

A survey of the Federal Methodist Inland Mission and an account of the ministry of the Rev Keith Lachlan Doust.

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The Federal Methodist Inland Mission ('FMIM') was an initiative of the Methodist Church to minister to non-indigenous dwellers of outback Australia. It sprang from a mission policy for the evangelisation of large tracts of inland Australia, adopted in 1926.¹ This paper will survey the establishment and strategy of FMIM, and examine the challenges which its missionaries faced in ministering across a vast expanse.² It will focus, by way of detailed case study, on the ministry of Rev Keith Lachlan Doust (1912-1981) as he worked in Western Australia (Port Hedland/Marble Bar 1941-1942; Wiluna 1942-1946) and in the Northern Territory (Alice Springs 1946-1948).³ After sketching a preliminary biography, the paper will outline and illustrate the many difficulties of Keith's ministry, drawing heavily from personal correspondence from that period. These challenges included: loneliness and isolation; a small yet scattered population; financial strain and limited resources; occasional conflict with other organisations; and disruptions caused by World War II. It will offer an assessment of his ministry and briefly outline FMIM's history up to the present date.

Part 1 | An overview of FMIM

The plan for the FMIM was received by the 1926 General Conference of the Methodist Church of Australasia in Brisbane. The Conference resolved that a Federal Home Mission

¹ Pederick, 7

² As Keith referred to himself as 'missioner' rather than 'missionary' in all of his reports, this essay retains this choice of language.

³ For a map of the FMIM mission field and base locations, see Appendix 1.

Policy be adopted 'for the evangelisation of the country north of the 28th parallel of latitude for Western Australia, the Northern Territory excluding those portions already occupied by the Foreign Missions Society, and that portion of Queensland bounded by latitude 28 and west of longitude 142'.⁴ (The boundaries were amended in subsequent years.) While there had already been sporadic attempts by the Methodist Church to minister to people in inland Australia, these had been sponsored by state Home Mission Departments and 'it was realised that this was a work on a national front, and beyond the means and the manpower of groups in the several States'.⁵ The vision was to establish 'at least ten stations...as soon as practicable at an estimated cost...of £6,000 per annum'.⁶ Missioners were to live on the field for three years between furloughs, fully immersing themselves in the lives of the inland people.⁷ The Conference appointed a governing board, the Methodist Inland Mission Board ('Board').⁸ The financial cost of the mission was to be shared between the various state Conferences, with New South Wales and Victoria/Tasmania shouldering the greatest load (32.5% each; with South Australia contributing 15%, Western Australia 7.5%, and Queensland 12.5%).⁹ The Board first met in November 1926. The President-General, the Rev J. G. Wheen, said, '[t]his will be an historic meeting. It signifies that the Methodist Church (in common with other Churches) is now arranging to provide the ministries of religion to every town, village, hamlet, and individual life in Australia.'¹⁰

The FMIM plan was received after consultations with other denominations about existing work. Missioners were not to be placed in any areas ministered to by any other Protestant

⁴ A. W. Pederick, *Men on the Frontier: A Brief History of the Federal Inland Mission* (Methodist Publishing House (Aldersgate Press), 1970), 8.

⁵ Pederick, *Men on the Frontier*, 7.

⁶ Pederick, *Men on the Frontier*, 8.

⁷ Pederick, *Men on the Frontier*, 11.

⁸ Pederick, *Men on the Frontier*, 8.

⁹ Pederick, *Men on the Frontier*, 9. These percentages were later amended.

¹⁰ Quoted in Pederick, *Men on the Frontier*, 9.

minister,¹¹ and care was taken in the original planning to avoid such double-up.¹² *The Brisbane Courier*, reporting on the conference, explained, '[t]he mission, which will be mainly one of travelling preachers, will work in co-operation with the Presbyterian Inland Mission [otherwise known as Australian Inland Mission (AIM)], whose work is largely of a medical character.'¹³ As AIM's Aerial Medical Service (established 1928, later to be known as the Royal Flying Doctors Service)¹⁴ could initially only attend emergency cases, in the early years many FMIM missionaries were also involved in 'day-to-day medical care of people with minor ailments'.¹⁵

Although in 1927 the Aboriginal population outstripped the white population in the FMIM's field, 40 000 to 23,439 respectively,¹⁶ the mission was geared 'primarily to the white settlers'.¹⁷ The population in view were those who either owned or worked on sprawling pastoral-lease cattle or sheep stations, or who worked in or around the minefields, at a time when '[g]old had become again an industry of national importance.'¹⁸ An early motto of the FMIM as they reached out to was, 'every day is Sunday; every house is a church; every child a Sunday School; and every person a congregation'.¹⁹

Part 2 | A brief biography of Rev Doust

Rev Keith Doust entered the FMIM mission field with limited experience. From the age of

¹¹ *The Methodist inland link (March 1, 1933)* (Melbourne: Victorian Home Mission Dept. of the Methodist Church of Australasia, 1933), 8.

¹² Pederick, *Men on the Frontier*, 10.

¹³ 'Inland Missions - Methodist Board. Northern Australian Appointments, Melbourne January 27', *The Brisbane Courier* (Qld., January 28, 1927).

¹⁴ National Archives of Australia, 'Reverend John Flynn and the Australian Inland Mission - Fact sheet 159', Cited 14 May 2013, Online: <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs159.aspx>.

¹⁵ Pederick, *Men on the Frontier*, 13.

¹⁶ Pederick, *Men on the Frontier*, 10.

¹⁷ Pederick, *Men on the Frontier*, 15. There were, at the time, a few mission stations for Aboriginal people but they were widely scattered. Harry Griffiths, *An Australian adventure* (Adelaide, SA: Rigby, 1975), 29.

¹⁸ Geoffrey Blainey, *The rush that never ended: a history of Australian mining* (5th ed.; Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2003), 315.

¹⁹ Griffiths, *An Australian adventure*, 29; Pederick, *Men on the Frontier*, 12.

fifteen to twenty three he had worked in retail, though qualified as a lay preacher of the Methodist Church.²⁰ At twenty six, after some circuit work in NSW and study, he undertook three years of full time theological training at the Leigh Theological College (Enfield) and The United Faculty of Theology (based at St Andrew's, Sydney University).²¹ Perhaps not the most confident student, Keith was concerned whether he would pass his final New Testament Greek and Exegesis exams.²² Nevertheless, having sat (and passed) his final exams, he quickly found himself on a train en route to his first FMIM appointment.²³

Keith had three FMIM appointments. He was first appointed to Port Hedland for patrol duties 1941-2,²⁴ and was known as a 'Patrol Padre'.²⁵ Here he ran church services, a Sunday school and patrolled outlying stations and Marble Bar, a large goldmining area. During this time he corresponded frequently with his sweetheart, Myra Chandler of Windsor, NSW, whom he had met prior to leaving for Western Australia and whom he was desperate to marry. He was appointed to the Murchison Patrol from Wiluna, WA from 1942-1946. Having been granted permission to marry Miss Chandler, he did so promptly in 1942.²⁶ Wiluna, a once-prosperous gold mining town, was in slow decline and towards the end of his appointment there were doubts whether the town would remain viable.²⁷ While in Wiluna, Keith also retained continuing responsibility for the 'North West' area as far as Port Hedland and Marble Bar,²⁸

²⁰ 'Resume of Keith Lachlan Doust, Minister of Religion, of 4 Beaumont Close, Chapman ACT', Undated, 1, Black Folder 1, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

²¹ 'Resume of Keith Lachlan Doust', 1.

²² Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, '12 December 1940 - The Parsonage, Clement St Forbes', December 12, 1940, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

²³ 'Certificate from the United Faculty of Theology - Keith Lachlan Doust', October 29, 1940, Folder 1, Personal Collection of Terry Doust. Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, '1 May 1941 - en route to Kalgoorlie, WA', May 1, 1941, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

²⁴ 'Resume of Keith Lachlan Doust', 1.

²⁵ 'Resume of Rev. K. L. Doust', Undated, 1, Black Folder 1, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

²⁶ 'Resume of Keith Lachlan Doust', 1.

²⁷ For example, Keith Lachlan Doust to Rev T.C Rentoul, '7 November [1945] (Carbon Copy)', November 7, 1945, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

²⁸ 'Resume of Keith Lachlan Doust', 1.

since no one could be found to fill his former post,²⁹ though there was no way he could effectively maintain patrol of that area. He also undertook a number of civic responsibilities, working for the local Council and as Scout Master.³⁰ While at Wiluna, he was also awarded a Diploma of Divinity from Melbourne College of Divinity.³¹ He was transferred to Alice Springs in 1946 where he worked until 1948 undertaking patrol and pastoral duties.³² In 1948 he returned to Forbes, NSW, where he continued to serve as a Methodist and, later, a Uniting Church, minister.³³

Part 3 | Challenges to ministry

The tyranny of distance

The challenges to ministry in this mission field were numerous and complex. The first and perhaps most obvious challenge was the enormous size of the overall mission field: some 1,300,000 square miles [i.e. 3,336,984 square kilometres].³⁴ In an early edition of the *Methodist Inland Link*, designed to garner support for the mission, the magazine informed its readership that ‘the Inland Mission area is larger than all the following countries put together: France, Spain, Germany, Sweden, Poland, Finland, Norway, Roumania [sic], Great Britain and Ireland, Switzerland, Hungary, Portugal and Denmark.’³⁵ Travel over these distances was not with the speed or comfort of aeroplanes, but by trains, mission cars and trucks.³⁶ (Only in 1946 was a small aeroplane first purchased and used by missionary Cliff Lanham.³⁷) The

²⁹ Rev T.C. Rentoul to Keith Lachlan Doust, ‘24 December 1941’, December 24, 1941, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

³⁰ ‘Resume of Keith Lachlan Doust’, 1.

³¹ ‘Divinity Degrees and Diplomas’, *The Argus* (Melbourne, Vic: 1848 - 1956, June 22, 1944), 5.

³² ‘Resume of Keith Lachlan Doust’, 1.

³³ ‘Resume of Keith Lachlan Doust’, 1.

³⁴ ‘Inland Missions - Methodist Board. Northern Australian Appointments, Melbourne January 27’.

³⁵ *The Methodist inland link* (March 1, 1933), 8.

³⁶ Noni Faragher, ed., ‘Finale’, in *Prelude fugue and variations: letters to a loved one from Chaplain T.C. Rentoul in World War One* (Richmond, Vic.: Spectrum, 1989), 180.

³⁷ Pederick, *Men on the Frontier*, 43.

countryside was also difficult: '[r]oads were practically non-existent and they battled through sandy or flooded creek beds, over gibber plains, and looked for the right track amongst a multitude of tracks leading from a mud patch. The trucks were strong and capable, but were not four-wheel-drive in these days.'³⁸ Mission cars were especially built so they would have enough clearance to traverse obstacles.³⁹ Missioners usually carried with them extra petrol, oil and grease along with books, magazines, medical equipment, hair-cutting and dental instruments, swags, changes in clothing, food to last a month, an axe, shovel and gallons of water.⁴⁰ The number of missioners was small: in the first year of 1927, five ministers were accepted for the field yet 'at the end of the first year's operation on the field the aggregate mileage for the five trucks was 77,241 miles [that is, 124,307 kilometres] – more than three times around the earth at the equator.'⁴¹ There were eleven missioners on the field during Keith's time of service, though he did not have much contact with many of them.⁴²

The journey in May 1941 from NSW to Keith's first posting took him a full month. He travelled by various trains to Leonora in Western Australia, and then by mission ambulance van making stopovers at Wiluna, Meekatharra and Cue. He then took an overland route to Marble Bar and onto Port Hedland, an overall trip of some 4000 miles⁴³ which included a serious car breakdown.⁴⁴ The landscape was foreign to him: '[t]alk of desolation! ... What a sight this outback is!' he exclaimed.⁴⁵ Travelling vast distances could be marked by loneliness and a sense of isolation. Keith certainly felt this at first, writing, 'I must confess that I'm not

³⁸ Faragher, 'Prelude fugue and variations', 180.

³⁹ Pederick, *Men on the Frontier*, 11.

⁴⁰ Griffiths, *An Australian adventure*, 53. Mission cars were especially fitted for such ambulance work: 'Inland Missions - Methodist Board. Northern Australian Appointments, Melbourne January 27', 6.

⁴¹ Pederick, *Men on the Frontier*, 11. Also 'Methodist Parliament: Evangelising the North', *The Register* (Adelaide, SA, May 28, 1926), Cited 13 May 2013.

⁴² Faragher, 'Prelude fugue and variations', 179.

⁴³ 'Port Hedland', *Northern Times (Carnarvon, WA: 1905 - 1952)*, June 5, 1941, sec. Social and Personal, 3.

⁴⁴ Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, '14 May 1941', May 14, 1941, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

⁴⁵ Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, '5 May 1941 (Monday)', May 5, 1941, 5, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

nearly as tough as I thought I was!⁴⁶

Once settled in Port Hedland, Keith would often visit various stations throughout the week, sometimes going on extended patrols. Homesteads would readily welcome travelling pastors to stay with them, if they had sufficient room. Despite this, sleeping out in the open, or in the car, was not uncommon.⁴⁷ It is difficult to calculate the total size of the areas Keith had responsibility for. To give some indication, the local government area of Port Hedland alone (not including the Marble Bar region) was some 10,587 square kilometres.⁴⁸ When later posted at Alice Springs, his patrol duties extended from Katherine to the South Australian border,⁴⁹ a distance of over 1,400 kilometres⁵⁰ from north to south.⁵⁰ Many of Keith's early letters to Myra list station after station he visited, and all manner of driving incidents: punctures, getting bogged, dodging in and out of clumps of trees and bush which scratched the car, getting lost because of dust obscuring the tracks, broken radius (suspension) rods and 'terrible' roads.⁵¹ Flies were also a pesky problem.⁵² Having advertised a church service at Marble Bar, Keith would often have to make an extra effort to press on through terrible conditions to arrive in time, though sometimes delays (and cancelled meetings) were unavoidable.⁵³ Company was very welcome on these long trips.

⁴⁶ Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, 'Commercial Hotel, Leonora WA Monday 6 May [1941]', May 5, 1941, 1, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

⁴⁷ Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, '20 May 1941', May 20, 1941, 2, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

⁴⁸ 'Town of Port Hedland', *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*, May 12, 2013, Cited 13 May 2013, Online: http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Town_of_Port_Hedland&oldid=541164882.

⁴⁹ 'Resume of Keith Lachlan Doust', 1.

⁵⁰ 'Google Maps', Cited 13 May 2013, Online: <https://maps.google.com/>.

⁵¹ For example, Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, '7 May 1941', May 7, 1941, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust; Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, '24 June 1941 - Port Hedland', June 24, 1941, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

⁵² Doust to Chandler, '20 May 1941', 3.

⁵³ For example, Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, '5 August 1941 - Pilga Station', August 5, 1941, 6, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust. For a cancellation see Keith Lachlan Doust, *Report (Copy) 31 May 1946 - Alice Springs* (Alice Springs, May 31, 1946), Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

Enforced singleness

Keith was evidently a man in love, having left his sweetheart Myra Chandler in New South Wales. Keith wrote to Myra of his hope that the time to marry would come quickly: 'I love you with an ever-lasting love darling so you can guess how I'm hoping for these years to roll away.'⁵⁴ His initial plans had been to remain at Port Hedland for three years, but to marry 'if possible', and within a month of arriving he was already making mental notes of improvements he could make to his living arrangements to make it more comfortable for Myra.⁵⁵ However, he was required to seek approval by the Board for permission. His friend and fellow missionary, Rev Ray Noble, warned him against optimism.⁵⁶ While the then director Rev T.C. Rentoul was sympathetic, the Board considered it too expensive to provide suitable furnished housing for Keith to marry.⁵⁷ The Board had previously declined staff applications to marry, similarly on the ground of added expense: finances were extraordinarily tight in these war years.⁵⁸ As T.C. Rentoul explained, Port Hedland was best suited for a single man and the Board thought it bad policy to change it temporarily and then have to revert back later.⁵⁹

This was a trying time for Keith, who wrote repeatedly to Myra of his wish to have her by his side supporting him.⁶⁰ Only when the opportunity arose to be transferred to Wiluna, a 'married' posting, was it possible for Keith to proceed with an engagement.⁶¹ First, though,

⁵⁴ Doust to Chandler, '7 May 1941', 7.

⁵⁵ Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, '2 June 1941 - Port Hedland', June 2, 1941, 1, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

⁵⁶ Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, '12 August 1941', August 12, 1941, 4, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

⁵⁷ Doust to Chandler, '2 June 1941 - Port Hedland', 2-3.

⁵⁸ *The Methodist inland link (December 2, 1935)* (Melbourne: Victorian Home Mission Dept. of the Methodist Church of Australasia, 1935), 5.

⁵⁹ Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, '27 September 1941', September 27, 1941, 2, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

⁶⁰ For example, Doust to Chandler, '5 August 1941 - Pilga Station'; Doust to Chandler, '12 August 1941'.

⁶¹ Doust to Chandler, '27 September 1941'.

he checked with Myra if she thought she could stand the heat of Western Australia.⁶² The previous missionary at Wiluna was returning to NSW on account of his wife's inability to cope with the heat.⁶³ (The average high temperature in Wiluna in January is 38 degrees Celsius).⁶⁴ Myra, evidently undeterred, submitted the necessary medical certificates⁶⁵ and made the long trip west. They married on February 2 1942, after a low-key ceremony held at Wesley Church, Perth.⁶⁶ From this point on, Keith had the support he so longed for. Myra also involved herself in the mission, especially with the Sunday School and using her musical gifts.⁶⁷

Small-sized ministry

For Keith, the impact of his ministry often felt very small. Church services were small, and resources were limited. He writes to Myra about his first service at Port Hedland, held in June 1941, exclaiming '6 people!!! The parson ought to have a wife – then there'd be 7. You'd better practice the organ or piano a bit darling – organists are scarce here!'⁶⁸ Despite the small and predictable turnout at his Port Hedland services, he resolved to 'keep plodding'.⁶⁹ Sundays involved taking a small Sunday School at 10am and church at 7:30pm.⁷⁰ On occasion he would conduct baptisms, marriages and funerals.⁷¹ Keith evidently felt very

⁶² Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, '31st, Sat [May 1941]', May 31, 1941, 2, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

⁶³ Doust to Chandler, '7 May 1941', 3.

⁶⁴ 'Bureau of Meteorology - Climate statistics for Australian locations - Wiluna', Cited 14 May 2013, Online: http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/averages/tables/cw_013012_All.shtml#temperature.

⁶⁵ Rev T.C Rentoul to Doust, '24 December 1941'.

⁶⁶ 'Wedding Doust-Chandler', *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, March 11, 1942, 6.

⁶⁷ For example, Rev T.C Rentoul to Keith Lachlan Doust, '21 October 1942', October 21, 1942, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust; Keith Lachlan Doust, *Report (Copy) 31st October 1946 - Alice Springs* (Alice Springs, Undated), Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

⁶⁸ Doust to Chandler, '2 June 1941 - Port Hedland', 2.

⁶⁹ Doust to Chandler, '24 June 1941 - Port Hedland', 2.

⁷⁰ Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, '1 Sept 1941 - Port Hedland', September 1, 1941, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

⁷¹ Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, '8 September 1941 - Callawa Station', September 8, 1941, 3, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust; Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, '11 October 1941', October 11, 1941, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust; Doust, *Report (Copy) 31 May 1946 - Alice Springs*; Keith

frustrated at times in Port Hedland, writing that the work seemed like a 'dead end' that might 'drive me crazy and I don't think I can do it'. He complained that 'Hedland with its Methodist population of three' was becoming 'a nightmare', whereas Marble Bar, the centre of a mining community embracing a much bigger population, was 'offering more scope'.⁷² However, if he or another missionary were to be posted out there, Keith noted they would need to 'live hard and probably camp in some kind of improvised humpy made with the sweat of his own brow'.⁷³ His ministry in Wiluna was more promising, though also small. For a sense of the size of his ministry, the 1947 Census showed that of its 1,065 residents, Wiluna was home to just 123 professing Methodists, with the majority identifying as Church of England (464), then Roman Catholic (127), with far fewer Presbyterians (39), Baptists (7) or no religion (2).⁷⁴

Physical demands

The ministry was varied, with physical not just spiritual demands. Missioners needed to be adept at all sorts of jobs, including medical treatment. Keith was involved, for instance, in treating a man at the Abydos Station, a cattle station 126 kilometres south of Port Hedland. Contacting the Flying Doctors with a portable transceiver, Keith was able to be given instructions on how to care for the man's torn leg muscle.⁷⁵ Missioners also needed to be able to serve as mechanic, sometimes even fashioning car parts when the required replacement was unavailable. Keith would work for days on end to repair his own car.⁷⁶

Lachlan Doust, *Report (Copy) 30 April 1947 - Alice Springs* (Alice Springs, May 7, 1947), Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

⁷² Doust to Chandler, '1 Sept 1941 - Port Hedland', 2.

⁷³ 144 gave no reply. Doust to Chandler, '11 October 1941', 1-2.

⁷⁴ Roland Wilson, 'Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1947 Part V WESTERN AUSTRALIA Analysis of Population in Local Government Areas', June 30, 1947, 369, 375, 412-3, 418-9.

⁷⁵ Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, '14 July 1941 - De Grey Station', July 14, 1941, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

⁷⁶ Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, 'Friday 18 July [1941] - Warralong Siding', July 18, 1941, 3, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

Missioners also needed to work on the upkeep of church and manse property. Keith spent over three months substantially renovating the manse at Alice Springs, which impinged greatly upon his pastoral and patrol work.⁷⁷ The buildings were often portable structures so they could be easily relocated if circumstances changed. Keith was involved in purchasing properties (both land and huts) for expanding FMIM's resources.⁷⁸ In 1947, Keith was given less than half a day's notice to prepare to travel to Katherine, some 1460 miles away, to dismantle and relocate an ex-army prefabricated corrugated Sidney Williams hut purchased by the mission from the Commonwealth Disposal Commission.⁷⁹ On the trip, which lasted over a week, Keith averaged 17 hours driving or working per day.⁸⁰ There was also a level of emotional intensity in his patrol ministry: when staying at stations, there was very little time to himself, which Keith seemed to find a little trying at times.⁸¹

Keith confesses to having lost weight due to the physical labour which came with the job.⁸² In his first year he also collapsed in the middle of a baptismal service he was conducting with suspected dengue fever, though he joked about it afterwards.⁸³ It was necessary for Keith and Myra, on occasion, to travel all the way to Perth for medical attention for their firstborn son, Richard.⁸⁴ Two years prior, FMIM missionaries Ray and Eileen Noble, who had

⁷⁷ Keith Lachlan Doust, *Report (Copy) 31 July 1946 - Alice Springs* (Alice Springs, September 2, 1946), Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust; Keith Lachlan Doust, *Report (Copy) 31 August 1946 - Alice Springs* (Alice Springs, undated), Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust; Keith Lachlan Doust, *Report (Copy) 30 September 1946 - Alice Springs* (Alice Springs, October 8, 1946), Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust; Doust, *Report (Copy) 31st October 1946 - Alice Springs*.

⁷⁸ Rev T.C Rentoul to Keith Lachlan Doust, '4 July 1944', July 4, 1944, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

⁷⁹ Keith Lachlan Doust, *Report (Copy) 31 December 1947 - Alice Springs* (Alice Springs, January 6, 1948), Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust; The Katherine Museum, 'Sidney Williams Huts' (The Northern Territory Government), Cited 15 May 2013, Online: www.katherinemuseum.com/wp-content/.../Sidney_Williams_Hut.pdf.

⁸⁰ Keith Lachlan Doust, *Report (Copy) Untitled [appears to be for November 1947 - Alice Springs]* (Alice Springs, Undated), Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

⁸¹ Doust to Chandler, 'Friday 18 July [1941] - Warralong Siding', 2.

⁸² Doust to Chandler, 'Friday 18 July [1941] - Warralong Siding', 5.

⁸³ Doust to Chandler, '11 October 1941'.

⁸⁴ See Rentoul's reference to this in Rev T.C Rentoul to Keith Lachlan Doust, '21 January 1944', January 21, 1944, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

responsibility for the Kimberley Patrol (Wyndham and Derby), lost a child on account of their isolation. Ray wrote to Keith, 'We feel sure that the little infant would have had every chance had he been in a well equipped hospital with good attention, but that is by the way.'⁸⁵

Isolation

Slow communication was a fact of life in the inland. Patrol duties meant missionaries could be isolated for weeks at a time. News that his mother had been dangerously ill with a ruptured appendix reached him long after the fact upon returning from an extended patrol.⁸⁶ Radio was not yet widespread and Keith did not yet have one in his car. In fact, the only reason he had been able to contact the Flying Doctors at Abydos Station was because he had an AIM radio technician on patrol with him, testing some sets in the outback.⁸⁷

Limited resources

Financial support for the mission was limited, especially in the shadow of the Great Depression. The *Methodist Inland Link* reported in 1936 that 'financial resources are spread to the utmost limit. Stipends are very meagre and the administrative work of the Director and office staff are entirely voluntary', and that missionaries' stipend (reduced from £6,000 per annum to £3,300) 'is scarcely a fair proportion of Methodism's contribution to missionary enterprise' given the 'magnitude and value of the work'.⁸⁸ Overhead costs were kept to a bare minimum. Keith was keenly aware of the financial stress (himself receiving the reduced stipend), and a large proportion of his mission reports were spent outlining expenses and income, including from fundraising. As postage was even expensive, Keith would joke to Myra that he would rather go without dinner than not write to her.⁸⁹ It was also difficult to

⁸⁵ Rev R. J Noble to Keith Lachlan Doust, '1 January 1941 - Wyndham', January 1, 1942, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust. Note that it appears the letter is incorrectly dated as 1941 and should read 1942.

⁸⁶ Doust to Chandler, '12 August 1941', 3.

⁸⁷ Doust to Chandler, 'Friday 18 July [1941] - Warralong Siding'.

access materials and some medication. Prior to getting married, Keith often wrote to Myra to enlist her to buy things and post them to him, including books and prescriptions.⁹⁰

Mixed attitudes towards the FMIM

On the mission field, people's perceptions of, and attitudes towards, the FMIM varied. Despite being separated by distance, some people remained divided along denominational lines. Inlanders would readily show hospitality but were reticent to be ministered to by ministers other than those belonging to their own denomination. In 1941, Keith visited one Church of England family, the Goodes, with whom he stayed with for several days because of car troubles. Keith wrote that Mr Goode, '[t]old me that they would be hypocrites if they asked me to conduct a service because they were C of E and they wouldn't enjoy it and didn't want it.'⁹¹ There was also a perception that Methodist church resources could be directed elsewhere. Four months into his mission work, Keith's initial impression, while hesitant, was that he agreed. Of the same conversation, Keith writes, 'Mr Goode told me frankly, and probably rightly, in front of all, that he considered it a waste of good time and that the energy of the church could be spent in better ways....They were quite prepared to talk on Christian issues but thought that a lot of propaganda about the thirst of the Inland for religion was only propaganda!'⁹² This was a matter that Keith determined to personally pursue silently.⁹³ He wrote to the Home Missions Department four months later, evidently to express his conflicted feelings over these matters, but the Department Secretary, eager to receive material suitable for publication advertising the mission, requested he submit 'matter which comes from your

⁸⁸ *The Methodist inland link (December 1 1936)* (Melbourne: Victorian Home Mission Dept. of the Methodist Church of Australasia, 1936), 6–7.

⁸⁹ Dust to Chandler, '2 June 1941 - Port Hedland'.

⁹⁰ Dust to Chandler, '31st, Sat [May 1941]', 2. Also Dust to Chandler, '2 June 1941 - Port Hedland'. Dust to Chandler, '24 June 1941 - Port Hedland'.

⁹¹ Dust to Chandler, '5 August 1941 - Pilga Station', 8.

⁹² Dust to Chandler, '5 August 1941 - Pilga Station', 8.

⁹³ Dust to Chandler, '5 August 1941 - Pilga Station', 8.

well considered judgment rather than that which comes from your first impressions'.⁹⁴ However, by July 1944 Keith and Myra had agreed to stay on the FMIM staff⁹⁵ and it appears that Keith's estimation of the ministry had changed.

Conflict

There were times when the mission, and Keith himself, came into conflict with other denominations or other organisations. For example, in 1944 T.C. Rentoul, normally polite and even-handed in his correspondence, wrote with exasperation, '[t]he Presbyterians have decided to set up their headquarters in Alice Springs. They have been more awkward than a team of mules. There isn't a spark of cooperation in them, nothing but jealousy and pride.'⁹⁶ Early on in his mission work, Keith encountered problems with the Freemasons and 'Buffaloes'. These fraternities were in competition for the halls Keith used for church services at Marble Bar. Hearing second-hand that there was to be a big lodge meeting there all day Sunday, Keith lamented, '[t]here is a tough crowd up there – don't tell you that they cancelled your hall arrangements or anything.'⁹⁷ He would then have to hang around the district for another week to secure a definite promise of the hall. He was not fond of these organisations, commenting, '[t]his Lodge business over here is purely a drunks turnout – they get great stacks of beer and spend all day Sunday and Sunday night just soaking....the Buffs are by far the worst. She's certainly a tough country.'⁹⁸ Despite this occasional conflict, Keith was welcomed into homesteads by Roman Catholics,⁹⁹ was on very friendly terms with a

⁹⁴ Rev A.G Manefield to Keith Lachlan Doust, 'Department of Home Missions (NSW) to Rev Keith Doust, Port Hedland - 5 Dec 1941', December 5, 1941, 1, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

⁹⁵ Rev T.C Rentoul to Doust, '4 July 1944'.

⁹⁶ Rev T.C Rentoul to Keith Lachlan Doust, '24 April 1944', April 24, 1944, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

⁹⁷ Doust to Chandler, '8 September 1941 - Callawa Station'.

⁹⁸ Doust to Chandler, '8 September 1941 - Callawa Station'.

⁹⁹ For example, see Keith Lachlan Doust to Myra Chandler, '22 May 1941 - Three Creek Station', May 22, 1941, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust. Of the Bender family he wrote, 'RC's but I felt quite at home with them.'

pastor from the Hermannsberg Lutheran Mission,¹⁰⁰ and seemed to generally to work cooperatively with AIM, with Dr Flynn accepting an invitation to take the Alice Springs service one Sunday when Keith was away.¹⁰¹

Disruption of war

Understandably, World War II had a significant impact on the FMIM. As a minister of religion, Keith was exempt from serving in the military and so continued his work.¹⁰² He did, however, participate in the Voluntary Defence Corps during his time at Port Hedland and Wiluna,¹⁰³ in part as a way to get to know some of the men.¹⁰⁴ At this time petrol had become a scarce resource, which hamstrung patrol work.¹⁰⁵ The Director believed it was impossible to replace mission trucks with either new or second hand vehicles, and so in 1942 warned missionaries to take great care of the trucks.¹⁰⁶ Administration staff numbers were reduced.¹⁰⁷ Understanding the scarcity of finances, Keith approached the Board to ask whether he should take up secular work to help tide the church over. The Board said no, citing that ‘we feel over here that you have a man-sized job in looking after the spiritual and moral interests of the town and district’.¹⁰⁸ The Sydney Morning Herald reported in February 1943 that the work of the FMIM had been ‘greatly affected by the war, according to a report presented to the Methodist Conference yesterday’, noting that ‘patrols, ambulance work, medical and dental

¹⁰⁰ Keith Lachlan Doust, *Report (Copy) 31st July 1947 - Alice Springs* (Alice Springs, Undated), Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

¹⁰¹ Doust, *Report (Copy) 30 April 1947 - Alice Springs*.

¹⁰² Australian Military Forces, ‘Certificate of Exemption No. 2077 - Keith Lachlan Doust of Box 149 Wiluna’, April 2, 1942, Black Folder 1, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

¹⁰³ ‘Resume of Keith Lachlan Doust’, 1.

¹⁰⁴ Doust to Chandler, ‘24 June 1941 - Port Hedland’, 6.

¹⁰⁵ For example, Rentoul lamented that even if they could find man to post at Port Hedland to replace Keith, ‘he could do little or nothing on account of the petrol situation.’ Rev T.C Rentoul to Doust, ‘24 December 1941’.

¹⁰⁶ Rev T.C Rentoul to Doust, ‘21 October 1942’.

¹⁰⁷ Rev T.C Rentoul to Keith Lachlan Doust, ‘12 May 1943’, May 12, 1943, 2, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

¹⁰⁸ Rev T.C Rentoul to Doust, ‘21 October 1942’.

help had all been disrupted'.¹⁰⁹ Keith was able to undertake limited patrol work, which he described in one report as 'costly and strenuous but entirely successful,' and hoped to recoup some of the heavy petrol costs from donations.¹¹⁰

Some denominations withdrew personnel from inland centres during wartime. T.C. Rentoul mentioned in 1942 that other churches, including the Salvation Army, had been withdrawn from Wiluna. He wrote, 'In this city the Methodists are described as being "the first to enter and the last to leave"'. It seems to be true over there also.' However, the FMIM did not hold their ground everywhere. They did not, for example, have a missionary posted at Port Hedland and the military authorities requisitioned the FMIM's Port Hedland premises.¹¹¹ With ministers withdrawing, Rentoul advised Keith to minister to Christians regardless of denominational ties, '[s]o long as we do not attempt to draw his people into membership I think we are spiritually bound to do everything we can to keep them in the faith...'¹¹² On a very practical level, there were delays for Keith receiving his stipend because of the FMIM treasurer losing a few sons in the war.¹¹³ Director Rentoul was heavily occupied by military work which affected his ability to oversee Keith's work and his characteristic encouragement.¹¹⁴

There were also population movements which impacted the ministry. In 1942 Rev Ray Noble wrote with deep regret about people migrating south and his mission field disappearing,

¹⁰⁹ 'Inland Mission Work: War Problem for Methodists', *The Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW, February 25, 1943), 9, Cited 13 May 2013.

¹¹⁰ Keith Lachlan Doust to Rev T.C. Rentoul, '30 June 1943', June 30, 1943, 1, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

¹¹¹ Rev T.C. Rentoul to Doust, '12 May 1943'.

¹¹² Rev T.C. Rentoul to Keith Lachlan Doust, '2 June 1942', June 2, 1942, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

¹¹³ Rev T.C. Rentoul to Doust, '2 June 1942'.

¹¹⁴ See, for example, his references to this in Rev T.C. Rentoul to Keith Lachlan Doust, '4 August 1943', August 4, 1943, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust. Also Rev T.C. Rentoul to Doust, '21 January 1944'.

‘It is possible that I shall be looking for a job any day now. This place has flopped badly. All the women have [2] packed up and have set off helter skelter to Perth as quickly as they can get seats in the aeroplanes. The Japs have them bluffed. Unless something turns up, I think that I shall have to go looking for some parishioners. If we can get petrol it will not be so bad, but at present I am mourning about 4 years work disappearing in about a fortnight. The position here is bad.’¹¹⁵

The war reconfigured people’s mission fields, especially once Japan entered the war. Some coastal evacuees arrived in Keith’s parish in early 1942.¹¹⁶ In many mission areas, however, missionaries now found themselves working alongside defence force members¹¹⁷ and saw their congregations swell. This was the case in Alice Springs. At its peak, Alice Springs was home to some 8000 troops and administration staff.¹¹⁸ In the financial year October 1944 – September 1945, the offertory totalled a high of £329.10, something Keith later had to defend to the Board when army personnel withdrew and the regular offertory fell to under £70.¹¹⁹

The plight of Aboriginals

Although Keith had little contact with Aboriginal people, unlike some other FMIM missionaries,¹²⁰ the question of how to minister to them had been raised in his mind ever since arriving in Western Australia and hearing a policeman blame ‘religious missions’ for making Aboriginal people dependent on handouts.¹²¹ On one particular occasion, years later, Keith had some close dealings which caused him to question the role of white people in governing

¹¹⁵ Rev R. J Noble to Doust, ‘1 January 1941 - Wyndham’. In February and March 1943, there were another series of air raids, including one on Wyndham, although there were no casualties in that particular raid. Australian War Memorial, ‘Air raids on Australian mainland - Second World War’, Online: http://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/air_raids/; ‘Air raids on Australia, 1942–43’, *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*, April 25, 2013, Cited 15 May 2013, Online: http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Air_raids_on_Australia,_1942%E2%80%9343&oldid=552052285

¹¹⁶ Keith Lachlan Doust to Rev T.C Rentoul, ‘10 March 1942 (carbon copy)’, March 10, 1942, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

¹¹⁷ ‘Inland Mission Work: War Problem for Methodists’, 9.

¹¹⁸ Keith Lachlan Doust, *Report (draft) November [presumably 1947] - Handwritten* (Alice Springs, undated), Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

¹¹⁹ Doust, *Report (draft) November [presumably 1947] - Handwritten*.

¹²⁰ Such as Harry Griffiths, Griffiths, *An Australian adventure*, 167–168.

¹²¹ Doust to Chandler, ‘5 May 1941 (Monday)’, 5.

the aboriginal people In 1945, he appeared at an inquest into the death of a native aboriginal man called Nudda who was speared during a camp argument at Wiluna,¹²² reportedly over a quarrel over a native woman.¹²³ Keith had been asked to interview a second native man charged with the murder of the deceased,¹²⁴ though the man later died in hospital¹²⁵ so manslaughter charges were not pressed.¹²⁶ In his report, although Keith said the inquest was ‘fair and open,’ he expressed significant apprehension ‘as to whether these natives should be judged (in tribal matters) by a white man’s law without a greater understanding of tribal practices, laws and custom, the tradition of which are far more prevalent in his mind and make up than the prohibitions of the white man.’¹²⁷ That Keith had found the application of law perplexing is an interesting window into the difficult relationship between aboriginal and white people at the time, an issue which has remained complex until today.

Part 4 | Assessment

It is interesting to reflect on what Keith’s correspondence does not contain. In his letters and reports, while he frequently comments on running church services and Sunday school, and how these were attended, rarely (if ever) does he specify what message he preached, how he went about preparing or how the message was received. He merely summarises, ‘I did my

¹²² C.L. McBeath to Keith Lachlan Doust, ‘Department of Native Affairs regarding Inquest of Jack Scaddan (Ref: 1275/44 16/02/1945)’, February 16, 1945, Black Folder 1, Personal Collection of Terry Doust. For this purpose he was given a temporary ‘honorary appointment’ as a Protector under *The Native Administration Act 1905-1941* as ‘Protector of Natives for the Wiluna District.’ Minister for the North-West, ‘Certificate of Appointment of Protector - Rev. Keith Doust of Wiluna from 19-31 January 1945 - No. 1991’, January 19, 1945, Black Folder 1, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

¹²³ ‘Wiluna Tribal Fight Quarrel Over Woman: Second Native’s Death’, *Geraldton Guardian and Express* (WA, January 27, 1945), 2, Cited 12 Mar 2013.

¹²⁴ McBeath to Doust, ‘Letter re inquest of Jack Scaddan (Feb)’. Keith Lachlan Doust, ‘Report (draft, handwritten) to C.L. McBeath, Acting Commissioner of Native Affairs, regarding Inquest of Jack Scaddan’, Undated, 2, Black Folder 1, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

¹²⁵ ‘Wiluna Tribal Fight Quarrel Over Woman: Second Native’s Death’.

¹²⁶ McBeath to Doust, ‘Letter re inquest of Jack Scaddan (Feb)’.

¹²⁷ Doust, ‘Report (draft, handwritten) to C.L. McBeath, Acting Commissioner of Native Affairs, regarding Inquest of Jack Scaddan’, 3.

best to give them the gospel message.¹²⁸ Occasionally he comments on a ‘deepening interest’ observed in Sunday School children.¹²⁹ Once, while critiquing theologians and books to read, Keith made a passing comment to Myra that theology doesn’t matter ‘out here’.¹³⁰ He did, nevertheless, ensure he had a Hebrew vocabulary and Greek lexicon, with which he thought he’d be ‘ok’.¹³¹ Describing recent patrol work, he goes as far as mentioning in his mission reports of taking his ‘Testament’ from his pocket, reading ‘the word of God’ and leading ‘the household in prayer’.¹³² However, not all homesteads offered ‘opportunity for open spiritual fellowship’ and did not extend beyond ‘social fellowship’.¹³³ Keith’s monthly reports are pragmatic and activity-centred: reporting on Ladies Guild activities, meetings of the Committee of Church management, Sunday School and Scripture activities, hospital visitation, community events, sport and social activities, recent expenses and petrol prices, renovations to church property, places he had patrolled.

It is difficult, however, to draw any firm conclusions from these sources about Keith’s personal faith, his attitude to Scripture or prayer, or the place they had in his mission work. It is also difficult to evaluate just how much spiritual impact his ministry had upon people. It is quite possible that his monthly reports to the Board emphasised activities because, unlike spiritual growth, these were concrete indicators of progress. Certainly, there were times when he needed to make a defence to the Board of the usefulness of the ministry, and as reports were used as ‘propaganda’ they were expected to have a positive angle in a magazine that certainly had a moralistic flavour.

¹²⁸ Doust to Chandler, ‘1 Sept 1941 - Port Hedland’.

¹²⁹ Keith Lachlan Doust, *Report (Copy) 30 June 1946 - Alice Springs* (Alice Springs, July 19, 1946), Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

¹³⁰ Doust to Chandler, ‘24 June 1941 - Port Hedland’, 4.

¹³¹ Doust to Chandler, ‘24 June 1941 - Port Hedland’, 5.

¹³² *The Methodist inland link (December 1952)* (Melbourne: Victorian Home Mission Dept. of the Methodist Church of Australasia, 1952), 6.

¹³³ *The Methodist inland link (December 1952)*, 6.

From his limited extant correspondence from this period, Keith does seem more reserved or less 'expressive' than some missionaries. Rev Boulter's own mission reports to the Board, for example, included an impassioned plea for more men on the field, with stirring rhetoric absent from Keith's own writings: 'We must seek out these men soon... let a note of urgency be sent throughout all our connectional journals calling for volunteers in this commando work for the Kingdom of Christ... Every day we postpone our decision is a day lost in the Master's service...'¹³⁴

Despite this, Keith seems to have worked quietly and persistently, in step with his own personality and temperament, faithfully employing the resources and abilities that were available to him. His reports reflect considered reasoning on strategic decisions and also show a proper sensitivity regarding the financial pressures the FMIM was under.¹³⁵ The Director was satisfied with his work, writing of a recent visit, 'I was particularly pleased with the work that you are doing in your own town. I shall not forget the spirit of devotion in the morning communion service, and the two well conducted and happy Sunday Schools.'¹³⁶ Thanking him for his years of service, the then secretary A.W. Pederick said, 'in every respect you have served with ability and sincerity.'¹³⁷

As Keith said himself of the mission field, '[i]t's not all beer and skittles'.¹³⁸ Sundays were spent 'in the usual manner of *trying* to get people to church'¹³⁹ Keith had struggled, particularly in that first year. Three months in he had written 'Sunday night I...was feeling fed up... Was truly down in the dumps...Decided that I'd have to toughen up a lot before I

¹³⁴ Rev Robert Boulter, *Copy of August 1945 Report to T.C. Rentoul* (Wesley Manse, Cue, August 1945), 2, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

¹³⁵ For example, Doust to Rev T.C. Rentoul, '7 November [1945] (Carbon Copy)'.
¹³⁶ Rev T.C. Rentoul to Doust, '12 May 1943'.

¹³⁷ A.W. Pederick to Keith Lachlan Doust, '25 November 1945 - Methodist Church of Australasia - Federal Methodist Inland Mission', November 25, 1945, Folder 2, Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

¹³⁸ Doust to Chandler, '27 September 1941'.

¹³⁹ Doust to Chandler, '1 Sept 1941 - Port Hedland'. Emphasis his own.

really fit in up here. My four days at Marble Bar were such a failure that I was all worked up and felt like cracking up on the spot.¹⁴⁰ However, to his credit, he persevered. When on patrol he held services at homesteads on cattle stations and persisted in inviting some of the shearers along, knowing ‘most of them are tough guys and probably won’t [come]’.¹⁴¹ His evangelism efforts, while perhaps modest, were genuine. He also demonstrated his love for people by getting his hands dirty, not shying away from helping with labour on the stations, something which won missionaries much respect.¹⁴²

Part 5 | The remaining years of FMIM

After World War 2, modern means of transport, bitumen roads and new communication technologies began to transform inland Australia. Tourism and discoveries of mineral wealth accelerated the development of some isolated areas.¹⁴³ The mission continued, though with far less primitive resources. For example, by at least the late 1960s, missionaries enjoyed modern air-conditioned houses similar to all others in the town.¹⁴⁴ Many of the challenges faced by early missionaries abated, though some will have continued and new ones will have emerged. Pederick, in his brief history of the FMIM, lists 93 men who served on the field from 1927 to 1970.¹⁴⁵ In 1977 the Uniting Church was established and the FMIM and the inland missions of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches were combined to form Frontier Services.¹⁴⁶ Much of the history of this period and mission field focuses on the Presbyterian work of AIM, established by John Flynn in 1912.¹⁴⁷ However, the contribution

¹⁴⁰ Doust to Chandler, ‘12 August 1941’, 1.

¹⁴¹ Doust to Chandler, ‘Friday 18 July [1941] - Warralong Siding’, 5.

¹⁴² Doust to Chandler, ‘Friday 18 July [1941] - Warralong Siding’, 5.

¹⁴³ Pederick, *Men on the Frontier*, 6.

¹⁴⁴ Pederick, *Men on the Frontier*, 30.

¹⁴⁵ Pederick, *Men on the Frontier*, 23–25.

¹⁴⁶ ‘Our history’, *Frontier Services - serving remote Australia*, Cited 14 May 2013, Online:

<http://www.frontierservices.org/about-us/our-history>.

¹⁴⁷ John Flynn, *Northern Territory and Central Australia: a call to the church* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1912).

of the FMIM should not be overlooked.

Conclusion

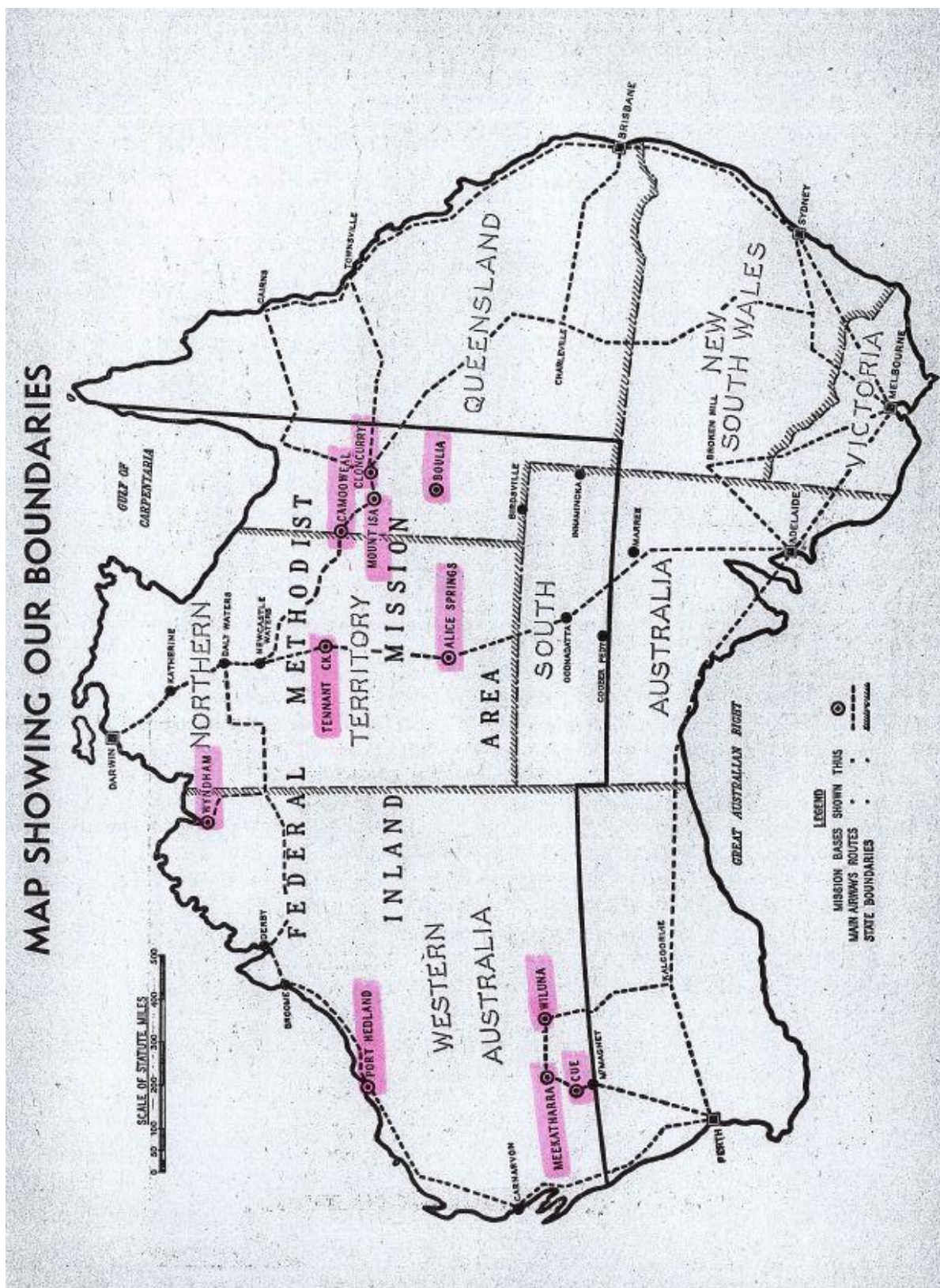
Missioners like Rev Keith Doust faced many hurdles in their ministry to evangelise the inland. While it is difficult to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of Keith's ministry and FMIM's wider efforts since 1926, it must be said that Keith, and many others, persevered in meeting with fellow Christians and seeking to love and serve people in the isolated outback. The missioners of the FMIM indeed worked 'penetrating to its loneliest homesteads and remotest prospectors' in Australia,¹⁴⁸ travelling huge distances to reach people. While the FMIM initiative was modest in size, with only eleven missioners on the field during Keith's service, it can be argued, nevertheless, that the FMIM was a bold and ambitious initiative to take the gospel to the heart of Australia at a time when transport, communications and resources were extremely limited.

Appendix 1 | *Map showing the mission bases of the FMIM mission*

Appendix 2 | *The trucks of the FMIM, circa 1940s*

¹⁴⁸ *The Methodist inland link (March 1, 1933), 1.*

Appendix 1



Map showing the mission bases of the FMIM mission¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ The Methodist inland link (December 1952), inside cover.

Appendix 2

The trucks of the FMIM, circa 1940s¹⁵⁰



Photo 1: 'On Inland mission trip Oct 9 1944 Meekatharra' [Keith is the tallest, on the right]

Photo 2: 'Methodist Inland Mission camp east of Mt Edgerton Oct 12 1944' [Keith is on the left]

¹⁵⁰ Unknown, 'Photo Album - unlabelled', Personal Collection of Terry Doust.

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