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The Rev. E. J. Telfer.



# AMONGST AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES

Forty Years of Missionary Work.

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The Story of  
The United Aborigines' Mission

By E. J. TELFER.

*"These forty years  
the Lord thy God hath been with thee."  
(Deuteronomy 2: 7).*

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AIAS

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## FOREWORD.

In response to repeated requests from the Federal Council of the United Aborigines' Mission, and from the Publishing Committee, I have, after considerable hesitation and much prayer, consented to write a brief history of the Mission from its inception to the present time. The story will cover a period of more than forty years, and will unfold some of the wonders of God's Abounding Grace amongst the despised and downtrodden aborigines of Australia.

From very small beginnings in a camp on the northern shore of Botany Bay, the work has developed and expanded so that the Mission has, at the time of writing, about 80 missionaries, besides native helpers and voluntary workers. These devoted men and women are scattered throughout the wide spaces of several States of the Commonwealth, from La Perouse in the South-east to the Kimberleys in the far North-west of the Continent; and through hazard and hardship they are preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ to the native people.

To all who are helping to make this record of the work possible, by supplying material, or defraying the cost of photographic blocks for illustrating the story, we tender our sincere thanks. Most of all we are grateful for those who are helping by continual prayer on our behalf; and it is only because we believe that we can depend on this prayer co-operation that we dare attempt the task.





## AUTHOR'S NOTE.

It seems necessary to explain that several years have passed since we first undertook to write this story. The chapters have, for the most part, appeared in the columns of "The United Aborigines Messenger," from time to time. The facts contained in this brief history have been carefully gleaned from the official records of the Mission. We realise that we have not in any sense done full justice to the great work that has been accomplished amongst the aborigines; neither have we been able even to mention some of the missionaries and other workers of recent years who have given of their best to the great cause. History is still being made, and at a later date it may be possible to gather up the threads of what has been accomplished in these later years. With all its imperfections we send it forth in the earnest hope that it will stir many of the Lord's people to a sense of their responsibility with regard to the aborigines.

We desire to acknowledge our indebtedness to many who have helped in gathering material for our story, and particularly to Mr. Henry Bush, who has kindly undertaken the final arrangements for publication. Without this timely help in the outline of contents, and the reading of proofs, there would have been further delay. May the record of what has been done in past years inspire every reader to do still more to bring the aborigines of Australia under the influence of the Gospel of Christ.

E. J. TELFER.

3rd February, 1939.

## PREFACE.

I have been asked to say a word respecting the publication of this record of forty years' work among the Aborigines of Australia. The Rev. E. J. Telfer has seen all sides of the work, which has been carried on throughout the Commonwealth. He has been in perils oft and trials many. As missionary, councillor and President, it says much for his physical constitution and his faith in God that he is able to publish this record of heroic service.

The book deserves a wide circulation among those who have at heart the cause of this much-neglected, and oftentimes ill-treated, people, to whom the white people, beyond introducing the vices, and communicating the diseases of civilisation, have done little to alter their condition. It should, however, be stated that the Government of Australia is now proposing to take a course of action in relation to the native Australian people, having for its object "the raising of their status so as to entitle them by right and by qualification to the ordinary rights of citizenship, and enable them and help them to share the opportunities available in their own native land."

It is the opinion of Professor Sir Arthur Keith, that "of all the races of mankind now alive, the aboriginal race of Australia is the only one which could serve as a common ancestor for all modern races. The common ancestor has to yield descendants which, on the one hand, might become the typical inhabitant of Central Africa, and, on the other, the fair-haired native of north-western

Europe. The Australian native has those intermediate and generalised characters needed for such an ancestral form."

Dr. Chas. Pickering, who visited Australia as a member of the United States Exploring Expedition, commanded by Wilkes, says, "Strange as it may appear, I would refer to an Australian as the finest model of the human proportions I have ever met with; in muscular development combining perfect symmetry, activity and strength; while his head might have compared with the antique bust of a philosopher."

I trust the publication will have much success.

HENRY BUSH,  
Vice-President, World's C.E. Union.

Sydney, N.S.W., 1st May, 1939.

