mission house, the local worker should follow the procedure laid down in Section 2.8.3 and 2.8.4.

The first step in developing a work is making contact with the Aboriginal people in the area. The appropriate ways to do this will vary from place to place, and will depend on how closely they are associated with Europeans etc.

You could start by visiting around the homes or sitting down in their camps, or contacting people at sports meetings or other community gatherings. In some areas a systematic survey or visitation programme will be required to determine exactly where Aboriginal people live.

Don't try to rush things. It will take time for the people to get to know you and trust you — especially if they have unpleasant memories of harsh treatment handed out to them simply because of their race. So we must be prepared to listen to the people talking, and learn from them, until we gain the right to share our message with them.

The 'Letterstick' magazines produced by MPA are designed for new literates, 'Today' magazines are for more sophisticated people with better education. Choose the kind suited to your area and begin distributing them. They will often open doors to the hearts and homes of the ones you want to reach.

When you feel that some people are sufficiently interested for you to present a Bible message, you could begin holding regular meetings. But make sure you have them some place where the people will feel comfortable and not trapped into listening to you. Probably a meeting around a campfire or in one of the homes would be best.

Once two or three folk have become Christians they should be encouraged to pray with each other, talk over their experiences and see themselves as part of Christ's Church. (Guard against any idea that suggests a Missionary's prayers are more effective than those of other Christians.) Help the new believers to see that they must look to God's Word for answers to problems, and all of us need the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

You in turn must trust God to guide His people. Don't just try to give them the answers you think they need. Teach the principles of God's Word, but let the Holy Spirit apply them to the lives of the believers.

New Christians must be taught to give regularly to God. Let them decide where the offerings are to be sent. (You may need to give information about needs in other parts of Australia and overseas.) Train them to be responsible for handling all money matters relating to their church group — don't do it yourself.

In fact, be wary of doing anything which the local believers can do for themselves. They will learn by doing. But if they are not given such opportunities, the local Church will remain crippled and weak.

3.2.3 *Use of Vehicles*

We should always be willing to use our vehicles for the benefit of the people we are serving. However, such kindness has often been abused in the past. Missionaries and Pastors have been expected to provide a free taxi service for everyone who asks. This is not only a drain on time and money, it doesn't help the people to develop independence.

Be very cautious about the way you respond to requests for 'lifts'. Make a rule that you will turn down all of them, except:

- Cases of urgent need, such as medical emergencies.

- Requests to accompany you on trips you have planned, as they won't cause you to go out of your way. (But even so, those you take should agree to help cover expenses.)
- Trips to pick up people for meetings.
- Taking people home after meetings. (Often this is more necessary than picking them up.)

If one of the local believers is willing to use his car as part of his service for Christ, encourage him to provide transport before and after meetings. It is always better for such a person to take on this responsibility, and so free you for other duties.

Where a Church group has been established, ask the Christians to discuss the matter of use of your vehicle and decide what guidelines you are to follow. Also try to get them to realise the financial burden involved, and agree to share this responsibility in some way.

3.2.4 *Outreach Work*

The apostle Paul was always anxious to reach out to the 'regions beyond'. Most of the pioneer workers in our own Mission showed the same sort of zealous concern for others. We should seek to follow their example if we are truly to carry out our calling as 'sent ones'.

We should always regard our Mission centre as only a base from which we work, rather than the limit of our area of witness for Christ. This means we should take deliberate steps to reach out to the surrounding areas. Some workers have not had the vision and 'drive' for outreach work. As a result, the work has suffered and many have not been reached. (But on the other hand, work at the centre must not be neglected by an unbalanced emphasis on outreach.)

Outreach work should not be done haphazardly, on the spur of the moment. It should be planned thoroughly and carried out systematically.

First find out where the people live in the areas around your centre. Then plan regular trips to visit them and hold meetings in key places.

In isolated areas where the people are widely scattered, this could amount to a long itineration around the district perhaps twice a year. In more closely settled areas it could involve a number of regular visits, perhaps one each week (in a different direction each time) so that four places could be reached regularly every month.

As men and women in any location come to Christ they should be challenged about the needs of other groups in their area, and given responsibility for outreach to such groups. Initially the Missionary may need to go with them, but they should decide when and where to visit, what teaching is needed and who is to take part.

Outreach work demands not only perseverance, energy and time, but also money. The Missionary should make this need a matter for regular prayer.

Believers in a local area should be taught that part of their responsibility for outreach is to give towards the financial cost involved.

3.2.5 *Records and Reporting*

Every Missionary in charge of a centre is responsible for seeing that the following are kept:

- (a) A record of all meetings held and the attendances at those meetings.
- (b) A record of conversions, the names of current church members and adherents, dedications, baptisms, and other statistics considered relevant.
- (c) An account book of monies received and disbursed for the work at that location.
- (d) A file of all incoming and outgoing correspondence (except for personal letters).

In addition to (c) above, all Missionaries must keep a record of money received for their own personal support, and gifts other than cash received both for their personal use, and for use at their centre.

It is the responsibility of the senior Missionary at each centre to provide a written monthly report to HQ. Suitable Report forms are supplied for this purpose. Two copies to be made, one for HQ and one to be kept at the centre as a permanent record.

Each year it is also necessary to send to Headquarters:

- (a) A statistical return for the centre.
- (b) Details of receipts and expenditure for the centre (Quarterly).

(c) A personal financial return.

Copies of these various forms will be found in the Appendix of this Manual.

Other reports may also be requested by Headquarters from time to time. These should be completed carefully and sent promptly. The importance of good communication is further stressed in Section 2.9.

3.2.6 *Visitors to Mission Centres*

3.2.6.1 *Visitors Known to the Local Missionary*

Relations and friends of workers (except Probationers) may be encouraged to visit their centre and stay briefly. This is an excellent way for interested people to gain a better understanding of the work, and will perhaps stimulate prayer and financial support later on.

If the visitors intend to stay for more than one week, the Missionary is requested to obtain permission from the Supt. beforehand. Applications should state how long the visitors desire to stay, and whether they are converted.

3.2.6.2 *Visitors Not Known to the Local Missionary*

Casual visitors often call at our centres seeking accommodation overnight (or for longer periods). This is a particular problem where the centres are on tourist routes.

Although we believe that Christians should be prepared to help those in need, it is not right for people to take advantage of our hospitality. HQ is particularly concerned in case a heavy burden falls on those located near busy highways. We are aware that finances available for such purposes are very limited.

The local worker will have to exercise his own judgement in this matter, but we believe that the visitors should, at the very least, cover the costs involved. For this reason, small cards are provided by HQ, setting out suitable amounts for beds and meals provided. These cards should be prominently displayed in the room where visitors are accommodated, and even handed to the people when they move in.

If a casual visitor indicates a desire to stay longer than overnight, the Supt. should be contacted for advice. This would keep the worker from feeling embarrassed if the answer is negative.

From time to time, HQ is approached by people offering to do voluntary service for a period, or intending to tour Mission centres. Such visitors are required to supply additional information before their application is approved. They are also advised that they will have to bear all costs involved. Centres they plan to visit will be advised beforehand.

Great care should always be exercised regarding the contact visitors have with local Aboriginal people. As a rule, they should not be asked to conduct or speak at meetings, but they could share musically etc.

3.3 *CHURCHES*

* The article 'Mission or Church' in the Appendix should be read in connection with this section.

3.3.1 *What Kind of Churches?*

3.3.1.1 *Character*

As set out in the Constitution and Section 2.1. of this Manual, the Mission aims to establish organised, independent, effective churches in the areas where we are ministering. They are to be Aboriginal Churches, but perhaps a better term is 'local' Churches, for they are not to be only for Aborigines. (They are not to be 'racist' in any sense — see Section 2.1.3.)

Each missionary should keep this ultimate goal in mind and constantly work towards it.

To be truly independent, a Church must be able to 'stand on its own feet' and not rely on any outside body such as the AIM to keep it going. Such a Church is usually described as:

Self supporting — raising all the money it needs to carry on its programme

Self governing — making its own decisions and having its own leaders

Self-propogating — actively spreading the 'seed' of the gospel and planting new

Churches both in the local area and in distant places.

3.3.1.2 *Organisation*

What sort of structure or organisation do Aboriginal Churches need? Are they to be just like the Churches we came from? And if so, which ones? Of course the AIM is inter-denominational, and our workers come from various Churches. What you regard as a sensible or practical set-up may not be what other of our workers are used to — or even what they approve of.

Why is there great diversity in the way Churches are organised and run in different denominations and different countries? It is partly the result of certain happenings in Church history. But it is also largely due to the lack of clear guidelines in the New Testament. Obviously we need some sort of uniformity within the Mission, but it would be foolish to lay down too many rigid rules for workers involved in organising believers into formed Churches.

There are, however, some obvious facts which we can use to obtain some guidance:

1. Any structure or pattern of organisation should follow *whatever is shown in the New Testament*.
It should not be based on the cultural ideas and Church history of European Christians.
2. It must be *simple, and suited to the needs* of Aboriginal Christians.
3. It must *fit comfortably into the lifestyle* and cultural background of the people themselves. In other words, it must be something they can understand and appreciate, and that makes them feel 'at home'.

This means, for example that Church organisation and the arrangement of meetings in tribal areas will differ from that which is found in NSW and southern Q'land.

3.3.2 *Establishing a Local Church*

3.3.2.1 *Stages*

As soon as possible after a group of men and women in a particular area have been won to Christ, they should be formed into an organised body for worship and teaching and service. They should also be taught and encouraged to gradually assume responsibilities that formerly rested on their Missionary.

Experience has shown that it may be best if this process is carried out in two stages.

1. When the number of Christians is small, the group is just called a *Fellowship*. There is very little organisation, but the group will probably appoint one of their number as leader.
2. After the number increases, the group is officially organised as a *Church*, with membership, rules (constitution), office-bearers and so on.

3.3.2.2 *Essential Requirements*

If a Church or Fellowship is going to have a chance of staying healthy and active, what does it need? Here are some suggestions that might be called 'the bare essentials'.

3.3.2.2.1 *A Special Meeting Place?*

What sort of meeting place do they need in order to operate properly? A special church building isn't necessary, even though that is often the first thing they think of.

It really doesn't matter if they must hold their meetings in a home or under a tree or in some untidy public hall — at least in the early days. Always keep before them the fact that the living Church is the only thing essential to God, not the building where it meets.

3.3.2.2.2 *Sufficient Christians*

It is risky to set down hard-and-fast rules about the numbers required for a true and active Church, but it is obvious that if there are only two members it will have a big struggle!!! On the other hand, the zeal and spiritual health of the local believers is far more important than mere numbers.

The FC has wrestled with this problem for years without coming up with a simple

and final answer. There are only some brief hints in the Bible — not enough to guide us. However, a bit of clear thinking can help us to reach some conclusions. As the Aboriginal population is small and scattered, obviously the number of Christians at our centres will never be high. We must take this fact into account. In our situation, three or four people could be enough to form a Fellowship. But to be realistic, we would have to aim for say 10 - 12 believers if we want a Church to function satisfactorily. In that number there should be at least two or three couples.

Aboriginal Christians in the Eastern States usually want to model their Churches on those they see in the white community. But they don't always realise the cost involved in owning and using a building (insurance, rates etc.). Also, they seem to expect Pastors to just 'live by faith' on a few dollars a week. Before they decide to call a Pastor or have a building of their own, they should have say 10 — 20 people attending regularly in order to raise the necessary finance.

3.3.2.2.3 *Regular Meetings*

A programme of regular meetings must be set up and maintained. They should cater for the needs of the Christians first, but must also include an evangelistic thrust.

These meetings don't have to be formal, or follow a rigid timetable, or have an organised format. In bush settings a happy, informal group around a campfire could be more effective than a stiff, carefully programmed service in a church building.

3.3.2.2.4 *Leadership*

* More details are given in Section 3.3.3.

Although there is no need for anything like a 'Church hierarchy', some leadership will be essential if a group is to function properly.

In a newly-formed group this responsibility will mainly fall on the Missionary. It seems that one of the problems in earlier years was that workers concentrated on preaching the gospel and gave little attention to building up the believers. Solid Bible teaching is needed if they are to grow. But they also need training in how to lead and speak at meetings. And they must be given opportunities to get practise.

If you are a Missionary in such a situation, look to the Lord to raise up leaders with spiritual gifts from among the local people. Then carefully teach the people about the roles of Elders, Deacons, Pastor, Secretary and Treasurer.

It should be your aim to hand over to local leaders (or perhaps a Pastor from elsewhere) as soon as they are ready to take on these responsibilities. (However, don't wait for them to be perfect before you are willing to leave them!)

3.3.2.2.5 *Rules (Constitution)*

The European way to organise a group is to set down a lot of rules for everyone to follow. These rules are called the 'constitution' of the organisation. A Church constitution states who may belong to it, how it is to be run, and so on.

In our society there are good reasons why such a document is prepared. The first reason is *legal*. No organisation can own property, or arrange for loans etc., without having a constitution. The second reason is *practical*. Without rules that all members have agreed to follow, the group could never function efficiently.

But as tribal Aborigines are not used to such things, they could find a lot of rules very confusing. So it is probably best for Churches in tribal areas not to have formal constitutions. Instead, there could be a simple statement of faith which every believer must agree with before being accepted as a Church member.

As the Christians gradually adapt to European ways, simple rules could be agreed upon and added to the doctrinal statement.

In the Eastern States, each Church should have a proper constitution, but it must be short, easy to follow, and be written in straightforward English. Also, it should

not go into fine details or try to cover every possible problem. For example, it should not mention meeting times, as they may need to be changed now and again.

In the Appendix there is a sample constitution. It could be used as the basis for the rules of a new Church.

The required constitution must be prepared before the meeting at which the Church is officially formed. It should be discussed with the local Christians, and the AIM Supt. may also be asked to look it over.

Every AIM Church is invited to send a copy of its constitution to Mission HQ, just for reference purposes.

3.3.2.3 *Qualifications for Membership*

Once a group is officially constituted as either a Fellowship or a Church, it must prepare a list of those officially recognised as members.

Only born-again believers who are walking with the Lord may become members of an AIM local Church. It is also an established Mission practice that the believers must be baptised by immersion before being accepted.

Other people — both Christians and non-Christians — will probably attend meetings, and should be encouraged to do so. But until they officially join the Church, they do not have the responsibilities and privileges of membership. They are just 'adherents', without belonging in the fullest sense.

Although the Mission is called to minister to Aboriginal people, there should be no racial discrimination in AIM churches. Nobody should be kept out of membership simply because of his race or colour.

The Church should be prepared to accept, by transfer, members from other Churches with a similar doctrinal basis.

3.3.2.4 *Preparation*

Before a Church is officially formed, the local Missionary should carefully teach what the Bible says about the Church. This teaching should include the illustrations of the body, building, and bride of Christ, and reference to the gifts given to the members for use in the Church.

Teaching should also be given about the responsibilities that believers have towards Jesus Christ, their fellow members, the unsaved, and their Pastor. They should also be brought to realise that they will have the responsibility to help support the work by regular attendance, by sharing in services and outreach programmes and by regularly giving money.

The members also need to be taught the responsibilities of the various office-bearers before people are chosen to fill those roles.

The appropriate Mission Supt. should make one or two visits to make sure the teaching of the local worker is well understood. He will also be able to assess whether the believers are ready to be formed into a church.

3.3.2.5 *Establishment*

The local worker should interview the various Christians to make sure they wish to become members of the Church. Then a special meeting must be called, at which the Church will be officially formed. It is urged that a representative of the Mission, such as the Area Superintendent, should be invited to lead the meeting.

During the meeting, the constitution of the Church would be read and accepted by those intending to become members. Then they would be welcomed officially as foundation members of the Church (probably by a handshake). Members should then be elected to fill the various offices such as Elder, Secretary and Treasurer.

3.3.2.6 *Forms of Worship*

How should meetings in Aboriginal Churches be run? What should take place at a meeting? Should there automatically be “four hymns and a sermon” as in many European Churches? Should everyone be seated in rows facing the leader or preacher?

The book of Acts shows that there were certain elements in the worship of the early Christians which should be included today — prayer and praise, teaching, preaching and sharing in the Lord's Supper. But these basic things can be present in a Church worship meeting without necessarily following the order of service commonly used in Evangelical Churches in the city.

Aboriginal Christians may find it difficult to listen to a complicated prepared sermon. A simply-told Bible story may mean much more to them. If they can then share by repeating it to one another or to the whole congregation (different ones taking a turn at adding to the story as it proceeds) they are more likely to remember it. If there is also a time for sharing truths learned from such a story there is more likelihood of such truths becoming part of daily life.

Seating the people in a circle, similar to the way they gather in their tribal setting, may mean more to tribal people than the more formal method of rows of seats. We want the gospel to become part of their way of life, not a foreign element which will disappear with the Missionary. We need to distinguish between what is actually Scriptural, and what is simply 'our way' of doing things.

We need to be very careful and prayerful about the patterns and practices we establish. These so easily become a ritual which believers slavishly follow without understanding why such things are done. And they have no idea whether there is a sound Scriptural basis for doing them.

3.3.3 *Leadership in a Local Church*

This is an area where we need to exercise great care, not only because these roles are so important, but because we are so strongly influenced by the cultural background we came from. We may feel, for example, that the way our home Church is organised and led is the only proper way. So we must carefully consider:

— *The teaching of the Scriptures.* We will have to be ready to put aside our prejudices and recognise what is merely the result of tradition. (But there is a limit to the guidance we will get, as many subjects are not dealt with in the Bible, or only referred to in passing.)

— *The needs of Aboriginal believers.* They may not feel comfortable in the sort of system that suits us, and they certainly don't need anything very complicated.

3.3.3.1 *Secretary and Treasurer*

* See the MPA book 'How to Run Business Affairs'. It has lots of helpful information.

No matter how small a group is, someone will have to be responsible for such things as:

- arranging meetings, inviting speakers etc.
- writing letters on behalf of the church
- taking care of Church money
- paying bills

In other words, a group can't operate properly without a Secretary and a Treasurer. Usually the members choose one of their number to serve as Secretary, and another one to serve as Treasurer. In a very small group, the one person is sometimes given both jobs. In Aboriginal Churches it may be preferable to choose two people as joint-Treasurers, and have them work together. (But it is best if they don't belong to the same family.)

* Teaching about the duties of these office-bearers should be given beforehand, to help make sure that suitable people will be elected.

The Secretary should have some knowledge of how to write minutes, prepare letters and keep records. The Treasurer should be able to keep an accurate record of money received and spent.

The members may feel inadequate to take on such duties, or perhaps no-one has the necessary qualifications. However, this difficulty can be overcome if the Missionary or Pastor takes time to train the person concerned.

Because of the pressure of other responsibilities the Missionary or Pastor may find that it

is easier to do everything himself, instead of trying to train others to do them. Such an attitude is a hindrance to the development of the local Church. It can also destroy the confidence of the believers. They will think they can't cope with church responsibilities, and just give up.

A series of training classes could be held for all members, not just those holding office. Then others could be ready to take over those jobs when the need arises.

3.3.3.2 *Elders*

Who should have the spiritual oversight of a group of believers? From what has been said earlier, it is obvious that this really isn't the job of a Missionary — at least not in the long term. So do the people have to call a Minister or Pastor from somewhere else? Well, although this is usually done in European Churches, it's not according to the pattern set in the New Testament.

Elders were appointed in the Church at Jerusalem, and in the Churches Paul started on his missionary journeys. It seems that they were local men. And they were trusted to carry on the work the Missionaries had started, even though they apparently had no formal training for the task. Obviously, Paul and the other key leaders felt that the Holy Spirit would enable them to serve effectively. (See Acts 14:23; 15:2; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:5).

When speaking of these men the term 'Bishop' is used in some translations of the NT. However, it didn't have the meaning usually associated with that term in Church life today. It simply meant 'Overseer' or 'Supervisor' — in the sense of a *shepherd (Pastor) caring for those in need*, not a big boss telling everyone what to do.

As Paul indicates in Titus 1:5-7, the terms 'Elder' and 'Bishop' (Overseer) refer to the same office:

- '*Elder*' speaks of a man's *qualifications*. He has to be mature and experienced.
- '*Overseer*' speaks of his *responsibility*. His job is to watch over and care for God's flock.

Many Aboriginal churches have followed the European pattern of calling a full-time Pastor. Then they have struggled (and usually failed) to raise the necessary financial support. Perhaps they would have done better if they had appointed Elders from among their own men.

The appointment of Church Elders fits in with the Aboriginal pattern of leadership. In their culture, older people were respected, and recognised as having wisdom and understanding to pass on to the rest of the tribe.

In tribal areas, a group of Church Elders could operate as a sort of 'pastoral team'. This would be similar to the 'council of elders' in their cultural background. And it could do away with the concept of 'one-man ministry', which does not always work.

Great care should be taken by the Church in making such appointments. It should choose only men who meet the Biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9). As their title implies, they should be physically and spiritually mature. They should be wise. They should be able to teach the Word.

The choice of wrong men can be a great hindrance to the growth of a Church. So the whole membership should be involved in the election process, as they know best who is really walking with the Lord and has spiritual authority among their group.

An Elder's job is to be responsible for the spiritual oversight of the Church. So the Elders work alongside the Pastor. (If there is a Pastor he would be regarded as one of the group.) They share most of the preaching and teaching and pastoral visitation. They deal with any matters of discipline.

3.3.3.3 *Deacons*

A Church may also choose some of its number to serve as Deacons. They are men and women who are responsible for attending to practical matters (Acts 6:1-6). However, in Churches where there are no Elders, the Deacons exercise a spiritual ministry too.

The qualities Deacons should have are set out in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

The differences in the roles of Elders and Deacons should be explained to the members before any are appointed. The deacons should be chosen carefully and prayerfully. In 1 Timothy 3:6,10 Paul warned of the sad results of choosing the wrong men.

3.3.3.4 *Church Leader*

A number of AIM Churches have solved the leadership problem in a simple way. They have selected one of their members to serve as Church Leader for a year. Then they have referred to him by that title.

In some cases the Leader has been a mature, experienced Christian woman. And where most of the members are women, this seems to work well.

The Leader may not be regarded as a Pastor. But he or she is looked to for guidance and is expected to lead many of the meetings. One of his/her big tasks is to make sure the other believers share together in the witness of the Church.

3.3.3.5 *Pastor*

3.3.3.5.1 *The Role of a Pastor*

* See also 'How to be a Successful Pastor', published by MPA.

As you probably know, the word 'pastor' means 'shepherd'. So his job is to care for part of God's 'flock' in a local Church, as a shepherd cares for his sheep.

He is really one of the Elders mentioned in Section 3.3.3.2. — a 'Preaching Elder'. And they are all to be involved in spiritual leadership. The main differences between them is that Elders serve voluntarily, and only in their free time, while Pastors usually serve full time and are paid for doing so.

Because he is an Elder, the Pastor should meet the requirements set down in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

A Pastor has various responsibilities.

He should:

Love the Church members at all times.

Point out their faults as necessary. But he should do so in a gentle way. And he must not constantly criticise them.

Teach the whole gospel. He shouldn't just go over the same pet subjects time after time, but plan a balanced coverage of the truths in God's Word.

Visit those in the Church family — especially people who are sick or who seem to be getting away from the Lord.

Train the members to share in services. He must give them opportunities to develop and use the talents the Lord has given them. And this is so even when the believers are inexperienced and only partly literate.

Allow the members to have their say in matters of Church government. He must let them see that he regards their opinions and suggestions as being valuable and worth considering. He must never force his own ideas on those who think differently.

Set a good example in such things as personal appearance, home life, being on time for meetings and trying to reach others. He must take good care of Mission and Church property, his own vehicle, and so on. He must be quick to pay his debts and must use his money wisely, and so honour the Lord's name.

3.3.3.5.2 *Calling a Pastor*

Sometimes AIM Missionaries have served as 'de facto' Pastors for a period after a new Fellowship or Church has been formed. This can be fairly satisfactory but it can cause problems. It tends to muddle up the lines of authority, because Missionaries serve under the FC, while Pastors should be answerable to their Church members.

A formed AIM Church may decide that it needs a proper Pastor. If so, it may call anyone it chooses to fill that position — even an AIM Missionary. But in the latter case, the worker may only accept the call if the FC approves. Then the FC will release him to serve the Church for a specific period.

If someone outside the Mission family is called, and he accepts, he does not automatically become a member of the Mission. In fact he is not linked in any official way with the Mission. But he is encouraged to apply to the FC to be classified officially as a 'Recognised AIM Pastor'. (See Section 2.7.6)

3.3.3.5.2.1 *Preparing the People*

If a Missionary appointed by the Mission is still serving at a centre after a local Church has been established, he should be 'working himself out of a job'. He should so teach and lead the people that they will soon appoint local men to serve as Elders, or even decide to call a Pastor. Then the Missionary will be free to move to another area.

The believers will need to be taught what the Scriptures say about the sort of qualities needed in a Pastor and/or Elders, as indicated earlier. They also need to understand their own responsibilities — to give their Pastor loyalty, adequate finance and help in the task of reaching others.

3.3.3.5.2.2 *Considering Suitable Men*

Although AIM Churches are autonomous, the Mission strongly urges that Churches thinking of calling a Pastor should consider only men who accept the Mission's doctrinal statement and are willing to be linked with the AIM.

When a Church decides that they need a Pastor, the Church Secretary may contact the Area Superintendent for names of suitable men.

Although it is possible for a Church to call a Missionary to serve as their Pastor, not all Missionaries would be suitable, or free to accept such a call. So any name should first be discussed with the Area Superintendent.

The Church should hold a special meeting to consider the names suggested. After a decision has been reached by vote, the Secretary should write to the person concerned, passing on the call of the Church to serve them. (Any other rules laid down in the Church Constitution about the calling of a Pastor should be carefully followed also).

After a call has been accepted, it is suggested that a representative of the Mission may be invited to lead the service at which the new Pastor is introduced to the work.

3.3.4 *Operating a Local Church*

3.3.4.1. *Links with the Mission*

Once a Church has been officially formed, it no longer operates under the authority of the FC. But the Mission hopes that warm links of fellowship will be retained. Any AIM Church is free to approach Mission HQ or the FC or the appropriate Supt. for advice, further training etc. Mission personnel could be invited to speak at special services etc.

The Mission strongly urges each Fellowship and Church to link up with sister Churches in the Church Council for their State (if there is one). At the very least, they should form and maintain strong links with other Aboriginal Churches established by the AIM or other groups with similar doctrinal beliefs.

3.3.4.2. *Spiritual Ministry*

3.3.4.2.1. *Regular Meetings*

These are most important in fostering the spiritual growth of members.

The number and types of weekly meetings will vary from place to place, depending on the needs of the various centres. Local circumstances and climate will indicate what times the meetings should be held. In such matters, Missionaries and other workers will need to be flexible, and willing to break from the customs of their home churches.

The believers at any centre must have regular opportunities to meet together for worship and fellowship. There must also be times for prayer and Bible study. And there could be training classes for various forms of Christian service and Church leadership — teaching Sunday school, preaching etc.

Local Christians need to be encouraged to share in the various services and meetings, by leading, singing, giving testimonies and messages. This will help them to grow in Christ.

An evening of a purely social nature can be very helpful. (We expect Christians to refrain from drinking and gambling, etc. but we often give them little lead about other leisure activities.) A room or area should also be set aside for reading books, listening to records or playing table tennis, etc. whenever people have free time.

Beware of expecting believers to attend meetings on every night of the week. We must remember that Christians have a great responsibility to their families. They cannot be faithful in this if they are out all the time. Unfortunately, some Churches have become so legalistic in outlook that Christians who do not attend all weeknight meetings are thought to be backsliding, and are sharply criticised.

3.3.4.2.2. *Outreach and Visitation*

The local believers should be encouraged to get involved in evangelising their community. They could help the Pastor (or Missionary) in visiting the homes in the area. Many believers share their faith naturally and simply in daily contacts with others, but there may be a place for special evangelistic meetings as well.

The Christians can help to distribute the free magazines produced by MPA. But they should be shown how to use them to advantage. (For example, they could be taught to mention something about a particular article as they hand out a magazine. Or they could give a personal testimony in line with that article or teaching.)

Believers should be shown the basic Scriptures used in leading folk to Christ. Studies of the methods of the Lord Jesus Himself are useful.

They should also be encouraged to take part in any open-air meetings. (But beware of pushing new converts into giving testimonies or solo items immediately after a profession of faith, or upon their return to Christ after a period of backsliding.)

Encourage Christians to take part in outreach to other areas. Where a number of people are available for this work, let them take turns. (Any apparent favouritism towards one person can cause friction between believers.) You may need to guard against numbers of folk wanting to travel with you just to visit relations. Make it clear that the purpose is to share Christ with others, and give your helpers some definite part in this work.

Some Christians may be able to help in Scripture classes in schools. Punctuality, obedience to school regulations and firm class control should be stressed so that Christ is honoured.

We say we believe in the priesthood of all believers but in practice we often have a 'one-man show' because we are unwilling to give the time and effort needed to help Christians take on responsibilities. We may be afraid that inexperienced people will make mistakes, but that is the way we all learn to do better. Of course it is much easier to do everything ourselves, but that results in a stunted, weak church and lazy Christians.

3.3.4.3 *Business Meetings*

- * The MPA book 'How to Run Business Affairs' has a lot of helpful advice about running business meetings.

3.3.4.3.1 *Members' Meetings*

As soon as a local Church is established, regular meetings of members, either monthly or quarterly, should be held to deal with all matters affecting the welfare of the Church. The Pastor or a suitable Elder should lead business meetings.

Members should be reminded that Church business must be kept confidential and not be made the subject of gossip to friends and neighbours.

The meeting itself should be conducted as simply as possible, so that all members

can understand what is being said. Try to keep the proceedings on a high spiritual level. An opening hymn, followed by prayer for guidance and even a short message will help. Often the members regard a Church meeting as an opportunity for expressing grievances and personal injuries. Unless they are brought into spiritual harmony the meeting could become unruly and dishonouring to the Lord. Minutes of what happened at the previous meeting should be read, as recorded by the Secretary. A statement of all money collected and spent should also be given (usually by the Treasurer). If they are thought to be correct, they should be formally accepted by the meeting

* In a Church made up of illiterate or partly literate people, matters such as these will have to be simplified.

3.3.4.3.2 *Annual Meeting*

Each year, one of the business meetings is called the Annual Meeting. This is when the office-bearers for the coming year are elected.

The Pastor or other Church leaders should make special preparation for this meeting and urge all members to attend. Adherents may also be invited, although they would not be permitted to take part in any of the business proceedings.

The Secretary should prepare a report of the year's activities, to read at the Annual Meeting. The Treasurer should prepare a list (statement) giving details of all money received and spent during the year.

3.3.4.4 *Church Finance*

3.3.4.4.1 *Teaching about giving*

Right from the earliest days of a work, local Christians should be taught the joy, duty and privilege of giving to the Lord. They should be shown that at least a tithe (\$1.00 in every \$10.00) of what they earn or receive really belongs to the Lord.

As we teach the Scriptural principles of giving, we should also teach and encourage the believers to depend on the Holy Spirit for guidance in applying those principles in spite of family or cultural demands.

3.3.4.4.2 *Handling Church Monies*

Someone (preferably not the Missionary) should be chosen to serve as Treasurer of the fellowship. This person will take care of all financial matters, though he may look to the Pastor or Missionary for advice.

Regular offerings should be received. The Pastor should also urge the people to contribute towards special needs such as the support of Missionaries serving in other places.

The amounts of all monies received in offerings should be written down in a special book every Sunday. Also, the Treasurer should keep an account book showing the totals received and banked, and every amount spent, and details of what it was spent on.

In some areas it has been found helpful to have two people count the offering and sign the entries in the Church account book. (This avoids putting undue pressure on anyone.)

It is also advisable to have at least two or three people authorised to sign cheques and withdrawal forms on behalf of the Church, with the signatures of at least two of them being necessary for any bank transaction.

The members should be encouraged to take responsibility for deciding how Church funds should be used and distributed.

They should be taught (preferably by Mission visitors such as the Area Superintendent) to help with the upkeep of the Pastor's (or Missionary's) car and the regular support of their Pastor and his family.

3.3.4.4.3 *Other Sources of Finance*

In some centres, secondhand clothing, cool drinks and packaged food are sold as a service to the local people. Such activities provide a useful source of income for

the Church. However, they may also cause a problem.

The Christians may begin to think that tuck shop and clothing sales are the best way to provide finance for the Church programme. They need to be reminded that *nothing* takes the place of their personal responsibility to give to God.

A couple of practical issues are worth noting also:

1. If the local believers feel that such 'commercial' activities are needed, they should be prepared to organise and run them, and not leave this task to the pastor or missionary.
2. It may be best to channel the money raised in such ways into a particular project, such as the running costs of the Church bus.

3.3.4.5 *Church Property*

3.3.4.5.1 *Ownership*

The Mission has provided finance for the erection of most *AIM Church buildings*, and the land titles are in the name of the Mission's Property Holding Company. However, the Mission regards each property as being held in trust for the local Church involved. In other words, the believers own the buildings they are using, but we assist them by taking care of the legal papers.

* The Property Holding Company is involved in order to avoid legal problems which may occur when churches appoint their own trustees.

Most AIM manses have also been purchased or built by the Mission. (Usually, almost all of the necessary finance has been provided through the Mission.) But we regard the manses occupied by Pastors of active Churches as belonging to those Churches. As with church buildings, the Property Holding Company is simply acting as Trustee for the local Church members.

If an active Church desires to sever all connections with the Mission and operate independently of us, the Mission will be prepared to favourably consider a complete handover of assets, including titles to the property involved.

When considering such a handover, the Mission will take into account the Church's ability to meet all ongoing operating costs of the property, and whether the handover will aid the development of an indigenous church in that area.

3.3.4.5.2 *Care and Maintenance*

Local Christians should be taught and encouraged to take care of all Church property and to protect it from abuse and vandalism. They should realise that it is honouring to the Lord for the buildings and grounds to be neat and tidy and in good repair.

Maintenance work required on each property is the responsibility of the local Church, not the Mission. Many jobs such as painting, and cutting lawns, could be done by the Christians themselves. They should be encouraged to be responsible for such jobs. It is a mistake for the Pastor or Missionary to spend time and energy doing things which ought to be done by the Church members.

Costs involved in operating and maintaining Church buildings and manses should also be met by the local Church.

3.3.4.5.3 *New Buildings and Land*

When additional land or a new Church building or manse is required, the local group of believers is responsible to provide it. However, because of the huge cost involved these days, the Mission stands ready to assist with advice and some financial assistance (when available) for approved projects. Also, to ensure a reasonable standard of design and construction, the local Church is urged to consult the Mission's Property Manager for guidance.

The Church Secretary should contact the Area Superintendent and discuss with him the proposed purchase or construction. He will in turn pass on details of the scheme to the Management Committee and the Administrative Council.

If the Mission approves the project, the following financing arrangements are

offered to the Church, subject to finance being available:

- 40% of cost provided from Mission funds
- 20% of cost provided from Church funds
- 40% of cost loaned from the Mission's Revolving Fund set up specially for such projects.

3.3.4.5.4. *Alterations and Extensions*

Alterations and extensions to church buildings and manses are the responsibility of the local Church, not the Mission. However, as with new buildings, the Mission's Property Manager is available for consultation. All AIM Churches are urged to draw on his experience and advice.

If the project is beyond the finances of the Church, financial assistance may be provided by the Mission, as set out in paragraph 3.3.4.5.3.

The procedure to follow is also as set out in the above paragraph.

3.3.4.5.5 *Disposal*

In unusual circumstances, an independent AIM Church may decide to dispose of the manse used by its pastor, or even their church building. Such a serious decision should be made only with the agreement of a majority of the members, and at a properly constituted church members meeting.

If the AIM Property Holding Company is the trustee of the building and/or land involved, the Mission's Executive Secretary should be advised of the decision. If possible, he will discuss the situation with the leadership of the Church concerned and seek the advice of the AIM Church Council in that State.

If the decision to dispose of the property still stands, he will notify the AC accordingly. The AC will then direct the Property Holding Company to either send the title deeds to the Church, or place the property in the hands of a real estate agent.

3.3.4.6 *Records*

As mentioned earlier, one job of the *Secretary* is to write a record of what takes place at each business meeting of the Church. (This record is called the 'Minutes' of the meeting.)

The Secretary should also keep minutes of the Deacons' meetings.

There should also be a book listing the names of all members, their addresses and the date they joined the church (and a place to show when they died or transferred their membership).

Some Churches even keep special books in which they list such things as:

- Number attending each meeting
- Names of visiting speakers
- Names of all who regularly attend meetings, but are not members

The *Treasurer's* job includes keeping a written record of all money received by the Church, and how it is used.

It is also a good idea to keep a smaller book at the Church, in which the Treasurer writes down the amount of each offering. This book should be signed each Sunday by two people, usually the Treasurer and a Deacon.

Examples of records are found in the M.P.A. booklet 'How to Run Business Affairs'. Some of this booklet is reprinted in the Appendix.

3.3.4.7 *Reporting*

All AIM Churches are urged to report regularly to the Area Superintendent and to Mission Headquarters. This is not to get permission to do certain things, but to keep the Mission up-to-date with what is going on. In this way, the Mission can stand behind the Churches with intelligent, informed prayer, and encourage its supporters to do the same.

The things reported should not only be those which show growth and victory in the life of the Church and its members, but also the problems and discouragements faced by the Christians. Report forms used by the Mission are shown in the Appendix.

3.3.5 *Helping a Church in Difficulties*

Sadly, many Churches and Fellowships go through periods of decline in numbers and/or spiritual life. At such times a group needs help from someone outside.

If there is an AIM Church Council in the State where the struggling Church is located, the Council should step in and give assistance, as set out in its own Constitution.

The Mission has no desire to interfere with the operation of an independent Church or Fellowship, but there are times when it must become involved (such as when there is no Church Council).

The remaining members of the group should approach the Council or the Mission's Field Supt. for advice or assistance. But if they fail to take the initiative, when the Field (or Area) Supt. becomes aware of the problem, he may offer assistance.

If the Church or Fellowship has gone down so much that it cannot function at all, the Mission may re-classify it as a Mission centre, and provide missionaries to try to re-establish the work. However, this step should only be taken as a last resort.

When a Church reverts back to being a Mission Centre, money left in the Church funds should first be used to pay remaining debts. Any balance should be kept in a trust fund at Mission HQ and used for future expenses at that centre.

If the Church owns a house used as a manse, it may be rented to any suitable person. The rent money is to be put into the above fund for use at the centre.

3.3.6 *Relationships*

3.3.6.1 *Church with Mission*

Once a local Church has been formed, with its own Constitution and membership, it is completely autonomous. However, it is hoped that strong family ties will be maintained with the Mission. This is not because the Mission wants to continue directing the Church. Rather, the relationships should be like that between a father and his grown-up, but still greatly-loved son.

The Mission stands ready to give guidance, advice, prayer support, the loan of a worker, and sometimes financial assistance when AIM Churches ask for it.

For this reason, it is hoped that the Church will invite Mission representatives to visit its area from time to time, and will keep in touch by sending regular reports (as mentioned previously).

3.3.6.2 *Pastor with Mission*

The Mission strongly urges that Pastors called to an AIM Church should be linked in a definite way with the Mission. (Provision for this can easily be made in the Church Constitution.)

Many Pastors who minister in AIM Churches will be AIM Missionaries or Pastors with a strong AIM background. But even those who are called from other areas should be willing to be affiliated with the AIM and work in close co-operation with it. (See further in Section 2.7.6)

3.3.6.3 *Church with Other Organisations*

A local Church within the family of AIM is free to form links with other Churches or organisations or groups of Churches. Of course, it is hoped that the local members will exercise discernment, so that they are only linked closely with those of similar beliefs.

If a Church decides to affiliate with another association of Churches such as the AEF (Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship), its links with the Mission need not necessarily be cut.

3.4 *Special Ministries*

From time to time the Mission may establish Special Ministries, either on its own or in association with other Missions or similar groups. A request for affiliation with the Mission may also be made from outside the Mission.

The Bible College in Darwin and Mission Publications of Australia at Lawson are examples of such specialised programmes within the framework of the Mission.

All Special Ministries must be operated in support of, and be affiliated with, the Mission.

3.4.1 *Initial Establishment and Affiliation*

Whether the Special Ministry is established by the Mission, or an application for affiliation is received from an existing organisation by the Management Committee, the following things will be required:

- (a) Those concerned must endorse the State of Faith as contained in the Mission Constitution.
- (b) The ministry must be carried out with the prime purpose of supporting the work of the Mission.
- (c) It should not significantly duplicate other activities normally carried out by the Mission.
- (d) It should be financially self-supporting and not require allocation of Mission funds, except for such purposes as may be specifically agreed upon from time to time.
- (e) The workers must be willing to operate within the guidelines laid down in this section.

If the ministry under consideration has been operated by an outside group, after considering the application, the Management Committee will recommend to the FC and the AC whether or not the Special Ministry should be granted affiliation with the Mission.

3.4.2 *Relationships*

Each Special Ministry is directly responsible, through the Management Committee, to the Field Council for all aspects of its operation. It must work in co-operation with the Area Superintendent in each State within which it works. Close contact and co-operation should be maintained with AIM workers in the same geographical area.

3.4.3 *Reporting*

In addition to the informal reporting resulting from the relationships set out in Section 3.3.6, the following written reports should be sent by all Special Ministries to the Management Committee, with a copy to the relevant Area Superintendent(s).

- A quarterly Operations Report
- A quarterly statement of income and expenditure
- An audited annual financial statement covering the same period as the Mission's financial year

Sample report forms are in the Appendix.

3.4.4. *Public Relations*

Special Ministries are encouraged to submit regular reports to the Editors of 'The Aim' and 'Today' magazines and to the Mission office for inclusion in newsletters. Regular personal contact with supporters is also encouraged.

Any publicity in which the Mission's name is used must be authorised by the appropriate Officer of the Mission.

No statements may be made to members of the press or the general public on matters relating to Mission policies or practices, without prior consultation with the appropriate Office of the Mission.

No special appeal for support may be made without approval of the Mission. Any such appeal must be consistent with the general principles of the Mission.

4. *ADDITIONAL READING*

This section contains the names of publications from which information has been drawn in preparing this Manual, or which contain additional helpful information about the Aboriginal people or the work of the Mission.

4.1 *THE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES*

The Australian Aborigine *by Professor A.P. Elkin*

The Problem of the Australian Aborigines *by E.R. Gribble*

Brown Men and Red Sand *by C.P. Mountford*

The Northern Territory *by Ernestine Hill*

The World of the First Australians *by R.M. & C.H. Berndt (Ure Smith, Sydney)*

Triumph of the Nomad *by Geoffrey Blainey (Sun Books, Melb)*

Aboriginal Man in Australia *edited by R.M. & C.H. Berndt (Angus & Robertson)*

- No Dying Race *by Charles Dugid (Rigby 1963)*
 Simply Human Beings *by E.G. Docker (Jacaranda, 1964)*
 Life Among the Aborigines *by W.E. Harney (Robert Hale Ltd., London)*
 Whitefella Culture *by Susanne Hargrave (SIL)*
 Aboriginal Myths and Legends *by Douglass Baglin & Barbara Mullins*
 ISBN 0 7255 0051 4 (coloured illustrated booklet available from bookshops)
 Aboriginal Land Rights and the Northern Territory *from speech by The Honourable Ralph Hunt,*
 Minister for the Interior. (Aust. Govt. Publishing Service, Canberra, 1972)
 Into Another World *by Ameer Glass (Institute for Aboriginal Development)*
- 4.2 *HISTORY OF MISSIONS*
- Venture of Faith An Epic of Australian Missionary History *by P.A. Scherer (Lutheran Book Depot)*
 Providential Channels *by Mrs Retta Long*
 In the Way of His Steps *by Mrs Retta Long*
 Harry Foster of the Northern Territory *by W. Arnold Long*
 Things as they Were *by Beth Burr*
 Bringing Christ to Aboriginal Australia *by Ian Lindsay*
 One Blood *by John Harris*
- 4.3 *THE CHURCH ON THE MISSION FIELD*
- On the Mission Field — The Indigenous Church *by M. Hodges*
 Planting and Development of Missionary Churches *by John L. Nevius*
 New Life for All (development of movement in Nigeria *under SIM*)
 Behind the Ranges *by J.O. Fraser*

APPENDIX 1

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT ABORIGINES PAST AND PRESENT

1. *THEIR RACE*

The original inhabitants of any country may be called 'aborigines'. That word simply means they are native to that place — they belong there (but are not necessarily dark-skinned). However, here in Australia we tend to only use the term 'Aborigines' as a tribal name for the original people who occupied this country before Europeans came.

Australian Aborigines vary in colour from chocolate brown to very nearly black — depending on where they live. Anthropologists say they are different from all other races in the world, and have called them 'Australoids'. They differ from the Polynesians and Melanesians — people living on nearby Pacific Islands.

Full-blood Tasmanian Aborigines died out many years ago. They were a different racial group from those on the mainland, being a Negroid group related to the Melanesians. And some scientists believe that mainland Aborigines may be divided into two or three groups, the result of successive immigrations from overseas.

It is not known how many Aborigines were in Australia before the coming of Europeans. Commonly accepted figures are from 300,000 to 500,000, with the emphasis on the lower figure.

They were divided into perhaps 500 tribes. The membership of a tribe probably varied from 100 to 1,500, and averaged about 500 or 600. There were very few large tribes.

2. *THEIR CUSTOMS AND CULTURE*

The people and their customs were not the same throughout Australia. There were differences in build and appearance and some variations in culture from place to place. Even the boomerang was not common to all tribes — in some places it was not known at all. Likewise the didgeridoo was only used in certain areas.

Most tribes had completely different languages, rather than varying dialects, but the general principles of the languages — both their structure and their part in native culture — were the same all over the Continent. The Aborigines had no written language before Europeans began to study them.

Some features of Aboriginal culture, such as religion, rules about social relationships and regulating

control within the tribe, were highly developed and complicated. In spite of previous public opinion, Aborigines are as intelligent as any other race.

Marriage was decided according to the kinship system of the particular tribe. A community would be divided into two, four, six, or more sections according to the system used in that area. Each section or 'skin' group, as it was called, might have a particular totem symbol associated with it, such as a bird, animal or some other object. A man from the first section would be expected to marry a woman from another section. Their children would then belong to a third group and would be expected to marry into yet another group. This prevented in-breeding.

Relationships and responsibilities to in-laws and relations were also controlled by this means, and included such things as food distribution, sharing in certain rites, and inheritance. (For example, a kangaroo killed in a hunt did not belong entirely to the successful hunter. Certain portions belonged to other members of the family group.) Some of this responsibility to the tribal group has carried over into the life of 'Europeanised' Aborigines (who may never have known a tribal background), and can cause problems in a society which emphasises individual ownership and rights. Aborigines who own houses or cars are expected to share them with relations — not as a favour but as a responsibility.

The Aborigines were a race of food-gatherers. They lived off the land, did not practise any form of gardening or animal husbandry, and were compelled by circumstances to be nomadic. Usually their wanderings followed a definite pattern. Each year they went to the same places at the same time to gather seasonal foods as they became available.

Some scientists have divided the peoples of the world into two groups — the culture races and the nature races. Australia's Aborigines are in the latter group.

The major problem faced by Aborigines in recent history has been that of adapting to the changed conditions which have come as the result of the settlement of their country by white people. They were still in the Stone Age when Europeans came — the sudden transition to modern times has caused great problems of adjustment.

The Aborigines were once regarded as a dying race, but are now one of the fastest-growing native races in the world. The Commonwealth Statistician and other authorities now give a population figure of around 200,000. About two-thirds of the total population live north of a line drawn through Townsville in Queensland to Broome in Western Australia. Most full-blood Aborigines live in the northern part of the country, and people of mixed racial background in the southern areas.

3. *THEIR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS*

The Aborigines were animists. They believed that all objects have a soul or spirit — trees, rocks, hills, as well as animals. Practically every area of life was governed to some extent by this belief. As mentioned earlier, each group or individual belonged to a particular totem or 'badge'. Some eating prohibitions were regulated by the particular totem to which a person belonged.

Birth and death were also closely associated with this belief in the spirit world. After death, ceremonies were held to drive away the spirit of the dead person. The form of ceremony varied from area to area. Even today, the clothes of the dead person may be burned a certain number of weeks after death, or his hut destroyed or left vacant. Death and sickness were believed to be the result of someone's curse or magic, not the result of natural causes. There would be efforts to locate the suspected murderer and kill him in revenge.

Aborigines believed the world was created by the dreamtime figures — animals which possessed not only man-like abilities such as speech and emotions, but also great magical power. Certain dreamtime figures were supposed to have created certain hills and valleys, great rocks, waterholes and rivers. (Now it is believed the figures are seen as the stars.) Such stories were handed down from generation to generation by re-telling and re-enactment. (In some areas they are still believed.) Some legends have a resemblance to Bible truths. For example, there is a Western Aranda story of an eternal being who lives above the sky, and another tale from the Northern Territory about a great flood. (See 'Aboriginal Myths and Legends' — Roland Robinson.)

Some tribes in NSW, such as the Wiradjiri believed in a benevolent supreme Creator. They called him 'Bi-ame'.

Various ceremonies were also handed down from one generation to the next. The elders of the tribe

were the teachers and were greatly respected. Some ceremonies were for all the tribe, others were for men only, or for women only. Death could be expected if a member of the opposite sex was suspected of seeing or hearing matters 'not their business'.

Certain objects were associated with some of these ceremonies and thought to have magical powers. They were kept in sacred places known only to the elders, or witchdoctors, or perhaps all the initiated men. No-one else was allowed to look upon such sacred objects.

For a fuller understanding of the beliefs and rules which governed Aboriginal life, read some of the books available. (*It would not be wise to question the people among whom you work about their beliefs and practices. Just allow them to tell you any details of their customs which they may feel free to share.*)

4. *LIVING STANDARDS*

The living standards of Aboriginal people vary considerably. No Aborigines live 'off the land' as they once did, but many still prefer 'bush tucker' when they can get it (as on weekend camping trips). In our area, this particularly applies to those living in North Queensland and the Northern Territory.

Areas of land were set aside in all States for the use of Aborigines. These areas were known as reserves or settlements, (though they were often called 'missions' by the people themselves). The trend now is to call such settlements 'Communities' e.g. Woorabinda Community. In the Northern Territory, settlements are now to be regarded as ordinary towns. However, in both these States decisions about who may live in such communities are under the control of the locally elected Aboriginal Councils. Thus even visitors need official permission from such Councils before arrival at a particular community. (In the N.T. a formal permit from the appropriate Land Council must also be obtained.)

Each mainland State has been responsible for the matters relating to Aborigines residing in it. This was written into the Constitution. However, the Federal Government has recently been pressing for control of all Aborigines, a move which has been resisted, particularly by the Queensland State Government. Most reserves and settlements have been given to the Aboriginal people now living there. Once again the Queensland Government has resisted this move claiming it would set up apartheid conditions.

In Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia many Aborigines live and work on the cattle stations.

Some Aboriginal people live on the outskirts of country towns (often referred to as 'fringe-dwellers'). Thousands of others have migrated to big cities, where too often they end up living in slum areas. However, there is an increasing number in all big cities and country towns who are living in their own homes, in a good suburban situation and fitting in with the local community.

In all States, efforts are being made to provide adequate housing for Aborigines. Good quality homes are being purchased or erected for their use. In New South Wales, Housing Commission homes are available for half rent to Aborigines.

5. *EDUCATION*

Years ago, schools exclusively for Aborigines were set up on various reserves, mission stations and even large cattle stations. Teachers on mission stations were employed by the particular Mission with which they were connected. However, almost all schools are now open to both Aboriginal and white children. Also, teachers are now employed by the Education Department of the particular State in which they work.

An increasing number of Aboriginal children are going on to higher education — a programme assisted by Government grants — and some are doing University courses.

The only exclusively Aboriginal schools today are residential colleges established in Darwin and Alice Springs. These provide secondary education and manual training. Courses for teaching aides and medical aides are carried on at Batchelor, N.T.

In Queensland and Western Australia many country children are able to attend secondary school through the provision of hostels, or special homes set up for the purpose of accommodating small numbers of students. Houseparents in such homes are usually Aborigines or Islanders. Hostels for apprentices and those doing other types of training are being established in large cities such as

Brisbane and Perth and represent a spiritually needy field. Each State has a special department to provide such vocational training, and scholarship grants are available as well.

6. *MEDICAL*

Aboriginal people have access to available hospitals and medical services, as all other Australians. In the outback, the Flying Doctor Service and the Aerial Medical Service are invaluable.

The Aboriginal Medical Service operates in some areas, particularly in NSW, but their role seems to be politically motivated.

7. *AGENCIES EVANGELISING ABORIGINES*

Denominational: Church of England through Australian Board of Missions, Church Missionary Society and Church Army; Presbyterian; Uniting; Baptist; Church of Christ; Lutheran; Brethren Assemblies; Salvation Army; Assemblies of God; Pentecostals; also several orders within the Roman Catholic Church (as well as most of the cults).

Interdenominational: Aborigines Inland Mission of Australia; Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship; United Aborigines Mission.

Our own Mission is working in a large part of New South Wales, Queensland, and the Northern Territory. (See the Field Map and Directory in the Appendix).

Translation: Summer Institute of Linguistics have a large number of workers doing translation work — mostly in Queensland and the Northern Territory. Some are also working in the Kimberleys of Western Australia. (However, SIL plans to close down their Australian Aboriginal Branch in the next few years.) Various parts of the Bible are available in a number of Aboriginal languages, but the major emphasis has been on the production of the Kriol Bible (Pidgin) spoken by most full-blood people across the north of the country.

Language Recordings also have discs and cassette tapes available in various Aboriginal dialects.

APPENDIX 2

CONSTITUTION OF THE ABORIGINES INLAND MISSION OF AUSTRALIA

1. *NAME*

The name of the organisation shall be:

Aborigines Inland Mission of Australia

In this document it is referred to as 'the AIM' or 'the Mission'.

2. *PURPOSE*

The Mission has a six-part aim. It seeks to:

- a. Evangelise Australian Aborigines and their descendants (and any other people to whom the Lord may lead us).
- b. Inspire and train Aboriginal believers to become active disciples of Jesus Christ.
- c. Establish local Aboriginal churches that follow the principles laid down in the New Testament.
- d. Assist these churches to assume increasing responsibility in evangelising and teaching their own people.
- e. Train pastors and other leaders for the churches.
- f. Encourage the formation of groups of churches capable of taking over the responsibility for ministry in certain areas, or the whole AIM field.

3. *PROGRAMME*

In order to achieve the above aim, the Mission will carry on a programme of evangelistic outreach, church planting and discipleship and leadership training among the Aboriginal people. It may establish and maintain training institutions and other special ministries designed to assist in the carrying out of this programme.

At all times it will seek to work in partnership with Aboriginal Christians promoting their involvement in and eventual leadership of such ministries.

It will also work in partnership with evangelical organisations whose aims and methods are compatible with our own.

4. *STATEMENT OF FAITH*

The AIM is an interdenominational, Protestant mission. It affirms the following evangelical

doctrines:

- a. The deity of the three Persons of the Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- b. The Divine inspiration and authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures.
- c. The fall of man from his original state; that all human beings are sinners and need a Saviour.
- d. The only way of salvation is through Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and rose again for our justification; and our eternal security as believers rests in Him alone.
- e. The resurrection of the righteous and of the unrighteous; the everlasting joy of the redeemed and the everlasting punishment of the lost.
- f. The personal and bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- g. The power and presence of the Holy Spirit in this age of grace, and that God's work can only be accomplished by His obedient servants as He empowers them.

5. *MEMBERSHIP*

The following people involved in the work of AIM are members of the Mission:

- Fully-accredited missionaries
- Associate missionaries
- Associate workers
- Management Committee members
- Administrative Council members
- State Representatives

In order to retain their membership they must continue to endorse the Statement of Faith, aim and methods of operation of the Mission.

As the Lord enables, the Mission may provide an allowance for a member, as part of his/her Team Support. But it is understood that no member is (or can be) an employee of the Mission, or can work for the Mission under any State or Federal Award.

Pastors and members of churches established by and /or affiliated with AIM are recognised as belonging to the wider Mission family. However, because Church and Mission have different functions, such people do not have formal membership in the ORGANISED Mission body unless they are in one of the above categories.

6. *MANAGEMENT*

Responsibility for the management and operation of the Mission shall be shared by its Management Committee, Field Council and Administrative Council, as set out in clauses 7 to 10 of this Constitution.

7. *OFFICERS*

A. *POSITIONS*

The officers of the Mission will be:

- President
- Vice Presidents (up to three)
- Executive Secretary
- Treasurer

B. *TERM*

Each officer will serve for a term of three years. At the end of his/her term, he/she is eligible for re-election.

C. *DUTIES*

Each officer will serve on the Management Committee and will be an ex-officio member of both the Field Council and the Administrative Council.

His/her role and other responsibilities are as defined in the Mission Manual.

D. *APPOINTMENT*

Mission officers will be elected at a joint meeting of the Field and Administrative Councils, arranged by the Management Committee.

Nominations of people thought suitable to serve as officers may be submitted in writing to the Management Committee by any Mission member (as defined in Clause 5).

Nominations must reach the Mission Office at least seven days before the election.

To be successful, a nominee must receive at least two-thirds of the votes of those present at the joint meeting.

If the office of President falls vacant during the term of service, the procedure set out in the previous paragraphs will apply for the election of a new President. However, if the Management Committee feels that a joint meeting is impractical, at their discretion the election may be conducted by postal ballot.

If there is a casual vacancy in one of the other offices, the Management Committee will consult with the members of the Field and Administrative Councils, and then appoint someone to fill the vacancy for the unexpired portion of the term.

8. *MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE*

A. *MEMBERSHIP AND OFFICERS*

The Management Committee will consist of the officers of the Mission, together with the Field Superintendent, who will be an ex-officio member with full voting rights.

The President or his nominee will act as Chairman of the Committee.

B. *DUTIES*

The Management Committee is the executive of the Mission, responsible for its efficient operation between the regular meetings of the Field and Administrative Councils and to facilitate close liaison of those councils.

a. Its particular responsibility is to act for the Field Council, which, because of the distances involved, is unable to meet frequently.

In all matters falling within the jurisdiction of that Council, the Area Superintendents (if any) are to be consulted.

If the Field Superintendent is unable to attend a particular meeting of the Management Committee, he is also to be consulted about field matters before the meeting.

b. Resignations from members of the Mission are to be dealt with, and then passed on to the Administrative Council for finalisation.

c. Members of this Committee are ex-officio members of both the Field Council and the Administrative Council, with full voting rights, and are expected to attend all meetings of those councils.

9. *FIELD COUNCIL*

A. *MEMBERSHIP AND OFFICERS*

Up to seven missionaries in full standing will be elected by the missionary body to serve on the Field Council for a period of four years. The election will be held as set out in the Mission Manual.

In addition, the members of the Management Committee will be ex-officio members of the Field Council.

The Council has power to invite up to three representatives from AIM churches to attend Council meetings. Such representatives will be given full membership privileges at all meetings they attend.

The President of the Mission or his nominee will act as Chairman of Field Council meetings.

The Council may appoint its own officers, such as Field Secretary, as it deems necessary.

The Field Superintendent will be elected from the Field Council members by the missionaries for a term of four years. He will be an ex-officio member of the Management Committee and the Administrative Council, with full voting rights, and eligible for re-election.

B. *DUTIES*

It is the responsibility of the Field Council to:

a. Control the work on the Field, including all Special Ministries (except MPA, which has a joint AIM/UAM Council).

b. Appoint missionaries and probationary missionaries to their respective places of service, and accept other workers as provided in the Mission Manual.

c. Establish any special terms of service required for workers in particular circumstances.

- d. Recommend the appointment as missionaries in full standing of probationers whose service has been deemed satisfactory.
- e. Appoint Area Superintendents as required, as set out in the Mission Manual.
- f. Determine the principles by which the work on the Field will be guided, and report any changes to the Administrative Council and all Missionaries.
- g. Make recommendations to the Administrative Council regarding the purchase, use and disposal of Field properties.
- h. Draw up by-laws for the regulation of its own affairs.

10. *ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL*

A. MEMBERSHIP AND OFFICERS

The Administrative Council will consist of the members of the Management Committee and not more than ten other members.

The members of the Council shall be brothers and sisters in Christ who believe they have been led by the Holy Spirit to assist in the work of the Mission. They must heartily endorse the Statement of Faith and Aims and Methods of the Mission, as set out in this document and the Mission Manual.

They may become members of this Council only in response to an invitation from the Council to do so. Their term of service is indefinite.

When a vacancy exists in the Council, any member of the Council or any Missionary may nominate someone to fill it. The nomination is to be presented at a meeting of the Council and then voted on at a subsequent meeting. If the vote is unanimously in favour of this person joining, he/she is to be invited to do so.

Members are expected to attend all meetings of the Council, or to send apologies if their absence is unavoidable.

If a member is absent from Council meetings for six months without explanation or apologies being sent to the Mission office, the Executive Secretary is to ask that person if he/she wishes to continue as a member. If the reply is negative or the absence continues without good reason for a further two months, he/she will be deemed to have resigned. He/she will be notified accordingly.

The Mission President or his nominee will act as Chairman of the Council and the Executive Secretary will be its Secretary.

The Council may elect other officers to facilitate the carrying out of its responsibilities.

These may be:

Minute Secretary, Deputation Officer, Promotion Officer, Property Manager, New Workers' Counsellor, Publicity Officer, Prayer Convenor and any others deemed necessary.

These additional officers of the Administrative Council will be elected annually, as soon as possible after the Annual Meeting of the Mission.

Any retiring Officer is eligible for re-election.

B. DUTIES

The Administrative Council is responsible for the business, administrative and promotional activities of the Mission.

It will:

- a. Serve as a link between the Christian public and the AIM Field, publicising the work and encouraging prayerful and financial support.
 - (1) To this end, it will organise deputation meetings and similar ways to direct the attention of the Lord's people to the activities and needs on the Field. It will assist Missionaries and others engaged in deputation work on behalf of the Mission.
 - (2) It may also authorise the printing and publishing of promotional literature, prayer letters, magazines and so on to publicise the work.
 - (3) It may take any other steps it considers necessary to enable it to reach this goal, provided they are in keeping with the principles of the Mission.
- b. Receive and consider applications for service in the AIM, in consultation with the

Field and/or Area Superintendents, and as set out in the Mission Manual.

It will accept as probationary missionaries those candidates whose applications are considered satisfactory.

Later, upon receiving an appropriate recommendation from the Field Council, it will appoint such probationers as missionaries in full standing.

- c. Keep in touch with missionaries and assist them in every way that seems appropriate.
- d. Receive and deal with resignations of Mission members forwarded by the Management Committee for finalisation.
- e. Transact any business referred to it by the Management Committee or Field Council.
- f. Appoint suitable persons to serve as State Representatives of the Mission in any State other than NSW.
- g. Receive and administer Mission finances in a businesslike way. The Council is responsible to:
 1. Receive contributions from Team Supporters and other donors, State Representatives, Auxiliaries and so on, and apply them according to the established practice of the Mission.
All monies received are to be banked. Payments required for the conduct of the work are to be made by cheque.
 2. Receive legacies and also allocate any which may be undesignated.
 3. Ensure that all designated gifts are used according to the instructions of the donors.
 4. Authorise persons affiliated with the Mission to open and operate bank accounts in the name of the Mission for approved purposes.
- h. Appoint an auditor annually, and be responsible for obtaining an annual audit of all monies handled by the Mission Treasurer. A financial statement will be published annually, showing:
 1. Monies handled by the Mission Treasurer
 2. A summary of monies handled by the State Representatives and Auxiliaries.
 3. A summary of all monetary gifts received directly on the Field, by Missionaries and by the Special Ministries operated by the Mission.
The Financial Year of the Mission will close on December 31.
- i. Draw up by-laws for the regulation of its own affairs.

C. PROPERTY

- a. Trustee. The Administrative Council will appoint from its members those who will serve as Members and Directors of Aborigines Inland Mission of Australia (Property Holding) Pty Ltd. This company will hold all real and personal property of the Mission upon trust for the work of the Mission, subject to the direction of the Administrative Council.
A resolution of the Administrative Council duly carried for that purpose has the effect of vesting, divesting or re-vesting property in the name of the said Company as required.
A letter of instruction to the Company issued under such resolution and signed by the Chairman of the Administrative Council is sufficient evidence of such resolution and of the identity of the Company.
- b. The Administrative Council has power through its Trustee Company to:
 - (1) Receive by gift or acquire by purchase, lease or otherwise, and
 - (2) Sell, lease, mortgage (for the purpose of securing purchase money only) of otherwise encumber or dispose of such real and personal property or any estate or interest therein as may be deemed necessary for the carrying out of the mission.
- c. In carrying out the programme of the Mission, the Administrative Council through the Trustee Company may enter into any agreement with a Government Department or other parties for the obtaining of finance for the acquiring of land and/or erection or purchase of buildings or any other purpose in furtherance of the above ministries.

11. *STATE REPRESENTATIVES*

The Administrative Council may appoint one or more mature Christians residing in any State outside NSW to represent the Mission in that State.

Any person being so appointed must affirm the Statement of Faith of the Mission, and agree with its Aim and Methods of operation, as set out in this document and the Mission Manual. State Representatives are to promote the work of the Mission among the churches of their area and, if possible, minister to Aboriginal people in any way approved by the Administrative Council.

Their duties include:

- a. Arranging deputation meetings for visiting missionaries or other approved AIM deputationists, and, if possible, taking some such meetings themselves.
- b. Establishing and supporting prayer groups.
- c. Arranging accommodation for missionaries passing through their area on the way to or from a Field appointment.
- d. Assisting Aboriginal people affiliated with AIM churches who live in or visit their area.
- e. Promoting the distribution of AIM literature.
- f. Receiving donations for the Mission and passing them on to Mission Headquarters each month.
- g. Receiving applications for service from prospective candidates, and forwarding them to the Executive Secretary with any relevant information and appropriate comments he/she can supply.

12. *AUXILIARIES*

With the approval of the Administrative Council, a local committee may be set up in a particular town or area to support the work and workers of the Mission. Such committees will be known as 'Auxiliaries'.

- a. Membership. Membership of an Auxiliary is open to any approved person who has a sincere desire to assist in the work being carried on by the Mission.

All office bearers in an Auxiliary will be required to endorse the Mission's Statement of Faith and its Principles as a condition of holding office.

- b. Duties. It is the duty of an Auxiliary to:

- (1) Welcome and befriend missionaries, help in arranging for their reception and accommodation, keep in touch with the missionaries by letter and, where possible, interest itself in a particular Mission Centre.
- (2) Assist in arranging deputation meetings, where possible.
- (3) Endeavour to establish meetings for prayer and help promote interest in any centre where an opportunity for such is afforded.
- (4) Promote the distribution of AIM literature.

- c. Finance. An Auxiliary may keep a nominal amount for local expenses, including love gifts for visiting speakers. All monies and donations received over and above this amount are to be remitted to Headquarters monthly. Any money earmarked by a donor will be forwarded to Headquarters, where the Mission Treasurer will ensure it is used to meet the donor's wishes.

- d. Officers. The officers of an Auxiliary will be a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. They will be elected as soon as possible after its Annual Meeting, and are eligible for re-election.

13. *QUORUMS*

A quorum for the Field Council is 50% of the elected members plus 50% of the Mission Officers; for the Administrative Council 50% of the members plus 50% of the Mission Officers; for the management Committee is 50% of the members.

At any combined meeting of the Field and Administrative Councils for the appointment of Mission Officers or for alterations of the Constitution, a quorum will be two-thirds each of the members of the Field Council and Management Committee. For the purpose of determining such quorum, members of the Management Committee will not be counted as Members of either Council.

In the event that sufficient numbers are not present to constitute a quorum for any of the above

meetings, the following will apply —

Where it is considered that an item of business requires urgent action, the meeting may proceed to discuss it and prepare a motion supported by a seconder. Subsequently, all members, who have been entitled to cast a vote, are to be advised either by telephone or mail, thus securing their ballot.

In the case of a postal ballot, when calculating a quorum each person casting a vote will be deemed to be present at the meeting which normally would have been held for this purpose.

14. *CANDIDATES*

- a. A Candidate must be qualified as set out in the Mission Manual and must satisfy the Administrative Council as to soundness in the Faith on all the fundamental doctrines as outlined in Clause 4 of this Constitution. To this end he/she will hand in with his/her application papers a written statement of his/her beliefs. A medical report will also be required. Forms for this purpose will be provided.
- b. Following acceptance, a probationary missionary will report monthly to the New Workers Counsellor during his/her period of probation, or up to appointment or otherwise as a missionary in full standing.
- c. A probationer will be required to do a Candidates Course and will also be required to do certain deputation work before proceeding to the field. Each probationary missionary will be asked to endorse the Mission's Team Support plan and obtain the promise of an agreed minimum figure before proceeding to a field appointment.

15. *DISCIPLINE*

On occasions, a Council may feel that a member of the Mission has acted contrary to this Constitution or the Principles of the Mission, or has been guilty of serious misconduct. Whenever that happens, the President will call a meeting of the Management Committee to investigate the matter and, if possible, interview the person concerned.

After due investigation to establish the facts of the case, and prayerful consideration, the Management Committee may then recommend to both the Field Council and the Administrative Council that the person involved should resign from the Mission, or that some other action should be taken.

If the President acts contrary to the Constitution or the Principles of the Mission, the members of the Management Committee (apart from the President) will first deal with the matter. Then, if considered necessary, a combined meeting of the Field and Administrative Councils will be called. This combined meeting may decide to request his resignation.

If a missionary or any other member of the Mission changes his or her views on any of the fundamental doctrines outlined in Clause 3 of this Constitution, he or she must inform a member of the Management Committee. The Committee will then decide what action to take.

16. *RETIRING AGE*

When a missionary reaches the age of 65 years, he or she will retire from that position. However, he or she may apply for appointment as an Associate Missionary to serve in a particular place and for a specified period.

If a nominee for an executive post will reach retiring age during the term to be served, the members of the Administrative Council and the Field Council must be notified of that fact before voting takes place. If they still wish to allow the nomination to stand, and the person is voted into office, he/she will serve only for that term.

When a member of the Administrative Council reaches the age of 65 years, he or she must notify the Executive Secretary. If he or she does not wish to retire, he/she may continue to serve the Mission, but only for as long as the Council considers advisable on the basis of an annual review of his/her case.

17. *WINDING UP OR DISSOLUTION*

If upon winding up or dissolution of the Mission there remains after satisfaction of all debts and liabilities any property whatsoever, the same must not be paid to or distributed among members of the Mission. It will be given and/or transferred to some other body or bodies (whether corporate or not) having objects similar to the Mission's primary objects.

18. *CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT POWER*

A joint meeting of the Management Committee and the Field and Administrative Councils convened by the Management Committee has power to amend this Constitution.

Any proposed amendment must first be submitted to the Management Committee. After consideration, the Committee will then notify members of the Field and Administrative Councils of any change deemed advisable. The Committee will also advise each State Representative in order to receive their comments.

At least one month's notice in writing must be given before any amendment is presented to the joint meeting of the Councils. To be successful the proposed amendment must receive a two-thirds majority vote of the members present at the meeting convened for the purpose.

At the discretion of the Management Committee, voting may be carried out by postal ballot if a joint meeting should be impracticable.

ABORIGINES INLAND MISSION OF AUSTRALIA

19 Cascade Street

Lawson NSW 2783

1st August 1991

APPENDIX 6

GUIDELINES ON MARRIAGE MATTERS

MARRIAGE

We believe that God's ideal plan for marriage is a life-long union between one man and one woman.

We believe that for any union to be accepted as a true marriage today, it must involve:

- * a man and a woman (Homosexual relationships are forbidden — see Romans 1:26-32)
- * life-long commitment
- * sexual union
- * intention to live as a new family unit
- * recognition as a marriage by people of that culture.

We believe that tribal marriages meeting these standards (even when they involve polygamy) should be accepted by the church and community as true marriages.

We believe that the AIM and its pastors and missionaries have no authority to set down rules for the marital relationships of non-Christians. But we believe the guidelines in this document should be followed by all Christians.

At Conversion:

We believe that all past sexual sins, marriage breakdowns etc. are put 'under the blood' and forgiven when a person repents and turns in faith to Christ. (See 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.) However, we realise that there may be difficult consequences of those events which the persons involved will have to live with.

We believe that as God accepts such people as new creatures in Christ, regardless of their marital state, so should the Church. (However, this doesn't mean that they will have no need to straighten out some things from their past life, as mentioned later on.)

We believe that complicated sexual and marital histories usually cannot be unscrambled, and we should not try to do so. We should only take note of the current sexual relationship of people turning to Christ.

After conversion:

1. *'De-facto' relationships*

We believe that new Christians living in such relationships should normally be encouraged to have their union made legal. However, any relationship not allowed by Scripture or the laws of the land should be ended as soon as possible.

We believe that where there has been a prior marriage that has broken down, the best course is for the person involved to obtain a divorce in order to be able to marry the current 'de-facto' partner.

2. *Tribal Marriages*

We believe that people already married according to their tribal custom do not need to be remarried. However, some may choose to have a service of dedication in which they seek God's blessing on their union.

If they also wish to have a legal form of marriage in order to obtain a marriage certificate to use in the wider community, they may do so. A private ceremony would be sufficient for this purpose.

We believe that a man with more than one wife when he is converted should not set one of them (with her children) adrift. We believe he should continue to live with his wives and care for them and their children. (The teaching of 1 Corinthians 7:17-24 could perhaps be applied to this situation.)

* See more about this in the section on divorce.

3. *People wishing to marry*

We believe single Christians and people wishing to marry again after being widowed or divorced should marry only believers. (See 2 Corinthians 6:14.)

4. *All Christians*

We believe all teenage and adult Christians should be taught Scriptural standards for living together as faithful marriage partners.

They need to realise that God's laws are far more important than tribal laws or man-made social customs.

They should be taught that God wants first place in marriage relationships — that partners should look first to Him, then to each other.

God man woman

ADULTERY

We believe that Christians found guilty of adultery after conversion should be disciplined by their Church (as set out in Matthew 18:15-17). This could involve being stood down from membership for a period and not being allowed to share in communion.

We believe that when they repent of their sin they must give evidence by their changed lives that their repentance is genuine. Only after passing through such a period of probation, as decided by the church, should they be restored to full fellowship.

We have grave doubts that they should take up such roles as pastor or elder even after restoration. It seems that although they have been forgiven, their sin disqualifies them from leadership.

The local body of believers should prayerfully consider such Scriptures as 1 Timothy 3:2 before reaching a decision about this matter.

DIVORCE

There is uncertainty about the meaning of some Scriptures that speak of divorce. However, we believe that although it is not part of God's ideal plan for His people, divorce is allowed when:

- * an unbelieving wife or husband abandons a newly-converted Christian. (See 1 Corinthians 7:12-15.)
- * one partner in a marriage is guilty of sexual immorality. (See Matthew 19:9.)
- * one wife in a polygamous tribal marriage agrees with her husband to separate after conversion, in order to bring the marriage into line with the Scriptures.

We believe tribally married Christians must follow God's rules, not the easier standards of Aboriginal law, in the matter of divorce.

REMARRIAGE

We believe a Christian may remarry in the will of God only:

- * after the death of his/her marriage partner (Romans 7:2,3; 1 Corinthians 7:39).
- * after being deserted by a non-believing partner when he/she was converted. ('Not under bondage' (KJV), 'free to act' (GNB) in 1 Corinthians 7:15 indicates this.)
- * if he/she was the innocent party in a marriage ended because of adultery, and where reconciliation is impossible.
- * after a woman involved in a polygamous marriage before her conversion has been separated from her husband.

PROBLEM AREAS

We realise that some new Christians come from such a morally mixed-up background that their situation is impossible to sort out according to the few guidelines in the Scriptures.

In these cases, whatever they do could be seen as being wrong or unscriptural.

We believe that it is most important to minister to the needs of the people involved, not just to apply rigid rules. So missionaries and pastors are urged to pray for guidance in such situations and then act as they feel the Lord Jesus would have acted.

Where there is a local body of believers, it would be best to take a difficult marriage problem to them and have them decide how the situation should be settled in the light of the Scriptures and their own culture.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Because of the appalling moral situation today, we believe special efforts must be made to guide young Christians in the areas of sex and marriage.

In particular, we must help them to see that God's rules are the most important, not what is now being practised and accepted in Aboriginal and European society.

We believe that it is just as possible for young Christians to keep themselves pure in this generation as in past generations. However, they will need encouragement from older people, clear teaching, help from the Lord, and willingness to obey God in the face of extreme pressure from their peers.

APPENDIX 7

PATTERN FOR A CHURCH CONSTITUTION

NAME: The name of the Church shall be —

For general reference and advertising purposes it will be called —

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT: We believe that these important truths have been given by God in the Bible:

1. That God is three Persons in One.
2. That the Bible was given to us by God through the work and power of the Holy Spirit. It is God's guide for salvation and right living.
3. That all men are sinners and need a Saviour.
4. That Christ is the only way of salvation; that He took the punishment for our sin by His death on the cross; that He rose from the dead; through faith in Him alone we are made right with God and receive everlasting life.
5. That the Holy Spirit lives in all believers and He gives them power to do God's work.
6. That the Lord Jesus Christ will return to this earth in the same body in which He went up to heaven.
7. That all those who have truly received Christ by faith will live with Him in everlasting joy. Those who have not received Christ will live in everlasting punishment.

PURPOSE: 1. To be a local centre of worship and fellowship in accordance with New Testament teaching and practice.

2. To give teaching from the Word of God.
 3. To reach out to the unsaved, both through each member and through the whole Church.
 4. To support missionary work in Australia and overseas.
- There will be no racial discrimination, but particular emphasis will be placed on reaching people of Aboriginal descent and assisting them spiritually, as well as helping them to take their place in the community.

MEMBERSHIP: The Church shall consist of baptised believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who have been accepted by the Church as set out in the next paragraph.

Application for Membership: Christians applying for membership shall be interviewed by any two members appointed by the Church, who will then bring a recommendation to the Church. If acceptable, the applicant shall be received into membership at the next Communion Service.

Members by Transfer: Members in full standing in another Church (with similar doctrinal

basis) may be received into membership by transfer, on the vote of the Church.

ORDINANCES: Baptism: A believer desiring to be baptised should inform the Pastor or Elders. If the Pastor is satisfied the applicant has been born again, he may arrange for the baptism, after a period of instruction on the meaning of baptism, or he may refer the application to the Church. Baptism shall be by immersion.

Lord's Supper: The Lord's Supper may be held at such times as the Church may determine.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT:

Link with While the Church shall have full power to manage its own affairs, it shall

Parent Mission: always work in full co-operation and fellowship with the Aborigines Inland Mission of Australia.

Business At every Church business meeting there must be at least one-quarter of the Church members present.

Meetings: No business can be dealt with unless this number is present. Business Meetings of Church members

shall be held quarterly and at such other times as may be required. At least fourteen (14) days' notice

business shall be given to members for the date of the annual meeting, and seven (7) for all other

Pastor, or meetings. The Chairman for all ordinary business meetings of the Church will be the

someone he chooses.

Officers: **Elders.** If suitable mature and experienced men are available, they may be appointed as Elders. They will be responsible for the pastoral care of the Church family, and will work with the Pastor (if one has been called).

Deacons (number to be decided on) shall be elected by vote at the Annual Business Meeting from the members of the Church. Each deacon shall be over the age of 21 and shall have been a member of the Church for at least six months. The deacons shall meet at least once a month to conduct their business. At all such meetings, at least one-third of the elected deacons must be present before any business can be dealt with.

A **Church Secretary** and a **Church Treasurer** shall be elected:

1. by the deacons at their first meeting after the Annual Business Meeting, or
2. by the Church members themselves.

Other offices may be elected as the Church requires and desires them. (e.g. Sunday School Superintendent, Church Organist, Diaconess, etc.).

Any officer may stand for re-election when his term runs out.

Nominations for officers shall be made in writing, and with the consent of the person nominated. They should reach the Church Secretary at least one day before the Annual Meeting.

Should a vacancy occur during the year, it may be filled at the next Church Business Meeting. The Pastor or Church Secretary is to give notice of the vacancy at least seven days before the business meeting.

Records: The Church Treasurer shall keep a Record Book of all offerings. Together with another deacon, immediately after each Church service, he shall count the offering taken and record the amount in this book (both people initialling the amount written in). A Bank Account shall be opened in the full name of the Church, and the method of its operation will be determined by the Church. A Financial Statement shall be presented to the Church by the Treasurer at least quarterly. The Church shall annually appoint an Auditor to check all books connected with Church finance.

Pastor: The Church members shall have power to call a Pastor to serve the Church.

Before making any call, the matter should be referred to the Area Superintendent of the Aborigines Inland Mission of Australia for advice.

Under all ordinary circumstances, any call given shall be for a stated length of service.

This may be extended, if so desired, and again for a stated time.

The Pastor's service may be terminated by either the Church or the Pastor by two months' notice in writing. The Area Superintendent should be advised of any such notice given.

RULES OF DISCIPLINE:

Lord's Supper: When inviting members and other believers to partake of the Lord's Supper, reference shall be made to the need for living a consistent Christian life (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).

Backsliding: If a member falls back into sin, the Pastor or Elders shall seek to help such a person. If there is no response, he shall bring the matter to the Church for disciplinary action.

If a member falls back, is dealt with by the Church (Matthew 18:15-17) and still shows no desire to get right with God, after a period of ... weeks, his or her name shall be removed from the Church roll.

If, after a member's name has been removed from the Roll, he is restored to God and everything is put right with all concerned and the Church, he may be restored to membership after a certain period as decided by the Church.

PROPERTY: All legal documents relating to a property owned by the Church shall be drawn up in the name of the trustees who are acting for the Aborigines Inland Mission of Australia.

ADDITIONS Any addition or alteration to this Constitution shall be made only by a vote of two-thirds of the

OR members present at a meeting called for this purpose. At least fourteen days' notice shall be given of

ALTERATIONS: such a meeting.

Suggested Other paragraphs which might be included as the Church may decide could cover:

- Additions:*
1. The responsibilities of Church members.
 2. The insurance and upkeep etc. of Church buildings.
 3. The oversight of organisations connected with the Church, such as Girls' Brigade, Boys' Brigade, Christian Endeavour, etc.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS:

Members should:

1. Have a life and testimony that brings honour to the Lord and His Church.
2. Have regular times for private prayer and Bible study.
3. Attend worship and fellowship meetings as arranged by the Church.
4. Generally support the various efforts of the Church in the advancement of our Lord's work in the district.
5. Contribute systematically and sacrificially to support the Church and its Pastor and missions in Australia and overseas.
6. Attend Church Business meetings.
7. Keep confidential the business matters of the Church.

APPENDIX 10

CHURCH RECORDS

(Extracts from 'How to Run Business Affairs')

THE TREASURER

A treasurer has tremendous responsibility. He has to account for all money received and spent by the group. The financial records of some groups may be checked by the government or other people in authority. The treasurer is responsible to make sure that everything is right.

DUTIES OF THE TREASURER

Handle Money Properly

1. Keep a clear record of money received (receipts) and money spent (expenditures). These figures should be kept in a book — a school exercise book would do. This is usually called an 'account' book.

A good way to do this is to have one page for the money received, and the page opposite for money

spent.

Keep all the details for the same period of time in the same part of the book — perhaps a different pair of pages for each month. Then you can easily add up the figures at the end of the month to see if everything is right.

The account book is very important, so it should be kept safely — perhaps with the cheque book in a cupboard you can lock.

2. Keep a book at the church in which the amount of each offering is written down (if you are a church treasurer). This book should be signed each Sunday by two people, usually the treasurer and a deacon.

Rule up the book like this

3. Put all the money belonging to the group in the proper account at the bank. Do this as soon as you can. Do not leave money at home — the bank is the safest place for it.
If you cannot get to the bank straight away, keep the money in a tin or a cupboard you can lock. Also keep the bank deposit forms in the same safe place.

Pay Accounts

1. Pay accounts as soon as possible. Groups which fail to do this get a bad name with the local business houses. Paying bills promptly is part of the church's Christian witness.
2. Pay accounts by cheque, not in cash.
All group and church accounts should be cheque accounts, not accounts operated by a bank passbook. It will not cost you any more, for society accounts are free of tax. And there is a big advantage in doing it this way — it is easier to check up on what has been spent.
3. After a business meeting, write out cheques for all accounts passed for payment.
If a second person has to sign the cheques, make sure this is done before you send them out.
4. Post the cheques with the accounts to the various places where you owe money.

Prepare Financial Statements

1. A financial statement is a list showing:
 - * how much money has come in since the last meeting, and where it came from.
 - * how much money has been spent since the last meeting, and what it was spent on.
 - * how much money is left in the bank or in cash.
2. Prepare a financial statement for each meeting. This should be accompanied by a bank statement showing that the figures for the money left over are right.
3. Prepare an annual financial statement. This should be checked by the pastor or auditor. All account books, receipts, bank statements, etc. should be ready for inspection. (An auditor is a person appointed to check over the financial records once a year.)
4. Give the financial report to the pastor before the Annual Business meeting.

THE MINUTES

Note Book

At each business meeting, the secretary should write down rough notes of everything that happens and everything that is decided. These notes should be in a notebook, which is kept just for that purpose.

Minute Book

Soon after the meeting, the secretary then re-writes his notes carefully in a special book called a minute book. The minute book is the permanent record of all the business meetings held by the group.

The record written by the secretary is called the 'Minutes' of the meeting. That word means that they are only short notes. But though they are short, they are to be an accurate report of all the business dealt with,

in the order in which everything happened. Nothing should be left out.

What Minutes should include:

The minutes should give the following details about the meeting:

1. The time and date when the meeting was held.
2. The place where it was held.
3. The type of meeting ... e.g. general, annual, committee or ordinary meeting.
4. Who chaired the meeting.
5. Apologies, and names of those present (if it was only a small meeting, such as a committee).
6. List of correspondence and of accounts passed for payment.
7. All motions written out in the exact words used, whether the motions were passed or not. Names of movers and seconders are usually included, but this is not essential.
8. Date of the next meeting.
9. Time at which the meeting closed.

APPENDIX 11

Responsibilities of Area Superintendents

The following list of Area Superintendent's responsibilities amplifies Section 2.5.3.5.2.2 of the Mission Manual.

The Area Superintendents are accountable to the Field Council for supervising specific areas of the field. Duties of each Superintendent include the following:

1. To be responsible for the general supervision of work in his area — by personal visitation, correspondence and phone calls.
2. To refer matters which require special attention to the Executive Secretary. If necessary he will refer them to the Management Committee or the Field Council.
3. To make recommendations to the Field Council regarding development of work within the State (close down, open up, transfer, supplement or reduce staff, etc.) to achieve effective deployment of Missionaries.
4. To settle Missionaries in to their new appointments, and preferably to be there for an induction service. To introduce them to the work. If this is impossible, to make an early visit after they move in.
5. To arrange Missionaries' holiday dates. In the case of furloughs, where satisfactory local relief can be provided during their furlough time, to approve the leave and notify all concerned. Otherwise the leave application should be referred to the Exec. Secretary.
6. To consider and deal with requests for permission for visitors to stay with Missionaries for extended periods.
7. To make a monthly report to the Management Committee.
8. To plan and arrange for State Conferences after agreeing dates, venue, etc. with the Management Committee.
9. To work with the Missionaries to direct attention on the centres to the Bible Training Programme.
10. To encourage all Missionaries and Pastors in his area to be actively looking for and encouraging Christian Aboriginal people to accept positions of leadership among their own people. To encourage Missionaries and Pastors to make effective use of local Christians. To encourage Aboriginal Christians to be identified with the local church and overall work of the Mission.
11. To check that Missionaries in his area are providing information concerning their work to the Editor of 'The Aim', and are in regular contact with Prayer Partners and Team Supporters.
12. To maintain liaison with existing autonomous AIM Churches and to work for the formation and establishment of new churches. Where new Pastors are being inducted, to be present if possible, and to share in the service.
13. To plan for evangelistic, teaching, children's or other special missions in consultation and co-operation with the Churches.
14. To explore the possibility of using additional Associate Workers. To discuss Mission policy and procedures with them, supplying relevant Mission documents such as the Mission Manual. If

considered suitable, and with their consent, to recommend to the Field Council their possible acceptance as an Associate Worker.

15. To become acquainted with what is happening in centres where there are reasonable numbers of Aboriginal families. In places where we do not work, to encourage a local church to take an interest in these people. If this is not possible, to encourage the local Christians to do something in the way of cottage meetings.
16. To check up on use being made of available literature — particularly as provided through Mission Publications of Australia. To encourage a greater use where considered necessary.
17. To be the Mission Officer responsible to contact or work in liaison with the Government Department in his State on all routine matters not involving major policy changes.
18. To regularly review the state of repair of property in his area and to make any necessary recommendations for maintenance etc. to the responsible authority and to the Property Manager.
19. To bring any special needs to the notice of the Executive Secretary with a view to making them known and having them met.
20. To submit accounts for travel and other expenses incurred as Area Superintendent, to the Treasurer. These will be paid as Mission funds allow.