



Pastor
Alec T Davidson

Denis V Smith



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A T DAVIDSON
A Man of Prayer
Dr. Denis V Smith



He was a unique man – a man of prayer and committed to people. To know him was to love him and to love him, enriched your life. He, together with his dear wife Olive, were an outstanding couple who faithfully served God in the Australian Assemblies of God Fellowship.

Alec T. Davidson was born on 28th October 1902 and raised by godly parents, who provided an active Christian environment for him to develop his faith. He became a qualified accountant, working in this profession for some years before becoming a minister of the Gospel.

C. L. Greenwood wrote of him:

“As we listen to the various testimonies of the saints, of the devious paths which they trod prior to receiving salvation, we readily agree with the poet when he wrote: ‘God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.’

As Pastor Alex. Davidson takes a retrospective view of his own life, I think he would echo a fervent Amen to that verse; for if anyone’s way was devious it was his. Brought up in a Baptist Church, but without any real knowledge of the saving grace of Jesus, he very soon lost all desire for spiritual things; so much so, that by the time he was seventeen years old he was steeped in rationalism, a confirmed agnostic.

But, praise God, He was watching this young man and by the power of His Blessed Spirit wooed him back to Himself."

Thus, it came about that in the Baptist Church, Auburn, in 1923, young Alex. Davidson was soundly converted to Jesus Christ. There followed the desire to uplift his precious Lord; and he found plenty of scope for his talents by labouring in the Baptist Church. [Richmond Temple Souvenir 1939]

During this period, he was a bitter antagonist to Pentecostal teaching and publicly denounced the Pentecostal Church from his pulpit. He placed in his local church's Constitution that "no Pentecostal could preach from this pulpit!"

Around this time. Mr. and Mrs Tebay from Woy Woy had invited Philip Duncan to preach in their new fellowship. He was holding regular meetings with them and the mainline churches were becoming alarmed.

Being a man who believes in doing things thoroughly, A. T. Davidson endeavoured to loosen others from this "delusion," and made a thorough investigation of the Pentecostal doctrine with the result that he himself was "made to see" that this Pentecostal Baptism was of God. He was baptised in the Holy Ghost on Good Friday, 1934, while in private prayer before retiring to bed.



"When A T Davidson was baptised with the Holy Spirit, he was banned from his own church because of the constitutional ruling he had introduced. It became a great source of amusement for the two now-Pentecostal brothers!" [Source: Elizabeth Rowlands (nee Duncan)]

"Many prophecies 'went before' and succeeded the call to the ministry, which the Lord confirmed in wonderful ways." [Richmond Temple Souvenir 1939]

His first Pentecostal church pastorate was at the Assembly of God church in Woy Woy, New South Wales. In 1937, he was called to pastor the Hamilton Assembly of God, also in NSW.

"He was influential in establishing churches in the Hunter Valley Region" [John Wolfenden]

C. L. Greenwood wrote, "He began ministering at Woy Woy in January, 1934, and stayed there until June, 1937. He then went to minister at Newcastle on June 22, 1937, and is at present very happy in that pastorate."

"That God is definitely using this sanctified vessel is proved by the fact that souls are being saved and hungry hearts filled with the Holy Spirit." [Richmond Temple Souvenir 1939]

A.T. Davidson wrote this testimony in the Australian Evangel around that time:

"Glory be to Jesus! Amen. The Dear Lord is still pouring out His blessings upon us here at Newcastle. We celebrated our first anniversary on June 26th. What glorious meetings! Pastor Duncan, State Chairman, ministered, and we were drawn very near to God. We cannot thank Him enough for His Wondrous Blessings at this place during the past twelve months.



Brother Hohnke, a real sterling character, was gloriously baptised in the Spirit a fortnight ago. He is now on fire for God. Pastor Greenwood, from Richmond Temple, paid us a visit last week and five souls found peace In Jesus. Pastor Wiggins, from Toowoomba, ministered recently to us here, and what a glorious time we had. Praise be unto our God! Would the Saints everywhere pray for a dear Sister who is very ill? The prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

He was commonly spoken of as "AT" but always "Pastor Davidson" to his face. He was a shepherd at heart and loved God and God's people.

In 1942 he moved to Parkes, [NSW] where he inaugurated a Junior Fellowship Radio Sunday School, over 2PK Parkes. This was a 45 minute Sunday morning programme, with over a thousand children enrolled. Each child received a chorus book and New Testament.



Alec T Davidson introducing his radio program

RADIO SUNDAY SCHOOL

Alec Davidson was the first Pentecostal Minister in Australia to conduct a Radio Sunday School of the Air, establishing himself as "The Country Radio Pastor." He was heard on seven relay stations with 2PK [Parkes] as his source. Broadcasts were heard in Dubbo, Albury, Lithgow, Parkes, Katoomba and Young in NSW; Carisbrook in Victoria and Cairns, Gympie, Ayr and Longreach in Queensland.

By this means, thousands of listeners over a very large area of New South Wales were reached with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He was ably assisted by his daughter Ruth. Pastor Davidson also wrote a weekly column in "The Parkes Times," NSW entitled "Pastor Davidson Speaks."

In 1947 he invited the Sturgeon Evangelistic Team [from the USA Assemblies of God] to conduct a Tent Crusade in Parkes. This was highly successful with many people born again to faith in Jesus Christ, resulting in young men and women preparing for Christian service. Following these Crusade meetings, a church was established at Peak Hill, NSW. An evangelistic Crusade, over three months, was also conducted in Orange, N.S.W.



Parkes Assemblies of God Gospel Van



Peak Hill Assembly of God circa 1963

Along with Pastor C. L. Greenwood from Richmond Temple in Melbourne, he invited the Sturgeons to set up the Assemblies of God Bible College in 1948. It was established in Richmond Temple, Melbourne, and later re-located to Camberwell, Victoria.

In May 1951, an article written by Pastor Davidson appeared in 'Revivaltime' entitled "Why I Am Pentecostal!" It was subtitled 'How I discovered the simple folk with the shining faces.'

The shining faces indicated what was inside — the mighty fullness of the Holy Spirit. He lived in this fullness and encouraged others to do so.

He loved, lived, and longed for the coming of Jesus and really believed that he was going to rule and reign with Him. Therefore he passionately prepared himself.

By 1953, he was presenting "Revivaltime" on 12 country radio stations. As Commonwealth Chairman of the Assemblies of God in Australia, he launched the "Christ for the Crisis Hour" crusade in the pages of the 'Evangel,' the monthly publication of the Assemblies of God in Australia. He wrote,

"Well, praise God, the Crusade has been launched. In every assembly throughout our Commonwealth we trust that supplication is being made to our Great God to visit our land with a mighty Holy Ghost revival.

From radio and pulpit, by street corner and personal witness, by tract distribution and vital literature, a mighty Crusade is under way... and the Truth must be demonstrated in living men and women...

Unless our lives personify the truths we preach, our efforts will be in vain." [Australian Evangel Vol.9, No.6]

"I can remember his voice on the radio when I was a young girl. I eagerly awaited his broadcasts," recalled Gwen Smith.



Alec T & Olive Davidson

However, his commitment was to the Sovereign God and His purposes. He visited the Brigalow-Chinchilla assembly in 1953, stirring up world mission's interest. The church decided to support two new missionaries in New Guinea when they became available.

In 1958, while pastor at Toowoomba Assembly of God, he continued in radio ministry. "Thoughts that Linger," was a 15-minute Sunday program with music and a short message. These were recorded on very large vinyl disks and distributed to various radio stations. Later they went to air live from the radio studio.

SUNDAY SCHOOL OF THE AIR

"Sunday School of the Air" was produced at the various churches that A. T. pastored. During his ministry in Toowoomba in the late 1950's this program was produced in the church building located in Neil Street, Toowoomba. In 1959 Pastor Tom W Whiting followed him into the pastorate and continued those radio programs.

A number of people were called to serve in the ministry during his period at the Toowoomba church. Some of them started on the "Sunday School of the Air." Lionel Berthelsen and Peter Short were the Technicians and Jeanette Kajewski [Whiting] was the "Storyteller."



Alec Davidson untangles a recording problem with "Cousin Fay" [Mrs. A. Thompson] and technicians Lionel Berthelsen and Philip Short – Star Pictorial March 15, 1958

A newspaper excerpt from the time read,

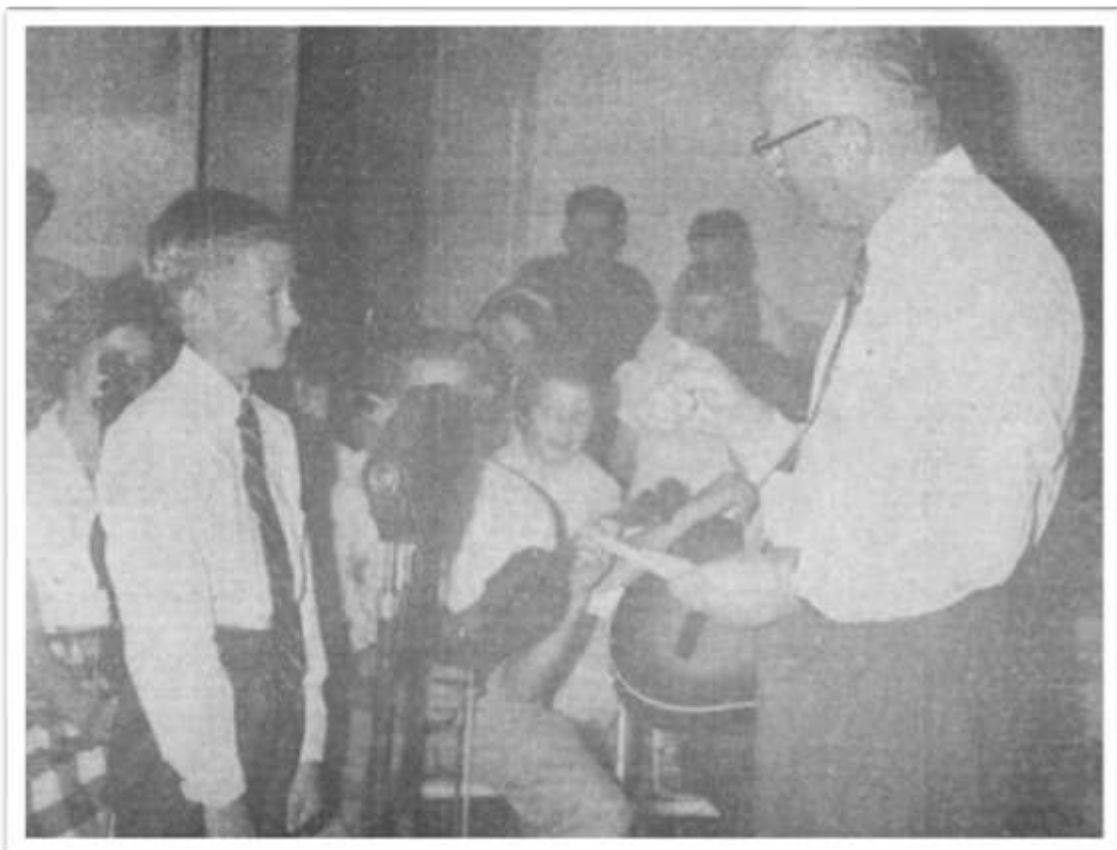
“Now Jeanette is going to give us a story,” he told his listening audience. A little girl, clad in a white dress came to the microphone.

She was Jeanette Kajewski of Hurslay Road, Toowoomba. And she read a story of Edward the Seventh’s pet dog, Caesar – how it even marched in the king’s funeral procession. It was one of those stories designed to hold a radio audience – no matter of what age or of what denomination.” [Toowoomba Newspaper Clipping]

Jeanette later married Stephen Whiting and they as well as Don Badham, Max Breeze, Earl Wing, Ernie Wing and Esther Weller, were among the group who went into the ministry from that era.

The Star Pictorial reported, “Keno Leo [pictured] was Quiz champion of the Radio Sunday School but he baulked when Reverend Davidson asked him who Moses’ father-in-law was.”

For the record it was a chap named Jethro,” commented the journalist who wrote the article.



WE MEET MEGGSY:

Immediately, a perky little fellow detached himself from the front row and stood in front of the microphones. He had light red hair, and his twinkly eyes and ready smile made me think of the Australian cartoon character of Ginger Meggs.

Somebody at some time must have had the same thought about this lad, for he's "Meggsy" to the mob. "Good morning, boys and girls," he said, "This is Meggsy introducing you to the Radio Sunday School." I found out later that "Meggsy" is nine-year old Lester Kajewski of Potter Street, Toowoomba. He's a pupil of South State School. "Thank you Meggsy," the compere said as the smiling little red head returned to his seat.

"And now we are going to sing, "I have found a Wondrous Saviour."



The radio broadcast was recorded in a studio at the Neil Street Toowoomba Assembly of God and broadcast at 8.15 am on Sunday mornings.

"Each Monday night, 70 children gathered for one of Australia's best "Sunday Schools," wrote Ray Johnston, the journalist. At this time, A T Davidson had been broadcasting children's programs without a break for 16 years.

The journalist continued, "There was all the atmosphere of a major radio station – and any minute you expected a Jack Davy or a Bob Dyer to appear. [If you don't know who they are, you are of another generation and should Google for information – Denis V Smith]

But instead of Davy we saw a compere called Davidson, a happy, breezy personality of middle age who has made this sort of thing his life's work."

"Everybody ready?" Davidson asked. The boys and girls nodded. The pianist moved over her keys; the instrumentalists got violins and accordions in position.

"Are sets ready for sound?" "One, one, one, one," the compere checked.

Both technicians nodded.

"Very well, on the air!" said the Rev. Davidson. And the program was recorded for the thousands of listeners each Sunday, broadcast through Warwick Radio Station 4WK.

The seed sown by this ministry did produce results in the hearts of those who avidly listened to the Radio Sunday School.

A TIME OF SADNESS

Of great sadness to Pastor and Mrs. Davidson was the passing of their only child, Ruth, who died of cancer at only 28. Ruth was the wife of Perc Ridge and mother of two girls – Carolyn (Carrie) and Lynnette (Lyn).

In spite of this great tragedy, Alec and his wife Olive bravely continued with courage, faith, hope and love.

Ruth was known to many throughout Australia and helped her father in running the Radio Sunday School.

"Her funeral service was conducted at Richmond Temple by C. L. Greenwood and a very large congregation was impressed by the deep sense of peace that ran throughout, emphasising submission to the will of God in taking one in "the bloom of life," was reported in the Australian Evangel.

A.T. Davidson shared with me of the personal loss this was to him. He maintained his faith in God for a divine intervention, even to the point of taking her clothes to the hospital after she died, trusting the Lord to raise her from the dead. [Denis V Smith]

RESERVOIR ASSEMBLY OF GOD

It was 1965 when Jim and Nancy Sharman moved from Reservoir Assembly of God and A. T. Davidson, "one of the most loved and respected of the Assemblies of God ministers" became the pastor. "It was just a brief interim ministry," he said, "about nine or ten months."

In March 1966, A. T. Davidson resigned his pastorate and stepped into full-time work in the capacity of Commonwealth Chairman.

COMMONWEALTH CHAIRMAN

His ministry included visiting and ministering at assemblies, including conducting training courses, business meetings, visiting the Assemblies of God missionaries in Papua New Guinea. He attended State and Commonwealth Conferences, Executive meetings, AOG camps and visiting and ministering at Commonwealth Bible College in Brisbane.



Known to many as 'A T,' he endeared himself to the pastors and leaders of the Fellowship as he moved around the country, encouraging and uplifting the ministers and their wives. He had a unique exhorting ministry, which did much to help those feeling the burden of the work of God. He and his wife proved themselves to be real friends to all who got to know them personally.



**Alec T Davidson Philip B Duncan and T L Evans in Papua
New Guinea circa 1967**

I heard a story he told years later from two of our colleagues, Philip and Barbara Hills who were pastoring a church in Tasmania. When he visited them in the early 60's, he told the moving story of one of the "poor missionary couples" in New Guinea. "They were living in an old hut in the jungle but were making the best of it – even the wife putting coloured curtains with lace on them hang over the shelves in the corner of their house" to make it appear more like home. We found he was telling stories [and he could tell them well] of Gwen and myself when we were living on the Sepik River. He was using the story to raise prayer support for the many missionaries serving God in that nation. [Source: Philip & Barbara Hills]

He told the story at that time when he was the pastor of Parkes Assembly in NSW. As the custom was then, the pastor stood at the front door of the church, farewelling the people. One of the farmers enthusiastically related that "old Sister *Mary* was really blessed by your message this morning pastor – yes, really, really blessed."

"I took in a deep breath of air as my chest swelled with the praise," A T continued with his story. "But my self-applause was short lived as the farmer continued, "Yes, dear old soul, she would get a blessing out of anything!"

He related that he was particularly annoyed when one pastor introduced him by relating the story of Daniel in the lion's den to the congregation. "Well, like Daniel's lions, we are now just going to loose him and let him go!" I think he felt like biting that pastor's head off.

I recall in Papua New Guinea, he would quickly excuse himself to the bathroom after church services in the village to "wash the fellowship" from his hands. "Lovely people," he related, "but is that grille [skin infection] dangerous?"

One of his better stories was his description of a communion service in Maprik. "We were having a lovely time in the Lord until we got to the Communion service. As I looked at the communion table, there, peering out from underneath the covering cloth was a big green frog. Then I noticed it was made of plastic. It was a child's potty belonging to one of the missionary families that the New Guinea deacon had seen and thought it would make a good container to give out the Communion coconut pieces [instead of bread] to the people. "The closer it got to me; I'm afraid I was not really 'discerning the Lord's body.' Rather I was asking myself the question, 'was it washed – or was it not washed?'"

His hilarious stories were many and the memories of his sharing them are precious.



Commonwealth Executive 1953

Back: Will J Enticknap, Ralph R Read, E. [Ted] Irish Alan Conwell
[Treasurer] Harold Bartholomew, Thomas L Evans
Front: Charles L Greenwood, James Wallace, Alec T Davidson, Henry E
Wiggins

On one occasion, Gwen and I were returning from a ministry weekend in country Queensland and we dropped by to visit the Davidsons, who were ministering at the Toowoomba Assembly of God. He was in a jovial mood that day and entertained us with many stories. I needed to get back for a District Meeting, but he insisted they could get on without me and we needed to listen to his stories.

He related the time he was reading his newspaper while walking through the main street of Parkes, NSW. A woman in front of him suddenly propped to pick up something from the ground. He couldn't go around her, so he quickly placed his hands on her back to leap-frog her.

At that moment she stood up and he leaped on her back. We quickly said, "Good morning to each other, and retreated at great speed."

Then there was the time he was making announcements on a sultry Sunday evening in Parkes Assembly. Many in the congregation were struggling to keep awake as he droned through the church announcements. Many of them had come in from milking the cows and other farm responsibilities. Pausing briefly to gather his thoughts, his associate pastor Robert Moodie who was sitting behind him on the platform quietly reminded him, "Don't forget the funeral..."

Pastor Davison continued, "And of course there is the funeral... "What funeral?" he enquired of his assistant who now had his head buried in his Bible, leaving a now awake congregation and a pastor embarrassed midway through his announcements. If you knew Bob Moodie, you would be laughing with me now.

He continued telling his stories of the time he took over the auctioneering platform from his father to sell an old black dress to women who may have "ailing husbands – so ladies, be prepared." Or lifting an old venetian blind in the air announcing, "if you cannot hang it ladies – wear it as a corset!"

He superbly blended the human and the divine.

Of true Christian character and having a keen sense of humour, Pastor Alec Davidson was respected and loved by all those who knew him. He encouraged, counselled and admonished in the faith, possessing the heart of a true shepherd, serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

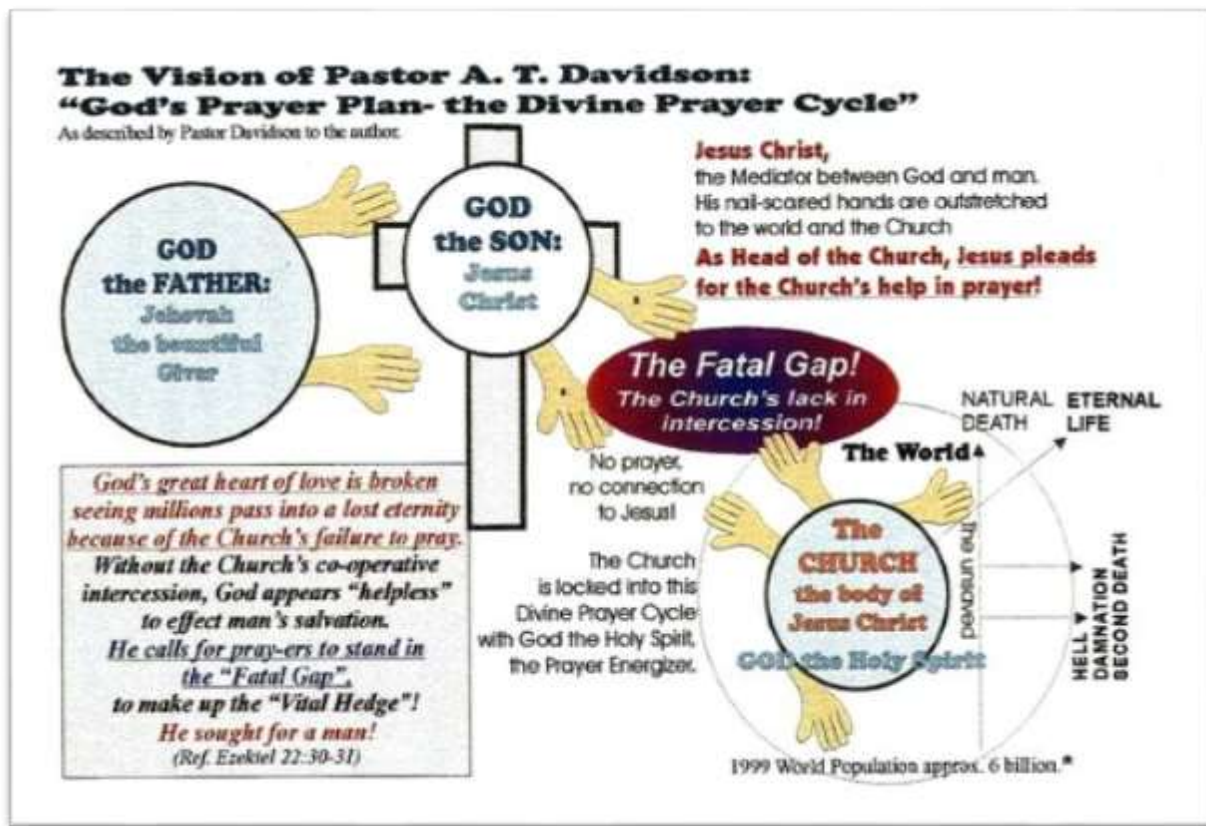
Philip Duncan wrote of him, "We were rather close friends and I ever found him all that a minister should be. His prayer he tempered with a human touch of humour and tolerance."

On Boxing Day, 1979 the Davidsons celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary at the Ringwood Assembly of God where he served as the Prayer Pastor.

COMMITMENT TO PRAYER

Towards the end of his life, he often taught on the subject of prayer. Fred Buse the pastor greatly encouraged him in this.

The *Prayer Bulletins* are a result of Pastor Davidson's diligent and prayerful study of the Scripture. He spent many hours typing the Gestetner master sheets, the Prayer Bulletins, which were then duplicated and distributed to the Bible study groups. Approximately 60 Prayer Bulletins are freely available for Church or personal Bible study. To download and print them, go to <http://prayerpodcastbethelhouse.blogspot.com.au/>



HOME CALL

The Australian Evangel reported,

"On Friday morning September 17, 1987 Alexander Thomas Davidson received his home call at the age of 84. He had been among those Pentecostal pioneers present at the historic 1937 conference that saw the foundation of the Assemblies of God in Australia. Beloved as 'AT', Pastor Davidson was twice Commonwealth Superintendent, 1951 -1955 and 1959-1969, and faithfully served the fellowship in so many ways and offices, especially through the avenues of encouragement and prayer." [Vol. 44, No. 11, Nov. 1987]

On September 21st 1987, Around 250 people, including many pastors, were in attendance at the Ringwood Assembly for the service led by Pastor Fred Buse, the pastor of the church. Pastor Jack Easton opened in prayer and Pastor Harold Bartholomew read the scriptures. Messages of encouragement and sympathy to Sister Davidson were received from Pastor Andrew Evans, Commonwealth Superintendent, other pastors, friends and missionaries. Pastor Buse's message included the following thoughts:

"Pastor Davidson was truly a great man of God, very highly respected, and the qualities of his godly life were many. His great love for Jesus is a prized memory. He read and studied the Word of God avidly. It was vital and alive to him and his desire was not simply to have an intellectual understanding but that the truth be on fire in his heart. Whilst others were content to talk about the weather, sport, TV and so on, Pastor Davidson was only satisfied to share some burning truths from the Word of God. Like Jeremiah, the Word was like fire in his bones.

His prayer life was extensive and in recent years he prayed from 2 am to 8 am every day. His motivation was threefold: His love for Jesus; his love for people, hence a long prayer list; obedience to the call of God upon his life.

Fred Buse continued, "In conclusion, allow me the liberty of a free translation of Hebrews 13:7, 'Remember, A. T. Davidson, who has spoken the Word of God unto you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of his conduct.'"

This was his "Coronation Day," as he left the scene of time for the glories of the "place prepared" by his Lord and Master. AT had pre-recorded his eulogy to be played at his funeral. We, who gathered, considered it "just right" that he should do it. "It was vintage AT."

Pastor Philip Duncan an early colleague and Fellowship leader wrote of him,

"He became a well beloved household name throughout all the vast outback centres through his radio ministry from 2PK. Our fellowship could never repay the part he played helping in the establishing and forming of the foundations in the early years of pioneering our testimony.

Alec Davidson created a unity in Commonwealth and State operations, holding the superintendency in national and local executive office for some years. His life was without blemish of character; his ministry carried the evidence of Holy Ghost anointing. He was the outstanding character during the formative years of our fellowship, with a pious simple love for God, and a loving human friendly consideration for all comers. Alec Davidson and I were the closest of friends.

My wife and I were with him and Olive constantly as we shared the experiences of the early days together.

We all were honoured as he encouraged us and we are honoured to remember him. I am deeply grateful to God for allowing me yet to remain to pay a tribute to such a Pentecostal prince who now is receiving his reward.”

Pastor Henry E. Wiggins, a past Commonwealth Superintendent, wrote

“50 years friendship with a great man of God. Our first meeting at Woy Woy – Christmas 1935 – both of us ‘new chums’, he in Pentecost and myself in Australia, but what mutual benefit we derived! Our last meeting was in December 1986. Over a ‘cuppa’, we re-lived many experiences — sad and joyful, mostly relating to our co-operation in various offices of the fellowship, in which he was always considerate, conscientious and fair. In private, he was known for consistent prayer and compassionate relationships. We would love to clothe the “skeleton’ with a little more ‘flesh”, as in the case of such a personality as ATD. There is much of interest that could be said. Who was it that said, ‘We ne’er shall look upon his like again.’ Alec, we salute you! May we “follow in your train!”

Pastor Ralph Read, also a past Commonwealth Superintendent wrote,

“A. T. Davidson had a loving heart and hospitable spirit coupled with such honesty and prayerful devotions. He set us all standards that we have sought to attain to. Missionaries loved his visits and encouragement. He was a true fellowship brother who understood well the principle of team work and submission one to another. As I shared with his wife on the Saturday prior to the funeral, I discovered inscribed in the flyleaf of his well-worn Bible the following words which so adequately sum up his life – “the great desire of my life is to live in unbroken communion with God – to live conscientiously in His presence always.’

It was dated as recently as 20/2/1985, revealing the heart of the man. Underneath was a further notation, ‘The necessity of praying with perseverance is the secret of all spiritual life.’ He still inspires so many of us who knew him.

Pastor Andrew Evans, then Commonwealth Superintendent wrote,

“Pastor A. T. Davidson was one of the great men of God that the Australian Assemblies of God has produced in its fifty years of existence. He served as Chairman and Superintendent of our fellowship longer than any other person. His leadership totalled to a period of 14 years. Under his leadership he demonstrated great skills in uniting the fellowship together. His pastoral heart and loving disposition made him a man respected and loved by all. Right until the end he was still having an impact upon our fellowship by his prayers. He will be sadly missed, our fellowship will be the poorer for his passing; Brother Davidson was a great pioneer, an outstanding pastor, an effective leader but above all a mighty man of God .”

Gwen and I visited Alec T. Davidson a few months before he died. “I pray for you and Gwen constantly,” was his response. How we treasured hearing that. We were left with memories of the lovely hospitality of his wife and the sure knowledge that he meant what he said. He had come into our lives at a couple of critical moments with godly wisdom and encouragement. He was always “God’s man for the hour.”

AT was an incredible role model who showed us younger ministers a sense of “true Christianity.” He blended the spiritual and the natural superbly. Gwen remembers, “God used the preaching of AT to create in me a hunger and thirst for God from about the age of eight.”

His love for Olive, his wife was exemplary and his passion for life and living was infectious. “The secret of my successful married life with ‘Mother’ is that I help her with the washing on Mondays and she helps me with the ironing on Tuesdays,” he would often say.

He lived at a time when lack of finance was a challenge in Australia. To let his wife know that he had arrived safely at his destination, he would call her at a set time and hang up after the phone had rung four times.

Allow me to repeat these thoughts. I think that the inscription in his Bible sums up his life, “The great desire of my life is to live in unbroken communion with God and to live conscientiously in His presence always.”

And Philip Duncan adds to that "I ever found him all that a minister should be. His prayer he tempered with a human touch of humour and tolerance."

This must be the challenge for us today – to leave a heritage of memory and influence for those who follow after us.

Denis V Smith – 2017



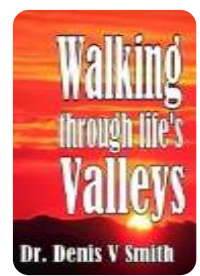
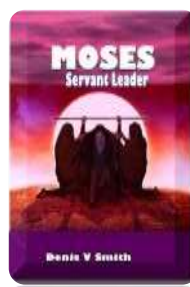
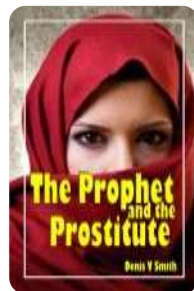
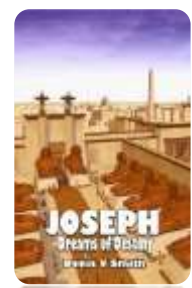
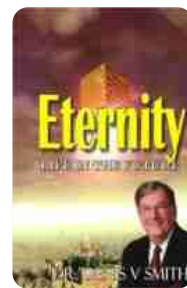
"When we die, we leave behind a gravestone and influence"

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

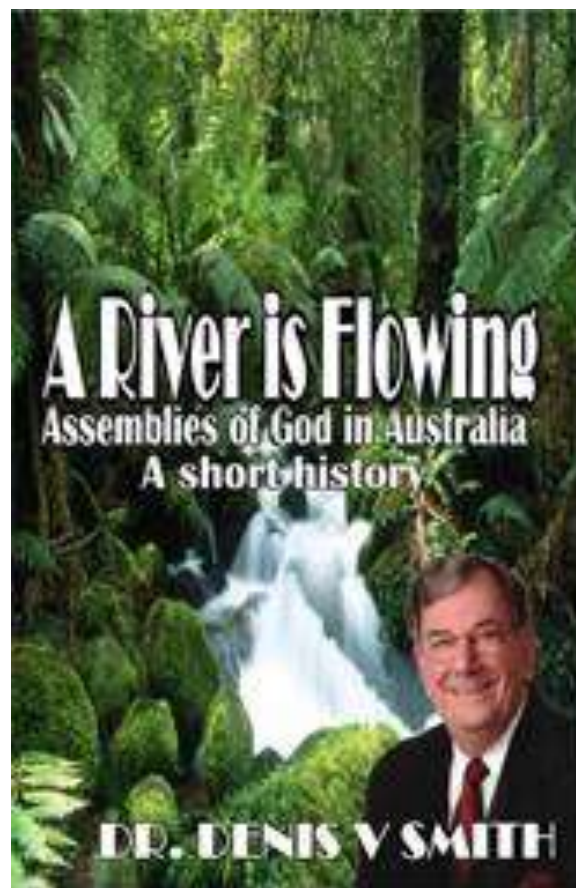
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