

# Stories from the past

*By Margaret Warr*

During the First World War a Mr and Mrs Dave Mortimer lived at Glenrowan near Wangaratta [Victoria]. Mrs Mortimer was suffering great distress because in one year, one of her sons died of mumps, one died in the war and two were missing. She was an Anglican and thought they were suffering torments in hell because none of her sons had ever had any interest in religion.

After this she came in contact with Sister Alice Warr and her son Brother Fred and found out that when we die we sleep peacefully and know nothing. This was a great comfort to her and her life changed. No longer was she in torment and life became bearable again. She was baptized and round about that time, her husband's half brother's wife, Sister Holloway also was baptized.

However her husband, Dave Mortimer, was not at all pleased. He did not like his wife's new religion, so he took her away to Beechworth to get away from these dreadful Christadelphians, only to find there were even more in Beechworth than there were in Wangaratta, so he took her away again to southern NSW.

One day Sister Mortimer met an old friend, Mary Richardson. Mary was a Catholic who had married a Protestant. When Mary married Vern Richardson most of her friends abandoned her. Vern had promised that their children would be brought up as Catholics. Vern did not mind when they had two daughters, but when they had sons he

did not like the thought of his sons being Catholics and tension arose in the family. Sister Mortimer told Mary that she had learnt the Truth. Mary thought 'She has become a Catholic'. As Sister Mortimer told her more she realised that what she was hearing was something new.

After a while Mary was ready for baptism and for this she went to Wangaratta. She went to the home of Brother Charlie and Sister Alice Warr. When she got there she realised that some years before this she had gone to the Wangaratta show and an old gentleman had offered her a leaflet. She had taken it and without reading it she had thrown it away when she got around the corner. Now here she was, in his house ready to be baptized!

In the June 1928 Christadelphian [magazine], there are three items of Intelligence that interest me. These are Sister F. Aitchison baptized 19.2.1928; Sister M. E. Richardson baptized at Wangaratta on 17.3.1928 by Brother J. Enever; and the marriage of Brother F. (Fred) Warr and Sister B. (Bessie) Hosie on 4.2.1928.

After Sister Richardson was baptized her life became happier. Her husband Vern was also baptized at Bowna on 8.3.1929 and there was no further conflict between them about religion.

Miss Florence Aitchison came to Australia from Motherwell in Scotland. She was the eldest of a large family. One brother was already living in Melbourne

when the rest of the family came. On the boat was a Brother Frank and Sister Doris White. They befriended Mrs Isabella Aitchison and her daughter Flo and taught them what the Bible teaches. When they reached Melbourne, Flo went along to a Lecture. Someone said to her 'we have another Scottish lady here, but she is away on her honeymoon.'

Flo went along to the Meeting again and saw a young couple in the train and wondered if this was the newly married pair. She followed them up the road and sure enough they were going to the same place. When she was introduced to Fred and Bessie not only did she find out that

she was that same lady, but they had both come from Motherwell! Flo even remembered that as a child she used to see Bessie going to school. Bessie was a 'big' girl and Flo was a 'little' girl! They became the best of friends and remained so. Sister Flo was baptized shortly after that and her father was sceptical. He was a staunch Presbyterian, Flo had become a Baptist. Her father said, first a Baptist now a Christadelphian. What next? What he said when his wife was baptized on 3.7.1929, then most of the rest of the family I don't know, but eventually he was baptized too, and a very fine brother he was.