
REV. ARTHUR HOWARD BLACKET

PRG 607
Series List

TRIBUTE TO ARTHUR BLACKET (died 11/9/1972).

Arthur Howard Blacket was a pastor, a missionary and a scholar. Born a son of the manse he spent his life in the service of the church. He was a man who it was good to know, a friendly man, interested personally in those whom he met and willing to make their concerns his concerns.

Born in Angaston in 1901 he was educated in primary schools, Norwood High and Prince Alfred College. He decided to be a teacher and was in the Teacher's Training College when there came a call to the ministry. The next three years were spent at Parkin College. Dr. E. S. Kiek, then Principal of Parkin College said of Arthur Blacket that he was one of the most brilliant students that he had known.

In 1924 Arthur Blacket was accepted for the Methodist ministry and for two years studied under Rev. Frank Lade at Wesley College. At the same time he was tutor in Latin and Greek.

His first appointment was Broken Hill and it was characteristic of the man that he continued to study and completed the final subject for the B.A. degree. A year later at Clarence Park he offered for work overseas and in 1928 sailed for India. Three years in India gave him one of the great loves of his life - the Indian people. It was a rich experience to sit and listen to Arthur Blacket talk about the Indian people, of the work in Azamgarh and Mau, of conducting worship in the Anglican Army chapel in Mau. He talked with warmth and feeling as though he was seeing it all over again. The Lord had called him to serve a people, and he had learnt to love them.

Incidentally, he was at his studies again and in those three years in India he completed his B.D. degree with the Melbourne College of Divinity.

It was not to be India, and he returned to South Australia and was appointed to Goolwa. He married Edith Dickinson and from then on, it was never just Arthur. It was always Arthur and Edith, for they were partners together. Two years later they were on their way to mission work in Fiji. Their home was to be in Dilkusha, the mission house on the top of the hill overlooking the Rewa River. He was to become Padri Sahib to the Indians of Nausori.

In North India Arthur had learnt Urdu but now in Fiji it was necessary to learn Hindi. He rejoiced that he had another language to learn. He loved language study. It was not unusual for him to say, after his holidays, I studied Tamil or maybe it was Telugu or Malayalam. But there was always more to it than the language study. If it were Tamil he was learning he was to be found among Tamil people talking to them in their own language. He was the missionary.

He would enter an Indian store and find out that the owner was a Mohammedan. They would talk for a while and then Arthur would sing a Bjahan - a song telling a story from the life of Jesus Christ. The Muslim storekeeper would have his turn and chant back selections from the Koran. They would part friends but the gospel had been preached.

While at Dilkusha he opened a boarding school for Indian boys. And that was not all; he visited the homes of those boys, often travelling a hundred or more miles to meet the parents and to talk with them about their son and how he was getting on at school. Always there was the witness to Jesus Christ. In fact it was from this school that came a number of the Christian leaders in the Indian community in Fiji.

On the Dilkusha compound there was the Orphanage, and the school, and Arthur was pastor to them all, staff, students and children. He never forgot them. They moved away, they married but he knew where they were and in his journeys would turn aside to call on

them.

On the mission field there is much administrative work and for several years Arthur was Secretary for Education for the Methodist Church. He was a good Administrator. With patience, with persistence, he pleaded the case of mission schools with the Government to the benefit not only of mission schools but also of education in Fiji.

For 12 years he served in Fiji. He returned to South Australia and took up his appointment in Salisbury. Two years later there began a new phase in his life that was to occupy the next 1 year. Conference appointed him to Wesley College first as Vice Principal and in 1953, on the retirement of Rev. P.O.W. Eckersley, as Principal. So the padre Sahib became the scholar.

Principal Arthur Blacket inherited grant gifts from his parents. His father, John Blacket, was a scholar and an author of several books especially on local history of this State. Possibly it was from his father that the Principal took over his concern for exact scholarship. He worked with meticulous care and knew the need to use the right word and the accurate phrase. His thesis on the growth of the Indian Church in Fiji reveals how he was prepared to word patiently through piles of correspondence and through minutes of the Synod and the Board of Missions so that he could be sure that his record was true. It was with the same diligence that he sought the exact meaning of a phrase in his Greek New Testament or a paragraph in a theological text book. He read widely and his judgements were based on an erudite understanding of his subject. He was the scholar.

About 100 students trained under Arthur Placket at Wesley College and that was to him a great responsibility, and his work has been a great contribution to the Church. Not only his emphasis on scholarship will be remembered but also his jokes, for he had a lively sense of humour. Conference was always brighter when Arthur Blacket was presenting his report. Among his students he was known as Uncle Arthur. It was a term of affection. His students could meet him at the Adelaide Railway Station with a rickshaw and take him for a ride. He related to his students as he related to his Indian parishioners. He was the pastor and his personal interest reached them. He could be deeply concerned about the right way to do things and that was part of the man who was the servant of the Church and the pastor of his people.

There was deep regret throughout the Church when ill health forced an early retirement from active work.

He had always loved the garden. The grounds at Parkin-Wesley College are a monument to that interest. So in retirement he turned to his garden and despite his physical disability enjoyed working in it. Now he had time for music and for Channel 2. His love of language continued. Last year it was conversational German, this year Italian and Dutch. And there was his love of people. The Arthur Blacket we knew and loved did not chance.

His deepest love was his love of his God. It found expression, particularly through the collects of the Church. He found the collects helped him to make response with all of the Church to the grace, and the mercy and the love and the wisdom of God.

Sunday evening he was in hospital. There was to be an operation in a day or two. He told his loved ones that there would be no need to come back that night. "I have my transistor" he said "and I will listen to the service from Maughan". And so he worshipped.

As a church we give thanks for Arthur Blacket, the missionary, the Principal, the pastor, the devoted servant of the Church. We thank Edith Placket and the family for all that they helped him to do. We hold them in our prayers before God the Father, by whose grace and mercy we have the hope of the life eternal, where love finds its fulfillment.

Amen. Full oration by Rev. Maurice Wilmshurst, September 1972.

Tsf. P749 INTERIM SERIES LIST

Special lists to be prepared and dates to be ascertained.

Letters received. 1925-30.; 5 cm.	1
Letters sent to his mother and father. 1926-27. 2 cm.	2
Letters from India. 1928-30. 2 cm.	3
Correspondence: Fiji. c.1940-1942. 2 cm.	4
n/a	5
Subject files.	6
Notes for lectures and addresses (various). c.1929-1950.	7
Notes and reviews on various theological topics.	8
Notebooks on various theological topics, together with some lectures.	9
Sermons.	10
College Chapel order of services. weeks 1 to 16.	11
Miscellaneous manuscripts.	12
Typescripts and published monographs and lectures chiefly by A.H. Blacket.	13
Papers connected with the Department of Methodist Missions.	14
Photographs: India, Fiji, Wesley House etc. and family.	15-18
Academic certificates. 1) Certificate of attendance at courses at Parkin College, 1921-1923 (issued 10/5/1924); 2) BA from University of Adelaide, 14/12/1927.	19
Certificate as Scout Commissioner, Fiji.	20
Notes on Oslo Conference. 1961. 1 small notebook.	21

School report of Muriel Blacker. 1954. 1 item.	22
Family Bibles and prayer books.	23
Bibles and prayer books in languages other than English.	24
Miscellaneous books on Fiji.	25
Miscellaneous pamphlets, and some manuscript notes, on India, Fiji and the Pacific.	26
Miscellaneous textbooks on Hindustani.	27
Miscellaneous printed works (including sermon by Wesley, 1741).	28
Lectures by Dr B.S. Kiek.	29
Journals of John Blacket. 1877-c.1905. 2 volumes.	30
Press cutting: appeal by John Blacket for support for England in the Boer War. 1899? 1 item.	31
Reminiscences of Rev. F.L. Nunn, missionary in India and Fiji 1908-24. 1 volume. (lacking pages 38-77).	32
Methodist Missionary Society of Australasia: Fiji District - Indian Section report and financial statement. 1922. 15p. Typescript + cover.	33
Account kept during visit to Tasmania [by Mrs. E.G. Blacket?]. n.d. [c.1955-65?] 7 pages.	34
Letter received by Mrs. E.G. Blacket from Mrs. Helen Fisher with details of family history. n.d. 4 pages. + enclosure + cover.	35