FOR THE LOVE OF GOD

A history of some Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in the Top End of the Northern Territory.

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A thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements for the

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the work herein, now submitted as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Charles Darwin University, is the result of my own investigations, and all references to the ideas and work of other researchers have been specifically acknowledged. I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis has not already been accepted for any other degree, and is not being currently submitted in candidature for any other degree.

Wendy Beresford-Maning

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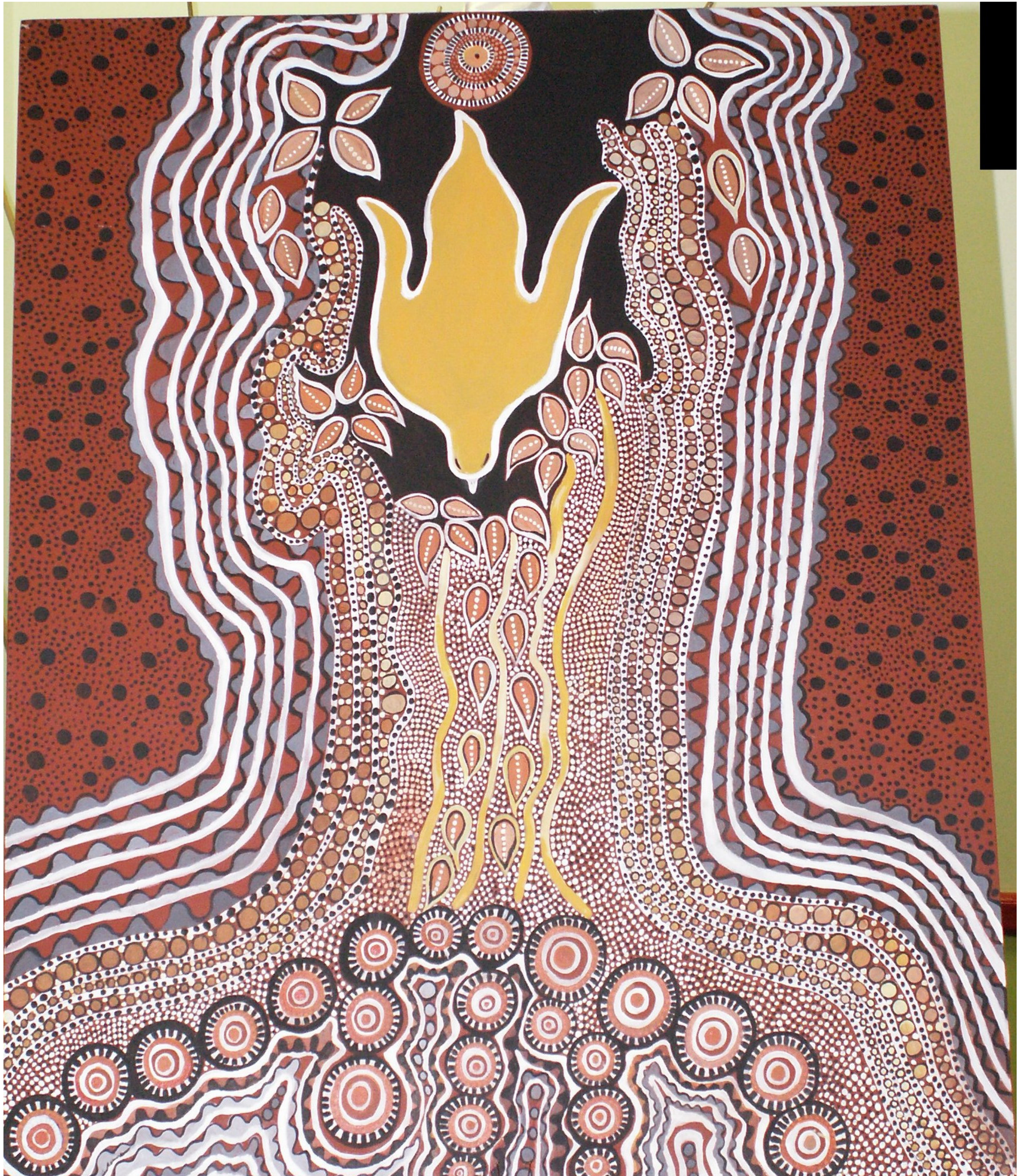

An expression of Aboriginal Spirituality. Miriam Rose Ungunmerr Baumann 2008.

This painting is an expression of Aboriginal spirituality which brings together traditional and Catholic Christian belief. It can be seen as a further development to Miriam Rose's "Dadirri" statement on Aboriginal Spirituality. Here the artist/theologian brings together the image of the tree of life arising out of the earth, the ancestors and ancestor spirits and the flowing water of life which connects the Spirit of God (God being the circle at the top of the painting). This is a very deep and dynamic image of spirituality.

Photo: Wendy Beresford-Maning. Diocesan Leadership Conference, Catholic Education Centre. Darwin. May 2008.

List of abbreviations used in this thesis.

AAS – Aboriginal Air Services

ABM – Anglican Board of Missions

AFL – Australian Football League

AIM – Australian Inland Mission

ARDS – Aboriginal Resource Development Services (an agency of the Northern Regional Church Council of the Uniting Church in Australia)

ATSI – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

ATSIC – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

AVI – Australian Volunteers International

BHP – Broken Hill Proprietary (Mining and processing company)

BMMF – Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship (now Interserve)

CDEP – Community Development Employment Projects

CMS – (Anglican) Church Missionary Society

COAG – Council of Australian Governments

CPE – Clinical and Pastoral Education

Cwlth – Commonwealth

DCA – Darwin Cathedral Archives

DPH – Darwin Private Hospital

FdCC – Canossian Daughters of Charity

FDNSC – Fraternité de Notre Sacre Coeur (French nomenclature for the OLSH)

IBVM – Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (the Loreto Sisters)

MAF – Missionary Aviation Fellowship (since 2007 - Mission Aviation Fellowship)

MIM – Methodist Inland Mission

MOM – Methodist Overseas Mission

MSC – Missionaries of the Sacred Heart /Missionarii Sacratissimi Cordis Jesu (Latin)

NRSV – New Revised Standard Version (Bible)

NT – Northern Territory

NTFL – Northern Territory Football League

O Carm – Order of Carmelites

OLSH – Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart

QANGOs – Quasi Australian Government Organisations

RCIA – Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

RDH – Royal Darwin Hospital

UCA – Uniting Church in Australia

UNCA – United Church of North Australia.

Cultural Note

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island readers are warned that there may be references to, or images of, deceased persons in these pages.

Thesis Abstract.

My initial intention in this thesis was to record the lives and work of three Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSCs) whose contribution to the life of the Northern Territory is historically significant to Northern Territory. Priests and brothers of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, a Roman Catholic order founded in France in 1854 were, after 1906, responsible for the maintenance of the Catholic Church in the Northern Territory. The three MSCs on whom this study is based are Father John Leary, Brother Gerry Burke and Brother Ted Merritt. Together they represent the breadth of missionary activity – the priest, the teacher and the 'jack-of-all-trades'. The MSCs have not only been responsible for all Catholic missionary activity with the Indigenous people in the Northern Territory but also for the pastoral oversight of the non-Indigenous Catholic community.

The thesis situates itself at the intersection of oral history, religious history and biography. It is organised into Landscape and Portrait chapters. The Landscape chapters provide the historical and, where relevant, theoretical contexts for the Portraits. Given the nature of the study these contexts necessarily include some discussion of Australian religious history, the contexts of Aboriginal affairs and ways in which these intersect with the Christian missionary enterprise. The biographical chapters are contextualised within a discussion of historiography and the often contested areas of memory and truth.

The centrality of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in the thesis also required a chapter on the founder, Father Jules Chevalier MSC, which provides both a portrait and a context for the work. Since I write from a non-Indigenous and Christian perspective, I allow Indigenous voices to speak for themselves where I can.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this research.

The primary aim of this thesis is to explore and record the work of three particular Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) – Father John Leary MSC and Brothers Ted Merritt MSC and Gerry Burke MSC. Together, these three men exemplify the work of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart who, since 1906, have been the agents of the Roman Catholic Church's work and mission in the Northern Territory. To this end I have made use of such archival and other written material as was available to me in order to support, and hopefully to validate, the oral record provided by the men themselves and their contemporaries, both religious and lay.

However, in order to give some context and meaning to their lives and work, it is necessary also to explore the history of the religious development of the Northern Territory (and North Western Australia), especially the missionary activity of the Church within which these men carried out their work. In particular, as a matter of documenting this significant aspect of Northern Territory history, it is important to gain their own stories from these men while they are still able to tell them. It is noteworthy that the missionary activity in the Northern Territory, as is typical of Roman Catholic missionary work especially prior to Vatican II, has always had a two-pronged emphasis. While there has been the emphasis on Christianising the Indigenous people, there has also been the focus on bringing the church to the non-Indigenous population. Both of these have been traditionally seen as missionary endeavours. The work of the MSCs as an order has been no different although, particularly since Vatican II, there has been more emphasis by people such as Father Leary on indigenising the church rather than Romanising the Indigenous people.

The question of Christian missionary activity is one that has long interested me. When I came from Melbourne to Darwin to live in 1993 I very quickly became aware of Father Leary who was, at that time, still very active in his role as Vicar for Aborigines within the diocese of Darwin. He was, in fact, something of a

living legend within the Roman Catholic community – and beyond it. Since I was living as a lay member of the Loreto Community[1] in Darwin, I had many opportunities to get to know and spend time with Father Leary as well as Brothers Burke and Merritt. In 1993, when I arrived in Darwin, Mrs Eileen Farrelly, who in a former life had been Deputy Principal of Loreto Nedlands[2] in Perth, was working as the Women's Educator and Art Advisor at Daly River. She soon involved me in some tuition of her charges who were undertaking studies externally from Edith Cowan University. While my role as tutor did not last long it nevertheless gave me an opportunity to become acquainted with some of the women and artists from Daly River. My interest in their work led in turn to my becoming better acquainted with the three MSCs who were, in one way or another also involved with these people. In 1993 each of them was still working – Father Leary in Darwin, Brother Merritt at Daly River and Brother Burke at St John's. Father Leary at that time was still nimble enough to leap into his little Suzuki four wheel drive and nip off down to the Daly when the mood took him.

Some twelve years later, as I watched these men – especially Father Leary – become older and frailer, I wanted to capture their stories, as I said earlier, before it was too late. In August 2006, the MSC involvement in the Northern Territory, particularly in the Top End, reached its centenary. In May 2008 the sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH), who have worked alongside the MSC missionaries, also celebrated the centenary of their mission work in the Northern Territory.

To me this seemed an ideal task since it brought together my interest in history, missions, church history and, to some extent, theology as well as biography. As a much younger person I toyed with the idea of missionary service although my interest lay in South America (where the Anglican Church Missionary Society worked) or India where my mother had spent her early childhood and where the non-denominational Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship (now Interserve)

[1] The Loreto Community in Darwin consists of one Loreto nun, Sister Jan Niall IBVM, and me although there is another Loreto sister, Helen Parer IBVM, living and working in Alice Springs. Since 2006 the Darwin community has also been a stopping off point for Loreto Sisters working in Timor Leste.
[2] Loreto Nedlands merged with the Jesuit Boys College to become John XXIII College in Perth.

worked. At that time I was a practising Anglican. As it turned out I was deemed medically unfit for service with CMS so it was not to be although my interest continued. A number of my friends and contemporaries came to the Northern Territory to work as missionaries with CMS. I explored my own extraordinary religious inheritance moving, over a period of years, moving from the Presbyterianism of my childhood, via Anglicanism, to Catholicism in adulthood. In 2008 I am an ecumenist – the most Catholic member of the Uniting Church of Australia or the most Protestant Catholic that I know. I thank my parents for this remarkable heritage. My father's family boasts generations of Anglican clergy, including some Primates of the Church of Ireland and one Cardinal of whom my father and his sister did not speak. My paternal grandfather, who migrated to Geelong in Victoria in the 1890s, was an Anglican priest until he left his family and the church in some disgrace. As a result of his fall from grace, my paternal grandmother took her young family to the local Presbyterian Church and the family history lay long buried until, like a blood hound, I began snuffling around. My mother's family were staunchly Catholic: my mother herself a Dublin-born Irish Catholic who left Ireland at the age of three days, with her mother and two older brothers[3] to join her father who was then serving in India with the Royal Irish Rifles. He was later head-hunted by the Australian Army and the family migrated to Australia in 1912. My mother (a typically rebellious young woman) left the Catholic Church in 1923 and later joined the Presbyterian Church when she married my father.

My desire to pursue this project is perhaps explained also by my fascination and my frustration with my own family history. I know from experience how difficult it can be to try to reconstruct the life of an individual once that individual is no longer available as a source of information. I am aware of the inherent bias that may be part of such an undertaking – people will rarely portray themselves in a poor light – but, on the other hand, the individuals themselves often provide insights that no-one else can. I was also aware that these men, especially Father Leary, was becoming increasingly frail and that there was little time left for

[3] My mother's two elder brothers were born in Belfast. Her own mother lived all her life in Ballycastle, County Antrim. My mother's younger siblings were born in north India, Sikkim and Burma.

anyone to gain insights from him about his work as both an MSC and a missionary. In fact, by the time the process was at an end Father Leary was too frail to read and comment on this work as it applied to him. He died in Sydney in January 2009.

Methodology and structure:

The theoretical framework of this thesis must necessarily encompass some examination of the nature of history, biography, memory, truth and the role of narrative in order to be able to evaluate the validity of the recollections of the primary informants. The area of the thesis which comprises new knowledge is that which relates to Leary, Burke and Merritt as well as the MSC founder, Jules Chevalier. Chevalier is included, not only to develop an understanding of the charism of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart but also to put on the public record information about this man who is little known to most people including members of his own order.

As I explored the life and work of each of these three Missionaries of the Sacred Heart it became obvious that, in subtle ways perhaps, each of them was to a greater or lesser degree quietly subversive. In their determination to put the people first, to focus on what the people wanted, to do what they could to enculturate both the Gospel and the rituals of the Roman Catholic Church, they were being subversive. Their subversion was more incidental than intentional, at least at first. While Bishop O'Loughlin's intent was that the people be evangelised and the Roman Church 'imposed' upon them, these three men all put the people first. In each case, despite O'Loughlin's strictures against learning Indigenous languages (in keeping with Government policy), all three of these men learnt the languages of the people with whom they worked.[4] Each of them developed a detailed understanding of the complexities of the Aboriginal kinship relationships and the ways in which those impact on apparently everyday matters

[4] Paul Collins, *Believers: Does Australian Catholicism have a future?*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2008. pp. 14 – 15. Father Leo Weardon was another MSC with a facility for learning Indigenous languages. When O'Loughlin found out that Father Weardon had learned the local language he moved him to another mission. This was O'Loughlin's typical response to such activities on the part of any of his priests. Conversation with Margaret Flynn. O'Loughlin Catholic College, Darwin 2005.

such as education and social intercourse. While Father Leary was converted by the people of the Daly River Region – a task made easier by his reading of Gutiérrez and Freire – Brother Burke became a passionate advocate for the people whose children were sent as boarders to St John's College in Darwin. In his commitment to their well being his subversion could be seen in his arguing that the College should focus on taking a few, carefully selected, students from each community and house them as carefully as they selected them. Brother Burke was well aware of the problems that could arise if, for example, 'poison cousins'[5] were expected to share the same dormitory, work in the same class, or play in the same team. Prior to his coming to the Northern Territory Brother Burke had already subverted the traditions of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart by becoming the first Brother to be put in charge of boarders in a School dormitory. In 2006 he became the effective Administrator of St Mary's Cathedral in Darwin although, since he was 'only a Brother', his title was that of Parish Worker. Given his quiet personality, Brother Merritt was the least likely to be subversive. But he, too, subverted both the status quo and Bishop O'Loughlin's rules against religious in his diocese holding secular positions. For much of the time he was at Daly River and Port Keats, Brother Merritt held the position of Town Clerk in which position he was responsible for implementing government policies as they applied to the mission settlements. In 2004, in his fiftieth year of religious life, he further subverted MSC tradition by becoming Superior of the MSC community at The Ranch,[6] effectively superior of all MSC in the Northern Territory, a position usually held only by a priest.

a. Argument

At its simplest my argument is that the lives and work of these three Missionaries of the Sacred Heart have made a significant contribution to the life and history of the Northern Territory over the past fifty years. In developing this argument I attempt to embed their work in its historical, religious, social and political

[5] The term 'poison cousins' refers to kin who are culturally forbidden to look, speak or relate to one another. One such relationship might arise between brothers and sisters after puberty; or between brothers.

[6] This position had been held by Father Peter Wood MSC but illness had forced his move to Melbourne, leaving Brother Merritt to take over. Prior to this Brother Merritt had been Community Bursar.

context. I contend that the choice of these three men – the priest, the teacher and the 'jack-of -all-trades' – presents a broad view of the nature of missionary work.

In developing this argument, I am aware that in the eyes of many the nature of any missionary endeavour is contentious to say the least. There are those who see missionary work as a form of social engineering if not cultural genocide. Such a view, it seems to me, actually places the missionised in the situation of powerless victims. While the issue of the balance of power in such situations is always arguable, such a view nonetheless seems to me to be unhelpful to an understanding of the role played by Indigenous people themselves in their own mission history. I believe that many Indigenous people have used the missions as a means of accessing and manipulating the power of the dominant non-Indigenous Australian culture.

It was undoubtedly a forlorn hope that this thesis would not at some point need to canvass Aboriginal matters but, as a non-Aboriginal writer, I am uncomfortable in attempting to speak for Indigenous people. Nor, as is observed by some Indigenous scholars who note a tendency for Western scholars to assume that there is a single Aboriginal voice and viewpoint on all issues,[7] is it possible to generalise a single Aboriginal viewpoint. The multiple Aboriginal voices both emphatically in support of and vituperatively opposed to the Commonwealth 'Intervention' is one example of the constant multiplicity of Indigenous voices. As long ago as 1988, Aboriginal poet Bobby Sykes made it clear that there were multiple Aboriginal voices. In her poem 'Monopoly', in which she notes that 'Blacks have no monopoly on pain', she also writes, comparing herself to the then Black activists Gary Foley, Paul Coe, Denis Walker and others of that ilk,

> Quietly now –
> Bobbi Sykes is not as black as us,
> white as us,
> poor as us,
> Let us discriminate because we think she is

[7] Interestingly, though, such Indigenous scholars often themselves fall into the trap of assuming not only a single unified non-Indigenous voice and viewpoint, but they also assume that they themselves speak for all Indigenous people as well.

'not the right kind of Black'.[8]

Elsewhere Sykes points out that much of the domestic and social violence which has become characteristic of Indigenous communities has been part of the white legacy: '… you have learned from them/and turn your new craft to us [Sisters]. Rape. Bash. Kill.'[9]

There has already been much research into the general contextual areas of Australian religious and mission history as well as Aboriginal history in Australia. Much of that research has presented a picture of Christian missionaries of whatever denominational hue as being agents of governments bent on the wholesale annihilation of the race – at best by means of assimilation and at worst by means of deliberate genocide. This thesis argues that, while inevitably missions and missionaries were caught up in the web of government policy, many of them – depending particularly on the time and place of the mission – took a stand against both any government notion of genocide and, at times, against the policies of their own churches when those too militated against the best interests of the Aboriginal people with whom they were working. Despite the claims of anthropologists such as Deborah Bird Rose,[10] for example, that the early Jesuit missionaries in the Northern Territory had little or no lasting impact on the Aboriginal people of the Rapid Creek and Daly River areas beyond the destruction of their Indigenous culture, this was not indisputably the case. Bird Rose is particularly condemnatory of the fact that, when ordered to withdraw by their superiors, the Jesuit missionaries did so with scant regard for the state in which they were leaving the Indigenous people with whom they had been working.[11] Citing the fact that many generations after the departure of the Jesuits, the local people have often garbled memories of their Christian teachings, Bird Rose assumes that the teaching meant little or nothing to the

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8 Bobbi Sykes, *Love Poems and other Revolutionary Actions*. Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1979, p. 18 ff. It is also noteworthy that many non-Indigenous literary scholars (or pretenders) refused to accept Sykes' poetry as a valid part of the Australian canon of poetry.

9 Sykes, p. 22.

10 Deborah Bird Rose, 'View from the North, Episode 5: Religions Old and New'. ABC Radio National. Transcript. http://www.abc.net.au/rn/history/hindsight/features/north/epis_5.htm. Downloaded 11 March 2005. See also Deborah Bird Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country: ethics for decolonisation*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2004. Chapter 6.

11 Rose, 'View from the North'. See also Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country,* p. 141.

people.[12] But one does not have to be Indigenous to have an often garbled view of the Christian story. The numbers of Catholic school children that believe that Noah received the Ten Commandments, Moses built the ark or that God's name is 'Harold' are legion. In like fashion, the cartoon character Harvie Krumpet sings his version of the Sunday school song, as his creator Adam Elliot remembers it:

> God is better than football,
> God is better than beer,
> God is better than cricket
> 'Cos God's there all the year.[13]

Bird Rose, like many others, assumes that the missionaries moved into the country and lives of Indigenous people with a Eurocentric world view which took little or no account of the people to whom they ministering. That their world view was Eurocentric was inevitable. We are all prisoners of our culture, to a greater or lesser extent. There can be no doubt that a Eurocentric view of the world dominated the second half of the nineteenth century even more than was previously the case following the application of Darwin's theory of evolution to society generally. That Social Darwinism took Darwin's theory further than he himself might have is immaterial. Social Darwinism was the justification for notions of European cultural supremacy. That European missionaries took little or no account of the culture of the people to whom they went is an argument that is harder to sustain. The early Jesuit missionaries – and those of other denominations – in the Northern Territory were convinced that sooner or later the Aborigines must inevitably come into contact with the European settlers.

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[12] Rose, *Reports from a Wild country*, p. 131. Rose's comments about "Big Sunday" (citing E Povinelli, *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism.* Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2002) to which the Daly River people actually refer as 'Sunday Business' actually seems to have little connection with the Jesuits. 'Sunday Business' refers to the traditional taboo against women seeing a man's penis. Sunday Business refers to the manipulation of this taboo by some of the men who deliberately expose themselves and then exact the traditional tribal punishment of rape. Gerry Wood MLA and former lay missionary at Daly River, commented in 2007on such activities in the Northern Territory Parliament. *Hansard.*

[13] Adam Elliot (Writer) and Melanie Coombs (Producer), *Harvie Krumpet*. Melodrama Pictures & Australian Film Commission, Film Victoria and SBS, 2003. The most likely accurate version of this song is:
'God is stronger than evil, God is stronger than fear; Light is stronger than darkness, Life is stronger than death.' Words: Desmond Tutu. Music: John Bell.

Concern for the welfare of the Indigenous people led the missionaries to attempt to separate them as far as possible from the worst aspects of European settlement encroaching on their lands – disease, sexual and other forms of exploitation, and the vices of tobacco and alcohol especially. That governments later used missionaries to impose their own agenda would seem to argue that the missionaries were in fact succeeding in keeping the Indigenous people alive and out of the reach of hostile settlers.

Two Daly River Paintings showing the synthesis of traditional and Christian imagery
Left: Uniya Painting, Miriam Rose Ungunmerr.
Photo: http://www.uniya.org/about/miriam_rose.html Downloaded 24 January, 2007.
Right: Jesus carries his cross. Miriam Rose Ungunmerr, *The Australian Stations of the Cross*. Melbourne: Dove. 1984.

Increasingly, both as part of the recent History Wars and outside that arena, Indigenous scholars such as Gordon Briscoe, Paddy and Mick Dodson, Marcia Langton and Sue Stanton are beginning to explore, write and argue their own histories. That their understanding of Indigenous history is often different from that of white historians is virtually inarguable: they frequently write from the viewpoint of the oppressed, and in the context of the Stolen or Lost Generations. As previously mentioned, a white historian is unlikely to understand Indigenous history from the same point of view. Nevertheless some Aboriginal scholars appear to be in danger of throwing the baby out with the bathwater, so to speak, and are most reluctant to entertain the idea that any real benefit has been derived

by Aboriginal people from the efforts of the missionaries. In some ways they seem to have adopted a Romantic notion of the Aboriginal past that looks to some golden age of Aboriginal culture. As Ngaio Marsh has one of her characters, 'a real Maori', say:

> …. Our teaching was not given to everybody. Only the learned and noble classes were permitted to know the history of their race. It was learnt orally and through the medium of carvings and hieroglyphics. My grandfather was a deeply-instructed *rangitira* and I learned much from him. He was a survival of the old order and his kind will not survive much longer. ….
>
> I have a kind of pride of race … the *pakeha* has altered everything, of course. We have been unable to survive the fierce white light of his civilisation. In trying to follow his example we have forgotten many of our own customs and have been unable wisely to assimilate his. Hygiene and eugenics for example. We have become spiritually and physically obese. That is only my own view. Most of my people are well content, **but I see the passing of the old things with a kind of nostalgia.** The *pakeha* give their children Maori Christian names because they sound pretty …. We have become a side-show in the tourist bureau ….[14]

But living cultures are never static. And arguably, throughout their pre-European contact history, many Aboriginal groups always included cross-cultural contacts with different language groups, either trading with other groups of Aborigines or with people from further afield such as the Macassans.[15] A number of those Aboriginal historians and political commentators who present a highly critical assessment of the work of Christian missionaries are in fact people who have not experienced mission life but rather were subject to the prevailing regulations of

[14] Ngaio Marsh, *Vintage Murder*. London: Collins, 1961, p. 225. My emphasis. There are of course significant differences between the Australian Aborigines and the Maori of New Zealand, whom this character represents. But the nostalgia for the old days is perhaps something they – and Indigenous scholars – have in common. Given that Marsh herself has a Maori Christian name she is no doubt well aware of the sentiments of which she writes here.

[15] See McIntosh, *The Whale and the Cross*: *Conversations with David Burrumarra MBE*. Darwin: Historical Society of the Northern Territory, 1995

the day as delivered primarily by government institutions such as The Bungalow at Alice Springs or the Kahlin Compound in Darwin – or who, as in the case of Sue Stanton, are descended from such people. Although these were government institutions, there was also some missionary involvement such as that of the Anglicans in Alice Springs and the Aboriginal Inland Mission[16] at Kahlin, usually at the invitation of the government of the day. I argue, however, that to assume that any Indigenous person who retains a religious commitment to the faith developed in them by the missionaries must necessarily have been brainwashed, whereas anyone who is aggressively critical of the missionary enterprise has not, is not only illogical but also an unsustainable argument. Such a point of view denies a voice to those people – Indigenous or non-Indigenous – who oppose this negative view of mission history and whose lived experience on many of the missions has led them to continue practising the Christian faith. To take the position that such people must necessarily have been brainwashed into their ongoing practice of Christianity, while not allowing that people with other viewpoints may be equally 'brainwashed', is to refuse to acknowledge that no-one can be brainwashed into faith[17] although, for any number of reasons, people may follow the observances and rituals of any particular religion or ideology.

To reject the possibility of Aboriginal people, of their own volition, choosing to remain within any one of the Christian churches is to reject the connection of Aboriginal people and the numinous (the awe-inspiring or quintessentially spiritual), which appears not only in Christianity but also in traditional Aboriginal religion and spirituality. For example, Deacon Boniface Perjert of Wadeye comments:

> God did not begin to take an interest in people
> with the incarnation of his Son,
> nor with Abraham.
> My people existed here in Australia thousands of years before Abraham.

[16] The Aboriginal Inland Mission still has a congregation, known as the Community Church, in 2008, in Sabine Road, Nightcliff.
[17] Olwen Cotter. Conversation, November 2007. This is a theological rather than a socio-political position. Practising members of most religions will argue that 'faith', as opposed to religious observance, cannot be imposed from without but must come from within an individual.

In all that time God was with my people.
He worked through their culture.
He was saving us despite human weakness.
He was preparing us for the day
when he would see the features of Aboriginals
in the image of his Son.
So I must recognise,
I must use the things of God that are in my culture.
I must use them in his service.
If I do not do this,
my faith and my service are shallow.
They are a pretending.
They belong to some one else, not to me.
God has asked us to love him with whole mind, heart and soul.
So I must give myself to God as an Aboriginal.
This is what God wants or he would not have made me what I am.
These words were written in the late 1970s.[18]

Deacon Boniface Perjert with Father John Leary MSC.

Gsell Centenary Reception, Parliament House, Darwin. August 2006.
Photo: Margaret Flynn.

For many of those whose life experience includes a mission education, for example, the relationships they developed with the missionaries were also vitally

[18] Boniface Perjert, (Deacon at Wadeye). Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, Diocese of Sydney. http://www.aboriginalcm.cathcomm.org/aboriginalCM/ Downloaded 24 January 2008.

important in the development and maintenance of their Christian faith. One could also argue that, with their emphasis on ritual and sacraments, there is a closeness particularly between Roman Catholic or High Anglican Christianity and traditional Aboriginal religions which is greater than that of Aboriginal religion and the theology of the Protestant missions of, say, the Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists. Not only do many Aboriginal people seem to be able to see their traditional religion as a forerunner to Christianity but some at least would claim that the news of salvation through the figure of the Christ of the Gospels is not new to them. Instinctively, many Aboriginal Christians believe that 'We had Jesus before you came'.[19] Certainly, as Deacon Perjert's comments indicate, this was the case at Port Keats when the missionaries first arrived. The senior elder had had a vision that prepared him for the arrival of the missionaries. That Aboriginal people are well in touch with the numinous whenever and wherever it appears was evident at a liturgy workshop at the Catholic Education Office in Darwin in August 2007.

Several women from Daly River and the Tiwi Islands were participants in the workshop. As part of the workshop a visiting clown, Aoife, appeared twice. Each time the clown's appearance was unannounced. While the clown figure is problematic in any culture given its dual role as entertainer and disturber of the status quo, the Aboriginal women appeared less disconcerted than some of the non-Indigenous participants in the workshop. Aoife's first appearance seemed to suspend time. The clown entered very quietly, shyly, and moved across the room to the lectern on which the book of the Scriptures was lying open. Very slowly and reverently Aoife approached the book and, looking at her audience and drawing their attention to the Book, she stroked the open pages and then in a gesture which shared the contents with all present wandered away leaving a holy silence behind. Later in the day, as the group were pondering the story of the leper whom Jesus healed,[20] Aoife again appeared.

[19] N. Loos, *White Christ Black Cross: The emergence of a black Church.* Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2007, p.14. Loos refers here to Monty Prior from Townsville, a Roman Catholic Deacon.
[20] Mark 1: 40 – 45. *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha. (NRSV).* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

This time 'the leper' was crouched in front of the group, his posture and body language expressing absolute fear, hopelessness and despair as he was crouched, head touching the ground in a pose of utter desolation. Aoife, despite being asked to wait by the presenter, this time acted assertively but gently. She went to the leper and touched him gently, unfolding his tortured body until he was standing straight and tall. She then anointed his face liberally with oil, the symbol of healing. Again, with a gesture which included everyone present, she moved off quietly, again leaving a sense of the holy. In many ways such actions as these characterise the best intentions and actions of the Christian missionaries in their involvement with Aboriginal people. Whatever the intentions of governments, and sometimes of church organisations, the missionaries themselves time and again demonstrate that their motivation was simply a love of the Aboriginal people and obedience to the missionary imperative of the Gospel. That imperative, simply put, is to 'Go and make disciples of all nations'.[21]

What appears to be virtually inarguable is that in the post-mission era, at least in the Northern Territory, Aboriginal culture was subject to far greater decay and destruction than happened under the missionaries. Aboriginal leaders such as Miriam Rose Ungunmerr noted that, in Aboriginal communities (often former missions such as Daly River and Port Keats) in the early twenty-first century, the challenges were the same as they were in 'mainstream' Australia. Aboriginal children, like white children, were sometimes part of the 'Now' generation: they want everything and they want it NOW! For example, as soon as they are old enough to pass their driving test, many members of the Now Generation expect to have a car at their disposal, preferably their own, whether they can afford to buy one or not. In communities such as Daly River this often means that parents use the money earned from the sale of their paintings (or won from gambling) to purchase a vehicle for their offspring. Not only that, but the skilled work that in mission times was usually undertaken by the Aboriginal people within their own community was, by the early twenty-first century, more usually provided by

[21] Matthew 28:19 *NRSV*

outsiders who won government contracts.[22] The post-mission era has seen an accelerated breakdown of Aboriginal culture and community. In a recent court case in Darwin, Aboriginal elders from Wadeye admitted that they had lost control of their young people. The young men ignored the elders' authority and had greater affinity with the heavy metal rock bands after whom they named their gangs – Metallica, The Evil Warriors, Judas Priest to name a few.[23] In other communities, while violence is less of a problem, alcoholism, drug taking, domestic violence and youth suicide are constant and disquieting features of community life. As such this, in microcosm, reflects the situation in the wider Australian community. While it may be tempting to say that such dysfunction is a product of the mission era, the evidence seems to suggest, as does Miriam Rose Ungunmerr, that it was far more likely a product of post-mission secularism. But that will be a matter for a later chapter.

My argument, then, develops the notion that, notwithstanding popular belief to the contrary, missionaries such as the MSCs did not undertake their task mindlessly or without some attempt to inform themselves as to the nature of the people and culture to which they go, and the potential impact of the work they are doing. This is particularly true in the case of Father Leary whose views of missionary work changed during his time spent working with the Indigenous people of the Top End.

Lyn Riddett points out that

> social memory in Western/literate society is constructed orally and transmitted both orally and through written texts … if no written text exist to cover an event [or a life] then the memory of the event may remain with the individuals who were involved, and thus remain at the level of individual memory only.[24]

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[22] Richard Trudgen, Public Forum on Aboriginal Education: 'Education – For What?' Uniting Church of Australia Northern Synod. Charles Darwin University. 2 October 2006.

[23] Nigel Adam, 'Riot Penalties after town locked down'. *Northern Territory News.* 29 December, 2007. See also "Elders have No control", *The Age.* 9 January 2008. At least one of these young rioters is 37 years old.

[24] Lyn Riddett, 'Think Again: Communities which Lose their Memory: The Construction of History in Settler Societies'. *Journal of Australian Studies*, Number 44, March 1995. p. 41.

If memory remains at the level of individual memory only then, once the individual has died, that memory or recollected experience has died also. Hence this thesis.

b. Central themes.

Despite the apparent simplicity of my argument, the contexts necessary to develop it mean that there are three interlinked central themes in the thesis. The history of the Northern Territory, of Indigenous Territorians and the impact of a range of government and mission initiatives on their situation over time is one theme. The nature of religious life, particularly that of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart is another. The development of missionary activity both in the context of, and in response to, the political agendas of the day is also significant in the way missionary activity was carried out.

c. Methodology

My **historical research** is given some depth, and context by interweaving as primary sources both the oral history of at least some of the men and women who were involved in such work as well as relevant archival material available from a number of sources such as the National Archives, the Northern Territory Archives and the archives of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in Kensington, New South Wales. Such **primary sources** are also necessarily set within the context of previous research which establishes the political, social and historical contexts in which these missionaries were working. It is of course impossible to explore the lives of these three men without also involving other people who from time to time worked with them and contributed to their mission.

As yet, apart from one biographical study each of Father Frank Flynn MSC[25] and Brother John Pye MSC,[26] little has been written about the endeavours of missionaries such as the MSCs to encourage and enable Indigenous people especially to take charge of their own destiny and to become involved in all

[25] Doris M Allen, *Frank Flynn M.S.C. A Remarkable Territorian.* Kensington NSW: Chevalier Press, 1994.

[26] Christine Gordon, *Punderdelime: Brother John Pye A Northern Territory Legend*. Darwin: Historical Society of the Northern Territory, 2002.

aspects of society. Consequently this work needs to be researched, recorded and evaluated, as do these lives.

In order to understand the process of mission development in the Northern Territory it is essential to understand the **historical and political** (both religious and secular) **contexts** of Christian missionary activity on a world scale, and then as that activity has influenced Australian missionary activity. It is equally important to understand the **theological contexts** in which missionary activity takes place, and to recognise that these do not necessarily remain static. While the activities and involvement of the Christian churches in 'mission' development have altered radically over time in response to changing societal attitudes and expectations and in response to changes in government policy there is, nonetheless, a rich heritage there to be discovered and recorded for a fuller understanding of Northern Territory history and of Christian mission history.

During the process of research, however, it became obvious that such a study could not ignore the writer's **contemporary context** of the Australian 'History Wars'.[27] Nor could it ignore the emerging Indigenous viewpoint which has become increasingly powerful since the 1999 Stolen Generations Enquiry. In like manner, as the work progressed, it became obvious that to ignore the biographical aspects of this research would be to overlook a significant element – particularly as it was evident that it would be advantageous to include a chapter on Father Jules Chevalier, the founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, about whom little is generally known. This in turn led to an examination of the **nature of memory, biography, truth and oral history** and an attempt to ensure that such questions as the truth of memory, for example, were explored openly.

As the work proceeded it became increasingly obvious, for example, that with his increasing frailty, Father Leary's memory and critical faculties were also diminishing. Fortunately, however, he had at various stages during his life and work written accounts of his work and these were available to me. Although in the case of each man I relied upon written questionnaires and follow up

[27] The 'History Wars' in Australia concerned the role and function of history in relation to national identity among other things. For a full discussion see p. 36 ff.

discussions and deliberative conversations with them to garner my initial information, I was then able to confirm, expand – or in some case interrogate – this information on the basis of archival sources, other written material or interviews with others who knew the men and in some cases had been their co-workers.

Thus the **oral history** component of my research revolves around three MSC men who have worked in the Northern Territory since the 1950s. Father John Leary MSC retired as the Roman Catholic Vicar for Indigenous people in 2004 and until December 2008 was living in retirement at The Ranch[28] in Nightcliff, with other retired MSC priests and brothers. In 2008 Father Leary was in his eighties and becoming increasingly frail. He was largely responsible for the re-establishment of the Daly River Mission in the 1950s following a request from the local people to build a Roman Catholic Church, school and health centre there for the children of those Aboriginal people working on surrounding cattle stations.[29] Contemporaries of Father Leary included Brother Garnet Groves MSC, who worked alongside Leary and Merritt at Daly River, and who was even older and frailer.[30] Also increasingly frail was Brother John Pye MSC who, in 2005, was moved to what was then the Salvation Army Nursing Home in Darwin. In December 2007 Brother Pye, now blind, celebrated his one hundred and first birthday.[31]

One of the youngest of this group was Brother Ted Merritt MSC, who turned eighty in January 2008. Brother Merritt also had significant involvement,

[28] The Ranch is the post-Cyclone Tracy building which was designed to allow retired MSC priests and Brothers to live out their days in Darwin, as far as possible, rather than retiring south. In July 2008 a "hacienda" was added to allow Emeritus Bishop Ted Collins MSC to live in the community. This was funded by the Diocese but ownership remains with the MSCs. The original Ranch, a small ramshackle building, was destroyed in Cyclone Tracy in 1974.

[29] Allen, p. 62. This request was relayed also to Bishop O'Loughlin by the Administrator of the time, Mr F J S Wise, who supported the request with a guarantee that Commonwealth, through the Minister of Territories, Paul Hasluck, would fund the cost of necessary buildings and equipment.

[30] Brother Groves died in Darwin on 24 October, 2005 at the age of eighty-seven. He was the only MSC missionary to have been involved in the founding of every MSC mission in the Northern Territory.

[31] In December 2006 Brother Pye celebrated his centenary of life with a Mass and party at St John's College. He was the only living MSC who was born before the founder Jules Chevalier died in France. Pye was also the oldest living MSC in the world.

alongside Father Leary, at Daly River from 1984-1987 and again from 1994-2000, although he also worked as a mechanic, electrician and Town Clerk at Port Keats, in 1970-1971 and 1992-1993. He was, until the MSCs sold their light plane, their only pilot, and his work in connecting both missions and remote parishes and settlements was vital to their development and maintenance. There is considerable contextual information included in the thesis which in itself is not new but which serves to establish the complexities of the situation in which churches and missionaries have found themselves.

The third MSC man who provides primary information for my research is Brother Gerry Burke, a long time teacher at St John's College in Darwin. Brother Burke's work at St John's brought him into contact with a large number of Indigenous students from various missions and, later, communities. He was involved over numerous school generations with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people and their families and has considerable insight into the ways in which education has contributed to the overall missionary effort as well as to the integration of Indigenous people into mainstream – or independent Indigenous – society. While at St John's Brother Burke, like many of the MSCs before him, was instrumental in the development of St Mary's Football Club and the integration of many skilled young Aboriginal footballers into that club, from whence a significant number 'graduated' to Victorian/Australian Football League clubs. (At least one of Brother Burke's ex-students, Maurice Rioli, went on to win a Brownlow Medal, the highest award of AFL football.) After his retirement from teaching Brother Burke became for several years the Roman Catholic chaplain at Royal Darwin Hospital and in that capacity was easily able to relate to many of the patients and their families because he had had prior contact with them.

From the outset of this work it has been obvious that, given the age of the key characters and the fact that they were recalling events of up to fifty or more years ago, one needs to be aware of the sometimes **problematic nature of memory** and the **equivocal nature of recollection**. Post–modern theory, particularly deconstruction theory, however, alerts the researcher to the ever present need to

read for what is not actually said[32] – or what may not even be recognised as underlying assumptions which inform particular world views. It goes without saying that the acuity of the memory of past events, encounters and emotions recollected in the comparative tranquillity[33] of age may have become blurred and softened.

At the outset of this project all three men were 'retired', although in retirement all had found new things to do. Father Leary was already 82 years old, Brother Merritt was 76 and Brother Burke a very active 70 years old.[34] If these three men were to pass on without their stories being told in some systematic way then there would be a significant gap of at least fifty years in the history of missions in the Northern Territory and in the history of the Territory itself, since mission history, Aboriginal history and Territory history are inextricably entwined.

d. Concepts

Tempting as it may be to try to portray missionary activity as a purely spiritual exercise, the reality is that it has never been thus. Increasingly it is evident that a Eurocentric world view no longer suffices as the sole context for research. It has probably never sufficed as a justification for the actions of missionaries, although the various churches had for a long time seen their work of evangelisation and salvation of Indigenous peoples as having both a spiritual and temporal application. Much of the early justification of the Christian missions in the Northern Territory was based on the need to save the Indigenous peoples from either exploitation or eradication by the advancement of white settlement. Some of that justification may indeed be valid.

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[32] Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text.* London: HarperCollins, 1977, p. 79. Here, in his 1966 paper entitled 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives', Barthes notes that 'the narratives of the world are numberless … there nowhere is or has been a people without narrative'. See also Ian Saunders, *Open Texts, Partial Maps*. Perth: Centre for Studies in Australian Literature, 1993, p. 86. In 1995 JMQ Davies suggested that the application of deconstruction theory to history or biography might be far more interesting than the straightforward application of deconstruction theory to literature. Literary Theory Postgraduate Seminar. (Coursework MA module). Darwin: Northern Territory University, 1995.

[33] With apologies to William Wordsworth who described poetry as 'emotion recollected in tranquillity'.

[34] Ages as at March 2004.

My research suggests that, although each wave of missionaries and mission activity tends to view itself in a greater or lesser degree of isolation from everything but the theological directives of the contemporary Church, it is possible to see established patterns of mission if one takes a longer and broader historical perspective. The issues which were relevant, firstly to the Jesuits who initiated Roman Catholic missions in the Northern Territory and later to the MSCs who succeeded them are, by and large, those that were relevant to all historical mission activity, wherever in the world it may have occurred. It seems to me to be a viable hypothesis that, from the historical evidence, the characteristics of western missionary activity as it has been practised can be described in the following terms.

Western missionary practice is a threefold activity which aims to convert (make disciples); baptise (build up the church); and to teach the faith (strengthen the church). It has a threefold locus or focus: firstly amongst one's own community; then one's region or nation; and finally the world. It is at once a simple and complex task: for the individual, the church or the sending organisation, the purpose may be clear and direct but in practice its execution becomes complex. Essentially the Churches and their missionaries understood their activities as a response in obedience both to what is often referred to in Christian circles as 'the Macedonian Call'[35] and to the injunction to 'Go … and make disciples'.[36] However this deceptively simple act of obedience always takes place within a range of historical, political and cultural contexts. It is often tempting, particularly for those who have no sympathy with Christianity, to see the all missionaries as socio-cultural nihilists who have little or no understanding of the cultures into which they intrude, and even less concern about them. Such is not always the case however. Hopefully the exploration of the missionaries' work at the centre of this thesis will demonstrate that is far from being so in every instance.

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[35] 'The Macedonian Call' derives from Paul's vision of 'a man from Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us".' When he had seen the vision, 'we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.' Acts 16: 9 – 10. *NRSV.*

[36] Matthew 28: 19. *NRSV.*

All missionary activity necessarily involves the aspects of the core beliefs of the Christian faith, the interpretation of those core beliefs and the cultural overlays and expectations of the missionaries. The questions facing missionaries, missionary organisations and sending churches remain, however, remarkably similar, regardless of time and place. They are such questions as replication – particularly, are the structures of the sending countries appropriate to the receiving countries? Should they be replicated with or without modification? This issue of replication is closely linked with matters both of interpretation and cultural manifestation of belief. In many ways, the more conservative or centralised the structure of the sending organisation the less easily it is likely to adapt its systems to meet the new social and cultural milieu. This then has implications for either cultural syncretism or disjunction with the incoming faith. In terms of Roman Catholic missions in particular the issues of replication of the institutional church have always been significant and worthy of study. The most recent document published by the Roman Curia, *Redemptoris Sacramentum* (April 2004), suggests that for Roman Catholicism at least issues of replication and imposition of the institutional church, regardless of its cultural context, should become more common rather than less.[37] This will have major, probably far from positive, implications for missionary congregations, missionaries and those who are being evangelised.

The earliest Catholic history of the Northern Territory dates from about 1850 and despite some disjunctions it continues thereafter, developing from its missionary beginnings to become an established and reasonably self-supporting denomination. Similarly, the congregations of the Uniting Church in the Northern Territory began as a result of the missionary outreach of the Methodist Overseas Mission (MOM) in Darwin and along the northern coastline and islands such as Croker and Goulburn off the coast. In the Southern part of the Territory, around Alice Springs and Central Australia, the work was conducted by the Methodist Inland Mission (MIM) and by the Australian Inland Mission (AIM) of the Presbyterian Church. Notable missionaries included the Reverend John Flynn

[37] This reflects a move away from the flexibility and openness to change heralded by Vatican II. During the reign of Popes John Paul II (1978 - 2005) and Benedict XVI the movement of the Roman Catholic Church has been increasingly towards conservatism.

of the AIM as well as such staunch Presbyterians as Dr Charles Duguid, who was horrified to find that the AIM, although founded in 1912 by money set aside for 'the education and evangelisation of the Aborigines in South Australia'[38], did not include Aborigines in their missions until after 1935.

The Anglican Church of the Northern Territory on the other hand remained a missionary area, under the auspices of the Anglican Diocese of Carpentaria from its inception until 1968, when the Reverend Ken Mason was appointed the first Anglican Bishop of Darwin. The Anglican Diocese of Darwin remains part of the Province of Queensland.[39] Historically, as a missionary region it was served by missionaries and clergy of both the Australian Board of Missions and the Church Missionary Society. The ABM took on responsibility for Queensland and for mission outreach and support of the non-Indigenous population of Darwin, while CMS worked primarily with the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory from about 1908.[40]

Other denominations (notably the Baptists and Lutherans) were also involved in developing the religious life of the Northern Territory and the North West of Western Australia. In modern Darwin there are two Garrison churches (the Anglican and Catholic Cathedrals) and one Memorial church (the Uniting Church), whose histories should also be researched and documented. In the case of the Protestant Christian denominations, most of the personnel, both clergy and lay people, who were involved in the historical development of their missions and churches have long since departed the Territory. Although the Greek Orthodox Church was centred among the Greek community and was not involved in 'mission' activity in the same way, its role, too, is an integral aspect of Territory history. This might become a research topic that provides some

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[38] Charles Duguid, *No Dying Race*. Adelaide: Rigby Limited, 1963, pp. 24 and 35.

[39] Darwin Anglican Diocese History. http://members.iinet.net.au/~diont/ Downloaded 22 January, 2008.

[40] See, for example, John Harris, *We Wish We'd Done More*: *Ninety Years of CMS and Aboriginal issues in North Australia.* Openbook: Adelaide, 1998. As a member of CMS Victoria during the 1960s and 1970s, I knew personally a number of the missionaries who came and worked in the Northern Territory at that time. Some have remained in various capacities until as recently as 2007. In general terms the ABM is associated with High Church Anglicanism, while CMS is associated with Low Church Anglicanism.

element of either contrast or confirmation of my main focus on the work of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

The context of both world mission and specifically Australian or Northern Territory mission has obviously changed throughout history. In the twenty-first century, although many Roman Catholic missionaries – particularly members of religious orders – are still identified as such, increasingly Protestant and Catholic lay missionaries are either being designated or are describing themselves as 'volunteers'[41]. Their work has always been in the fields of education and health – and sometimes in government – as well as the 'core business' of faith education and church establishment. Increasingly, where missionaries were once the people who initiated such activities, their role at the beginning of the twenty-first century is increasingly that of specialists being employed by Indigenous peoples (or, on very rare occasions, by government agencies) to provide services which as yet they cannot provide themselves. The modern missionaries' aim, as it had possibly always been for at least some of them, was to work themselves out of their current jobs and to become advisors upon whom the people with whom they were working would come to rely less and less as their own expertise and independence increased.[42] The face of recent missionary activity then is evinced most frequently through the persons of various professionals although, within the Catholic Church in particular, there remained a special and relatively unchanged role for parish Priests – whether their parishes be typical white suburban or city

[41] For example, from 2006 there have been three sisters of the Loreto order (IBVM) who have been working in Timor Leste under the auspices of Australian Volunteers International (AVI) rather than directly under the auspices of the Catholic Church or their own order. Another example is Ms Margaret Parkinson who began her work as a missionary nurse in India with the then Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship. The BMMF (founded in 1852) changed its name in 1987 to Interserve and its missionary members now often work as members of AVI, rather than as 'missionaries'. Their work is little changed however. http://www.interserve.org.au/. Downloaded 22 January 2008.
See also www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/focus/1299/Focus29_1299.pdf. Downloaded 23 May 2005.
Sisters Jan Niall IBVM and Angela Sambusida FdCC work in educational and pastoral work in Darwin, NT. Sister Odete Moreira FdCC works with the East Timorese community in Darwin. Sister Anne Kelly IBVM worked with AVI in Timor Leste (with the Elola Foundation) until withdrawn by AVI due to civil unrest in Timor Leste in 2007. She returned in early 2008. Sisters Ann Byrne and Diaan Stuart IBVM currently work in Baucau, Timor Leste in teacher and community education with the Marist Brothers.
[42] Harris, p. 69 cites CMS luminary, Henry Venn, as developing and promoting the idea that he called "the euthanasia of mission" – missionaries working themselves out of a job.

parishes or those comprising Aboriginal communities in remote or less remote areas.

The face of recent Christian mission is increasingly represented by people such as these:

Ms Margaret Parkinson
(Interserve/AusAid)
Photo: Ausaid. 1999.

L – R: Sisters Jan Niall IBVM, Anne Kelly IBVM
Angela Sambusida FdCC and Odete Moreira FdCC.
Photo: W. Beresford-Maning. 2007.

There has always been a preponderance of lay people within Protestant or Interdenominational missionary agencies whereas there remained a majority of religious – Sisters, Brothers or Priests – serving the Catholic Church as missionaries. This was due at least in part to the instructions of Pope John Paul II following the outcome of the Councils of Vatican II that all religious orders were to undertake missionary work. It was also due to the fact that many of the traditional teaching orders found their involvement within Catholic schools lessening as lay teachers and administrators took their place. Thus many members of religious orders were available to assist with mission and actively looked for work in this area as social workers, medical/health workers, counsellors, artists, teachers or tradesmen, whether in Australia or in places where Australia had some traditional involvement.

e. Other Literature

The complex interweaving of the various threads of this thesis means that, rather than presenting a comprehensive literature review at the outset, it makes more sense to analyse the range of sources relevant to the various threads as and when they occur. Nevertheless, as far as I am aware, little has been attempted in the field of this thesis with this precise focus, and using this methodology which

combines 'traditional' history, oral history, biography and some theological perspective. Others, however, have explored the missionary work of the various individuals and denominations which has been undertaken in different parts of the Northern Territory.

Ian McIntosh has researched the Elcho Island/Arnhem Land coastal people from an anthropological point of view[43] and Sue Gleed presented a Master's thesis based on a sociological study of Christian missions, particularly in Arnhem Land, as Quasi Non-Government Organisations (QANGOs).[44] Lending weight to Gleed's argument is John Harris's comment in his account of the Church Missionary Society's involvement in the Northern Territory, that

> CMS wanted to be regarded favourably by the government,
> which had the power to approve or close down any mission
> and to provide financial and other assistance.[45]

In 1993 Father Peter Hearn MSC also completed a thesis, later published as a book, on the theology of mission, with particular reference to the mission activities of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart during the Episcopal reign of the Right Reverend John O'Loughlin DD as Bishop of Darwin.[46] In 1988 the Catholic Diocese of Darwin published *NT Dreaming*[47], compiled by Ann Thomson RSM and Jan Niall IBVM as a non-academic history of the Catholic Church in the Northern Territory, with a particular emphasis on its mission and education work. Recent doctoral research in history has related to the Methodist involvement in Arnhem Land; the work of the Catholic church and women in the Wadeye region and the involvement of the Catholic church generally with Aboriginal people and Sue Stanton's thesis entitled 'Coloureds and Catholics: Coloureds at Garden Point Mission 1941 – 1967'.[48]

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[43] Ian McIntosh, *The Whale and the Cross*.
[44] Susan Gleed, A Study of Northern Territory Missions and Government 1910 – 1940. Master of Social Work Thesis. James Cook University, 1995.
[45] Harris, p. 99.
[46] Peter Hearn MSC, *A Theology of Mission: Diocese of Darwin 1949 – 1985*. Kensington NSW: Nelen Yubu Missiological Unit, 2003.
[47] Ann Thomson RSM & Jan Niall IBVM, *NT Dreaming: The Story of the Catholic Church in the Northern Territory.* Darwin: Catholic Education Office, 1988.
[48] Sue Stanton, Coloureds and Catholics: a colonial subject's narrative of the factors and processes that led to the colonisation and conversion of coloureds at Garden Point Mission, 1941– 1967. PhD Thesis. Darwin: Charles Darwin University, 2007.

Of these, the work of Hearn, Thomson and Niall and Stanton have the most relevance to this thesis. The writers of *NT Dreaming* were given access to Diocesan archival material, which has since become very difficult to access[49] and thus their work provides a sound historical background to the Roman Catholic Church's activity in the Northern Territory from 1846 until 1988. In 1998 John Kadiba completed a thesis which explored the history of the missionary activity of the Methodist Church in Arnhem Land.[50] Kadiba records his sadness at the lack of development of any Aboriginal theology over the period of missionary activity in Arnhem Land.[51] Within the ambit of the Catholic Church theology is generally seen as the preserve of 'professional theologians' – that is priestly scholars – at least until Vatican II, after which there was an increasing involvement of lay people (and women in particular) in developing theological ideas. Within the Catholic Aboriginal community of the Northern Territory, such Indigenous theologising is often best seen in the artwork of the people. The Daly River people's work, for example, draws on and synthesises both Christian theology and Dreamtime stories without any great sense of tension or conflict. More recently Christine Gordon has explored the influence of Catholic Missionary activity on the status of women at Wadeye/Port Keats[52] and concluded that the involvement of the church has indeed improved the status of women in that community. If the Wadeye website[53] is to be believed the women declare themselves to be proud of their mission background and very grateful for

[49] When I attempted to gain such access for this thesis I was told that (a) the archives 'were in a mess and no-one knew what was there' – despite the fact that Father Tony Caruana, the MSC archivist could later give me a precise list of what and where every document was to be found, having previously organised and recorded the details and (b) Diocesan records are to be kept for 70 years before release, if then. This was the response of the then Diocesan Vicar General, Fr Tim Brennan, MSC. It may be that the Church regards these documents as potentially dangerous. Since 1988 there have been two well publicised cases of alleged child abuse concerning members of the Catholic clergy in the Northern Territory. In one case the individual is no longer a religious and the events took place elsewhere prior to his coming to the NT. In 2006 Father Brennan was appointed the Provincial Superior of the Australian MSCs.

[50] John Kadiba, The Methodist mission and the emerging Aboriginal church in Arnhem Land, 1916 – 1977. PhD thesis. Darwin: Northern Territory University, 1998.

[51] In the ten years between 1998 and 2008, however, there have been some developments in Indigenous theology. Not only has there been the development within the Uniting Church of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (and in the Northern Territory the Northern Regional Congress of UAICC), but since 2004 retired minister, Rev Djiniyini Gondarra has established his Mawul Rom cross-cultural program at Galiwinku, Elcho Island. The Mawul Rom project was based on Yolngu tradition and developed a theology of reconciliation.

[52] Christine Gordon, The Catholic Church and the Status of Aboriginal women: Port Keats 1935-1958. PhD thesis. Darwin: Charles Darwin University, 2004.

[53] http://www.indiginet.com.au/wadeye/wadeye_history.htm. Downloaded 24 January 2007.

the work of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH) alongside the MSC men. During May 2008 the OLSH sisters published an account of their hundred years of work with the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory.[54]

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Painting from Port Keats/Wadeye demonstrating how Christ brings together the people from various clans and language groups.

Source: http://www.indiginet.com.au/wadeye/wadeye_history.htm
Downloaded 24 January, 2007.

Interior of St Francis Xavier Church, Daly River. The sanctuary area of the church incorporates both traditional Catholic images and traditional Aboriginal motifs.
While Fathers John Leary and Peter Huan MSC were parish priests, the painting below was in front of the altar as the people wished.

Photo: Wendy Beresford-Maning
June 2007.

The Daly river painting that was the altar frontispiece. It now stands behind the altar. The painting shows the hand of God reaching down to the people and, at the same time, shows the people and their spirituality as being linked to their country. The whole is incorporated into a cruciform/chalice design.

Photo: Wendy Beresford-Maning
June 2007.

[54] Anne Gardiner OLSH, *The Flame in the North*. *Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart 1908 – 2008*. Darwin: Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, 2008.

f. organisation

In order to present a clear line of argument, the thesis is organised as follows. The Title Page, Acknowledgements, Table of Contents and List of Abbreviations used in the thesis are followed by the chapters, which are organised in such a way that the biographical portraits are contextualised by interpolating the biographical 'portraits' between broader contextual chapters or 'landscapes'.

This enables me to place the men and their lives into some sort of historical context. To do this, it is necessary to explore, however briefly, both the general history of religious development in Australia, the history of missions both generally and in Australia, the history of Roman Catholicism in Australia and the uniqueness of the Catholic story in the Northern Territory, as well as the history of Aborigines in the Northern Territory and something of the history of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. It will become obvious that the focus of this thesis is on the missionaries themselves and their work rather than an attempt to explore also in any great detail the impact of their work on the Aboriginal people with whom they have worked. sequence of chapters then is: Introduction; Landscape 1 – History, Memory, Truth; Landscape 2 – Mission Imperative; Portrait 1 – Jules Chevalier; Landscape 3 - Evolution of missionary activity in Australia; Landscape 4 – Aboriginal affairs; Portrait 2 – Father John Leary; Landscape 5 – Contemporary Northern Territory Mission history; Portrait 3 – Brother Gerry Burke; Portrait 4 – Brother Ted Merritt; Landscape 6 – Was it worth it? and the Conclusion followed by Appendices and the Bibliography.

The Landscape chapters are those which establish the context for the various Portraits of the individuals who are the focus of this thesis. The organisation itself reflects the complexity of the task of combining narrative history and biography with the larger historical context that can be established by the use of documentary and archival evidence. The fact that the majority of the chapters deal with landscapes rather than the portraits may suggest that the emphasis of the thesis actually lies with the broader picture. But, as in reality individual figures in the landscape rarely dominate it, so here the landscape in which these

individuals are situated is vast. That they are seen at all in this vastness is the point worth pondering. Indeed to many people they are – and perhaps always will be – invisible, thanks both to their own personalities and to the nature and location of their work.

The second chapter – History, Memory, Truth – explores the nature of each of these elements and the ambiguities and ambivalences within each element. In this theoretical chapter I draw on the work of Ann Curthoys and John Docker's *Is History Fiction*[55], together with the work Inga Clendinnen,[56] Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark[57] which examines the nature of the history wars in Australia. Since this is a contextual chapter I make no pretence to exploring the historiography in great or sequential detail. My aim is merely to highlight the possibilities of seeing history as both narrative and interpretation of ordinary lives as well as heroic ones. Marilyn Lake's *Memory, Monuments and Museums*[58] also develops an argument that explores the nature of both history and memory and the way in which public memory is constituted. The work of Paul Ricoeur,[59] which situates itself at the crossroads between philosophy, history and theology, is also cited as are the works of Paul Tillich[60] and Liberation Theologian, Gustavo Gutiérrez[61] – the latter being of particular significance to the work of Father John Leary MSC. The writings of Nigel Hamilton,[62] Paula Backscheider,[63] Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton[64] explore the nature of biography and the relationship between history and

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[55] Ann Curthoys and John Docker, *Is History Fiction?* Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006.
[56] Inga Clendinnen, 'The History Question: Who owns the past?' *Quarterly Essay* Issue 23, 2006.
[57] Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark, *The History Wars*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004.
[58] Marilyn Lake (ed), *Memory, Monuments and Museums: the past in the present*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2006.
[59] Paul Ricoeur, (tr R. Czerny, K McLaughlin & J Costello SJ), *The Rule of Metaphor: the creation of meaning in language*. London & New York: Routledge, 2003.
Paul Ricoeur, (tr. K. Blamey & D. Pellauer), *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2006. p.353
[60] Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976.
[61] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*. New York: Orbis Books, 2003.
[62] Nigel Hamilton, *Biography: a Brief History*. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007.
[63] Paula R Backscheider, *Reflections on Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
[64] K Darian-Smith and P. Hamilton (eds), *Memory and History in Twentieth Century Australia*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994.

biography, as does Mary Evans in *Missing Persons*.[65] In broad terms, Evans theorises that since the Protestant Reformation biography and autobiography have become impossible, not least because of the 'spiritual loneliness of Protestantism (and Calvinism in particular)'.[66] Fortunately then my work falls within the ambit of Roman Catholicism. Needless to say, although this is peripheral to my argument, I do not agree with Evans' proposition which I believe is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of Protestant theology.

Given that there is in some quarters a degree of suspicion of narrative history or history based on oral sources, I also look to the work of David Dunaway and Willa Baume,[67] Mark Cranfield,[68] Ronald J. Grele[69] and Lyn Riddett[70] to establish the credibility of oral history as a discipline which brings together notions of memory and history. I am loath to argue that any history presents the definitive 'truth' of any set of circumstances, however, because I believe that 'truth' is often contingent on the viewpoint of the observer. The theoretical underpinnings discussed in this chapter flow through the remaining chapters and inform the argument which follows.

Throughout these chapters a range of sources is examined as and when relevant. It is worth noting at this point that such literature as there is which deals with the life and work of the MSCs, particularly Father Leary, has either been written during his time in the Northern Territory by himself or by others who have worked with him such as Brother John Pye MSC.[71] Father Frank Flynn MSC[72]

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[65] Mary Evans, *Missing Persons: the impossibility of biography*. London: Routledge, 1999.
[66] Evans, p. 13.
[67] David K Dunaway and Willa K Baum (eds), *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History (in co-operation with the Oral History Association), 1984.
[68] Mark Cranfield, 'Voices and Memory: Australian Oral History'. *NLA News* 8 March 1997. Canberra: National Library of Australia. www.nla.gov.au/events/oralhist/cranfiel.html Downloaded 6 November 2006.
[69] Ronald J Grele, 'An Introduction to Oral History'. New York: Columbia University. http://www.fathom.com/feature/2137. Downloaded 11 January 2006.
[70] Lyn Riddett, 'Think Again: Communities which Lose their Memory: The Construction of History in Settler Societies'. *Journal of Australian Studies*, Number 44. March 1995.
[71] John Pye MSC, *The Tiwi Islands Story*. Darwin: Coleman., 1985.
___________ , *The Daly River Story*. Darwin: Coleman, 1996.
___________ , *The Port Keats Story*. Darwin: Coleman, 1972.
___________ , *Santa Teresa and East Aranda History 1929 – 1988*. Darwin: Coleman, 1988.
[72] Frank Flynn MSC, *Distant Horizons: Mission Impressions,* Kensington: Sacred Heart Monastery, 1951
________________, *Northern Gateway*, Sydney: F P Leonard, 1963

has also written a number of books about the work of the MSCs in the Northern Territory. Where Brother Pye's books read almost like adventure stories, Father Flynn's writings stress far more the prevailing attitudes of the Church of Bishop O'Loughlin's era, pre-Vatican II. The definitive works relating to Father Jules Chevalier were written by his companion Father Piperon MSC or by Father Jim Cuskelly MSC, one time Superior General of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

The Landscape chapters – Two, Three, Five, Six and Eight – establish the context in which the men whose portraits are painted have lived and worked. Chapter Three, which examines the Mission Imperative, looks back to the words of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Matthew that establish the imperative which has informed Christian mission development since the first Century of the Common Era. This chapter traces the development of Christian missionary activity, its scope and the various motivations which at different times have led to the expansion of the missionary enterprise. It also explores the changes in missionary emphasis which have occurred as a result of, or at least linked to, political, commercial and theological changes which have occurred through out the world. There is no doubt for example that, during the ages of exploration and mercantilism, missions were seen both as a means of securing territory and peoples for European interests and as a means of protecting the Indigenous peoples from some of the worst excesses of Europeans invaders.

Chapters Five and Six, which deal with the Evolution of Missionary Activity in Australia and the history of Aboriginal Affairs, provide the context for much, if not most, of the significant missionary activity within Australia and certainly within the Northern Territory. The earliest missionary endeavour within Australia was that in which the Anglican clergy, such as Johnston and Marsden, who sailed with the early convict fleets and faced the thankless task of trying to Christianise the convicts, were primarily charged with using religion to establish and maintain social order. So far as missionary endeavour was concerned in

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________________ with Keith Willey, *The Living Heart*. Sydney: F P Leonard, 1964
________________ with Keith Willey, *Northern Frontiers.* Sydney: F P Leonard, 1968.

Australia in the early nineteenth century, there was relatively little emphasis on the Australian Aborigines. Most of the missionaries whose focus was Indigenous people were working in the South Pacific and Australia was for them a stopping off place en route to or from their mission fields, until such time as the English Church Missionary Society and, even later, the Roman Catholic Benedictines, began to focus on working with Australia's Indigenous peoples. The missionaries saw their task almost universally at that early stage as being one of 'saving' the Indigenous people from exploitation and decimation by the advancing settlers who were greedy for land and often regarded the 'savages' as a species of vermin.

The history of the relationship between the Australian people and the Indigenous peoples of Australia as reflected by the attitudes and legislation of various governments is examined in Chapter Six. The two recurrent features of such relationships are, on the one hand that Aboriginal people are usually in an inferior relationship to governments and their policies and, on the other, that decisions which affect Aborigines are most often made by bureaucrats and politicians who are, in terms of both geography and cultural understandings, far removed from the Indigenous people, particularly those who live in remote areas. Government policy in its turn reflects the social attitudes which are prevalent at different stages of the nation's development and, as a result, Aborigines have at different times been subject to policies which have isolated them, separated them from their own families, or attempted to either assimilate or integrate them into the dominant white culture. The impact of such policies and attitudes as it has affected the work of Father Leary MSC and Brothers Burke and Merritt MSC and the Aboriginal people of remote Australia is also examined in Chapter Eight which looks at the development of Christian Missions in the Northern Territory specifically – with an emphasis on the development of Roman Catholic missions established by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart since 1906.

These Landscapes provide the background against which three of the portraits are set – but in many ways it is an interactive background. The background informs and, to some extent at least, determines the ways in which these men lived and worked, while at the same time their lives and work also had an impact

on their environments. The inclusion of the Portrait of Jules Chevalier in Chapter Four is essential to an understanding of the work of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, of which he is the founder.[73] An understanding of Chevalier's life and motivation as well as the context of his life enables an understanding of how and why the three other Missionaries of the Sacred Heart lived out their mission as they did. Chevalier's life in post-Revolutionary France may seem far removed from that of Irish-Australian Catholics working in the Northern Territory of Australia in the latter part of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. However the 'mal moderne' which concerned Chevalier is arguably still relevant to these men and their work. For Chevalier the 'mal moderne' was rationalism. For the Christian Church today the 'mal moderne' is undoubtedly secularism. For these three Missionaries of the Sacred Heart the passion which motivated them – and still motivates them in retirement[74] – was born out of the charism of Jules Chevalier which continues to motivate the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart: 'to be on earth the heart of God'.[75] In other words they are motivated by a desire to make known God's love to all to whom they are sent and with whom they work.

For much of the sixty years he spent in the Northern Territory Father Leary was charged with the responsibility of superintending missions in the Daly River Region, particularly Daly River and Port Keats. His attitude to the people was in large measure determined by them. Bishop Eugene Hurley, addressing a Diocesan Leadership Conference in Darwin in May 2008, introduced Father Leary by saying that 'Father Leary came to the Territory in order to convert the Aborigines … but they converted him!'[76] Father Leary happily agreed with the statement and, some time later in the session, Miriam Rose Ungunmerr from

[73] I have chosen to explore Chevalier's life in some depth because little is known of him by the MSCs themselves, much less by the general public.
[74] While in 2008 Father Leary, at the age of eighty-six, was very frail and definitely retired, both Brother Burke and Brother Merritt were very active in retirement and neither had withdrawn totally from their involvement with and commitment to the Aboriginal people with whom they have worked in the past.
[75] Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. http://www.misacor.org.au. Downloaded 14 July 2008.
[76] Bishop Eugene Hurley, Diocesan Leadership Conference. Darwin: Catholic Education Office. May 2008.

Daly River observed confidently: 'Bishop Eugene said we converted Father Leary. We did!'[77]

Father Leary represents the priestly face of the missionary, Brother Burke the teacher and Brother Merritt the missionary who is called on to do a range of tasks which merge with the secular. In the final Landscape, Chapter Eleven, I canvass the question "Was it worth it?" In part, this is a question that the men must ask themselves but it is also a question that has broader implications. Since my focus has been on these three Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and, since I do not feel qualified to speak for Indigenous people, it may appear that I present an unduly optimistic or benign picture of the work of missions in general and these missionaries in particular. However, I believe I have allowed Indigenous people such as Miriam Rose Ungunmerr, the Garden Point Mob[78] and, from a diametrically opposed position, Sue Stanton to speak for themselves. The question of evaluating the worth of the missionary enterprise as carried out by these men, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart as an order, or Christian missionaries in general is one which is not, I think, subject to any final and unequivocal answer. Both the question and the answer will always be subject to the contexts which prevail at the time of asking and the viewpoints of both questioner and respondent.

[77] Miriam Rose Ungunmerr, Diocesan Leadership Conference. Darwin: Catholic Education Office. May 2008.

[78] 'The Garden Point Mob' is the name given to those people, both missionaries and Indigenous, who were part of the mission community at Garden Point from 1940 until its closure as a mission. These people remain close to the MSC and OLSH missionaries with whom they share a common past. See for example, Thecla Brogan, *The Garden Point Mob*. Darwin: Historical Society of the Northern Territory, 1990.

2. Landscape 1: History, memory, biography, truth.

‘Who controls the past controls the future, who controls the present controls the past’.

This, the duplicitous O’Brien explains to the hapless Winston in George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty Four*[1], is the motto of the Ministry of Information. Orwell, in presenting a bleakly prophetic view of the post-World War 2 world, posits his Ministry of Information more as a source of manipulation and misinformation than accuracy. His Ministry of Truth is likewise a manipulative suppressor of anything which is not a ‘truth’ politically acceptable to Big Brother. It is often assumed that it is the role of history and biography to present ‘the truth’ of a life or an event or series of lives or events. More often than not, however, history is a matter of interpreting events and such interpretations will always be affected by the interpreter’s cultural background, personal beliefs and their own place in time.[2] Interpretation is also a major responsibility of biographers[3] but, as Nigel Hamilton notes, most biographers have ‘always accepted the instability of definitive factual “truth” where people are concerned, especially recollections or memories of events’.[4] In *Nineteen Eighty Four* it is the interpretations (or suppressions and elisions) of the Ministry of Truth which prevail. In many ways Orwell might have been preparing us for the History Wars which have marked much of the later decades of the twentieth century and the early days of the twenty-first. Ironically, although the History Wars have absorbed many column inches in the print media, many hours in seminars and produced a number of books, the central issue of the History Wars has in fact been a matter of politics rather than history. The History Wars have as much to do with notions of ‘political correctness’ as with history itself as a discipline.

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[1] George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four*. Harmondsworth: Penguin. 1949, p. 199.
[2] Jenny Uglow, *The Lunar Men: Five friends whose curiosity changed the world.* New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2003, p. xix.
[3] Backscheider, *Reflections on Biography*, p. 7.
[4] Nigel Hamilton, *Biography*, p. 209. See also the comment made by the character Hammet in Richard Flanagan, *Gould’s Book of Fish*. Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2001, p. 3.

In an address to the Sydney Institute[5], Australian historian Stuart Macintyre traces the History Wars back to a controversy which erupted in the United States when the curators of an exhibition at the Smithsonian Institute to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II included in their exhibition the Enola Gay, the aeroplane which had dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The aeroplane itself was not at issue but the curators, having consulted veterans' organizations and historians, chose to present the exhibit in such a way that it 'invited visitors to ponder the moral legitimacy of using this new and terrible weapon'.[6]

The idea of history being little more than a means of supporting national honour and pride caused a storm of outrage which resulted in the resignation of the museum director and the scrapping of the exhibition. As Macintyre points out, the 'History Wars are concerned with the obligations of the historian and the demands of patriotism. They arise when historians question the national story and are accused of disloyalty'.[7] Similar difficulties have dogged the National Museum of Australia which, according to its controversial former Director, Dawn Casey, attempted to meet the contemporary expectation that museums be 'interactive and entertaining as well as informative and instructive' as they provided an 'acceptable account of the national experience'.[8] For many people today the museum is the means of accessing history. Dawn Casey noted that a modern museum 'cannot revive a "simple narrative of national progress" but rather must present "the interplay of many stories and points of view" in keeping with the approach of modern museology'.[9] The National Museum's attempts to capture and present the 'multiple narrative' which is the Australian experience have challenged the preconceptions of governments and funding bodies alike. Some would prefer a traditional approach in which the Museum, like historians and biographers, presented the accepted story that underpins our sense of 'National Identity' – as they understand it. That the National Museum set out to

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[5] Stuart Macintyre, "Who plays Stalin in our History Wars?" *Sydney Morning Herald*. 17 September, 2003. www.smh.com/au/2003/09/16/1063625030438.html Downloaded 5 March, 2007.
[6] Macintyre.
[7] Macintyre.
[8] Marilyn Lake, 'The Past in the Present' in Lake, *Memory, Monuments and Museums*. p. 7.
[9] Lake, 'The Past in the Present', p. 7.

'explore the land, nation and people of Australia' and to 'celebrate Australian social history in a unique way by revealing the stories of ordinary and extraordinary Australians, promoting the exploration of knowledge and ideas and providing a dynamic forum for discussion and reflection' as stated in the introduction to its website[10] was sufficient for the Museum to find itself embroiled in the Australian History Wars. The Museum declared its purpose clearly when it said

> The National Museum of Australia is a museum of social history, and focuses on three broad research areas:
> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture
> Australia's history and society since European settlement in 1788
> the interaction of people with the environment.
> These interrelated concepts feed into the Museum's three themes of land, nation and people. They constitute the intellectual and conceptual framework of the Museum's content and shape the nature, topics and style of each of the Museum's five galleries.[11]

Opened in 2001 to coincide with the Centenary of Federation, the Museum's building reflected its declared purpose of presenting the themes of land, nation and people. 'The Museum building itself is anti-monumental, compelling and controversial. With 6600 square metres of permanent and temporary exhibition space, it is a visual feast, characterised by vivid colours, unexpected shapes and angles, and textures that are not seen in any other Australian national buildings'.[12]

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[10] National Museum of Australia: http://www.nma.gov.au/about_us/ Downloaded 16 May, 2007.
[11] http://www.nma.gov.au/about_us/whoweare/ Downloaded 16 May, 2007.
[12] http://www.nma.gov.au/about_us/ Downloaded 16 May, 2007.

Entrance to the National Museum, Canberra.

Photo: Wendy Beresford-Maning, 2006

Courtyard of the National Museum, laid out as a map of Australia showing dreaming tracks.
In the foreground – the Tiwi Islands and Cobourg Peninsula.

Photo: Wendy Beresford-Maning, 2006

A visual feast it may be but its concept of the nation's history propelled it headlong into the History Wars. At times the views of Director Casey and then Prime Minister John Howard appear to converge as, for example, when the Prime Minister observed that 'The museum seeks unusually and attractively to interpret the history of our nation. Not only in terms of events and objects but also in terms of the life experience of people from different backgrounds ….'.[13] Although the Prime Minister stressed its role in presenting the national history to

[13] Dawn Casey, 'Reflections of a National Museum Director' in Lake, *Memory, Monuments and Museums.* (pp.110-123), p. 117.

the populace – presumably anticipating that this would be '**the** accepted historical evidence' – Casey makes the point that 'museums are continually changing and developing new display techniques using the latest technology to provide engaging experiences … to fulfil the role of educator they first need to entertain and capture the imagination of potential visitors ... they can attract new audiences by … marketing themselves and being responsive to visitor need …'.[14] Casey's view, which stresses the commercial reality that the Museum needs to be 'responsive to visitor need' if it is not to remain a monumental white elephant whose appetite places an enormous strain on the public purse, leaves itself open to the charge that history has become no longer a fixed set of irrefutable facts about the past (if it ever was) but rather a narrative presentation which responds to the demands of the audience. In other words, the perceived needs of the audience in part at least shape the interpretation and presentation of our national history. To those who see the role of history as being to support the prevailing myth of national identity, such a view is anathema, not least because it implies that there are multiple histories rather than a single history. This complexity of interpretations will become obvious later in this thesis when, in examining the lives of John Leary, Gerry Burke and Ted Merritt, my interpretation of their work as missionaries and their contributions to the life of the Northern Territory will, while striving to be accurate[15], be sympathetic to them. This is not to suggest that my perceptions and interpretations are any more or less 'true' than those of others with vastly different viewpoints such as Sue Stanton.[16] They are, however, as noted in the previous chapter, different.

Although, as Macintyre and Clark point out, the History Wars are conducted in 'extra-curricular forums' rather than in the halls of academia, they have nevertheless operated almost like a commercial deep sea fishing operation, netting some very big fish in Australian academic history circles. Manning Clark and Geoffrey Blainey were but two of the leading historians who, along with Macintyre himself, found themselves and their views impugned and caricatured. The history wars have been reduced on occasion to a war between 'the white

[14] Lake, p. 117.
[15] Given my previous comments about the multiplicity of 'truths' I prefer to focus here on 'accuracy'.
[16] Stanton.

blindfold' or 'Three Cheers'[17] and 'the Black Armband' approaches to Australian history.[18] The 'white blindfold' image caricatures the traditional and often triumphalist view of Australian history that trumpets the successes of white Australian achievement and pays scant attention to the fate of the Aboriginal Australians whose existence predated the arrival of European settlers. The most notable historian often nominated in this group is undoubtedly Geoffrey Blainey – despite the fact that much of his writing is sympathetic to Aborigines.[19] A more recent advocate of the 'white blindfold' or 'Three Cheers' school would be Keith Windschuttle who, although trained as a historian, has spent most of his academic career in the fields of media studies and social criticism. Journalist, commentator, social and education critic and former Howard advisor, Gerard Henderson, it is claimed perhaps simplistically, has also joined the 'white blindfold' bandwagon. Then Prime Minister, John Howard placed himself in the 'white blindfold' camp although, as one might expect, his argument was carefully balanced for minimal disruption of the status quo. Howard argued that, although there have been black marks on our history, they are outweighed by the achievements of the nation. He further held firmly to the view that, whatever blemishes exist, they are not the responsibility of the present generation of Australians.[20] Although some, remembering the redoubtable Manning Clark's assertion in the Boyer Lectures of 1976, that his purpose was 'to tell the story of what happened when a great civilisation was transplanted to an ancient land', would place the 1970s Manning Clark in the 'Three Cheers' camp, given his apparent lack of interest in the possible prior existence of any form of indigenous culture in the land,[21] others would put him in the 'Black Armband' camp, along with Henry Reynolds, Don Watson and Ros Kidd. Clearly, though, Manning Clark is a law unto himself rather than a fellow traveller in any camp, communist

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[17] Macintyre and Clark, p. 3.

[18] *ANTaR News*. http://antarqld.org.au/03_news/armband.html Downloaded May 16, 2007. The Black Armband epithet was coined by Geoffrey Blainey who was referring to the practice of Australian Football League players of wearing a black armband during matches to denote mourning for some great former player or member of the club who has died.

[19] See for example, Geoffrey Blainey, *The Triumph of the Nomads*. Melbourne: Sun Books, 1983.

[20] Macintyre and Clark, p. 138. (There is no suggestion that John Howard appreciates the irony of his references to 'black marks' in Australian history.) The former Prime Minister was notable by his absence from Parliament House as Prime Minister Rudd made his 'Apology to the Stolen generations' in February 2008.

[21] Nevertheless in Volume 1 of Manning Clark's visionary *History of Australia*, he clearly acknowledged the existence, life and culture of the Aborigines.

or otherwise.[22] Former Human Rights Commissioner Marcus Einfeld, whose reputation has recently come into question, is another of the 'Black Armband' brigade, having reputedly said: 'he would rather have a black armband than a white blindfold'.[23] Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark characterised the History Wars as being virtually a political and media circus in which the warriors were bound by Rafferty's Rules.[24] The irony is that those prosecuting the History Wars should have taken as their disparate champions Clark and Blainey, both of whom might be described as particularly idiosyncratic historians rather than typical of opposing schools of academic historical thought.

According to Macintyre and Clark, 'Australians have ambivalent attitudes to history' which is often treated as dispensable or irrelevant. This they see as a feature of modernity 'where change is constant and habitual'.[25] They cite the English historian J.H. Plumb as having claimed 'more than thirty years ago' that this way of seeing history 'as a way of understanding change and progress' was threatening to 'bring about the death of the past'.[26] It is a small step from there to Eric Hobsbawm's lament that 'history is the raw material for nationalist or ethnic or fundamentalist ideologies, as poppies are the raw material for opium addiction'.[27] He insisted that it was the duty of historians "to stand aside from the passions of identity politics".[28] In Australia the 1988 Bicentenary celebrations seemed to provide the touch paper to ignite the history wars. As planning for the Bicentenary got underway the competing views and claims that history had been hijacked to support differing political positions on the nature of Australian society and the nation's achievements found a focal point around which to swirl. In terms of the political uses of history, Paul Keating's version of Australian history 'transferred the evils of colonialism to the imperial master'[29] with one exception. In his Redfern Park Speech of December 1992, Keating

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[22] The assertion that Manning Clark was a communist fellow traveller if not a KGB agent was one of the charges levelled against him in an attempt to discredit his views. Macintyre and Clark, p. 5.

[23] "Journal of Shin Buddhism". http://www.nembutsu.info/personal/gh_howa1.htm Downloaded 16 May 2007.

[24] Macintyre and Clark, p. 222.

[25] Macintyre and Clark, p. 17.

[26] Macintyre and Clark, p. 17.

[27] Macintyre and Clark, p. 48.

[28] Macintyre and Clark, p. 48.

[29] Macintyre and Clark, p. 125.

acknowledged that in 'our ignorance and prejudice … we practised discrimination and exclusion'.[30] He was accused of deploying cultural nationalism – based on his interpretation of history – as a political weapon. John Howard on the other hand saw himself, like Geoffrey Blainey, as a defender of 'old Australia', stressing the economic development of the nation and the comfortable way of life which economic success underpins. The Bicentenary, commemorating as it did two hundred years of European settlement, was always going to offer itself as a whirlpool-like site for contested views of Australia's history. Its principal focus was, perhaps inevitably, on the history of white Australia. The Aboriginal people had long since passed such a minor milestone of occupation of the land. The Bicentenary in fact seems to have resulted in the history wars being fought by their combatants on two fronts simultaneously.

On the one hand, the political leaders were accusing each other of using and abusing history to bolster and sustain their own political agendas, and on the other hand the whole issue of the plight and rights of Aborigines became a second front as, firstly, Henry Reynolds[31] began to quantify the number of Aboriginal deaths at the hands of white settlers in the first 150 years of settlement and expansion and then Keith Windschuttle leapt into the fray to attack such numbers. Reynolds' arguments, which were based at least in part on Aboriginal oral accounts of their conflict with the white 'invaders', were refuted by Windschuttle on the basis that 'Aboriginal oral history, when uncorroborated by original documents, is completely unreliable, just like the oral history of white people'.[32] Windschuttle seems to be ignoring the fact that, as Macintyre and Clark point out (as do Curthoys and Docker), since Thucydides historians have relied on memory as well as available documentation.[33] The issue of memory in relation to history is one which will be discussed subsequently in some depth.

Although, as Macintyre and Clark concluded, the chief point of dispute in the Australian History Wars was the politics of history, the outbreak of the war – rather like any war which affects a society – allowed for a much broader re-

[30] Macintyre and Clark, p. 125.
[31] Macintyre and Clark, p. 44.
[32] Macintyre and Clark, p. 45.
[33] Macintyre and Clark, p. 45 See also for example Curthoys and Docker, p. 36.

evaluation or reassessment of history. In *Is History Fiction?* Curthoys and Docker explored the 'doubleness' of history – history as 'fact' and history as literature. Inga Clendinnen, in *The History Question*,[34] written in the context of the period leading up to the Australian Government's History Summit in late 2006, also looked at this matter of the doubleness of history. Whereas Curthoys and Docker began their exploration of history with Thucydides and Herodotus, from whom they date the doubleness – fact and narrative – of history and reviewed the twists and turns of history over time since then, Clendinnen focused on the duality of history and literature or narrative by looking at the point of overlap between the two. Clendinnen, focussing on Kate Grenville's *The Secret River*, a fictionalised history of Australia – but with a passing glance at David Malouf's fictional historicisation of the Australian experience as well – bemoaned the fact that

> Historians are cruelly limited. We can't do conversations; we
> can't (usually) do monologues [as novelists may in the
> pseudo-autobiography]. But … we can become
> increasingly knowledgeable about the contexts in which
> particular actions, including the writing of particular words,
> took place. We do this … by reconstructing as
> delicately, comprehensively and subtly as we are able,
> not only the material but also the cultural settings
> in which people, once living now dead, lived out their lives.[35]

According to Clendinnen it is 'the confusion between the primarily aesthetic purpose of fiction and the primarily moral purpose of history which makes the present jostling for territory matter'.[36] This skirmish between fiction and history appeared to be a battle occurring well away from the main front of the History Wars, but it is none the less important for not being in the front line. The issue which Clendinnen addressed of novelists taking over what has traditionally been seen as the role of historians in recording, interpreting and telling the national story reflects what is assumed to be the current parlous state of history as a

[34] Clendinnen, 'The History Question'.
[35] Macintyre and Clark, p. 27.
[36] Macintyre and Clark, p. 34.

discipline within schools (and universities).[37] That was certainly the factor which prompted the Howard Government's 'History Summit' in 2006. Under the guise of 'Studies of Society and Environment' – an umbrella title which incorporates history, geography and civics as well as rudimentary legal, business and religious studies – the former academic disciplines have languished almost to the point of extinguishment. It is left to literary fiction to try to capture and retell the stories of the past.

For all historians the question of historical truth is paramount, although few would argue that their historical truth is necessarily to be equated with absolute truth. It is in 'the nature of history as a research activity that it should generate additional knowledge and novel [but not fictional] interpretations'.[38] Macintyre and Clark continued:

> It is inherent in history as a branch of the humanities that
> it should respond to changing concerns. The suggestion that
> the rewriting of history is a sinister activity rests on a naïve
> view of the past as something fixed, fully disclosed and final,
> a record of immanent truth that only malcontents could deny.[39]

However, public audiences often want what historians say to be 'true'. They do not always like it when historians disagree among themselves or suggest that a 'true' answer may never be found. In the public mind, 'if a question is important then there must be a correct answer'.[40] There is little comfort to be had for the public mind in the assertions of academic historians which stress the contingent nature of the truth they discover and propound. Inga Clendinnen notes that 'in human affairs there is never a single narrative … The narrative depends on the point of view one takes'.[41] In literary terms, the narrative depends on whose voice the author or narrator chooses to take. Curthoys and Docker observed that historians 'have always pondered the problem of historical truth, and have

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[37] There are significant differences in the status of History in the Secondary school curriculum from state to state. In some states History is a compulsory stand alone subject. In others it may be either optional or non-existent.
[38] Macintyre and Clark, p. 13.
[39] Macintyre and Clark, p. 13.
[40] Curthoys and Docker, p. 4.
[41] Clendinnen, 'The history Question', p. 3.

always markedly differed over how to achieve it'.[42] They traced these differences back to the beginnings of history with Thucydides and Herodotus whom they identify as the founding figures of Western historical writing.[43] Curthoys and Docker believe both in truth and the search for truth in historical narratives, asserting that 'no-one would do history, pursue historical research unless she and he thought they could arrive, however provisionally, at some kind of truth about the past'.[44] Nevertheless they noted that 'there always has to be a question mark hovering over any claim to have attained an objective, let alone a scientific status for one's findings'.[45] Whereas Clendinnen worried over the fictionalisation of history, or a fictive approach to the presentation of history, Curthoys and Docker suggested that 'a self-conscious awareness of the fictive elements in historical writings strengthens rather than weakens the search for truth'.[46] The 'self-conscious awareness' is the key to their argument here. They argue, as do others such as Hannah Arendt, that Leopold von Ranke's notion of the 'extinction of the self' when writing history is impossible.[47] The historian is and must inevitably be involved in the selection of data – a kind of editorialising and censoring process – in order to try to present an intelligible interpretation of past, or even contemporary, events. This is certainly evident in my own choice of subject and in the way in which I interpret my information.

Postmodern theory has also made it almost impossible to neglect the role of the writer/reader in the creation of any text, whether that text is history or literature. For many people the postmodern sense of fluidity was introduced into the concept of textuality by theories such as those of Neitzsche and Derrida, who believed and argued among other things that a text, even truth itself, is a constellation of metaphors[48] which must be approached in the serious spirit of 'play' by the reader.[49] Huizinga describes play as

> a free activity standing quite consciously outside ordinary life. …

[42] Curthoys and Docker, p. 3.
[43] Curthoys and Docker, p. 3.
[44] Curthoys and Docker, p. 5.
[45] Curthoys and Docker, p. 5.
[46] Curthoys and Docker, p. 6.
[47] Curthoys and Docker, p. 121.
[48] Curthoys and Docker, pp. 50 and 149. See also Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Viking Portable Nietzsche* (tr Walter Kaufmann). New York: The Viking Press, 1954, pp. 46 – 47.
[49] J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1955, p. 13.

> It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner … The function of play in the higher forms … can largely be derived from the two basic aspects under which we meet it: as a contest *for* something or a representation *of* something.[50]

Such play which is typical of history and which adheres to rigorous rules, allows for layers of meaning to be built up in the form of a palimpsest. Every reader brings his or her own new layer of meanings to the interpretation of a text.[51] Roland Barthes, in *Mythologies*, asserted that 'conventional historical narrative is but a particular form of fiction'.[52]

Curthoys and Docker claimed that, although 'modern scientific history may attempt to present history as secular … European and Western historical writing both past and present has many religious, sacred and mythic elements'.[53] Further, they argued that in *Is History Fiction?* they evoke

> in 'postsecularist' fashion the Western experience and phenomenology of time as double, as secular yet also sacred and mythic. Secular time is as if a line, unbroken, continuous, homogenous. But time is also as if a substance – sacred, mythic, messianic, prophetic, apocalyptic, millennial, miraculous, nostalgic.[54]

This double nature of time is typical of the Christian Scriptures in which the substantively cyclic nature of Jewish time is overlaid by the linear thread of Hellenist notions of time and history. This play of interpretations is not untypical of what Curthoys and Docker describe as the 'doubleness of history' – indeed since their 'doubleness' is the interplay of history as literature, history as fiction, history as rigorous quasi-scientific research – it might be more appropriate to talk about the multiplicity of history rather than merely its 'doubleness'. For Curthoys

[50] Huizinga, p. 13.
[51] Curthoys and Docker, pp. 149 – 151. See also Wendy Beresford-Maning, Releasing C .S.. Lewis from the Shadowlands. PhD thesis. Darwin: Northern Territory University, 1997, Wendy Beresford-Maning, Everything you wanted to know about deconstruction but were afraid to ask. PhD Seminar paper. Darwin: Northern Territory University, 1994.
[52] Curthoys and Docker, p. 146. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*. London: Fontana Books. 1957.
[53] Curthoys and Docker, p. 8.
[54] Curthoys and Docker, p. 9.

and Docker, history is inevitably entwined with literature because it presents its findings as narrative and is thus part of the 'world of literary forms'.[55] Not only that, but they allow that the very doubleness or multiplicity of history, from its beginnings until the present, also means that history is often at war with itself.[56] But, in the literary world that is not a fault: without conflict there can be no forward movement of the text. And this too, one might argue, is the case with history. Perhaps more provocatively – particularly for those who want history to be neat, mono-linear and unchallenged and unchallengeable – Ann Curthoys and John Docker argue that

> the very doubleness of history – in the space between history as rigorous scrutiny of sources and history as part of the world of literary forms – gives it ample room for uncertainty, disagreement and creativity. And perhaps this doubleness is the secret of history's cunning as a continuing practice, an inventive, self-transforming discipline. Herein lies our enjoyment of, our fascination with, our affection for, our love of history.[57]

Tracing the double origin of history back to both Thucydides and Herodotus as, on the one hand, a sustained enquiry into the past and, on the other, as literary, engaged in narrative, history as drama, engaged in the creation of scenes, characters and speeches,[58] Curthoys and Docker then present an analysis of the history of history as it were. In so doing they point out clearly the ways in which history has at almost every stage been at once shaped by and helped to shape the prevailing philosophy or focus of the time.

In *The Histories*, Herodotus pursued the double goal of trying to find the truth if he could, and to record stories even where the truth is impossible to ascertain while at the same time maintaining a scrupulous research ethic.[59] His aim then was to find the truth of the past, particularly if there was corroborative evidence or if he had personal knowledge of it, or if he could decide that a particular

[55] Curthoys and Docker, p.11.
[56] Curthoys and Docker, p.11.
[57] Curthoys and Docker, p.11.
[58] Curthoys and Docker, p. 12.
[59] Curthoys and Docker, p. 17.

account presented the truth of the matter. For Herodotus interpretation was vital. Curthoys and Docker find in Herodotus

> a sophisticated methodology that at once creates and disperses meanings and interpretations, a pluralising methodology that anticipates contemporary literary and cultural theory, especially if we think of three of modernity's greatest literary philosophers: Walter Benjamin, Mikhail Bakhtin and Jacques Derrida.[60]

The Histories presents 'an interplay of multiple storytelling and adventures of interpretation … which does not confine history to any particular field or focus but rather establishes the breadth of historical writing'.[61]

Thucydides (c460 – 400 BCE), on the other hand, was a generation younger than Herodotus and his focus was the Peloponnesian War. As a historian his view was that history should focus on a great historical period such as a period of war.[62] Such an approach generally established its own parameters of scope. For Thucydides, unlike Herodotus, politico-military history was the true subject for research. Such history is, as Thucydides has it, 'fast moving, precise, directed, decisive and highly analytical, deploying a strict chronological method'.[63] However Thucydides doubted that a historian could write even of the recent past. He stressed the advantage of the history of the present – often describing events that he himself witnessed or relying on oral reports from eye witnesses.[64] Unlike Keith Windschuttle, Thucydides regarded oral accounts as perfectly valid basic material from which to write his history. Indeed Curthoys and Docker assert that

> for Thucydides history is largely oral history, where 'facts' are established by comparing 'reports' from various 'informants', from contemporaries who were participants in and observers of the war. Indeed it appears that such was Thucydides' preference for and reliance on oral communication and eye-witness accounts that he neglected documentary research, even when pertinent documents

[60] Curthoys and Docker, p. 14.
[61] Curthoys and Docker, pp. 21 and 30.
[62] Curthoys and Docker, pp. 33-34.
[63] Curthoys and Docker, pp. 33-34.
[64] Curthoys and Docker, p. 36.

existed (though he does quote some documents).[65]

Herodotus and Thucydides, then, established the multiple nature of history. Where Herodotus identified his sources, Thucydides' sources remained largely unknown. This tends to give *The Histories* a more authoritative tone[66] – a difference which still exists today as many see 'traditional history' based on documentary evidence as preferable to oral history, because its documentary basis makes it apparently more authoritative. Both approaches, however, depend on the point of view of the historian and their interpretations of their material. Modern theorists such as Derrida would challenge such a supposition that gives the written word (as in documents) more authority than the spoken word, largely because once written the spoken word becomes fixed. For Derrida 'the development of language occurs through an interplay of speech and writing and, because of this interplay, neither speech nor writing may be properly described as being more important to the development of language'.[67]

Derrida's development of the theory of 'Grammatology' – the science of writing in the sense of communication – is his response to the theory of logocentrism which privileges speech over writing. Logocentrism, based on the concepts of a signifier (the word) which derives meaning from the signified object or idea (as propounded by Saussure and others), perhaps inadvertently developed a sense of increasing distance from the original idea or object as one moved from speech (an action contemporaneous with the idea or object) to writing (a delayed and considered action). If one accepts that the further one is from the idea, object or event in time, then logocentrism necessarily privileges the contemporaneous action of speech. But historians on the whole tend to privilege documents and other interpretative writings developed over time. The notion here is that distance from the event, idea or object allows for the development of objectivity when the event (and it usually is an event or series of events) can be seen in a context that is enlarged, as it were, by the passage of time. Only then, historians would argue, can the event be seen and interpreted more clearly in terms of its precipitating

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[65] Curthoys and Docker, p. 36.
[66] Curthoys and Docker, p. 38.
[67] Alex Scott, 'Derrida's *Of Grammatology*'. www.angelfire.com/md2/timewarp/derida/html Downloaded 4 June 2007. Derrida uses 'play'/interplay in the sense explained by Huizinga above. See footnote 49, p.41. See also Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*. (tr. G Chakravorty Spivak). Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, p. 50 ff.

events or ideas or, as in the case of biography, personalities. Only then can its impact on consequent events or situations be interpreted. And those interpretations are in turn influenced by the context in which the act of interpretation is taking place. Thus Derrida's notions both of the palimpsest and *différance* become relevant to historiography. The palimpsest, the super-inscription of material over the traces of previous inscriptions leaving a multi-layered set of inscriptions, is a characteristic of historical writing and analysis. Derrida's notion of *différance* simultaneously incorporates notions of presence and absence and also the idea of the trace (as in the palimpsest) as well as the notion of both difference and deferment. The French verb 'différer' means both 'to differ' and 'to defer or delay' and Derrida uses it to represent both meanings simultaneously. Our concepts of history, as demonstrated by Curthoys and Docker, certainly allow for difference, in terms of interpretation, contexts and intention. The history of history which is largely a sequence of re-interpretations also allows for, even if it is not actually based on the premise of, *différance*, in the sense that reinterpretations hope to throw new light on previously explored territory and allow for as yet unimagined later (deferred) reinterpretations.

Neither Herodotus nor Thucydides established historical writing as fully secular, according to Curthoys and Docker. Both allowed for the involvement of the gods in the affairs of humanity or for the tendency of humanity both to consult God or the gods in the event of war and to assume that the deity will be 'on their side'. It is not difficult to move from that position to an understanding of Paul Ricoeur's assertion that 'it is theology that is asked to interpret historical time'.[68] It is Saint Augustine to whom we owe 'the tridimensionality of the temporality assigned to the soul',[69] according to Ricoeur. But whereas St Augustine envisaged an 'equal primordiality of the three instances' – that is a sense of contemporaneity – Heidegger moved to a concept in which the equal primordiality of the three temporal instances (past, present, future) 'is distributed around a centre which is the present'.[70]

It is the present that shatters into three directions, in a way

[68] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 353
[69] Ricoeur, p. 352.
[70] Ricoeur, p. 352.

> reduplicating itself each time: 'there are three times, past, present and future'. Now, 'the present of past things is memory; the present of present things is direct perception; and the present of future things is expectation'.[71]

The connection between 'futureness and pastness is assured by a bridging concept, that of being-in-debt. Anticipatory resoluteness can only be the assumption of the debt that marks our dependence on the past in terms of heritage'.[72] For Ricoeur the present is the link between past and future. In this passage he appears to be exploring the moral aspect of historical knowledge but, unlike contemporary historical warriors, although he seems to suggest that a nation's present and future cannot and should not be cut adrift from its past, he is closer to the position that 'to ignore the past is to repeat it' than he is to the position of exploiting the past from the standpoint of a particular political polemic. Ricoeur also believes that

> the idea of fault must take its place at a very specific stage of historical judgement, when historical understanding is confronted with admitted wrongs [as, for example, in the case of the Third Reich]; the notion of wrongs done to others then preserves the proper ethical dimension of the debt, its dimension of guilt. … But before that, it is good to make use of a morally neutral concept of debt, one that does not express more than a heritage transmitted and assumed, and one that does not exclude a critical inventory.[73]

Ricoeur, following his philosophical analysis of history, noted that Heidegger enumerated four understandings of 'history': the past as unavailable; the past as still acting; history as the sum of things transmitted; the authority of tradition.[74] But, he notes, 'Heidegger accords no place to memory nor to its prize, the act of

[71] Ricoeur, p. 352. Ricoeur cites St Augustine, *Confessions*. 11.20. Ricoeur, fn 5 notes that the debate here occupies the border of the ontology of the human condition and the epistemology of historical knowledge. (p. 579).
[72] Ricoeur, p. 363.
[73] Ricoeur, p. 363.
[74] Ricoeur, p. 377.

recognition'.[75] On the other hand, French historian Jacques Le Goff regards memory as part of a "history of history".[76] As such

> memory is still recognised as the 'raw material' of history, 'the living source from which historians can draw'. The historical discipline 'nourishes memory in turn, and enters into the great dialectical process of memory and forgetting experienced by individuals and societies'. But the tone continues to be marked by mistrust with regard to an excessive praise of memory.[77]

Memory remains a contested area in the discipline of history. Ricoeur noted that the mode of transmission of memory has altered over time: from oral transmission 'where memory takes wing' to written transmission over time up to 'the contemporary upheavals affecting memory' in our own day.[78] He further noted that the 'problematical nature of the past's manner of persevering in the present … results from the fact that the reference to absence is constitutive of the mode of presence of memories'.[79] But, out of the 'rupture between history and memory … a new figure emerges, that of "memory grasped by history"'. This new memory is an 'archival' memory, a 'paper' memory.[80] Ricoeur argued that

> the final symptom of the metamorphosis of memory seized by history: after memory-archive [is] memory distance. This … rupture between history and memory is now taken up again under the sign of discontinuity [shades of Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge*]: we have moved from 'a firmly rooted past' to a past we experience as a radical break in continuity.[81]

It is perhaps just such a metamorphosis which is inherent in the current Australian History Wars – the unease engendered by an apparent re-ordering of the received past which leads to a sense of the past as a series of ruptures rather than a fluent movement of time and events.

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[75] Ricoeur, p. 377.
[76] Ricoeur, p. 386. Ricoeur cites Jacques Le Goff (tr S Rendall & E Claman), *History and Memory.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.
[77] Ricoeur, p. 386.
[78] Ricoeur, p. 386.
[79] Ricoeur, p. 391.
[80] Ricoeur, p. 403.
[81] Ricoeur, p. 404.

Elsewhere Ricoeur noted that 'history recounts what has happened, poetry what could have happened. History is based on the particular, poetry rises towards the universal …'.[82] Inga Clendinnen's concern about fiction as "value-added history",[83] as in Kate Grenville's *The Secret River,* picks up this difference between history and literature, be it fiction or poetry. Grenville at a seminar entitled 'The Novelist as Barbarian' admitted that, as a novelist her relationship to history had 'always been pretty much the same relationship as the Goths had to Rome. History, for a greedy novelist … is just one more place to pillage'.[84] It is admissions such as this, and a renewed fascination with historical or quasi-historical fiction that raises questions about the place of memory in history. Clendinnen cites D.W. Blight as observing that

> memory is often owned, history is interpreted. Memory is passed down through generations; history is revised. Memory often coalesces in objects, sites and monuments; history seeks to understand contexts in all their complexity … historians study memory because it has been such an important modern instrument of power.[85]

In *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Milan Kundera has also declared that 'the struggle of men against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting' but it must be, as Clendinnen points out, 'accurate, critically assessed memory … because memory as a sacred relic of a past age can function as a dynamic agent in the present one …'.[86] It is perhaps this role of memory in the 'struggle against power' that causes some historians to be distrustful of memory. In her introduction to *Memory, Monuments and Museums*, Marilyn Lake asks whether 'the discipline of history must make good the fallibility of memory' or whether the task of enlivening the past is not better left to fiction.[87] The construction of historical memory, Lake notes, continues to excite controversy. The sites of memory are variously taken to include archives, libraries and museums; objects

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[82] Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 44.
[83] Clendinnen, *The History Question,* p. 17.
[84] Clendinnen, p. 16.
[85] Clendinnen, p. 44. Citing D.W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*.
[86] Clendinnen, p. 46.
[87] Lake, p. 5.

and material artefacts but also landscape and, in the case of Aboriginal people, 'country'.[88] The slippery nature of memory is established by the range of definitions of its nature and role throughout history. For Plato, memory was a waxen tablet on which was imprinted those things which man needed to remember. Memory was both an act of human volition and an act influenced by the intervention of Mnemosyne.[89] For Locke, building on Plato's notion of memory as the waxen surface on which retained ideas were inscribed, memory received sensations as well as ideas – opening memory to emotion as well as volition.[90] For Proust, there was an abyss of creative memory from which ideas could be dredged up almost at random rather than memory holding an ever present duplicate of the past before our eyes.[91] For the writer Nabakov, the supreme achievement of memory was its ability to 'stabilise and harmonise the detritus of the past and compose an internal narrative which is the story of our lives, the ground of our being'.[92] Such a description of memory as 'the ground of our being" is redolent of Paul Tillich's theology of God as 'the ground of our being'[93] and may carry overtones of the authority of memory. But it is precisely this aspect of memory as 'stabilising … harmonising … composing an internal narrative' which brings the validity of memory into question. To stabilise, harmonise and compose a narrative in this way may well be to weld disparate facts into a narrative with little or no objective historical validity or truth as, for example, Sue Stanton does in her thesis. Stanton asserts that the Catholic Bishop of Darwin, Bishop O'Loughlin, speaking at a public forum in 1986 responded to a submission from the Croker Island people to the Stolen Generations Enquiry by asserting that he saw 'no such problems' at the Garden Point Mission on Melville Island.[94] While Stanton's account presents a cohesive and convincing narrative, it does so at the expense of the facts. Bishop O'Loughlin's speech was given in 1982. He died in late 1985. The Stolen Generations Enquiry began in 1998 after

[88] Lake, pp. 7 – 8.
[89] Peter Conrad, 'A History of Memory' in Lake, *Memory, Monuments and Museums*, (pp15 – 32). p. 17.
[90] Lake, p. 22.
[91] Lake, p. 27.
[92] Lake, p. 29.
[93] Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*..
[94] Stanton, p. 39.

some years of lobbying by Aboriginal people. In this case the narrative presents a compelling but ultimately unsound version of events.

It is perhaps this aspect of memory – its ability to reshape and harmonise details in order to compose such an internal narrative – that makes many historians suspicious of memory in relation to history. For the American historian, Richard White, it is obvious that 'only careless historians confuse memory and history. History is the enemy of memory'.[95] White observes that

> few non-historians realise how many scraps a life leaves. These scraps do not necessarily form a story in and of themselves, but are always calling stories into doubt, always challenging memories, always trailing off into forgotten places.[96]

In Australia Bain Attwood and John Murphy have similarly attacked 'memory' in the name of the greater interpretive power and authority of history,[97] that is history based on archival materials rather than unsubstantiated memory, be that memory individual or collective. History, according to Walter Benjamin, 'is an image from involuntary memory, an image that suddenly occurs to the subject of history in the moment of danger'.[98] This seems to suggest that, far from creating a neat and potentially seamless narrative which may well be false, memory once startled by the unexpected may dredge up long hidden information, bringing our attention to 'forgotten places'.[99] The expatriate Australian writer Peter Conrad observes however that

> the sudden occurrence of the image in the moment of danger sounds to me like a recipe for literary re-creation, not historical research. Historians see the past from a distance whereas literary characters … are still alive in it. For them it is and always will be the present.[100]

This question of temporal viewpoint was also raised by the anthropologist Bird Rose when she observed that Aboriginal people are often confused by what white

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[95] Marilyn Lake, "Monuments of Manhood and Colonial Dependence: the Cult of Anzac as Compensation" in Lake, *Memory, Monuments and Museums*, (pp.43 – 57) p. 43.
[96] Lake, p. 44.
[97] Lake, p. 44.
[98] Lake, p. 30.
[99] Lake, p. 56.
[100] Lake, p. 30.

people choose to remember and to forget as they frame their history.[101] For Aboriginal people all time traditionally is the same: the Dreamtime links past, present and future.[102] Their past is made present, and kept for transmission into the future, in traditional song, dance, ceremony and art work. Aboriginal artists using modern painting techniques are, nevertheless, using these techniques to continue to preserve and transmit their dreaming stories, although they may now also explore more 'modern' subjects. Even past European interventions are often interwoven into the wider Dreamtime framework – as for example in the Daly River people's recollection of the Christian teachings of the Jesuits. Interestingly, while Deborah Bird Rose criticises the nineteenth century Jesuit missionary influence, citing the misremembering of the details of the Christian creation and salvation stories and their having become interwoven with the people's own stories[103], she fails to recognise that many non-Aboriginals for whom the Christian story is peripheral to their daily life have an equally, if not more, garbled memory of the details of the story. This, one suspects, has less to do specifically with ethnicity and culture, and more to do with the lifestyle and values of the people to whom the story is being told. It was some of these same people who, as children, had known the Jesuits and a generation or two later asked for the new Daly River Mission to be established. The Daly River story and that of Father John Leary are very closely interwoven as will be obvious in a later chapter.

Peter Conrad observed that

> history is an adjudication about memory, like that in which city fathers engage when they decide to construct a monument: it needs to establish truth, to reach a verdict about what actually happened and who was responsible.[104]

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[101] Rose, "Religions old and new". See also, for example, Rose, *Wild Country,* chapter three, p. 53 ff.

[102] Rainbow Spirit Elders, *Rainbow Spirit Theology*. Blackburn: HarperCollins Religious, 1997, p. xi. See also: James Cowan, *Mysteries of the dreaming*. New York: Avery Publishing, 1992, p. 69. and Muriel Porter, *Land of the Spirit?* Melbourne: Joint Board of Christian Education/World Council of Churches Publications, 1990, p. 1.

[103] Rose, "Religions old and new".

[104] Lake, p. 30.

Literature, he continued, is more tolerant of memory's fictionality, and treats its lapses as creative leaps.[105] But it is precisely this facility of memory to make 'creative leaps' that sets alarm bells ringing for historians. Creative leaps are generally regarded with suspicion. Paula Hamilton observes that 'history and memory are … assumed by and large to be in opposition, the battles lines firmly drawn'.[106] Hamilton however would prefer to emphasise an essential interdependence between history and memory.[107] Similarly, Marilyn Lake questions the conceptual opposition drawn between memory and history 'not least because it occludes understanding of that powerful compound form, historical memory'.[108] For Lake, 'historical memory is a powerful force in shaping personal and political identifications … it can bring to our attention "forgotten places"'.[109] Ultimately, 'the role of historians … is to unscramble myths, not to make them'.[110] For Clendinnen the historical record is a 'great shared reservoir of human experience'.[111] It is the task of historians to separate myth from fact, rather than to create new myths.[112] But myth-making lies not solely in the realm of memory: it can also be found in the realm of historical interpretation. Thus, historical memory can of course also become a weapon in the history wars. Increasingly, though, museums are becoming the public sites and custodians of historical memory, no longer in the sense of enshrining fixed narratives of the past but rather presenting, interpreting and – where relevant – challenging those narratives, as in the case of Australia's National Museum.

The purpose which motivates a historian will necessarily influence the way in which both memory and archival material might be used to present interpretations of past events. To assume that all historians share a common purpose, while useful perhaps for the sake of prosecuting arguments such as those engaged in the History Wars field of combat, is nevertheless misleading.

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105 Lake, p. 30.
106 Darian-Smith and Hamilton, *Memory and History..* p. 9 ff.
107 Darian-Smith and Hamilton , p. 12.
108 Lake, p. 44.
109 Lake, p. 57.
110 Inga Clendinnen, 'History as a preferred past only hampers the way to a clearer future'. Sydney Morning Herald. 15 October, 2005. www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/10/15/1065017478187.html?from=storyrhs Downloaded 28 August, 2008.
111 www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/10/15/1065017478187.html?from=storyrhs
112 www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/10/15/1065017478187.html?from=storyrhs

As mentioned earlier, it is ironic that Manning Clark and Geoffrey Blainey have become embroiled in the History Wars. Both are often regarded as highly idiosyncratic historians.[113] Blainey, for part of his career, operated as a professional historian outside the academy, with an apparent predilection for Australian Rules Football and all things pertaining thereto as well for championing historical viewpoints that seemed to fly in the face of 'political correctness' regardless of the storm of protest he would draw down upon himself. Manning Clark, also, had a highly personal view of the purpose of history and of the human condition which influenced his approach to Australian history. For Manning Clark,

> the duty of the historian was to create history anew from primary sources; he insisted that historians should never start arguing with what others have to say.[114]

McKenna claims that Clark not only shied away from argument with other historians but he 'could not even bring himself to discuss the research work of others'.[115] In his 1976 Boyer Lectures, for example, Clark cites a range of literary giants but includes not a single historian. Perhaps this is part of the mystique, 'the image of the lone outsider' and the frustrated writer that McKenna suggests Clark deliberately cultivated.[116] Clark's personal voice is grounded in a profound religiosity, according to McKenna.[117] This no doubt accounts for the prophetic tone of at least some of his work. Undoubtedly influenced by Dostoevsky,[118] as well as a family of Church of England clergy, reaching back to and including Rev Samuel Marsden,[119] Clark was concerned with understanding what moved, inspired and defeated people in their lived experience.[120] According to McKenna, throughout Manning Clark's *History of Australia* and his writings about history, he emerges as

> the seeker of the heart and souls of human beings (usually men), the worrier over the question of faith and what it meant to live in a

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113 Don Watson speaking on 'Big Ideas', ABC Radio National, 16 February 2003.
114 Mark McKenna, 'Being There: The Strange history of Manning Clark' in *The Monthly*, March 2007. p. 24.
115 McKenna, p. 24.
116 McKenna, p. 22.
117 McKenna, p. 26.
118 McKenna, p. 36
119 'Big Ideas', 16 February, 2003.
120 McKenna, p. 26.

> godless world, the tragedian, the writer who drew inspiration from art, literature and music and who, following Carlyle, saw history as the 'true epic poem of mankind' and himself as 'one of the muses' that could 'communicate a vision of the world'.[121]

In an interview with Peter Ross on ABCTV in 1987, Clark described the impact of seeing Stefan Lochner's 1450 painting of the *Madonna and Child* in Cologne Cathedral:

> ... it was germinal in writing the *History* [*of Australia*], because … in a sense the History became an account of how all we in Australia became citizens of the Kingdom of Nothingness – believing in nothing – but that doesn't mean nothing in one sense … It's the opposite of nil. It's really giving up the great expectations and asking yourself, what then?[122]

McKenna notes that this 1987 version of events is a far cry from Clark's diary record of these events on 9 December 1938 when he actually visited the Cathedral. His diary makes no mention of his seeing the painting, nor of its supposed impact on him and his view of history. Having retired, Manning Clark threw himself into autobiography which, as McKenna, basing his observation on Doris Lessing's experience as an autobiographer, notes 'is a notoriously imperfect and fraught exercise at the best of times'.[123] For Lessing autobiography exposed the truth that 'we make up our pasts'.[124] Given history's uneasy relationship with memory it serves as a warning to note that 'the unreliability of memory is the unreliability of autobiography'.[125] McKenna quotes the American psychologist Jerome Bruner's view of autobiography as:

> an account given by a narrator in the here and now about a protagonist bearing his name who existed in the there and then, the story terminating in the present when the protagonist fuses with the narrator … The self as narrator not only recounts but justifies. And the self as protagonist is always, as it were, pointing

[121] McKenna, p. 26.
[122] McKenna, p. 35.
[123] McKenna, p. 34.
[124] McKenna, p. 34.
[125] McKenna, p. 34.

> to the future.[126]

McKenna sees Manning Clark's move to writing autobiography as being an opportunity to do with his own life 'what he had already done with his historical actors: create himself as a character, and employ the same literary devices'.[127] For Clark, history is approached as the grand narrative of literature – 'an account of how all we in Australia became citizens of the Kingdom of Nothingness …'.[128] Such an analysis as this should surely take Manning Clark out of the battle field of the History Wars. He is clearly not fit for such a battle. His war is about something else entirely, the historian as prophet in the modern world perhaps, exploring the human condition from a position within his own philosophy of life. As such he also demonstrates that, despite their often uneasy relationship, history and biography are often intertwined.

McKenna, however, alerts us to the dangers of autobiography as mythologising. In pursuing oral history, the reliability of memory and personal narrative based on recollections of past events must necessarily be tested, wherever possible, against the 'objective' historical record. A measure of objectivity can be gained, as I have tried to do in this thesis, by setting individual stories in the context both of available documentary evidence, and the observations of others who may have shared at least some of the same experiences. The 'objectivity' of history, however, as has been explored above is something that itself is questionable. If the historian's task is one of interpretation, then it is almost certain that there will be a degree of subjectivity brought to bear on the task, however unintentionally. Despite what may appear to be a randomness or objectivity at the outset, there is necessarily a subjective decision in the selection of both one's task and one's material. Memory is generally seen as the theatre in which the contest between subjectivity and objectivity, individual and group recollection and interpretations, accuracy and inaccuracy takes place. Paula Hamilton, as noted above, believes that despite the intense critical scrutiny of recent time

> a closer examination of the relationship between memory and history

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[126] McKenna, p. 34.
[127] McKenna, p. 34.
[128] McKenna, p. 35.

> suggests that we cannot assume a simple process of rupture and opposition [between the two].[129]

Arguing for an integral relationship, 'an essential interdependence between memory and history',[130] Hamilton notes that in ancient times memory was the source of historical discourse. She cites Luis Passerini as asserting that

> research work in oral history reveals that each one forgets 'crucial aspects of society's pasts' and therefore 'reciprocal critique and elaboration is essential. Memory is gradually lost and here the historian steps in to tell the stories that people forget – the 'gaps' in the collective remembering. Just as people do remember what the historians forget.[131]

It is worth noting at this point that the purpose of oral history, and biography, is not necessarily to be seen as the same as that of autobiography. Despite claims and intentions of objectivity, autobiography lends itself to the mythologising and self-justifications that McKenna speaks of in relation to Manning Clark. There is and always will be the temptation to tie up loose ends and to create a seamless and purposeful narrative. Although that temptation may be there in oral history and biography it is easier to resist the desire to neaten up the subject's life and experience and not only to acknowledge, but in some cases to highlight, the apparent or real inconsistencies of the lived and remembered experience. In the case of the subjects of this thesis it is clear that, in much the same way that a comparison of photographs of them both as young men and as they are today highlights physical differences, so listening to their stories and then contextualising them by listening to the stories of others who know them, and by reference to documentary evidence where possible, enables the writer to remember that these are men who are in the here and now recalling themselves and their experience in the then and there. Hamilton notes that in the case of Australian Aborigines, culture, ceremony and community are the constituents of Aboriginal cultural memory which is constantly renewed – in the sense of being remembered – through story, dance, ceremonies and material arts. This is an

[129] Paula Hamilton, "The Knife Edge" in Darian-Smith and Hamilton, p. 11.
[130] Darian-Smith and Hamilton, p. 12. See also Lyn Riddett, "Think Again: …"
[131] Darian-Smith and Hamilton, p. 12.

instance where memory and history, she argues, have nourished each other.[132] Inasmuch as the subjects of this thesis live their lives in a state of recurrent if not continuous reflection as part of their religious vocation and heritage, it could be said they too have their ‘ceremony’ or ‘ritual’ which not only keeps alive memory but also serves to objectify that memory so far as possible – to remember the actuality rather than the dream or the intention.

In an exploration of the supposed dichotomy between individual and social memory on the one hand and historical memory on the other, Hamilton points out that former somewhat simplistic views of the ‘inaccuracy’ of memory

> have given way to a more sophisticated understanding that what gets remembered and how is of critical importance in the process of remembering. Now oral historians are coming to understand that the collaborative act of interviewing can often be the point of intersection between memory and history, a contested terrain, frequently the knife-edge of tension between the two.[133]

It is no longer satisfactory, however, to say that if there is an apparent conflict between an individual’s memory of an event and a received historical account, that either one or the other must be ‘correct’. Increasingly, as Docker and Curthoys point out, history is no longer a single discourse.[134] Hamilton asserts that, since the 1960s the ‘cultural authority of historians’ has been gradually eroded and ‘there has been a return to the storytelling function in history, a celebration of the imaginative elements in historical reconstruction, a greater awareness of history writing as a literary practice’.[135] This does not, of course, imply that such history writing is necessarily any less ‘true’ for that reason. ‘Cultural memory’ according to Hamilton, ‘represents the many shifting histories and shared memories that exist between a sanctioned narrative of history and personal memory’.[136]

[132] Darian-Smith and Hamilton, p. 13.
[133] Darian-Smith and Hamilton, p. 15.
[134] Darian-Smith and Hamilton, p. 25.
[135] Darian-Smith and Hamilton, p. 25.
[136] Darian-Smith and Hamilton, p. 20.

Xavier Pons, in an examination of the relationship between history and literature, has observed that 'history is always mediated … second hand'.[137] He points out that some historical narratives are never written or else are hidden, lost, although they may be 'looked up'. Thus 'writing history is like assembling a jigsaw puzzle with missing pieces'.[138] If this is the case then 'the historical record can never be complete'[139] and, for writers like Richard Flanagan,[140] a historian by training and a novelist by vocation, 'imagination is essential to the interpretation of facts' which in themselves mean nothing.[141] The significance of facts themselves is always contested, but 'their contextualised resonances are important although not fixed'.[142] This allows for the différance of Derrida which entails the continuing postponement of certainty. As Hammet, the character who morphs into Gould in Flanagan's novel, observes at the outset, 'these days I am no longer sure what is memory and what is revelation. How faithful the story you are about to read is to the original is a bone of contention'.[143] Such a comment as this highlights some of the reservations which may be applied to oral history which more often than not relies heavily on memory. Despite the possibilities of the subject's misremembering or selective forgetting, oral historians more often than not depend on 'carefully framed and verified accounts'[144] of events rather than simply spontaneous conversations about those events. Obviously, like history based on selected documentary evidence, the oral record is mediated by the interests of both the interviewer-historian and the subject. It is as Pons, noted above, mediated. Cranfield cites George Ewart Evans as describing the forceful impact of the combined power of both voice and memory which created for him

> a kind of osmosis [which works] through your skin so to speak, to give the feel of history, the sense of the past which is such an essential ingredient in the best historical writing.[145]

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[137] Xavier Pons, Seminar discussion of Richard Flanagan's novel *Gould's Book of Fish*. Darwin: Charles Darwin University, 15 August 2005. Pons, Visiting Professor in the School of Creative Arts and Humanities at Charles Darwin University in 2005, is Professor of English at the University of Toulouse in France, where he teaches Australian Studies.
[138] Pons.
[139] Pons.
[140] Richard Flanagan, *Gould's Book of Fish*. Sydney: PanMacmillan. 2001.
[141] Flanagan.
[142] Flanagan.
[143] Flanagan, p. 29.
[144] Mark Cranfield, *Voices and Memory*.
[145] Cranfield, citing G.E. Evans, 'Approaches to interviewing' in *Oral History*, 1973, No 4.

Cranfield goes on to point out that 'auditory intelligence … is claimed to be the most deep seated and fundamental of our modes of communication'.[146] Of the two forms of speaking, that which occurs

> when we inhabit the words we say, when language is the very house of our being, when we live in the very words we utter, when we create each phrase out of a concrete experience in time and place – an experience which we allow to crystallise, as it were, in the very words which flow spontaneously out of our whole being,[147]

uncalculated and unpremeditated and unarranged for the purposes of making an impression, is that which resonates truth. It is such speech as this that the oral historian seeks to capture and record.

Ronald Grele of Columbia University notes the unchallenged fact that 'people have always passed their history down from generation to generation by telling stories. Oral history is as old as civilisation itself'.[148] He observes that the move away from oral history to the almost exclusive use of documentary sources was a feature of the development of 'scientific history' which began in the nineteenth century.[149] He credits Allan Nevin, the leader of a team of oral historians at Columbia University, who in 1948 established that university's Oral Research Office, with the resurgence of oral history. Nevins, he says, recognised the increasing importance of ephemeral means of communication in modern life – telephones and electronic communications systems which increasingly led to the decline of written records such as letters, diaries and memoirs.[150] Over time oral history has become increasingly important for both social and cultural history, not least by expanding the range of historical enquiry.[151] In terms of social history, oral historical enquiry allowed insights into the 'interior history' of particular groups under study. That is, it was possible for people within those groups to speak for themselves, from within their situation, rather than to rely on historical accounts written from a purely external perspective. Similarly, in terms

[146] Cranfield. Cranfield defines 'auditory intelligence' as that 'concerned with speaking and listening, the intellectual connections between voice and ear in the mind'.
[147] Cranfield.
[148] R. Grele, *Introduction to Oral History*.
[149] Grele.
[150] Grele.
[151] Grele.

of cultural history, using interviews to elicit 'facts' provided the means not only to understand what happened in individuals' lives but also to understand how people 'made their own histories, in the sense of constructing a story about their own pasts'.[152] Thus oral history became 'a tool for understanding history as a cultural construct', offering a kind of double vision[153] – both eliciting information and, at the same time, observing how history is 'created' through individuals organising the events of their own experience. Australian curator of Maritime Communities,[154] Peter Emmett positions oral history within a twentieth century 'brouhaha … commotion … hubbub… uproar' within which

> all forms of representation collapse into all-at-onceness. … This is the creation of the twentieth century – voice-sound-image-text-past-present-future flow into one. To counter this we still tell each other stories, practising the art of memory and storytelling – an aptitude for always being in the other's place without possessing it. Memory is the sense of the other.[155]

For Emmett memory is not so much a fluid and possibly questionable entity but rather it allows people to foreground events and observations that may have been 'airbrushed' out of official histories. The example he gives is of the official history of the Snowy Mountains Scheme which brushed over – if not actually denying the reality of – worker deaths, conflict between different ethnic groups involved in the project and bullying by 'ruthless' contractors.[156] For historians such as Emmett oral history can offer the opportunity to correct such elisions – or, on the other hand, to provide a 'realistic' corrective to overly romanticised versions of past events. From the meaningless cacophony of modern society, Emmett sees a

> jubilant brouhaha of robust conversation negotiating difference in the present, reflective of the rumble of history and open to the melodic strands of the future. This is an affirmation of nation and

[152] Grele.
[153] Grele.
[154] Peter Emmett is the Senior Curator, Maritime Communities, at the Australian National Maritime Museum.
[155] Diana Giese, 'Speak! Listen! Voices of a Twentieth-century nation.' in *NLA News*, December 200 1. Volume XII Number 3. www.nla.gov.au/pub/nlanews/2001/dec01/article4.html Downloaded 27 June 2005.
[156] Giese.

> oracy and of the necessity of oral history.[157]

Oral history as 'the collection of stories that broaden our understanding of a culture at a certain time and place'[158] can be seen the addition of yet another valid strand to the multiple strands of historical discourse. What then is the relationship of biography to oral history and its place within that discourse? Views about biography vary. There is that of Mary Evans who claims that biography

> is now impossible. Its moment as a genre was linked to Protestant ethics …. [It] was the basis for a 'secure identity' search [and has been] steadily eroded by technology and ideology resulting in individualised identities. … Biography is now more determined by its form than its content – and this form is increasingly irrelevant to the contemporary world.[159]

On the other hand, the compilers of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* in July 2006 launched an online version of the *Dictionary* – as well as a related (but not online) seventeenth volume covering the 'missing persons' of Australian history, those who are most often likely to be the subjects of oral history: the lesser known characters rather than the famous. The reason for an Online Dictionary is twofold: from the compilers' viewpoint it is easier to correct mistakes than in the older print version and it is also easier to update with new entries. From the users' viewpoint the *ADB Online* is easier to access. However, the *ADB Online*'s establishment surely demonstrates that biography, although it is almost always 'committed on dead people',[160] is not itself dead. Indeed, Nigel Hamilton in his *Biography: A Brief History*, points to a positive explosion of biography since the mid twentieth century.[161] In many ways biography is essential to an understanding of history. Much of what we learn of the past is mediated by the lives or voices of the people who lived it – or by interpretations and re-interpretations of their lives.

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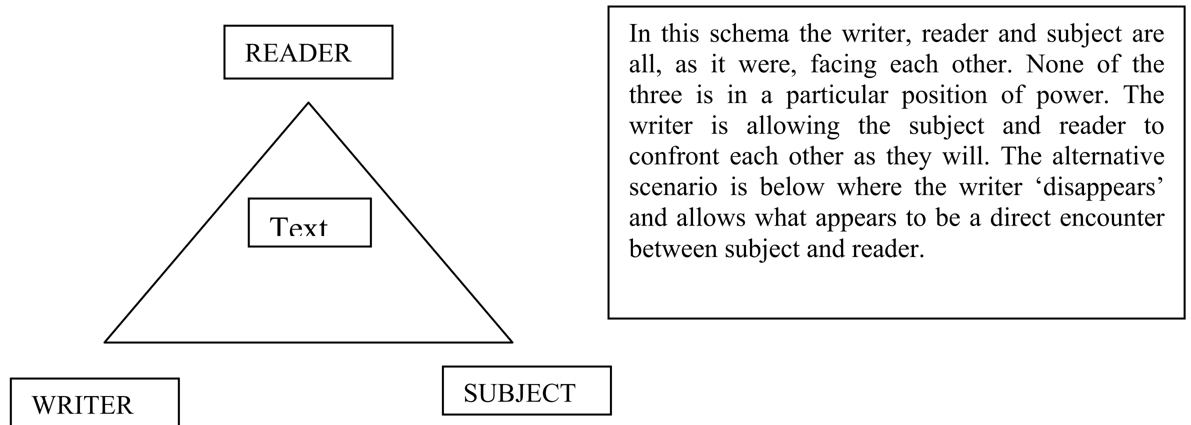
[157] Giese.
[158] Giese.
[159] Mary Evans, *Missing Persons.* Cited by Nicholas Brown at 'Using Lives Workshop', Canberra : Australian National University, February 2006.
[160] Susan Currie, 'Using Lives Workshop', Canberra: Australian National University, February 2006.
[161] Nigel Hamilton, *Biography.*

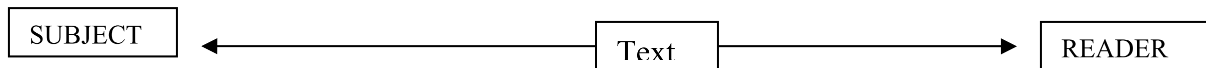
It is stating the obvious to say that we are all prisoners of our pasts – whether as subjects of history or as writers of history or biography. Who we are will affect the positions we take, and from which we view the material with which we deal, be it oral or documentary. History and biography are matters of interpretation after all. As a white historian and biographer of Anglo-Celtic background who is situated within the broad context of the Christian Church in Australia,[162] my interpretation of the lives of the missionaries about whom I write and, indeed, of the mission era of which I write will necessarily be influenced to some extent at least by my own experience and beliefs. Biography might be composed of fragments but it is not simply the accumulation of facts. The most important function of the biographer is 'to tell the story and to interpret it', according to Ian Donaldson.[163] Despite an 'ethics of loyalty and friendship'[164] which may cause some constraints when writing the biography of a living subject or subjects, as I am, it can be said that, as in history, 'without something problematic a biography is not worth writing'.[165] The most problematic aspect of writing biography, as in writing history, is the relationship of writer and subject. In history writing it is taken for granted that the position of the writer is necessarily objective and impartial, but Indigenous historians in particular believe that there is no such thing as objective history and therefore history cannot be written without passion.[166] Passion in such a context is often assumed to be a pejorative term, an essential characteristic of which is assumed to be bias. But one can argue that to aim to be impassionate can also involve the exercise of bias – but it is often seen as a more acceptable bias. The question of passion or lack of passion leads one to consider the relationship of any writer to their subject, whether they are writers of history or biography. Lenore Coltheart, who is both a biographer and historian, notes that method is equally vital to both the historian and the

[162] See pages 30 – 31 of this thesis for details.
[163] Ian Donaldson, 'Using Lives Workshop', Canberra: Australian National University. February 2006.
[164] Marilyn Lake, 'Using Lives Workshop', Canberra: Australian National University. February 2006.
[165] Iain McCalman, 'Using Lives Workshop', Canberra: Australian National University. February 2006.
[166] Gordon Briscoe and Frances Peters-Little, 'Using Lives Workshop', Canberra: Australian National University. February 2006.

biographer, while not being necessary to the writer of fiction.[167] The relationship of writer and subject may be expressed thus:



or thus:



The text is, to use the metaphoric language of Derrida or Huizinga, the ground on which the play of meanings and the interaction between subject, writer and reader takes place. In the first model, there are three distinct players in the encounter, whereas in the second the writer is effectively erased from the game, leaving subject and reader to confront each other. I contend, however, that such an erasure of the writer's voice is largely illusory. In my attempt to develop an interpretation of events which takes account of a history of events in Australia that explores the relationship between secular and religious history over time as well as the lives of these four specific individuals – Jules Chevalier, founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, and Father Leary and Brothers Merritt and Burke – I am aware that my own background and interests will influence my interpretation, although hopefully without invalidating it. As a declared member of the Christian Church who has had a long association with missionaries from various denominational or interdenominational societies who have worked in the

[167] Lenore Coltheart, 'Using Lives Workshop', Canberra: Australian National University. February 2006. One presumes that she means that fiction writers employ a different kind of method since the aims of fiction and history may be seen to be different. Not all critics would agree that this difference exists, however.

Northern Territory and in other places it is to be expected, perhaps, that my understanding of the missionary enterprise and of the motivations of those who work as missionaries will be different from those who have no such 'inside information' or understanding. That is not to say that my point of view and my interpretations are any more 'true' than those of any other writer, but they may well be different, particularly when I come to the more biographical aspects of this work.

In summary, it is increasingly difficult to accept that there is only one history which relates the truth of events or people. History, like truth itself, is and always has been multi-stranded and influenced not only by the model being used – documentary or oral or biographic – but also by the positioning of both writers and subjects in terms of their intention and interpretations in the ways that I have explored in this chapter.

3. Landscape 2: The mission imperative.

Given that the focus of this thesis is the life and work of a number of Roman Catholic missionaries in the Northern Territory of Australia, it is essential to provide a historical context for their work. They are placed, after all, at the end of centuries of traditional missionary activity and, if the mills of God grind slowly, those of the Church often grind even more slowly. This means that, in many ways, so far as the institutional Church is concerned missionary activity has not changed greatly since its inception. This chapter explores the various contexts, motivations and practices of Christian missionary activity over time.

Of the three monotheistic religions of the world it seems to be stating the obvious to say that both Christianity and Islam have, usually at different times, devoted themselves to widespread missionary activity occasionally in conflict with each other. Much of the time that activity has been seen as being linked either with politics or imperialist expansions on the one hand or, on the other, with the goals of economic expansion. Judaism alone, with its belief in the Promised Land as an actual geographic location and God's 'chosen people' as a distinct ethnic or cultural entity, has eschewed any form of religious expansion. Whereas the worldwide spread of both Islam and Christianity can be attributed at least in part to missionary activity as well as the dispersion of cultures, the global nature of Judaism is a result of the historical dispersions of the Jews, usually as a result of persecution, invasion or exile. This, expressed in its simplest form, is the context for Christian missionary activity.

A sound, if circular, traditional definition of 'missionary' is 'one who volunteers or is sent out from their own country and culture to do missionary work or one who is concerned with the work of a religious (or similar) mission'. A mission, in its turn, is defined as a 'body sent by a religious community to propagate its faith; a field of missionary activity; a missionary post; an organisation in a

district for the purpose of converting people'.[1] For most missionaries and mission agencies the evangelistic or mission imperative of Christianity can be traced back to the words of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew:

> All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them
> in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
> and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.[2]

This instruction is usually expanded to incorporate the additional reassurance of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Book of Acts. Here Jesus promises that at Pentecost the Holy Spirit will empower the disciples and they 'will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth'.[3] Needless to say the earth was then conceived of as being much smaller than it is today. However, in terms of the mission imperative, the sequence of 'Jerusalem … to the ends of the earth' is usually taken as instituting an accepted process of spreading the gospel firstly amongst one's own people, then amongst those with historically connected and shared cultures, before spreading the gospel to those people of other cultures amongst whom one might live and finally, literally, to 'the ends of the earth'. Interestingly, what seems to be a word of reassurance to the first disciples in Acts has since been taken as not only a mandate but also as an edict to undertake missionary activity on a worldwide scale.

If the Matthean instruction of Jesus is the primary motivation for mission then an inextricably linked motivation is the conviction that the Gospel, by definition, brings the 'good news of salvation' to those who have not yet heard it. That much, one could argue, is now a view shared by Muslim missionaries who see Mohammed as the last in the line of prophets which includes Moses, Elijah and Jesus. Usually, too, by the time of the modern mission movement around the world (that is, the missionary movement which began in the eighteenth century as opposed to that of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), there is an understanding that salvation alone does not mean much if people are starving,

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[1] Derived from *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2002.
[2] Matthew 28: 18b –20a. NRSV
[3] Acts 1: 8 NRSV.

exploited, chronically unemployed, underemployed, ill or illiterate. So the modern mission movement has almost always taken place within the context of cultural change linked with education, improved health and living conditions and often, if not always, with a desire for social justice. One could argue that the rise of independent states in Africa in particular demonstrates the effectiveness of this broad missionary activity which went beyond simple proselytising. In the first instance many of the leaders of independent African states which had formerly been European colonies were either self-proclaimed Christians or had been mission educated. Their values in many cases had at their heart at least a veneer of Christian values – although this did not necessarily translate into Western notions of democracy.[4]

However, where contemporary missionaries are on the whole – though not necessarily entirely – convinced of the need for cultural sensitivity and, wherever possible, the preservation of culture, this has not always been the case. It is all too clear if one looks at the fifteenth and sixteenth century spread of Christianity throughout a world shared magnanimously by Alexander VI, the Pope of the time, between Portugal and Spain, that cultural imperialism, and – integrally bound up with it – the brutal suppression of the Indigenous inhabitants together with the winning of territory and wealth, was the prime purpose of much supposed missionary outreach. The current efforts of the Roman Catholic church, through the efforts and agencies of its missionaries (Columbans, Jesuits, Maryknolls[5]) in particular, in both South America and the Philippines to establish 'Base Christian Communities'[6] in which the local people take responsibility for their own faith and their own local church as a matter of social justice and independence, is a recognition of the historical failure of a Church

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[4] Julius Nyerere, founding father of Tanzania was such a man: mission educated and a declared Christian, but his government was formed along the lines of a single party democracy. 'Julius Nyerere, lifelong learning and informal education'. http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-nye.htm Downloaded 6 March 2008. In South Africa, both Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu are further examples.

[5] Missionaries from these orders are primarily from the USA, although the Columbans and Jesuits were founded in Ireland and Europe. The Maryknolls are an American order.

[6] The 'Base Christian Communities' are also known as 'Base Ecclesial Communities'. See Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*. p. xli. See also http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED301683&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED301683 Downloaded 6 March 2008.

corrupted by power and its close association with invaders, landlords and politicians – the wealthy rather than the poor. Despite the opposition of Pope John Paul II[7] to such developments – and especially in South America, to the involvement of a number of Jesuits as members of popularly elected governments – these communities still seem to be the way forward if the church is truly to be locally encultured and to demonstrate what much of the Roman Catholic Church since Vatican II has called 'the preferential option for the poor'. Where Vatican II established the image of the Church as a pilgrim church seeking its way in humility rather than the glorious or militant and virtually infallible church of earlier eras, subsequent councils and assemblies of the church worked towards this emphasis on 'the preferential option for the poor' as a reminder to the Church that its mission was to reach the marginalized rather than to entrench the powerful and wealthy. The phrase itself came out of a 1979 meeting of Latin American Bishops of the Catholic Church in Puebla, Mexico. The bishops had come together to discuss the affairs and direction of the Latin American Catholic Church since Vatican II. They issued a statement which included the following words: 'From the heart of Latin America, a cry rises to the heavens ever louder and more imperative. It is the cry of a people who suffer.'[8] In the preparation of this document the bishops entitled one of its key sections 'The Preferential Option for The Poor'. It is this phrase which has since caught and arguably dominated the imagination of those sections of the Church which see their task as mission. And, given that one of the outcomes of Vatican II was the instruction that all religious orders should accept mission as part of their charter,[9] this 'preferential option for the poor' suggested a way forward for many. Not only was the Catholic Church now actively directing its mission towards the marginalized in the areas where it had long existed and ministered but it was now being virtually compelled to reach out to the marginalized beyond its own immediate – and comfortable – environment.

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[7] Popes John XXIII and Paul VI greeted the development of Base Ecclesial Communities as evidence of real hope for the church on poor countries. See Vatican documents: *Lumen Gentium; Ad Gentes; Evangelii Nuntiandi* for example.

[8] Jack Jezreel, "Why the preferential option for the poor is not optional", *U.S. Catholic*, November 1997.

[9] Vatican Document "Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church: *Ad Gentes*" Promulgated by His Holiness, Pope Paul VI, 7 December 1965. Rome.

In the Australian context, it was this post-Vatican II expectation that resulted in many previously unrepresented religious orders becoming involved in missionary activity in the Northern Territory.[10] Many of these were involved in education, some in catechetics (religious education) or working within established parishes with either Indigenous people or other ethnic groups. In the Territory, however, as is true elsewhere in Australia and elsewhere in the Western ‘sending’ world, the Catholic model of mission is still in many ways that of the administrative Church directing and dominating activity, with the church building and the priest as the focus of activity. In contrast, particularly in Asia and South East Asia, it is most probably the strength of the Base Christian Community movement which sees the Roman Catholic Church of the third world as the strongest growing sector of that church. This is also the sector of the church which is increasingly sending out missionaries to evangelise or regenerate the church in the developed world. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Missionaries (MSCs), for example, are not the only order with burgeoning numbers in Asia and with priests from Papua New Guinea now being used as missionary priests to minister to the Indigenous peoples of the Tiwi Islands and elsewhere in the Northern Territory.[11] It will be perhaps only when the Church adopts as its missionary model an approach such as that of the Base Christian Communities that the almost inevitable clashes between the existing Indigenous and the incoming belief systems and cultures might be avoided or minimised. In the Kinabalu region of Sabah, for example, while the Church building or complex of buildings may be the centre of the institutional or administrative Church, it is the presence, energy and committed leadership of the laity which is fundamental to the life of a thriving Catholic community. Here it is comparatively rare for the local Bishop or his priests to be celebrating Mass in the Cathedral, other than on festive occasions. As often as not they are to be found celebrating Mass in the more remote towns and villages of the region whilst, centrally, it is trained local lay catechists[12] – often married couples – who conduct “communion services” for

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[10] Ann Thomson RSM, *N.T.Dreaming*. pp. 12 – 16.

[11] In 2007 there were priests from Papua New Guinea ministering at Melville Island, and Alice Springs; priests from India at Palmerston, St Mary’s Cathedral and Tennant Creek; priests from Vietnam at Katherine and Santa Teresa. Source: *Diocesan Directory 2007*. Catholic Diocese of Darwin.

[12] Catechists are those trained in religious education and deemed capable of teaching the faith to the people.

the local Catholic community. The church itself is not so much an administrative centre but an educational centre providing worship, education and catechetical education. Where the Catholic church in Australia and other Western countries struggles to find lay catechists (for both adults and children), in Kinabalu there are at least 400 committed catechists working full time for the Church amongst their own people. There is an embryonic religious community developing and the catechists are extending their skills in the areas of education, social welfare and palliative care.[13]

The notion of mission inherently involves the possibility of a clash of cultures. Frequently the imperative to mission impels the missionary or missionary organisation to reach out – usually to the traditionally non-Christian and non-Western world, although some may also see increasingly a need to work amongst the isolated, marginalized, apparently apostate or heretic groups within their own larger cultural or national communities. The emphasis and motivation which underlies the notion of mission is focussed on the sending societies (national, cultural, religious or political – or any combination thereof) and, often, fairly minimally on the needs of the receiving countries or populations. The perennial struggle of missions and missionaries is that of juggling the Christian belief system – and its attendant cultural accretions – with the Indigenous cultural milieu into which it is being introduced.

The earliest conflicts between faith and culture in Christianity are recorded in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, which was written in the first century of the Common Era.[14] There are a number of instances where the Jewish Christians express concern about Gentile converts who are not following Jewish religious law. Eventually the first council of the church was convened in Jerusalem, probably about 60 CE.[15] At that council, the apostle Peter spoke strongly in

[13] Verbal report to the author from Mary Prunty (Holyoake, Alice Springs) and Sister Helen Parer IBVM (Alice Springs) on return from a month long training session funded by the local bishop in Sabah. July 2004.

[14] The terms BC – Before Christ – and AD – after Christ's birth have been replaced in theological circles with BCE – Before the Common Era (i.e. the time common to Judaism and Christianity and, later, to Islam) and CE – the Common Era.

[15] Tim Dowley (ed), *The History of Christianity*. Oxford: Lion Publishing, 1990, p. 62. See also Acts, chapter 15 NRSV.

favour of minimising cultural interference as part of preaching the gospel.[16] Finally the Council agreed that all that was necessary was 'that converts abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication'.[17] These requirements reflected the simplest of the Jewish dietary and property laws as well as the avoidance of any appearance of sacrilege or apostasy. The first Council of the Christian Church, then, had taken significant steps towards establishing Christianity as a religion which was not tied to any particular region or place, nor primarily to the observance or imposition of multitudinous cultural rules of behaviour. The rules which were enjoined on converts were essentially those that supported healthy living and good social order.[18] This reinforced the understanding that behavioural markers followed conversion and were not essential precursors to conversion. That distinction seems to have been blurred more than a little in subsequent mission eras. In Islam,[19] by contrast, certain behaviours are essential to the practice of the religion. This being so, they must be learned and practised before one is ready to become a Muslim convert. And, while Christianity and Islam have much in common, it tends to be the minor differences which are foregrounded to become major irritants. One could say that, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the world saw the earliest of the Common Era 'missionary wars'.

For the first six centuries, once it had been established by Constantine as the state religion first of the Roman Empire and then of the Holy Roman Empire,[20] Christianity ruled virtually unchallenged. The subsequent appearance on a large scale of the followers of Mohammed, who also laid claim to the Holy Land and the Holy Cities as part of their religious heritage, set the stage for a conflict between these two monotheistic religions which continues still – although the reasons for conflict may now be different. Whereas Christian mission activity is pursued, and often also funded, largely by various distinct Christian

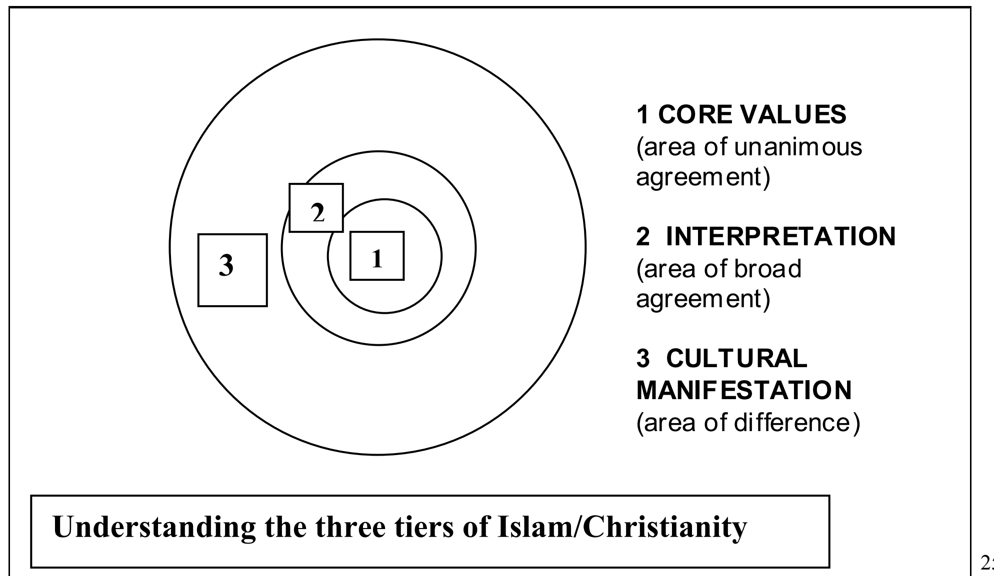
[16] Acts 15: 6 – 29.
[17] Acts 15: 29.
[18] This connection between social order and Church involvement was not lost on governments such as the colonial governments – and later the Federal government – of Australia.
[19] Islam and Christianity are the two monotheistic religions of the world which actively practise proselytisation. The other monotheistic religion, Judaism, does not.
[20] Dowley, p.139. Following the Emperor Constantine's conversion in 312CE Christianity was at first tolerated (Edict of Milan, 313CE) and finally established as the state religion. See also p. 142ff.

denominations or inter-denominational groups, Muslim proselytisation often seems to be linked with political and national agendas. Arguably in Australia today the challenge for Christian 'missionaries' working in Indigenous communities or with Indigenous people is often the appeal of radical Islam (wahabism[21]) or heavy metal music, both of which seem more attractive to young people in particular than the somewhat nebulous, and often negative, teachings of Christianity (although fundamentalist churches which have a strong music base are also attractive to young people). Arousing passion is more appealing than 'thou shalt not'. And, although traditional and current conflicts in the region of Palestine may appear to be an internecine Semitic struggle between the 'children of Abraham', Abraham's other children, the Palestinian Christians, are also caught in the crossfire. But, ironically, it is such struggles as these that serve as reminders of the closeness of all three religions that ultimately derive from God's dealing with Abraham.[22]

Islam arose in Arabia in the sixth century C.E. and most Muslims still understand Islam to share in the common heritage and prophetic tradition of Judaism and Christianity. The essential beliefs and practices of Islam are: belief in one God (Allah); belief in the prophets; belief in the Scriptures; belief in angels; belief in the Day of Judgement; belief in God's foreknowledge and destiny. In addition to these six fundamental beliefs are a number of practices which are compulsorily required of Muslims who can practise them. Together with the belief in one God, these are often referred to as 'the five pillars of faith'. The remaining four are: daily prayers, five times a day; fasting, especially during the month of Ramadan; giving charity; pilgrimage to Mecca.[23] Abdullah Saeed, writing about Australian Muslims, points out that the Australian Muslim community, for example, is drawn from a wide range of different ethnic groups as a result of immigration from all over the world. As a result, he says, there is a marked diversity because

[21] Wahabism is a militant sect of Islam which arose in the eighteenth century. http://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS521695.pdf Downloaded 7 March, 2008. See also Alex Mitchell, 'Mastermind recruiting Islamic Gang inside super jail'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 April, 2007. and *The Religion Report*, ABC Radio 22 March, 2006. http://www.abc.net.au
[22] Mark Dowd, *Children of Abraham,* UKTV Channel 4. December 2006. Transmitted by ABCTV January 2006.
[23] Abdullah Saeed*, Islam in Australia*. Crows Nest NSW: Allen & Unwin. 2003. pp. 47 – 63. Diagram adapted.

of the intermingling of religious faith and cultural identity. 'Thus not all Muslims share the same views on all issues, and often there is no one "standard" Islamic view on many of the problems Muslims face in their daily lives'.[24] The same is true of course of the Christian community, Indigenous or otherwise. The following diagram is certainly as true of Christianity as of Islam – and, indeed of the other Abrahamic religion, Judaism.



[25]

Within each of the Christian denominations as well as across the denominations it can be argued that the distinction between core values, interpretations and cultural manifestations of the faith cause problems often of the same dimensions as those between the early Crusaders and Muslims. The **core values** are basically those Gospel values which one finds in the words of Christ such as the beatitudes, the parables and prayers and the law of the God of the Jews which Jesus summed up in 'Love God with all your heart, mind and spirit and love your neighbour as yourself'.[26] The difficulties arise however as soon as we begin to interpret those core values or beliefs. As with historical interpretations, the **interpretations** of religious beliefs often vary as widely as the number of people making them. The difficulty of interpretation arises not from any actual confusion about the core values themselves but rather because of the cultural filters which people use in order to interpret them. These are the **cultural**

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[24] Saeed. pp. 63 – 64.
[25] Adapted from Saeed, p. 65.
[26] Luke 10: 25 – 28.

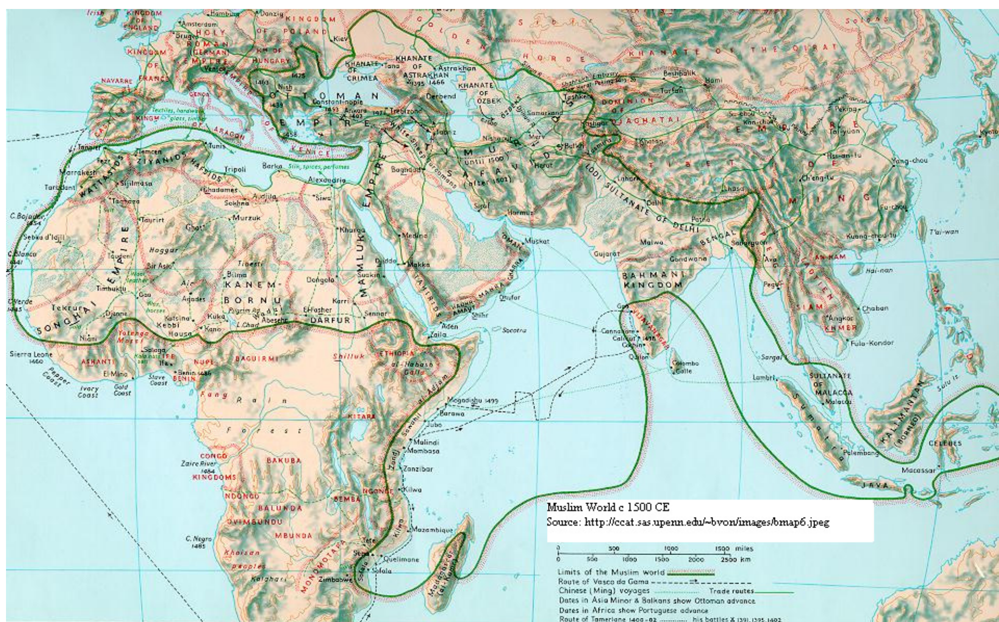
manifestations which act so often, and almost inevitably, as narrowing and separating devices rather than as broadening and reconciling devices.

The spread of Islam throughout the Middle East and Far East was of comparatively little interest to the Christian West until recently. It sprang into focus at the time of the Crusades (1095 – 1250), when Christianity and Islam fought over the possession of various Holy Land sites and territories in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but the spread of Islam into South East Asia (Java, the Moluccas, Borneo) in the mid-sixteenth century was largely unnoticed – until Muslim interests began to cause difficulties for the imperial expansions of the Dutch and the British in the Spice Islands.[27] Meantime, elsewhere in the world, Christian missionaries were spreading the Gospel. The Catholic missionary priests who accompanied the Spanish Conquistadors and the Portuguese explorers and adventurers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were followed in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by Dutch and British Protestant missionaries among others. But, where the Spanish and Portuguese concentrated on the Americas, the Dutch and the British looked to the Far East, Africa, the West Indies and North America. The maps below give some indication of the way in which the Muslim world spread between 500 and 1500 CE – and shows particularly the way in which the Muslim world spread into South and South-East Asia.

[27] See, for example: Mike Dash, *Batavia's Graveyard*. London: Phoenix, 2003.

[28]

Muslim World c 500 C.E.



[29]

Muslim World c1500 C.E.

In looking at the history of Christian missionary activity from a Western viewpoint, one is of course looking primarily at the history of Catholic missions from about the fourth century until the sixteenth or seventeenth century, although one might recognise differences in Western Europe between Celtic and Roman Christianity. The questions facing missionaries, missionary organisations and sending churches, however, remain remarkably similar. They are such questions

[28] http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~bvon/images/bmap6.jpeg Downloaded 14 March, 2008.
[29] http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~bvon/images/bmap6.jpeg

as replication – particularly, are the structures of the sending countries appropriate to the receiving countries? Should they be replicated with or without modification? One of the reasons often advanced for the lack of Indigenous Australian priests within the contemporary Catholic Church is that the notion of celibacy has no place in traditional Indigenous cultures where family and the continuance of family is vital to the structure of the society. Similar problems beset the Catholic Church in Africa where celibacy is often regarded as a denial of manhood. As such, a celibate priest has no credibility at all with his people rather than enhanced credibility (which is one of the reasons often advanced in the West in favour of celibacy). The Protestant missionaries in Arnhem Land offered a different model of ordained ministry since many of the missionary priests or ministers there were married with families. At Yirrkala, for example, at least one of the missionaries, the Rev Lotu, was not only married with a family but was also black – he was a Fijian. The minster at Yirrkala, Rev. Hala Tuopu, in 2005-2008 was also Fijian. The Anglican Communion found similar cultural difficulties when, at the Lambeth Conference – the assembly of the worldwide Anglican church – the majority, dominated by the Western Church, in response to movements and expectations in Western culture, finally agreed to the ordination of women as priests (in consenting dioceses).[30] Such a decision flew in the face of African cultural realities and as such was opposed by the African church. (Although he supported the ordination of women, Archbishop Desmond Tutu described the decision as 'a luxury' compared to the African church where issues of survival are far more important.[31])

The issue of replication is closely linked with matters of both interpretation and cultural manifestation, as discussed above. In many ways, the more conservative or centralised the structure of the sending organisation – be it a missionary society or a church – the less easily it is likely to adapt its systems to meet the

[30] 1988 Lambeth Conference of the Worldwide Anglican Communion.

[31] Archbishop Desmond Tutu himself is on record as strongly favouring the ordination of women. 'We are grossly impoverished and we undermine the effectiveness of our mission and witness when we deny women access to the ordained ministry … I believe quite firmly that [the ordination of women] is God's will for our Church at this time. …'. Address to the Provincial Synod in Capetown, South Africa, 1992. Nevertheless, Tutu recognised that issues of social justice which had earlier been of greater concern to the African church had still not been overcome.

new social and cultural milieu in which it finds itself. As with the Council of Jerusalem, there is always a need to evaluate and re-evaluate the expectations and actions of the mission in both the light of traditional and contemporary understandings of Christianity as well as of the local culture. The fear however always seems to be that of 'watering down the Gospel'. Rather than find points of connection between the receiving culture and the Christian gospel, most missionaries have traditionally found it necessary to destroy the existing culture and to replace it with their version of the Christian culture, rather than to attempt to implant or embed Christianity into Indigenous cultures. A happy marriage of the two may not always be possible, of course. Ancestor worship, spirit worship – especially that based on the need to appease an evil and malignant spirit world – runs counter to the tenets of Christianity. The decision then for the missionary is to replace the old beliefs with the new on the understanding that this will liberate the people from fear. It is nevertheless a decision which imposes cultural change. Although some might bemoan the loss of such a culture, the fact that in many such situations the Indigenous people **choose** to change would seem to indicate that they view the change as beneficial.[32]

Census Year	No. Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Catholics	% Australian population (sic)
1986	No figure available	20.4
2001	94 800	23.1
2007	105 000	20.3*

Source: Paul Collins, *Believers*. University of New South Wales Press, 2008, p. 18

(Based on ABS figures)

* That this number has fallen may be based on more people identifying themselves as ATSI, more young Indigenous people identifying with Islam or ineffective data collection.

The variations in either the degree of cultural violence or cultural toleration arise out of both the interpretation and the cultural background of the missionary or the sending organisation. An organisation which follows a fundamentalist or literal understanding of the Christian Scriptures will no doubt be less likely to attempt to embed Christianity in the pre-existing culture. Similarly, a sending

[32] Paul Collins, *Believers*. Collins notes that "There are a surprising number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Catholics in Australia". p.18. Collins notes that in 2001 the largest populations of Aboriginal Catholics were: New South Wales – 33,422; Queensland – 22,428; Western Australia – 17,305; Northern Territory – 10,733.

institution which has over time embedded cultural expectations into its practice of faith to the extent that they are now inseparable will expect to impose those cultural manifestations on any culture in which it works and any converts it may make. A prime example of this was the requirement for Indigenous peoples in the Northern Territory (and elsewhere) to be 'decently clothed' – the women in skirts and the men in nagas or shorts.

A contemporary example of this apparently inseparable combination of religion and culture might be the Amish community in the United States of America. Founded by Mennonite missionaries, the Amish are now basically a self-contained and socially isolated community within mainstream American society. Their clothing, transport, lifestyle and work patterns still religiously reflect those of the eighteenth century Mennonite way of life.[33] To some extent the Australian Lutheran Church also reflects this dilemma. Whenever a church or faith is 'transplanted' by means either of mission or migration there is an understandable desire to replicate what existed 'at home' and to maintain that as a link with the old country or the sending country. However, over time, a failure to change and to develop a truly Indigenous church may create an anachronistic one, a church frozen in time. In 2004 a German visitor to the Barossa region of South Australia, Lutheran pastor Ilse Frank, commented on the fact that the 'German culture' being promoted to tourists there made her feel uncomfortable. 'They [the Australians of German descent] were singing the folk-songs and performing the country dances that we today in Germany associate with the Hitler Youth. We don't have anything to do with this culture any more.'[34] The traditions of expatriated worship are often similarly frozen in time.

This desire to replicate what one has known and trusted is a fundamental human desire, as is the distrust of that which is new and different. And this is further

[33] The Mennonites were descendants of the earlier (fourteenth century) Anabaptists who had been influenced to some extent by Zwingli at the time of the Reformation. The Amish were a group of Swiss Mennonites who followed Jacob Amman, born 1656. They live by a literal adherence to the text of the Bible. http://religiousmovements.lib;virginia.edu/nrms/amish/html.The Mennonites are similar in some ways to the Moravians who began as a fifteenth century reform movement within the Roman Catholic Church. Under the leadership of John Hus in Czechoslovakia they broke away and found sanctuary in a village on the etstate of Count Nicholas Zizendorf in Germany. http://religiousmovements.lib;virginia.edu/nrms/amish/html

[34] Comments made to the writer by German Lutheran Pastor Ilse Frank. Darwin. 2004.

complicated by the fact that Christian mission activity has more often than not had a dual purpose. The further removed one is from the beginning of a process – in this case the missionary commission of Jesus – the more likely it is that an initially simple injunction becomes enmeshed in a web of other motivations and justifications. Given that Christian missionaries (particularly Roman Catholic priests) were rarely the explorers or conquerors of new territory themselves during the ages of exploration and imperialism and that they followed in the wake of either commercial or military enterprises, their mission – more often than not – was both to minister to the settlers and to reach out to the Indigenous population. That dual purpose increases the inherent likelihood of imposing foreign cultural expectations on Indigenous populations and cultures. And whilst the church may thrive amongst expatriate settlers, this may work against its successful transplantation amongst Indigenous people who almost invariably seem to become a dispossessed underclass. However, by almost bizarre co-incidence, missionary activity may ultimately be the means to their re-entry into what tends to become the dominant culture. The conviction of the need for social justice which seems to be inseparable from most missionary activity is, in theory at least, ultimately the catalyst for social, cultural and often eventually political change.

These complex interactions between the Indigenous peoples and their cultures and that of the outside ‘invaders’ and missionaries can be seen as far back as the sixth century when St Augustine was commissioned by Pope Gregory the Great to bring Roman Christianity to Britain. Prior to this, parts of Britain had already been converted to Christianity by the great Celtic saints Patrick and Columba. Where it had taken hold Celtic Christianity had become embedded in the pre-Christian culture of the people.[35] It was a mytho-religious syncretism that was part of every aspect of their daily living. It has been said that the difference between Celtic and Roman Christianity is that Celtic Christianity derives from the Gospel of John whereas Roman Christianity derives from the synoptic gospels and St Paul. Since Roman Christianity dominated Europe it came in turn to dominate the Celtic church. Ironically it is the Celtic understanding of

[35] Dowley, pp. 231-234.

Christianity that is often more consonant with Indigenous cultures than that of the Roman Church.

Arguably, between the first century and about the ninth century the codification of the Christian faith and the establishment of the monastic tradition dominated Christian activity. During the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Church was preoccupied with at least seven crusades against the Islamic 'invaders' of the Holy Land. As is the case with some missionary activity at least some of these Crusades seem to have been as much politically as religiously motivated. However, during the thirteenth century St Francis of Assisi, founder of the Franciscan order of Friars, attempted two missionary journeys to Syria and Morocco.[36] A short time later the first Franciscan and Dominican Friars landed as missionaries in England to renew the church there.[37] At the end of the thirteenth century (1289) the first Franciscan missionary, John of Montecorvino was sent by Pope Nicholas IV to work in China. He founded a see in Peking, was created archbishop there in 1307 and died there in 1328.[38] En route he had spent some time with the Nestorian Christians in Madras, India. A second see was later established in China. The Pope also sent another mission to Persia for the twofold purpose of caring for Western Christians in the area and also to work for the conversion of Muslims and Eastern Orthodox Christians. The Franciscan missionaries to Persia continued on to India, although only one survived the journey to settle amongst the Nestorian Christians of Travancore (South India).[39] At about the same time two Dominicans undertook a mission to the Crimea and the Pope created a new ecclesiastical province for the Black Sea area. In 1335 John of Marignolli left Avignon in France with fifty Franciscan friars bound for China where he remained for about eighteen years. By 1369 however the last Catholic missionaries had been expelled from Peking.[40] For the time being this missionary focus on China was over. During the fifteenth century which saw the literally world-expanding discoveries of Diaz, da Gama, Columbus and Magellan, the focus of mission shifted to North Africa, central Africa (the

[36] Dowley, p. 272.
[37] Dowley, p. 275.
[38] Stephen Neil, *A History of Christian Missions.* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964, p. 126.
[39] Neil, p. 126.
[40] Neil, p. 128.

Congo) and the Americas. In 1493 Pope Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia) recognised the rights of the Spanish to trade with lands to the west of the Atlantic (west of the Azores), and the Portuguese were to have identical rights to the east, with the concomitant responsibility of converting the Indigenous peoples of those lands.[41] (The line from Pole to Pole was adjusted westwards in 1494 to assign Brazil to Portugal.) This missionary activity may have been about saving souls but it was certainly about expanding European influence throughout the world.

The sixteenth century saw a burgeoning of Christian mission activity. With the opening of a sea route to India extending the sea route around the Cape of Good Hope, Columbus's discovery of America and the Spanish conquistador excursions in South and Central America, missions were established in India, Santo Domingo, the Antilles, Mexico, Goa, the East Indies, China and Japan.[42] In some of these places this wave of missionaries found pre-existing Christian communities such as the Mar Thoma Church in Kerala, supposedly founded by St Thomas the Apostle. History implies that these Thoman Christians of (Kerala) India were 'people who had achieved oneness with the cultural mainstream and were in religion Christian, by worship Eastern and by culture completely Indian'.[43] This is either testimony to the syncretism of Indian culture or to the embeddedness of the 'new' religion into the pre-existing culture. The sixteenth century is dominated in terms of missionary history by Spanish and Portuguese explorers and missionaries – despite the presence of other mostly continental European figures. Not until later in the century did the English, for example, begin to make their presence felt. And yet in some ways it is misleading to focus primarily on nationalities. Whilst the explorers, adventurers and conquerors travelled in the name of the sovereign and the nation, the missionaries tended to be identified with the religious order or denomination in whose name they were sent. The sixteenth century, however, marks the beginning of an increasingly

[41] Neil, p. 141 ff.
[42] Dowley, p. 467 ff.
[43] The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church Homepage Downloaded March 2004. http://www.orthodoxsyrianchurch.com/index.php Having attended a Syro-Malabar Mass at St Mary's Cathedral Darwin on the Feast of St Thomas the Apostle, 3 July 2008, I was struck by the Jewishness of this Mass. The Mass was led by Keralan Carmelite priest Father Thomas Mathacheril. There is a far greater use of a cantor and more involvement of the people than in a typical Catholic Mass. This is to be expected if the Keralan church dates itself back to St Thomas in 52CE.

more pluralistic missionary endeavour than had been seen to date. The sixteenth century may be the century of the great Jesuit missionaries – but it is also the century of the Protestant Reformation, the English Reformation and the Counter reformation. The sixteenth century saw great moments of missionary endeavour and achievement – but it also saw the involvement of the Church in some infamous events such as the destruction of the Incan empire and most of its people. A similar fate befell the Aztecs in Central America and even in the south-western areas of North America, although there the Spanish were forced to flee.[44]

It is tempting to attempt to quarantine the missionaries and their work from the explorations and conquests of their countrymen, but such an approach is unrealistic. In his division of the world between Spain and Portugal in 1493 – 4, Pope Alexander VI had not only conferred exclusive trading rights but he had also quite clearly delineated the responsibility of each nation to proselytise the Indigenous people and to convert them to Christianity.[45] Not only did that mean that most exploratory expeditions – whether designed for territorial conquest or commercial exploitation – were accompanied by their missionary priests, but in many instances (if not most) the explorers themselves were motivated by a powerful sense of exploring – and even conquering – in the name of God. Although the excesses which the Augustinian monk, Martin Luther, saw in Rome provoked him into writing his Thirty Nine Theses and thus the beginning of what he saw as a Reformation of the Roman Church, at the same time equally devout men were sailing the globe and amassing treasures, while their companions were 'converting the heathen' in the name of their church. Arguably, the Protestant Reformation and the English Reformation were serious 'diplomatic incidents' within what had hitherto been an apparently united Church. The Counter Reformation was the response of the institutional Roman Catholic Church to the challenges.[46] The Inquisition, hitherto having devolved into a series of regional 'inquisitions' was, in 1542, reorganised by Pope Paul III as the Congregation of the Holy Office.[47] This new body was given oversight of the Inquisitions.

[44] Neil, pp. 168-170.
[45] See for example a film such as *The Mission* (Joffé/Bolt. Warner Brothers, 1986) which explores both the passion and the trauma of Jesuit missionaries in South America.
[46] Dowley, pp. 410-428.
[47] Dowley, pp. 410 – 428.

Although the Pope was and is the titular Prefect of this body, he delegated this role to one of the cardinals. The Inquisition was primarily the responsibility of the Dominicans. Its fundamental function was and is to seek out and eradicate heresy and heretics.[48] Today it is part of the Curia, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.[49] Its role within the Roman Church is still to seek and destroy heresy and heretics. The other significant event of the sixteenth century, as alluded to previously, was the founding by the Basque Ignatius of Loyola in 1540 of the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits, who were to be directly at the service of the Pope.[50] Among the founding Jesuits were Ignatius himself, Francis Xavier, Matteo Ricci and Robert de Nobili, all of whom became notable missionaries.[51] All of these were to contribute significantly to the Christian missionary cause and both Francis Xavier and Matteo Ricci are credited with developing modern mission.[52]

The 1540s seem to be a crucial period in the history of western Christian missionary activity. Not only did the decade see the formal foundation of the Jesuits – and the almost immediate missionary endeavour of many of them, but the impact of other missionaries such as the Franciscans, Augustinians and Dominicans on colonial Portuguese and Spaniards settlers was possibly more notable than their successes in converting Indigenous peoples. As has already been suggested, many of the Roman dioceses and bishoprics which were created in Asia, the Americas and North Africa had more to do with bolstering national political claims than with the spread of Christianity. Nevertheless the influence of the church was not entirely insignificant in terms of affecting the lives of

[48] Albert van Helden, 'The Galileo Project', Rice University 1995. 'In 1616 these consultants [of the Inquisition] gave their assessment of the propositions that the Sun is immobile and at the centre of the universe and that the Earth moves around it, judging both to be "foolish and absurd in philosophy," and the first to be "formally heretical" and the second "at least erroneous in faith" in theology. This assessment led to Copernicus's *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* to be placed on the Index of Forbidden Books, until revised and Galileo to be admonished about his Copernicanism. It was this same body in 1633 that tried Galileo and excommunicated him. Galileo's work was not reinstated until late in the twentieth century.' "The Galileo Project", http://galileo.rice.edu/ Downloaded 27 June, 2004.

[49] The Roman Curia: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/index.htm. Downloaded 27 June, 2004

[50] Australian Jesuits. http://www.jesuit.org.au/ Downloaded 27 June, 2004.

[51] More recently the Jesuits have been seen as challenging the shortcomings of the Institutional Church as they have championed the rights of the marginalised members of society. See *The Tablet* , 21 February 2008.

[52] Neil, p. 156 and Dowley, p. 420.

Indigenous peoples. As a result of the influence of Dominican missionaries in Hispaniola (present day Haiti and the Dominican Republic – no doubt named for the influence of the early missionaries), Bartholomew Las Casas, a wealthy young Spaniard who although he had a reputation for social justice (having already been influenced by the Dominicans at the University of Salamanca), nevertheless relied on slaves on his own plantation, petitioned both King Ferdinand and the Emperor Charles V on behalf of the Indigenous people. Eventually Las Casas himself freed his slaves, gave over to a friend the management of his plantation and became a Dominican priest in Hispaniola. His petitioning of the Emperor was at least in part the reason for the *New Laws* promulgated by the Emperor Charles V in 1542 which brought a degree of protection to the native peoples who had previously been exploited. These Laws conceded 'the principle that Indians too have human rights'.[53]

Whereas the early missionary activity of the church could be characterised as primarily if not entirely motivated by the desire to spread the gospel and convert the non-Christian – or to assert the supremacy of Christianity over Islam – from the mid-sixteenth century onwards it seems reasonable to claim that missionary activity and political activity in the form of regally or nationally funded voyages of exploration and the conquest of new lands were increasingly entwined. Not only were explorers accompanied by priests but, as already mentioned, often the explorers themselves undertook their journeys with a sense of Christian mission. The late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were also significant in missionary terms for the remarkable contribution made by the Jesuits in China. Their work there and in India paved the way for Christian missionary work in Indo-China, especially in Vietnam.[54]

[53] Neill, p.172.
[54] http://www.jesuit.org.au/

Left: **Matteo Ricci SJ and fellow Jesuit missionary in China.**
Source:
http://www.companysj.com/v243.htm

Below: **St Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits)**
Source:
www.romeofthewest.com2007/07

By the time the last Jesuits were finally expelled from China in 1951,[55] their contribution to Chinese culture and particularly to science had been immense, notwithstanding the fact that in 1948 some 120 Jesuits still languished in Chinese jails. Francis Xavier SJ began his missionary activity in India before moving via the Spice Islands to Japan. Matteo Ricci SJ and a companion received permission from the Chinese Emperor to settle in Chaoch'ing in 1583. Here, as elsewhere, the Jesuits generally adopted the view that 'in all possible ways, especially in external matters, missionaries and Christians must adapt themselves to local

[55] Jesuits California Province. http://www.jesuitscalifornia.org/NETCOMMUNITY/Page.aspx?&pid=473&srcid=519 and the Church Missionary Society http://www.cms-uk.org/Whoweare/History/CMStimeline/tabid/184/Default.aspx Downloaded 10 March, 2008.

custom and prejudice'.[56] Not all of course agreed. There is in fact a record of an argument between Alessandri Valigano SJ and the Jesuit Visitator who, on visiting the Jesuits' Japanese mission in 1579, found disagreement from the mission superior as to whether the missionaries should dress in silk (as the Japanese did) or cotton.[57] After many attempts to reach Peking, Ricci, who had made a name for himself as a cartographer, horologist, mathematician and scientist, was summoned by the Emperor to fix a clock that had been given to him by the Jesuits. None of his own people could fix it but Ricci was able to. Finally, perhaps as a reward for his services to the Emperor, in 1601 Ricci and his companion were allowed to live permanently in Nanking where he died nine years later. Ricci and the later Jesuits such as Verbeist and Schall von Bell also added to the standing of the Jesuits in China by their contributions to science, mathematics, astronomy and geography. Unlike most Westerners in Chinese eyes, they were regarded as men of culture.[58] They adopted Chinese dress, learnt the language and absorbed the culture. By the time Ricci died in 1610 it was estimated that there were 2000 members of the Christian church and three of their most significant Chinese converts had established missions in their own home towns. In 1711, when all other missionaries were expelled from China, only the Jesuits were allowed to remain. Their continuing presence was not without its trials however. Periodic persecution of the Jesuits and their converts was common. However, even today it is possible to find their well-preserved – and indeed honoured – tombs in the centre of Beijing. Most significant among them are the headstones of Matteo Ricci, Ferdinand Verbeist and Johann Adam Schall von Bell. Elsewhere in the same cemetery are the grave markers of a further sixty Jesuits, mostly from Europe but also some Chinese Jesuits.

[56] Neil, p. 157.
[57] Neil, p. 157.
[58] Dowley, p. 471.

This old map of the Beijing shows the communities and works of the French and Portuguese Jesuits and, to the west outside the walls of the old city, the Jesuit cemetery
Source: www.companysj.com/v193/map.jpeg

Left: **Grave marker for Br Pierre Frappiere SJ. who died in 1703**

Right: **Grave marker for Fr Chen Shengxui SJ (which also gives his western religious name as Fr Francis Regis). He died in 1776.**

Source: www.companysj.com/v193/map.jpeg

While these Jesuits were at work in China, others of their number began work in Vietnam and in Africa. By the mid-seventeenth century the Jesuits were also working as missionaries in Paraguay where they gathered the local people into self-contained and self-sustaining settlements called *reductions*[59] or missionary villages. Their aim was to protect and defend the people from the predations of the settlers as well as to Christianise them. This experiment, which became the model for Jesuit missions elsewhere, finally collapsed in the eighteenth century. Meanwhile the seventeenth century also saw, for the first time, the appearance of

[59] Dowley, p. 421.

Protestant Christians bringing the gospel with them as they pioneered new sea routes – especially the Dutch as they explored the sea route along the Indian coast and across the Indian Ocean towards the Spice Islands. This century also saw the first notable missionary activity by Catholic women as a number of Ursuline nuns, led by the Frenchwoman Mary of the Incarnation, set out for Canada and established themselves in Montreal.[60] The presence of religious women was in future to be an important element of Catholic missions. Although new mission enterprises were usually established by priests (perhaps supported by Brothers of the same order), the essential works of education and health were usually left until women, nuns, usually from a sister order arrived at the mission field to undertake such work. Certainly in the case of Gsell's establishment of his mission on Bathurst Island the education and health work followed the arrival of the sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH).[61]

From the eighteenth century onwards, missionary activity becomes increasingly an activity of Protestant Christians as well as Roman Catholics. Once again, although many of these missionary activities were almost inextricably linked with national expansion and either colonisation or commercial expansion, increasingly individual Christians offered themselves for missionary work. Although the purposes of those who initiated or funded such missionary activity may have been multi-faceted, many of the missionaries themselves were more single-minded. For the likes of Danish, Moravian, English and Scottish missionaries it was the same gospel imperative that had impelled the early apostles which compelled them into missionary work.[62] Unlike many of the earlier missionaries these men (and they were almost exclusively men), like the Jesuits before them, saw as an integral part of their work learning the language

[60] Neil, p. 201.
[61] Francis X Gsell, *The Bishop with 150 Wives*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1956, p. 63ff .
[62] For example, when the Presbyterian Church of Australia decided to respond to the request of the Queensland Government to establish a mission for Aborigines at Mapoon, the Queensland branch of the Presbyterian Church 'didn't want to know' and so the national Church invited the Moravians to send missionaries to begin the mission on behalf of the Presbyterian church. The mission, always under the control of the Presbyterian Church, was later staffed by Presbyterians of the Australian Inland Mission. This would seem to set a precedent in the confusion that can be caused by mission activity: Australian Aborigines evangelised by German Moravians on behalf of the Australian Presbyterians (from a Scottish background!). Information derived from conversations with Julie Watts, whose father Rev. John Watts ministered at Mapoon for AIM, and with Rev Stephen Orme, Uniting Church Minister from Darwin Memorial Uniting Church, who began his ministry in North Queensland. 9 March 2008.

and culture of the people among whom they laboured. As a result missionaries – particularly the Protestant missionaries – began to learn native languages and to attempt early translations of parts of Scripture. Their work was then built upon by subsequent generations of missionaries. By the end of the eighteenth century there was scarcely any region of the world which had not been reached by missionaries.

Missionary activity not only had its impact on the life and culture of the countries and peoples to which missionaries were sent but, increasingly also on the sending countries. By the turn of the century, from 1787-1807 particularly, this burgeoning mission activity was having its impact on the culture and accepted mores of at least some of the 'sending countries'. In England, for example, the Clapham Sect,[63] an influential group of Evangelical Anglicans, themselves influenced by the work of missionaries in Africa and the West Indies, began working to bring about the end of the slave trade. While they did not succeed in the total abolition of slavery itself (as practised in the Americas and elsewhere) their influence did nevertheless halt the slave trade – or English involvement in the slave trade – in 1807. Perhaps as a result of the ideas of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, Christian missionaries were almost imperceptibly interweaving matters of belief and what today would be seen as social justice. So the core values of the faith was being overlaid or underpinned by particular cultural beliefs, interpretations and practices which were valued by the missionaries. There is of course, potentially at least, an inherent conflict here as an incoming (or, some might say an invading) culture may run entirely counter to the Indigenous culture into which the missionaries are interposing themselves. One of the most lasting influences of almost all missionary activity of course was its Eurocentrism. Ironically, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, it is those countries which were traditionally the missionised countries that have now becoming the sending countries. One has only to look at the Roman Catholic Church's rapid and continuing growth in South East Asia, the Philippines and Africa to see the contrast with the declining numbers in the West. It is no longer uncommon for immigrant communities with Australia to have a

[63] G.R. Balleine, *A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England*. London: Church Book Room Press, 1951, pp. 115 – 125.

priest from their own culture as a parish priest. Indigenous people have yet to achieve that goal – and one could argue that it is the cultural hurdles that are likely to continue to prevent that – but, increasingly, their priests are also coming from non-European backgrounds, be they Vietnamese, Filipino or from Papua New Guinea as is currently the case in the Northern Territory.

The traditions of missionary activity, then, particularly in the Roman Catholic tradition have changed little over the centuries. The MSC missionaries in the Northern Territory who come at the end of this tradition are, to a greater or lesser extent, inheritors of the tradition and therefore bound by it. In later chapters it will become obvious from these men's stories and from MSC archival documents that not only does the traditional model of missionary activity with the church (the priest), school and health clinic (the nuns) being central to the work still continue up to the time of the devolution of the Northern Territory Missions into Indigenous communities, but the traditional gaps in understanding between the sending bodies – usually Provincial Councils – and the missionaries on the ground appear again and again. Noel Loos makes the point that often the people in the pews (as well as the hierarchies) of the sending churches had little understanding of, or sympathy with, those who went out as missionaries to the Indigenous peoples of Australia.[64] The history of missionary activity in Australia is one of the interweaving of missions as agents of conversion to the Christian faith and, increasingly, of religion – including missions and missionaries – being used as a regulating and civilising mechanism to maintain the good governance of the colonies. The next chapter considers the changes in the universality of traditional belief wrought by such events as the French Revolution and the beginnings of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in response to the rising tide of secularism in Europe.

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[64] Noel Loos, *White Christ Black Cross,* p. ix.

4. Portrait 1:

Jules Chevalier and the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

In 2006 the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart celebrated their centenary of service to the communities of the Northern Territory. In 1906, after four priestless years following the departure of the Jesuits, the Catholic community of Darwin and the Northern Territory welcomed Father Francis Xavier Gsell, a Missionary of the Sacred Heart, who had been appointed by Rome after requests from Cardinal Moran that some mission to the Aborigines be reinstituted. Through Gsell, who had been born in Alsace Lorraine in 1872, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart had a link with their founder Jules Chevalier. Gsell left the Northern Territory in 1949, a few years prior to Father John Leary beginning his work in the missions there. Nevertheless his retirement to the Kensingston monastery in Sydney meant that he was still a significant presence in the Order until his death in 1960. Although their mission service took place under the episcopates of John O'Loughlin MSC and Ted Collins MSC, Leary's life, together with those of Brother Ted Merritt who arrived in 1966 and Brother Gerry Burke who arrived in 1975, provide a line of connection from the founder of the MSCs to the present. The Bishop of Darwin, Ted Collins MSC, submitted his resignation to the Holy See in March 2006[1] and, although Leary and Merritt had already retired, they remain based in Darwin and so, for the time being will continue to provide that thread of continuity to the presence of the MSCs in the Territory.

Each of the numerous Roman Catholic religious congregations has its own founder and 'charism'[2] or special contribution to make to the life of the Church. This special contribution is seen as being a gift of the Holy Spirit for the good of the church. The Order of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart was founded at

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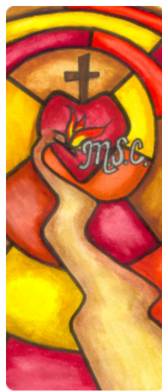
[1] Bishop Collins MSC reached the age of 75, the statutory age of retirement of bishops in the Roman Catholic Church in March 2006. His resignation was not accepted until early in 2007. His successor, Bishop Eugene Hurley, formerly of Port Pirie Diocese, was appointed in August 2007.

[2] A charism is a gift freely given by God to a person or community, for the good and service of others in bringing about the Kingdom of God. Religious communities seek to live the charism which is received through their founders as God's gift to the Church. www.vocations.ca Downloaded 15 March, 2006

Issoudun, France, by Father Jules Chevalier in 1854.[3] The thirty year old priest was then curate of the town and was deeply concerned about the social conditions of his parishioners, as well as their state of spiritual health. His Order, called in Latin the **Missionarii Sacratissimi Cordis Jesu,** was recognised in 1869 by Pope Pius IX, who directed the men to foreign mission work. This was in accord with Chevalier's own vision for his Order. By 1881 the MSCs were in the South Pacific, where they still work today. In 1882, with Marie-Louise Hartzer, Chevalier cofounded the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun. These nuns dedicated themselves to educational, hospital, and missionary work. The OLSH (Our Lady of the Sacred Heart)and FDNSC (the French title of the OLSH sisters: Les Filles de Notre Sacre Coeur) sisters, while having their own educational and nursing work, often work alongside the MSCs in their missions around the world. Chevalier's particular religious focus was his devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which honours Christ's heart as the symbol of his love for the world. Indeed the 'motto' of the MSCs and their sister order is, today, 'May the heart of Jesus be everywhere loved'.[4]



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These are two of the typical contemporary images of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

Source: http://misacor.org.au

One of the challenges of exploring the life and work of the MSC missionaries is that, since their ministries at least theoretically reflect the charism of their Order and its founder, it would be helpful to be able to explore Jules Chevalier's life in some detail. But, until recently, there has been very little detail to be found in the

[3] MSC (Australia)Vocations. http://mscvoc.customer.netspace.net.au/jules.htm Downloaded 15 March, 2006.
[4] http://misacor.org.au Downloaded 14 March, 2008.
[5] The current web page logo of the MSC Australia. .http://misacor.org.au Downloaded 14 March, 2008.
[6] The typical insignia of the MSC priests and brothers. http://misacor.org.au Downloaded 14 March, 2008.

public domain. Chevalier himself wrote two books – in French, obviously – in 1863 and 1886, but the only subsequent writing or information about him was the little that one can glean from occasional sermons by MSC priests such as Father Bob Irwin, the then Provincial Superior of the MSCs in Australia,[7] on the occasion of the sesquicentenary of the foundation of the MSCs in 1854 or the late Bishop E. J. Cuskelly MSC who has written about both Chevalier and the order. The writings of Fr Charles Piperon, Jules Chevalier's contemporary, on the life of the founder were published internally in 1993.[8] The occasion of the Order's sesquicentenary in 2004, also prompted the publication of some small booklets for circulation within the MSC order which reflected on the charism, history and present experience of the order worldwide.[9] Apart from these, and despite the fact that some of the MSC priests and brothers have written various things, very few of these texts reflect on the charism of the order or its impact on the lives of the MSC men. Very few of the MSCs, in fact, seem to be particularly aware of Chevalier's charism, nor of its links with Ignatian spirituality.[10] Nonetheless this chapter relies heavily on the contemporary information which derives from Piperon, one of Chevalier's earliest companions. Cuskelly describes Piperon as 'a genuinely humble man intensely devoted to Father Chevalier and his work. He was to be in many ways, through word and writing, the best interpreter of Father Chevalier's ideas and spirit; he was to work loyally with him all his life. … Chevalier referred to him as "the dear and venerated Father Piperon … Pious, good, zealous, charitable and fearing neither work nor privations"'.[11]

Christine Gordon, who has written a biography of Brother John Pye, another MSC missionary, reportedly found it difficult to extract from Pye more than a sense that he 'wanted to do something for the people – nothing to do with the

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[7] Homily Delivered by Father Bob Irwin MSC at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church, Randwick 'On the occasion of the Year of Celebration for the Sesquicentenary of the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart', 14 March, 2004. http://misacor.org.au Downloaded 14 March, 2006.

[8] Charles Piperon MSC, *Writings on the Life of the Founder, Jules Chevalier*. Fontes MSC Series ll. Rome: Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, 1993. (Presentation and notes by Jen Bertolini MSC. Translated by Sisters Benigna Moore & Gerarda Kennedy FDNSC).

[9] Fascicles 1: *Thanks*; Fascicle 2: *Whom Shall I send?* and Fascicle 3:*On the journey.* Rome: Missionaries of the Sacred Heart General Administration, 2004.

[10] Spirituality or theological thinking based on and deriving from that of St Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits.

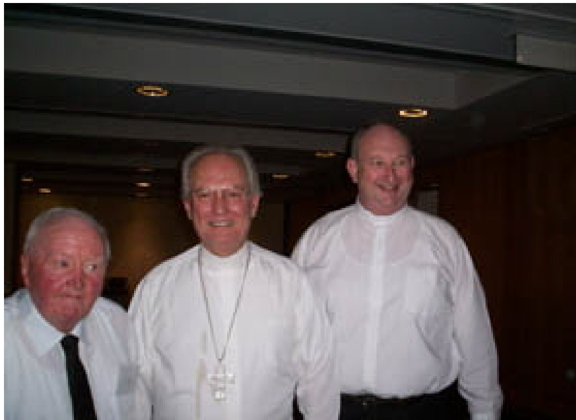
[11] E J Cuskelly, *Man with a Mission: Jules Chevalier*. Rome: Casa Generalizia Missionari Del Sacro Cuore, 1975, pp. 29 – 30.

Church really – people are the Church'.[12] Rather than any great sense of vocation, for Pye it seemed to be more a sense of adventure, coupled with the idea of service. It is this attitude which is also reflected in Pye's writings. Brother Pye has chronicled the history of the various MSC mission foundations of the Northern Territory and, while his is the most complete record of these missions, they too read more like adventure stories than accounts of religious undertakings. For the religious focus one needs to read the works of Father Frank Flynn MSC. But even in his writings there is little sense of the charism of Jules Chevalier. His focus is far more consistent with a traditional view of 'church building'. Father Leary MSC, who has written significantly about the Aborigines particularly of Port Keats and Daly River, conveys more of a sense of vocation in his writings and Brothers Merritt and Burke also seem to have a clear sense of vocation as their motivation for what they do, although this is not often spoken about. In a recent book by Father Peter Hearn MSC,[13] which deals with the missions in the period of Bishop O'Loughlin,[14] there is again much valuable information about the development of the missions and of O'Loughlin's philosophy of missions – but little sense of any link to any specific charism or theology of the MSCs or their founder. During a conversation with the Administrator[15] of St Mary's Cathedral, Darwin, Father John Kelliher MSC, and the current Northern Territory MSC Superior, Father Malcom Fyfe, both commented that they were not surprised that there was not much sense of connection to the founder since, even within the order, there had been little emphasis on this or other aspects of MSC history or theological orientation during the time that Leary, Merritt and Burke would have been seminarians.[16] The reconnection with a sense of their history and that of their founder seems to have been a post Vatican II phenomenon, and even then it seems that only a relatively few MSCs have developed a sense of their own order's history.

[12] Christine Gordon, *Punderdelime*, p. 11.
[13] Peter Hearn MSC, *A Theology of Mission.*
[14] Bishop O'Loughlin was also an MSC.
[15] The Administrator of the Cathedral is effectively the priest in charge of a Cathedral parish. Technically the Parish Priest is the Bishop, but the day to day work of the parish falls to the Administrator.
[16] Conversation with Fathers John Kelliher and Malcolm Fyfe MSC, St Mary's Cathedral, Darwin, December 2005.

Brother Rexford John Pye MSC celebrates his 100th birthday at St John's College, Darwin. December 28, 2006.
Sharing the celebrations are two Tiwi Islanders and Sister Emmanuel OLSH from Wadeye.

Photo. W Beresford-Maning



Left – right: **Father John Leary MSC, Papal Nuncio Archbishop Ambrose De Paoli, and Fr Stephen Hackett MSC, Vicar General at Centenary Parliamentary Reception, Darwin.**
August 2006.

Photo: Catholic Diocese Darwin.

By 1885 Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were already living and working in Australia almost independently of their French foundation. Soon after his ordination to the priesthood in 1896, Gsell arrived in Sydney in 1897 with three MSC companions, destined for the mission fields of New Guinea. He spent six years serving on MSC missions in Papua[17] before being sent to the Northern Territory as Apostolic Administrator[18] in 1906. Gsell himself had expected to return to Papua but, when Father Treand,[19] then Provincial Superior of the Australasian MSCs,[20] asked him to go to Northern Australia instead, 'since [he] knew of no difference between a Papuan and an Australian Aboriginal, he

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[17] Ann Thomson RSM., *NT Dreaming*, p. 17. See also, FX Gsell, *The Bishop with 150 Wives,* p. 16.

[18] An Apostolic Administrator is a person 'appointed by the Pope to serve in a leadership role for a Diocese that either has no Bishop (an apostolic administrator sede vacante) or, in very rare cases, has an incapacitated bishop (apostolic administrator sede plena). This person serves in that role until such time that a Bishop is chosen for the Diocese. The Apostolic Administrator has most of the same duties and powers of a Bishop'. "Catholic Church". www.catholic-church.org. Downloaded 14 March 2006.

[19] Father Treand was a Swiss MSC, from Hermance near Lausanne. Gsell, p.16.

[20] The Australian Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart was established as a separate entity in December 1905.

offered no objection'.[21] Having re-established a priestly presence in Darwin from 1906 to 1911, Gsell then moved from Darwin to missionary work in the Tiwi Islands in 1911. He was anxious to move from Darwin to the Tiwi Islands because, as a missionary, he felt that his 'first care was to the natives and one might not call Darwin a native centre … although there were half castes living within a dwindling population of Chinese …'.[22] He remained there until 1938 when he returned to Darwin as its Bishop. Gsell was the guiding force behind the establishment of both the missions in the Tiwi Islands (Nguiu and Garden Point), as well as those at Port Keats (Wadeye) and Arltunga (now Santa Teresa).[23] Quite apart from matters of distance, communication difficulties and the day to day preoccupations of the missionaries, which might have effectively cut the Australian MSCs off from their French roots, life in France at the time was also far from settled. Not only that but within three years of Gsell's move to the Tiwi Islands, World War I overtook the world, effectively cutting the Australian Province off from its roots in Issoudun, France.

Chevalier had been born less than 50 years after the French Revolution and the French Church was in a parlous state, as were any number of pre-Revolutionary institutions. Nineteenth century France also saw ongoing political and social upheavals with struggles to establish democracy; to restore or destroy the monarchy; the 1848 revolution; the 1871 Commune; the Third Republic[24] and so on. By the time of his death in 1907, Chevalier had lived through turbulent times and the impending World War would soon also engulf his men, particularly in Europe. All of these aspects served effectively to isolate the Australasian MSCs from the foundation at Issoudun, despite the fact that the early Provincials of the Australasian province were either Swiss or German. Father Treand, the Provincial Superior who appointed Gsell was, as previously mentioned, Swiss. The other significant early figure in the Australian Province was Father Vandel whose relationship with the order was not without incident. By the time Gsell

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[21] Gsell, p. 16.
[22] Gsell, p.17.
[23] Thomson and Niall, p. 19.
[24] J. M. Roberts, *A History of Europe*. Oxford: Helicon Publishing, 1996, p. 311 ff.

reached the Northern Territory – then also an isolated outpost – the founder, Jules Chevalier, was in his last year of life. He died on 21October 1907.[25]

In many ways the life and experience of Jules Chevalier typified the turmoil of post-Revolutionary France. Chevalier ascribed the first real break with the dominance of the Church to Descartes (1596-1650) who allowed that reason and reason alone was the basis of all science. For Descartes, truth was to be established by using logical deduction to explore an evident intuition. After Liberty, Reason was one of the key pillars of the French Revolution.[26] 'Reason opposed to revelation: therein is the root of the upheaval'.[27] It appears, however, that Chevalier remained aloof from the on-going turmoil of pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary France. Although Chevalier was born on 15 March 1824,[28] a generation after the Revolution, the social, political and intellectual turmoil that had precipitated it was still rife in France. The Revolution saw an ill-defined split in the Church hierarchy, with the princes of the church tending to support and defend the monarchy while the lower clergy were often active in the meetings of the 'États Generaux' (the Three Classes) which marked the beginnings of the Revolution and which influenced the passage of early Revolutionary laws such as the Abolition of Privileges.[29] Father Jean Tostain MSC presents a picture of the clergy as being 'poor, generous and selfless' like the Cure of Ars[30] who, like Frederick Ozanam,[31] would later influence Chevalier. It was, he says, a time of clerical renewal.[32] And yet at the same time many of the clergy remained deeply committed to monarchical rule because to them it alone was ordained by God and it alone was capable of maintaining the divine law which they saw as a guarantee of stability, as opposed to the random 'law' of democracy.[33]

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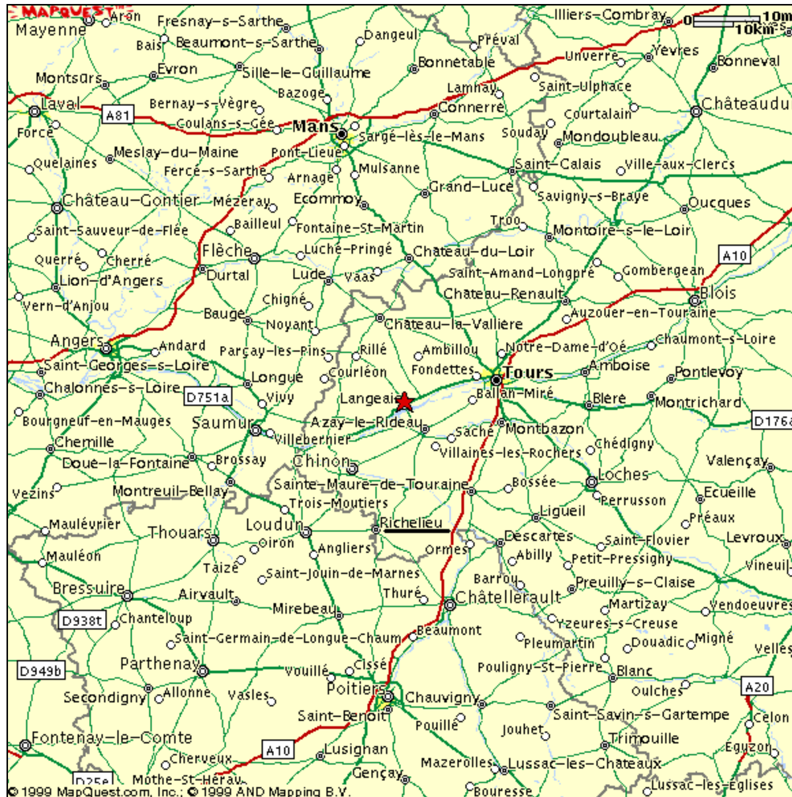
[25] http://misacor.org.au Downloaded 14 March, 2008.
[26] Father Jean Tostain MSC, 'Father Chevalier and his times.' (tr Father Ray Deisburg MSC) Paper given at the General Chapter Issoudun, September 1999. p. 3.
[27] Tostain, p. 3
[28] Jules Chevalier. (2008). Encyclopædia Britannica Online: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/109845/Jules-Chevalier. Downloaded 14 March 2008.
[29] Tostain. p. 5.
[30] Tostain, p. 5.
[31] Parisian scholar Frederick Ozanam founded the St Vincent de Paul Society.
[32] Tostain, p. 5.
[33] Tostain, p. 5.



Map of the Langeais region of France, showing Chevalier's birthplace of Richelieu, south of Paris. Issoudun lies to the north-east of Richelieu.

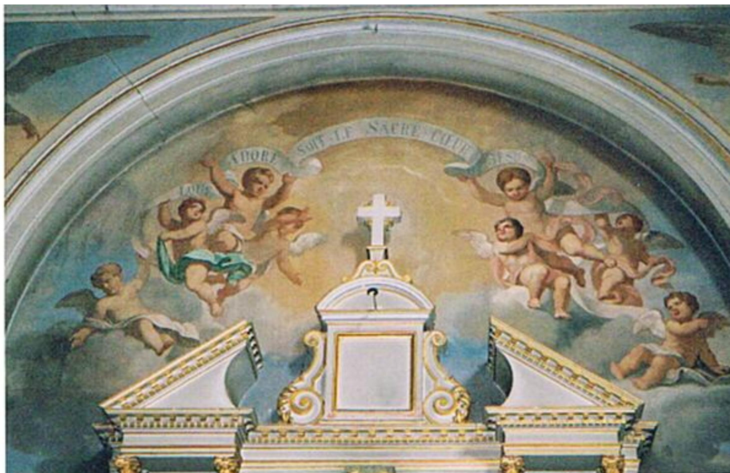
There is no record of Chevalier's having defended the concept of the monarchy, but neither is there any evidence that he identified with the Republicans. On a personal level Chevalier's experience also reflected the greater experience of France. Born in his parents' house at the corner of Rue du Cigne and Route de Loudun, near the wheat market in Richelieu[34] in the Loire valley on March 15, 1824, Jules was the third, and somewhat unwelcome, child of a poor baker, Jean-Charles Chevalier and his wife Louise (née Ory). The town of Richelieu, which was some 200 kilometres southwest of Paris, itself in many ways symbolised the France into which the young Chevalier was born. Built initially to service the palace of the prince of Richelieu, the town was perhaps one of the earliest modern examples of a planned housing estate. During the Revolution Richelieu's church had been transformed into a 'temple of Reason' and then left virtually ruined.[35] Indeed, of the town as the young Chevalier came to know it, only the Chateau, confiscated during the Revolution, remained standing. The rest of the town had been reduced to rubble, the stones being sold to the highest bidder.[36]

34 Piperon, p. 26.
35 Tostain, p. 1.
36 Tostain, p. 2.

For the rest of his life Richelieu would represent for Chevalier the dilemma of a society which had lost its landmarks.[37] But Richelieu was merely reflecting the state of revolutionary and post-revolutionary France in microcosm.

The Catholic Church at Richelieu.

Photo: John Kelliher MSC.



Lady Chapel at Richelieu.

Photo: John Kelliher MSC.

Chevalier's parents married in 1811. At the time of their marriage his father was twenty eight years old and his mother eighteen. Jules Chevalier's father was a nominal Catholic, worn down by poverty. Jean Charles Chevalier had been destined for a liberal profession but poverty – possibly as a result of the Revolution – forced him into trade. He started a grain business before becoming a baker, but the business was not particularly successful. The family had little more than the bare necessities of life.[38] The couple's first two children were

[37] Tostain, p. 2.
[38] Cuskelly, p. 18.

Charles and Louise.[39] Already struggling to survive, Jean Charles in particular, saw the third child as an added burden. Piperon remarks that 'it is even said that, more than once, the mother had to suffer from her husband's anger'[40] on account of the child's existence. Jules's mother worked at the market to try to add to the meagre family income. On one occasion, Piperon records,[41] Mme Chevalier was delayed longer than usual at the market and the infant Jules, no doubt feeling neglected, began to cry loudly. At about the same time her husband, aggravated by having to wait for his dinner, arrived on the scene and reproached her. Discouraged by the angry husband, the distressed child, and her own weariness Louise, we are told, 'became deeply discouraged. She took refuge, with Jules, in the church but he continued to cry. The exasperated mother placed the baby on the chancel steps saying "Take him, O Blessed Virgin. If he always going to give me as much trouble as today, you can have him and do what you like with him"'.[42] Needless to say, Mme Chevalier calmed down and went back to retrieve her son. Piperon suggests that this incident led to Jules being taken under the particular care of the Virgin Mary. 'From the time the child's intelligence began to develop he showed a true devotion to his heavenly Mother. When he was still very young he could be seen kneeling at her altar, sometimes gazing at her and praying, sometimes looking at the Tabernacle. At school he was always remarkable for his piety, his good behaviour and his desire to learn'.[43]

Mme Chevalier trained the young Jules in both Christian and human values. Among other things she taught him how to 'temper the rather ardent and impetuous character that he had inherited from his father by the good humour he could learn from her and by the courage and tenacity which he saw her exercise in difficult situations'.[44] Her personal piety was also to have a great influence on the young Chevalier who expressed his desire to be a priest as early as 1836 (at the age of twelve), shortly after he had made his First Communion. Like most Roman Catholic boys he was an altar boy, serving on the Altar at Mass.[45] His

[39] Cuskelly, p. 18
[40] Piperon, p. 27.
[41] Piperon, p. 28.
[42] Piperon, p. 28.
[43] Piperon, p. 28.
[44] Cuskelly, p. 19.
[45] Piperon, p. 29.

family, however, could not afford to send him to the seminary and instead he was apprenticed to a shoemaker. Jules thus applied himself to the making and repairing of shoes as a means of earning and saving the money necessary to pay his own way through religious training. At the same time he was already trying to prepare himself for the priesthood. Such was his commitment to a priestly future that, at this time, he remained aloof from the pastimes of his fellows. He eschewed drinking wine in cafes in favour of studying Latin in whatever free time he had. This of course laid him open to teasing from his peers but he usually handled their laughter with aplomb. When one of the servants in the shoemaker's household, however, took it upon himself to lash out at Chevalier after a time of consistent unpleasantness, Chevalier's quick reflexes saw the other lad on the receiving end of a solid punch. As is often the way on such occasions, the young thug invited Chevalier to 'meet his big brother'. Nothing daunted Chevalier, asserted his lack of fear of such retaliation and was then invited to share a drink.[46]

Cuskelly records the 'only other pugilistic incident' on Chevalier's record. This time the incident occurred, of all places, in the chapel of the Minor Seminary. Jules, kneeling in prayer, fell victim to a couple of fellow seminarians that liked to tease newcomers. They pushed him a couple of times until he lost his balance and fell forward on his hands. Then one of them pushed him a third time. This time Jules turned around and gave his assailant a resounding slap on the face – with sufficient force that his tormentor never tried the trick again. Chevalier though was very remorseful about his own reaction, regarding this tendency to react to provocation as a defect he would have to master if he were to become a good priest.[47] Cuskelly comments that, although Chevalier did not believe that severity for its own sake had any special merit, he nevertheless imposed severe[48] discipline on himself as a seminarian. His reasoning apparently was that he personally needed such discipline to control his own temperament. Later in life he was at times judged to be a hard man. Cuskelly notes that perhaps he was –

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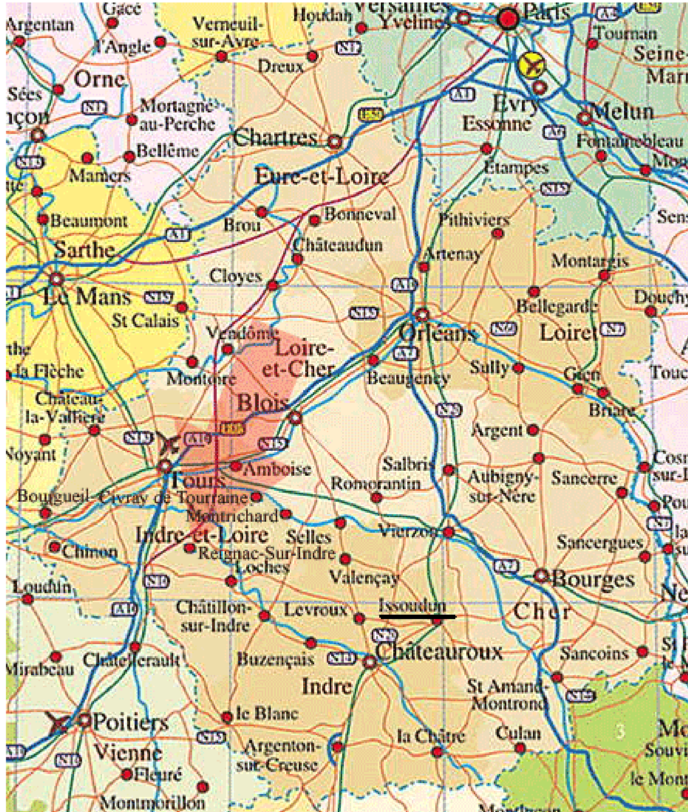
[46] Cuskelly, pp. 20 – 21.

[47] Cuskelly, pp. 20 – 21. Cuskelly cites Sadouet, Ms *Souvenirs personnels*; and Piperon, Ms *Notice sur les origines* (1899) pp. 31 – 32, quoted by Vermin, *Le Père Jules Chevalier*, Rome: Maison Généralice MSC, 1957, p. 108.

[48] Cuskelly, pp. 20 – 21.

'for to that his strength and weakness would have inclined him'[49] – or else it would again have been a case of his limits of enduring unreasonable behaviour having been tested too far.

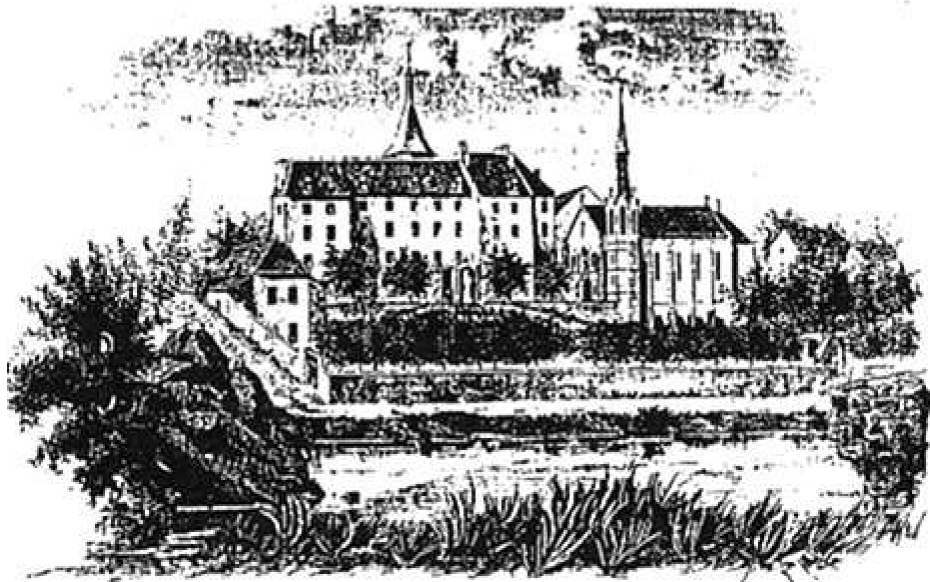


Map of part of the Loire Valley, showing the location of Issoudun. Vatan (Indre) lies to the south of Issoudun. Bourges, the site of the major seminary lies to the north east of Issoudun.

The young Chevalier's chance to enter the seminary finally came when his father accepted a job as a forest caretaker at Vatan (Indre), 21 kilometres south of Issoudun. This seemed to be a providential intervention in the family's fortunes. Monsieur Juste, the man who employed Chevalier's father was, among other things, the administrator of a tract of forests near Vatan, owned by the Benedictine Sisters.[50] At the same time as offering Jean Charles Chevalier the position of caretaker, Juste also expressed his willingness to enable Jules to enter the seminary.[51] In March 1841 the family moved to the forest caretaker's house four miles from Vatan. Each day Jules walked the four miles into town, and back again, in order to continue his Latin tuition under the guidance of the curate,

[49] Cuskelly, pp. 20-21.
[50] Piperon, p. 120.
[51] Cuskelly, pp. 18-22.

Father Deldevèse. In October 1841 Jules Chevalier finally entered the Minor Seminary of Saint-Gaultier.

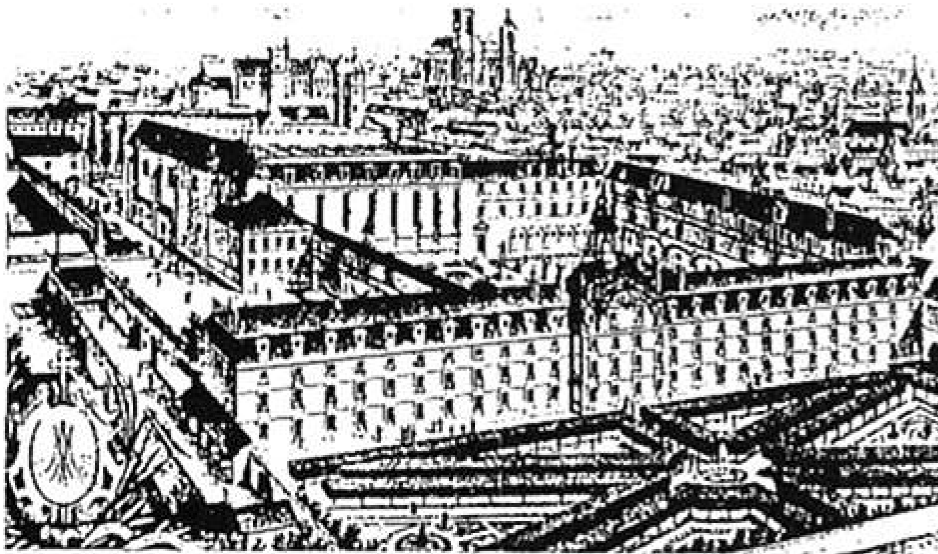


The Minor Seminary of St Gaultier.[52]
Source: MSC internal publication

Chevalier was now seventeen years old. The Minor Seminary, like the 'Juniorate' of the MSCs in Australia, was essentially a secondary school designed to educate boys in early adolescence (from the ages of about twelve to sixteen) in preparation for the Major Seminary which would be their preparation, as young adults, for priesthood. Most of the students at the Minor Seminary came from the immediate area around Berry. They were also younger than Chevalier. He was an outsider both in terms of coming from Richelieu and in terms of age. It seems that this was the only time in his life that Chevalier entertained any serious doubts about his priestly vocation.[53] Indeed Chevalier himself wrote: 'Quinze jours s'étaient à peine écoulés depuis mon arrivée que je fus saisi d'un ennui mortel et d'un profound découragement. Je voulais à tout prix rentrer dans ma famille … M. le Supérieur me conseilla d'attendre la fin de la retraite qui devait bientôt avoir lieu … Le jour fixé arriva; elle fut prêchée par un Père

[52] This and subsequent images relating to Issoudun and Jules Chevalier are taken from internal privately printed and circulated MSC documents lent to me by Father John Kelliher MSC.
[53] Cuskelly, p. 22.

Jésuite. C'est là que la grâce m'attendait. Tous mes doutes faurent dissipés; la joie revint dans mon coeur et je fus heureux.'[54]



MAJOR SEMINARY OF BOURGES (CHER)
from 1822 to 1905
Former convent of the Ursulines, and after 1905, the Law Court
(drawing by Abbé Moreux)

Source: MSC internal publication

He survived this crisis and entered the Major Seminary of Bourges in 1846, although not without some drama in his final year at the Minor Seminary. Piperon only sketches the incident, referring to a fuller account in Chevalier's own *Histoire religieuse d'Issoudun*.[55] It appears that, presumably on a winter recreational outing from the seminary, Chevalier suffered what Piperon calls 'a terrifying fall'. All those around him believed him to be dead, although Chevalier was apparently fully conscious but unable to move or speak. While he was in this state he heard the priest who accompanied them declare that he could not give Chevalier the last rites because he was already dead. In his own mind, and in this frightening situation, Chevalier was challenged as to how he would acquit himself before his Maker and Judge. This state of presumed coma lasted for

[54] '1854 – Le P. Jules Chevalier …' www.nd-sacre-coeur-org/150. Fiche 6 – page7/11. 'For the past fortnight I have experienced the depths of despair and discouragement. I have begged to return to my family … Father Superior counselled me to wait until after the Retreat which is about to take place … The day [to begin the retreat] arrived. It was being preached by a Jesuit father. It was there that God's grace awaited me. All my doubts disappeared; the joy returned to my heart and I was happy once more.' (My translation.)

[55] Piperon, pp. 31-32, citing *Histoire Religieuse d' Issoudun.* pp. 406-7.

several hours. Indeed, the undertakers reached the seminary to remove the body at about the time he recovered consciousness and the power of speech and movement.[56] From this time on the already serious Chevalier developed a severity 'which alienated him from a good number of his confreres'[57] … until on the day of his ordination to the sub-diaconate[58] he underwent a yet another change and became less stiff and taciturn. While his faith was no less passionate he himself was more gentle and approachable. For much of his life Chevalier seems to have been regarded by some as kind and gentle while others saw him as unnecessarily hard and severe. As a young seminarian, these apparently opposite characteristics are perhaps best exemplified in his setting up an informal association of fellow seminarians who shared his dream of becoming religious rather than diocesan priests – that is, priests ordained within a specific religious order and set apart for particular ministries such as missions rather than priests ordained by and answerable to the local bishop in whose diocese they are then licensed to serve. Their shared fervency, idealism and perhaps also the young Chevalier's romanticism and sense of humour were reflected in the name he chose for them: *Chevaliers du Sacré Coeur* – Knights of the Sacred Heart.[59] It was of course a play on his own name as well as a serious, if romantic, notion of their gathering together to advance the cause of Christ and the church in a time of perceived chaos and secularism. But, in his conviction that devotion to the Sacred Heart was the way to salvation from the evils of his day, Chevalier was ahead of the Catholic Church. It was not until 1856 that Pope Pius IX established the Feast of the Sacred Heart in the liturgical calendar. It was, and is, celebrated in the Roman Catholic church nineteen days after the Feast of Pentecost.[60]

Both his family and personal experience, before he entered the seminary and after, led Chevalier, not so much to involve himself in the social and political confusion of the time as to focus on what he called a 'remedy' for what he saw as

[56] Piperon, pp. 31-32 and 122- 123.
[57] Piperon, p. 34.
[58] Ordination to the sub-diaconate is the first stage in ordination for the Roman Catholic priesthood.
[59] Cuskelly, p. 10.
[60] New Advent Catholic Encyclopaedia. http://home.newadvent.org/cathen/12134b.htm Downloaded 18 July 2008. As a Marian Pope (one with a special devotion to Mary as the mother of God), Pius IX also declared the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary in 1854.

the two major evils of the time – egoism and indifference.[61] For Chevalier 'indifference'[62] meant to ignore God while 'egoism' was a selfishness which finds value only in what suits the individual without reference to anyone but himself. The 'remedy' for these evils, regardless of the political regime was, he believed fervently, to establish the reign of God.[63] For Chevalier the way to establish the reign of God was to draw people back to 'the Sacred Heart of Jesus who is nothing other than love and charity …'.[64] In his stress on bringing about the reign of God, Chevalier was probably ahead of his time and would be at home with modern theologians. His stress on the Sacred Heart, however, drew more on the medieval traditions of personal pietism and devotion which are less congruous with modern religious practice. This stress on personal devotion to the Sacred Heart as the symbol of Christ's love is one of the reasons for the difficulty in ascertaining with any clarity the way in which the charism of the order has drawn men to it both as priests and brothers. Father John Kelliher MSC suggests that, not only did the older members of the order in Australia know little about Jules Chevalier, but the idea of devotion to the Sacred Heart issued more in an emphasis on discrete works being done in the name of God than any overarching religious philosophy or theology of service.[65]

The young Jules Chevalier, after his ordination.

Source: MSC internal publication

[61] Tostain, p. 6.
[62] This definition of 'indifference' is very different from that of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, whose spirituality informed that of Chevalier and the MSCs. For Ignatius 'indifference' is the state of acceptance or balance in the spiritual life, regardless of external or internal circumstances or feelings.
[63] Tostain, p. 6.
[64] Tostain, p. 6.
[65] Conversation with Father John Kelliher MSC. Darwin, December 2005.

For Chevalier himself, the struggle to establish the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, as the order came to be called, was neither easy nor short-lived. Having graduated from the Major Seminary at Bourges and been ordained priest in 1851, his first assignment was as assistant priest in the small town of Ivoy-le-Pré in the canton of Chapelle-d'Angillon. Less than a year later he was transferred to Chatillon-sur-Indre where, as assistant priest, Father Chevalier did most of the parish work for the aging and ill parish priest. The death of this parish priest saw Chevalier moved again, to a similar situation in Aubigny-sur-Nère. Then, toward the end of his fourth year as a priest, in 1854, Chevalier was transferred to Issoudun as assistant priest.[66] Issoudun presented a special challenge to the young priest as well as a turning point. Issoudun was 'the most deprived town in the diocese' according to Piperon[67]. There were only three priests for the large parish of some 14,000 souls which had 'a reputation for religious indifference even in the old Province of Berry which at that time was not noted for religious fervour'.[68] The parishioners of Issoudun,

> if they were not totally lacking in religious belief, at least they were most indifferent to all that concerned the service of God. Through the shortage of priests since the time of the French Revolution, they were immersed in total ignorance of Christian truths. In 1793, regrettable scandals had completed the ruin of this town which had formerly been so religious. Priests and alas! religious had contracted sacrilegious marriages, and the majority of their families lived without any religious practice.[69]

Despite this, Issoudun's parish priest, Father Crozat, was esteemed by all who knew him, in both the parish and the diocese but again, like the previous parish priests to whom Chevalier had become assistant, he was in ill health. Nevertheless Father Crozat had replaced much of his active ministry in the parish with a life of constant prayer and he was to be a continuing source of support and encouragement to Chevalier as he struggled to establish his fledgling order.[70]

[66] Piperon, p. 35.
[67] Piperon, p. 36.
[68] Cuskelly, p. 11.
[69] Piperon, p. 36.
[70] Piperon, pp. 35-36.

Also at Issoudun Chevalier found that his fellow assistant priest was one Father Emile Maugenest who had been one of his companions at the seminary in Bourges. Maugenest was a man of great talent and deep prayer and he shared Chevalier's vision of establishing a religious order dedicated to the Sacred Heart.[71] Chevalier's other companion at this time was Charles Piperon. These three were to be the foundation community of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. But the foundation depended on the Archbishop of Bourges, Cardinal Dupont[72] being satisfied as to the financial viability of the undertaking. For this Chevalier and his companions had to rely on the unlikely prospect of benefactors in the largely unchristian region of Issoudun. In time such benefactors appeared.

The young priests spent all the money initially available to them to purchase a run down 'villa' at the end of 'La Place de Vouet' on the outskirts of Issoudun.[73] The property was a few hundred metres from the cemetery but included the house, a barn, stables, a garbage dump and a large ploughed field. The property had been abandoned for fifteen years and was in a state of significant disrepair. Indeed, in clearing the old garbage dump after the barn and stables had eventually been turned into a chapel, they had inadvertently removed some structural beams from the chapel and one morning they discovered that the left hand wall had collapsed and the rest of the structure was in a dangerous state. The young priests could not afford the repairs – and the Cardinal forbad them using the chapel in its life-threatening state. Nevertheless, within a fortnight a benefactor had enabled them to safely re-open the chapel.[74]

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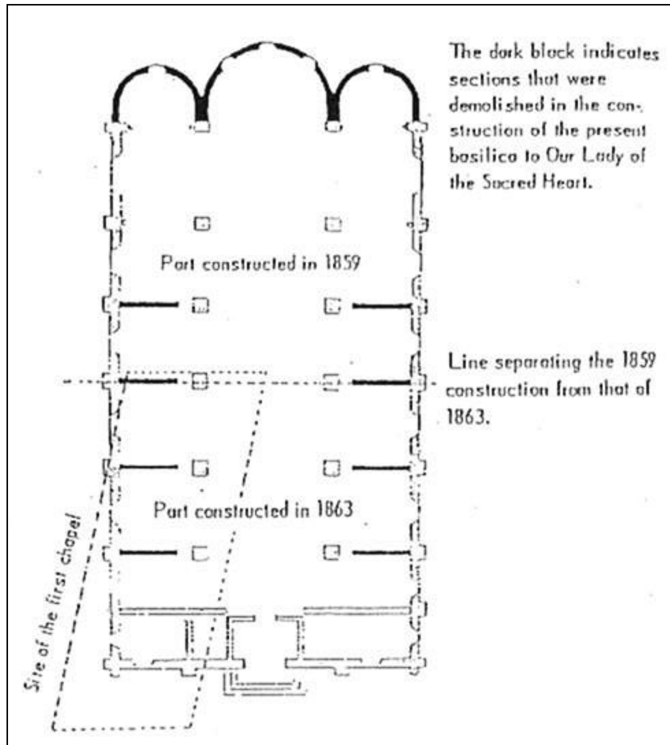
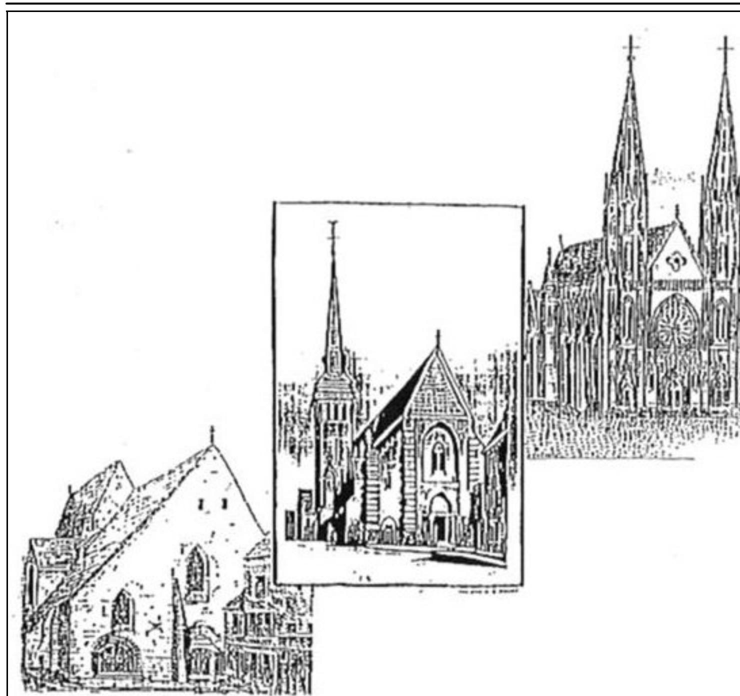
[71] Piperon, pp. 35-36.
[72] Piperon, p. 43.
[73] Piperon, p. 45.
[74] Piperon, p. 45.



This diagram shows the site of the original chapel and subsequent constructions, including areas demolished to build the present Basilica in Issoudun. The original chapel was a converted and somewhat dilapidated barn.

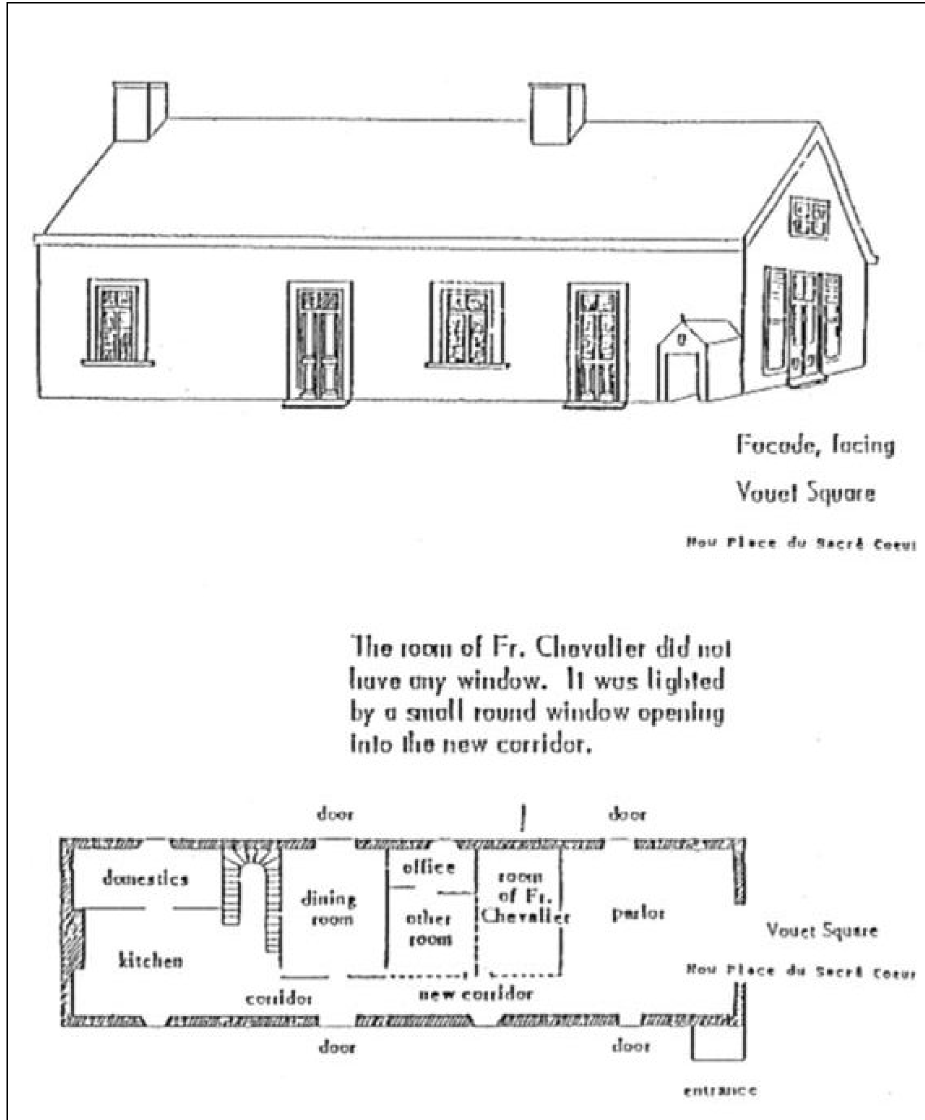
Source: MSC internal publication



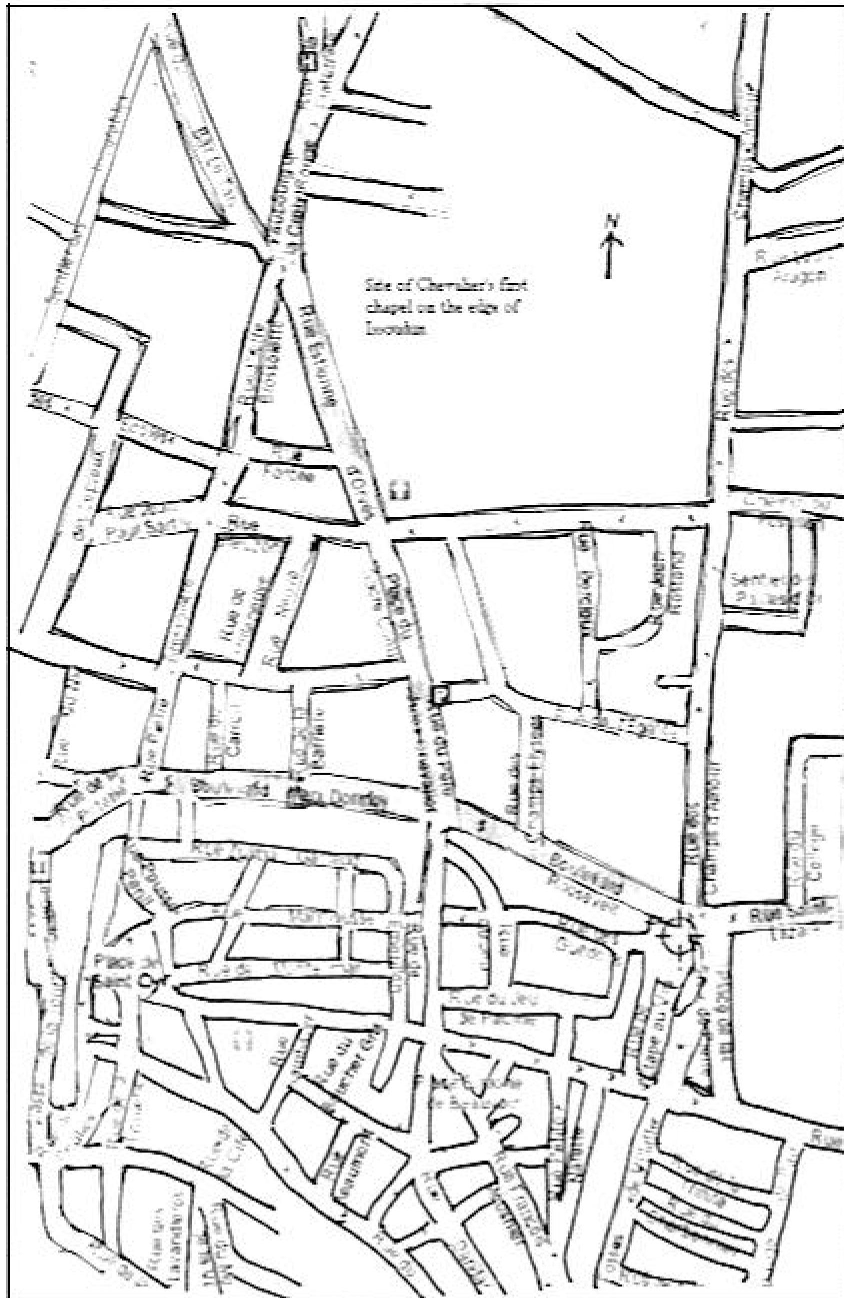
Three phases of the Basilica building of Notre Dame du Sacré Coeur, Issoudun.

L – R: **earliest to most recent.**

Source: MSC internal publication



Above: **Father Chevalier's first dwelling on the site in Issoudun. The location which was known as Vouet Square is now the Place du Sacré Coeur. This can be seen on the map of Issoudun below.** Source: MSC internal publication



Chevalier's own account records that

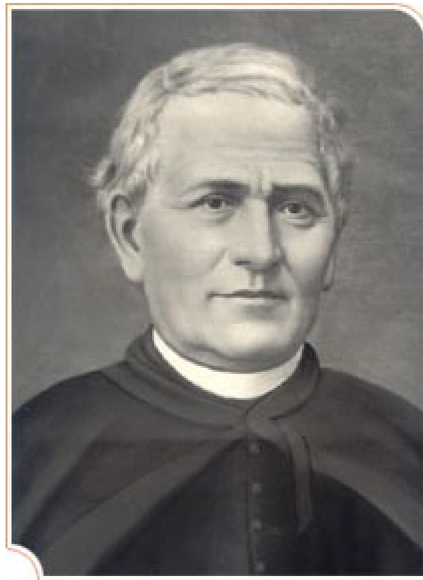
> On Sunday, September 9, 1855, the feast of the Holy Name of Mary, the missionaries were installed by His Eminence, Cardinal Dupont, Archbishop of Bourges and received the name Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.[75]

Cuskelly notes that, while Chevalier's account is correct, 'it leaves some things unsaid'.[76] The Cardinal was ill so the Vicar General of the Diocese took

[75] Cuskelly, p. 25 – citing J. Chevalier, *Notre Dame du Sacré Coeur*. 4th ed. Issoudun: Pèlegrinage, 1895, p. 4.

responsibility for the installations in his stead. Secondly, they were installed in a barn – although it was disguised as a chapel!.[77] Cuskelly, citing Sadouet and Piperon, describes the Chevalier of this time as a man who

> inspired confidence, a confidence that commanded respect.
> He was of medium height, well built, with an upright stance
> and plenty of hair. He had a pleasing appearance, a warm voice
> and spoke rather slowly. His modesty, his zeal, his careful
> attention to duty, his affable piety, and his prudence in his
> relations with others were things one noted.[78]



Father Jules Chevalier. MSC

undated photograph.

Source: www.misacor.org/newsite/english/WhoWeAre/founder_english.htm

The community that Chevalier founded at Issoudun was to be the fulfilment of his vision of a community of missionary priests who would cure the ills of the world. As Cuskelly comments, there was a deal of romanticism in this vision but it was also realistic.[79] Chevalier was convinced, from his own experience and observation, of three things in particular. They were that:

1. Parts of France, and of the world, were suffering from a lack of living faith, from indifferentism. Moral ills came in the train of this lack of faith.

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[76] Cuskelly, p. 4.
[77] Cuskelly, p. 4.
[78] Cuskelly, p. 17. Citing Sadouet, Ms *Souvenirs personnels* and Piperon, Ms *Notice sur les origines* 1899, pp. 31-32 quoted in Vermin, op cit, p. 108.
[79] Cuskelly, p. 11.

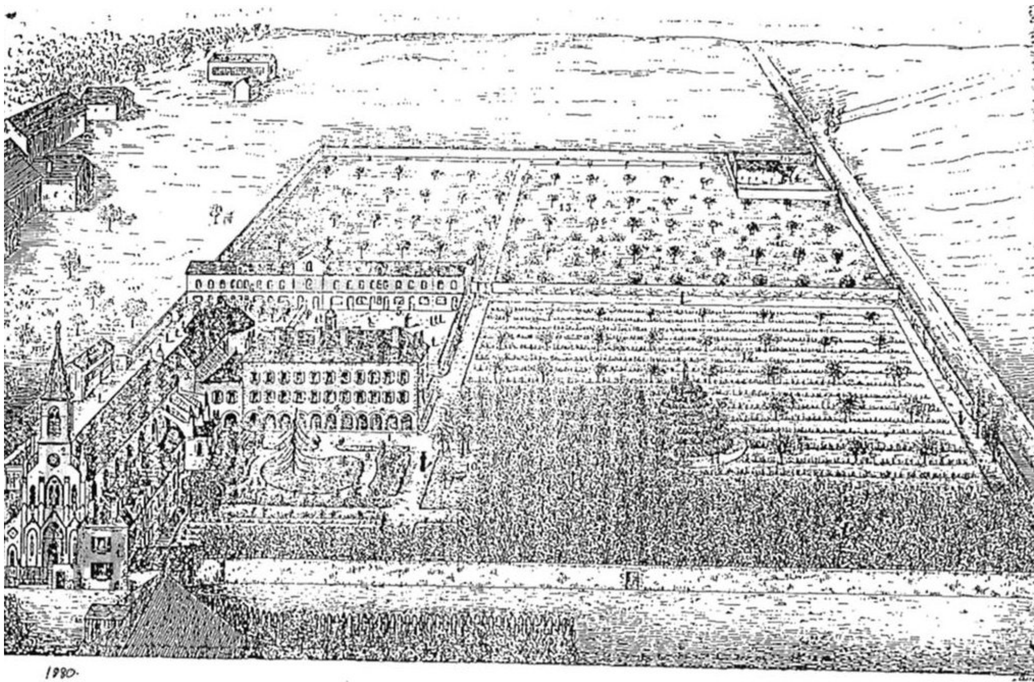
2. The doctrine and devotion of the Sacred Heart was a wonderfully efficacious means to preach the Gospel message of God's love and care for people and to rouse up in human hearts a religious response. This response could only result in greater human happiness and greater human good.
3. A band of missionary priests, fervent and well-formed in their own spiritual lives could be a most effective force in bringing the results Chevalier hoped for.[80]

One can well argue that Chevalier's observation about the 'indifferentism' of his age remains pertinent today. However, the world itself has changed and the solution of a 'band of missionary priests' might now strike us as too simplistic a solution to the apparent faithlessness of the world.

The great age of missionary endeavour as it has been historically understood is past,[81] and one could argue that it was past its heyday by the time Chevalier's men were sent out as missionaries. Nevertheless it is necessary to understand Chevalier's vision in terms of his own time. This is particularly true of his stress on devotion to the Sacred Heart. He was supported from the earliest days by two fellow priests who shared his vision. As mentioned previously, on his arrival at Issoudun Chevalier discovered that his fellow seminarian, Father Emile Maugenest already there. In many quarters, Maugenest is regarded as co-founder with Chevalier of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.[82] However his involvement with the MSCs was all too short-lived. Cuskelly describes the Cardinal Archbishop of Bourges, a supporter of the fledgling community, as the 'agent of the threat' of its almost immediate demise.[83] The Archbishop, needing an archpriest and dean for the cathedral of Bourges, happened to hear Father Maugenest preach in Bourges. His mind was made up in an instant. He knew of the young priest's qualities already and appointed him archpriest. Father Maugenest's appeals to be left in Issoudun fell on deaf ears – not that the Archbishop was unmoved by his pleas, but the need of the Archdiocese overrode all other considerations. Both Piperon and Cuskelly note that this meant the

80 Cuskelly, p. 11.
81 See Chapter 3 of this thesis: Landscape 2: The Mission Imperative.
82 For example, in the Philippine Province of the MSCs. http://ph.misacor.com
83 Cuskelly, p. 28.

removal of the most gifted member of the little community.[84] When Father Maugenest returned to the community in 1865 he appeared to have changed in his attitude to the community (although for the four years he was in Bourges he was still named as a member of the MSC community).[85] After 1866 he was no longer listed in the *Ordo*[86] as a member of the community. By 1869 he had ceased to participate in the elections for the councils of the community.[87] He remained, however, a lifelong friend to Chevalier and the Missionaries.[88]



Place du Sacre Coeur, Issoudun, as it was in 1880.
Source: MSC internal publication

Maugenest's departure left both Chevalier and Piperon somewhat shaken. Piperon commented, likening the young community to a tree, that of the three

> branches of the tree, two were flourishing vigorously, the third [Piperon himself] was frail, almost lifeless. The one promising the best fruit had been taken away[89].

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[84] Cuskelly, p. 29.
[85] Piperon, p. 102. Maugenest later went on to join the Dominicans, the Order of Preachers in 1871. See also Cuskelly, p. 66.
[86] The *Ordo* is the list of priests and religious in a particular area (in this case, France) which designates the community to which they belong (if any), their title and position within the church. It is published annually.
[87] Piperon, p. 103.
[88] Cuskelly, p. 31.
[89] Piperon, p. 48.

Needless to say Piperon saw Maugenest as the ‘branch’ with the greatest potential – and himself as the almost lifeless one. Nevertheless others, such as Cuskelly, describe Piperon as an MSC ‘old faithful’.[90] Whilst Piperon, in his own writings portrays himself with great modesty as being very ordinary and contributing little to the life of the young community, others view his contribution very differently. Emile Maugenest, on hearing of Piperon’s death on February 16, 1915, wrote of him in a letter to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart:

> He did so much for the Sacred Heart by his words, his prayer and by his co-operation in the foundation, the support and the progress of the great work of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun.
> Above all it was by his example that he contributed powerfully to the establishment and continuance of the work and to the spiritual formation of its religious. The spirit of [the] Order was, in effect, the realisation of the great commandment of the Sacred Heart: Learn of me, for I am gentle and humble of heart …
> … if the merit and glory of the eminent Father Chevalier is that he founded your Order by the force of his creative genius, the merit and glory of the humble Father Piperon is that he gave you your spirit by his practice of the virtues of the Sacred Heart. For more than 60 years he was a model of these virtues …[91]

Piperon’s own writings about the foundation of the order speak volumes of the humility and faithfulness which others also recognised in him. He was to be Superior General of the Order on several occasions.

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[90] Cuskelly, p.43.
[91] Cuskelly, pp. 44-45 citing a Letter from Maugenest to Father E Meyer MSC, La Rose, 5 March 1915.

Father Charles Piperon, msc (1828-1915)
(photo AGmsc, Rome)

Father Charles Piperon, MSC (1828 – 1915)

Undated photo: AG msc Rome.

Source: Charles Piperon MSC, *Writings on the Life of the founder, Jules Chevalier.* Rome: Fontes MSC. 1993. p. 114.

Cuskelly points out that the foundation of a religious congregation is not an instantaneous matter. He remarks that, despite the clarity of his vision, Chevalier's vision for the work of his congregation broadened from an initial commitment to the region of Berry (as he had been advised) to a much broader commitment. This was not least a response to the fact that few of his priests, even in the early years actually came from Berry. Nor was Berry the focus of the MSC's ministry.[92] Cuskelly suggests that the year 1867 should be taken as a milestone in the life of the young congregation because 'that was the year in which a second community was established in Chezal-Benoit, with the Apostolic School beside it' for the training of MSCs.[93] Cuskelly lists the MSC personnel of the time – and it is immediately clear that the community has grown beyond the original three – Chevalier, Piperon and Maugenest.

[92] Cuskelly, pp. 39-40.
[93] Cuskelly, pp. 39-40.

from 1855

Picture - Annales N.D. du S.C. - December, 1904
1st Chapel and 1st MSC house

to 1900

The Church of the Sacred Heart (Basilica since 1874) was
constructed at two periods:
the sanctuary and first bays 1859-60
last bays, facade and belfry 1863-64
chapel Our Lady of the Sacred Heart 1867-69
to the right of the entrance: 1st house, twice heightened
behind the belfry, perpendicular to the apse of the church:
1st monastery (about 1865-66)
at the back, parallel to the preceding, School (since demolished)
the other main buildings, with the cloisters, constructed at
different stages:
partly before the expulsions of 1880, partly in the last decade of
the century

Source: MSC internal publication

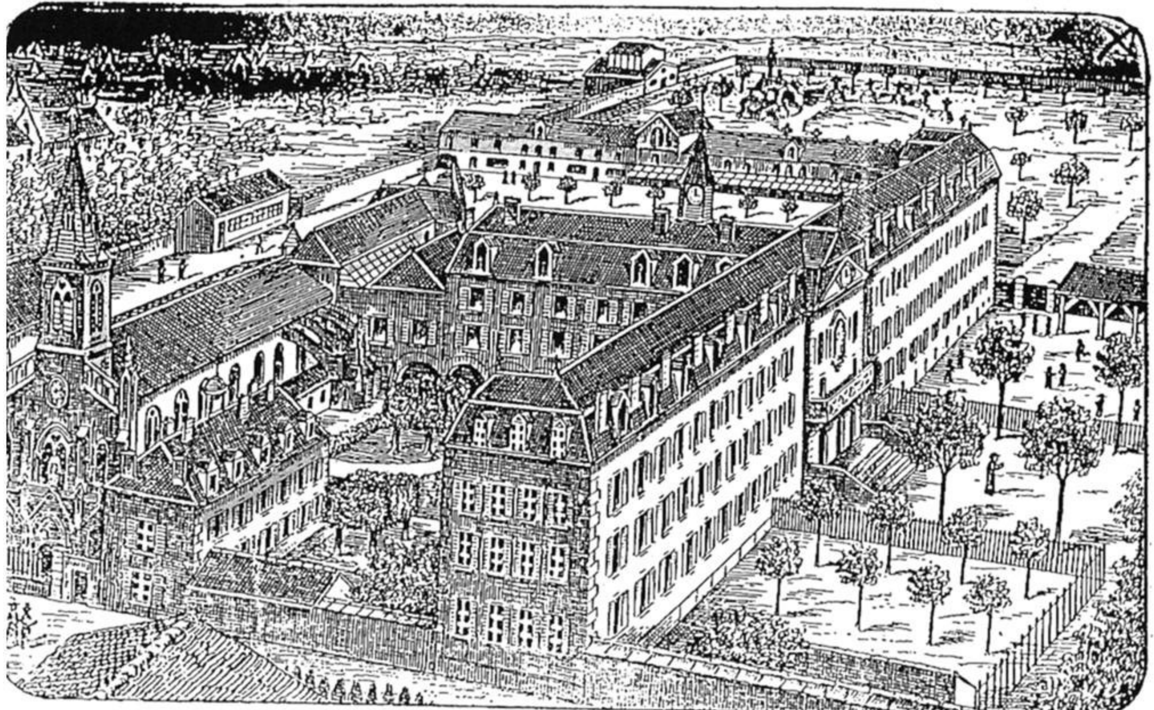
By that year the order numbered some eleven priests, most of whom had joined the Order between 1863 and 1864. Not only was the community growing in number but it was expanding in terms of the origins of these new members. Whereas the three foundation members came from the Berry region, the newcomers were from further afield. Many of the new priests served as parish priests. At Issoudun Chevalier and Piperon were joined by Father Antoine Mousseaux who took Piperon's place as chaplain to the hospices while Piperon found himself travelling and preaching. Father Jean-Baptiste Guyot was parish priest at Montluçon while Father Joseph Durin continued as parish priest of

Nocq-Chambérat. Father Louis Bazire, from Normandy, was based at Issoudun while Father Victor Jouët, from Marseilles, continued to live and work in that diocese. Father Jouët became the editor of the *Annals*, the internal journal of the order. They were joined also by the Breton Father Paulin Georgelin, a professor in the clerical school in Rimont, and Father Jean-Marie Vandel from the diocese of Lausanne who continued an itinerant ministry around France, as well as beginning the order's interest in educating boys who expressed an interest in becoming missionary priests. Having worked with Jesuits at Avignon, he had gained some experience in this activity.[94] Father Pierre Malabat, a preacher and writer, and Father Celestin Laporte, from the diocese of Tours, completed the community at this time.[95]

At this stage all was looking promising and the vision and work of the Order was expanding. But all this was to change in the late 1870s. From 1854 until February 1869 the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart had remained under the juridical authority of the Archbishop of Bourges. When the Pope approved the Constitutions of the Order 'for experimentation' in 1869, the congregation became subject to the direct authority of Rome.[96]

In 1879 as the MSCs were celebrating their Silver Jubilee, twenty-five years of existence, a Republican government was elected in France. Traditionally the French Church was pro-Monarchist and the Republicans were anti-Church. A significant aspect of the Third Republic was the institution of the "Ferry Laws", (so named for the Minister for Public Instruction, M Jules Ferry), an attempt to reform the French education system. These laws were passed between 1879 and 1885. Ostensibly the aim of these laws was to provide free primary education and to improve the standard of secular teacher education.[97]

[94] Cuskelly, p. 51.
[95] Cuskelly, pp. 39-40, 52. Father Jean-Marie Vandel was 57 years old when he entered the MSCs. He died on April 26, 1877 after ten years in the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.
[96] Cuskelly, p. 71.
[97] Stephen Tonge, 'The Third Republic'. www.historyhome.co.uk/europe/3rd-rep.htm.



Undated sketch of the Basilica and Place du Sacre Coeur, Issoudun
Source: MSC internal publication

Nevertheless, Cuskelly quotes the atheistic Ferry as declaring that his intention was "to organise humanity without God".[98] Cuskelly notes that, while there was long-standing fault on both sides of the debate, there was nevertheless "a real hostility to the Church as religion"[99]. As a result of the Ferry Laws, Father Chevalier, on November 5, 1880,

> saw, in one day, all of his religious thrown out of their houses in France by the police and the armed forces; ignoble seals were placed on the doors of the Basilica of Issoudun and the other chapels of our houses …[100].

[98] Cuskelly, p. 80. Citing Daniel Rops, *Un Combat pour Dieu*. Paris: Fayard, 1963, p. 160.
[99] Cuskelly, p. 80. again citing Rops, p. 15.
[100] Cuskelly, p. 81. citing Piperon, *Le R T P Jules Chevalier*. p. 146.
(The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 had also had an unsettling effect on the young Order. For details of the war see http://www.bl.uk.collections/westeuropean/francoprussainwar.html. See also Piperon, p. 71ff. This also coincided with the return of Father Maugenest whose interest was now tending towards the Dominicans whom he eventually joined.)

Father Chevalier's Presbytery in Issoudun from which he was eventually evicted. Source: MSC internal publication

The parish of Issoudun itself was spared not least because Chevalier had been appointed Archpriest of St Cyr, Issoudun in 1872. This meant that Issoudun, ironically, was less obviously a religious house than were the other foundations in France. The Scholastics (Novices) and eventually the boys from the Apostolic School moved to Holland.[101] What began as a rescue plan in the face of disaster was to be decisive in making the MSCs a worldwide missionary order. In 1881 the first missionaries were dispatched to the South Pacific at the request of Pope Leo XIII.[102]

But matters were slowly moving towards what Cuskelly calls the 'MSC Crisis'.[103] Cuskelly explores this crisis in some depth since it had a lasting impact on the order although, by the time the crisis arose (1883-1891),[104] there were already MSC missionaries in Australia and the South Pacific. They were in many ways distanced from and, to at least some extent, ignorant of the critical events taking place within the Order in Europe. Cuskelly notes that, virtually of necessity, the founder of a religious society must be a charismatic leader – both in the strict sense that he possesses some gift of the Holy Spirit for the good of the Church (without which the foundation would never receive the blessing of the Church), and in the sense of a charismatic personality which attracts

[101] Cuskelly, p. 82.
[102] Cuskelly, p. 91.
[103] Cuskelly, pp. 181-210.
[104] Cuskelly, p. 189.

followers. As long as an organisation is characterised by charismatic leadership, the leader remains the dominant and, usually, the controlling force within the organisation. Such is an almost natural first stage of any new organisation – especially a religious foundation. However, inherent in such an organisation are two potential crises, particularly in a religious organisation. The first is that, if the organisation remains fundamentally charismatic in structure, there is the danger of the cult of the leader developing – a situation in which the leader, rather than God, becomes the figure of ultimate authority and power. Such a cultic status often leads to excesses and abuse of power. The other danger is that, when the organisation matures and moves beyond the charismatic stage and needs to establish a more 'democratic' organisational structure, at least some of those who joined to follow the charismatic leader may feel their loyalty under threat and may feel, ironically, disenfranchised.

Cuskelly points out however that, regardless of the 'norms' of such an organisational evolution, there were particular circumstances which created the MSC crisis of the late nineteenth century. In the case of religious foundations within the Catholic Church there are of course canonical laws which govern such congregations and, charism notwithstanding, they must be obeyed. Add human personalities and intergenerational tensions to this mix and the situation may become combustible. An added factor in the situation facing the MSCs was that what had begun very much as a French congregation was now rapidly becoming an international one. One could easily argue, however, that European Catholicism had almost a national character and culture of its own that transcended national and linguistic differences (given that Latin was the language of the Mass and of religious training for priests, and of official correspondence). The critical factors, then, in precipitating the MSC crisis were largely those which flowed from the political situation in France under the Third Republic.

The Ferry Laws,[105] which led to the scattering of the congregation throughout Europe, particularly to Holland as mentioned earlier, also meant that the leaders

[105] www.historyhome.co.ik/europe/3rd-rep.htm p. 8 of 12. Downloaded 20 March 2006.

of the Order, the General Council and the members of the General Chapter[106] which would normally meet every six years, were scattered as well. Obviously, any sense of unified leadership would be difficult to maintain in such circumstances. There was a brief period of détente between the Church and State in France when Pope Leo XIII 'advised Catholics to rally to the republic and to defend the interests of the Church by taking a greater role in the [secular] political life of France'.[107] Few Catholics responded to his call and, in fact, it has been claimed that there were no practising Catholic ministers nor was there a Catholic head of State in France between 1879 and 1914.[108] In 1901 a law passed to guarantee freedom of secular association in France also saw the dissolution of numerous religious orders and the restriction of the rights of religious to teach in schools.[109] In 1904 all members of religious orders were forbidden to teach and in 1905 the Law of Separation of Church and State was passed, ending the Concordat of 1801 which had allowed an uneasy truce between both parties. With the passage of this law all ties between Church and State were cut, bringing an end to state salaries for priests and bishops as well as, at least in theory, handing the control of all church property to the state. This latter measure was short-lived. A visit by the French President to the Italian King Victor Emmanuel in Rome in 1904, seen by the Pope as a challenge to pontifical authority, led to a 'rupture in diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Rome'[110] when, in July, Pope Pius X recalled two French bishops to Rome. This incident is seen in some quarters as the precipitating cause of the 1905 Law of Separation.[111] This

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[106] The General Chapter is an Assembly of elected representatives assembled by the General Superior of an Order at regular intervals (according to Canon Law, every six years) to oversee the activities of the Order for the ensuing period and to evaluate its current position. In the intervening period the General Council of an Order, usually consisting of Provincial Superiors and elected members is responsible for the appropriate maintenance of the Order. (The General Superior is the worldwide head of the Order.)

[107] www.historyhome.co.ik/europe/3rd-rep.htm p. 8 of 12. Downloaded 20 March 2006.

[108] In February 2008, the President of France caused a sensation when he called for 'a more positive laicité'. Nicholas Sarkozy, a practising Catholic suggested that the French government needed to encourage a greater acceptance of all religions in French public and social life. *The Tablet*, 8 February, 2008.

[109] Richard Francis Crane, 'Les congregations hors la loi?: Autour de la loi du 1er juillet 1901, and: Secularisation, separation et guerre scolaire: Les catholiques francais et l'ecole (1901-1914) (review)' in *The Catholic Historical Review* 90.4 (2004) pp. 809-812. http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/catholic_historical_review/v090/90.4crane.html

[110] http://ideesdefrance.fr/All-About-1905.html p. 1 of 3. Downloaded 20 March 2006.

[111] http://ideesdefrance.fr/All-About-1905.html.

political situation seriously disturbed the normal course of administrative events for the MSCs.

Normally a General Chapter would have been held every six years, as laid down by canon law. A General Chapter had been held at Issoudun in 1879. The next General Chapter should have been held in 1885. However, because of the political events in France which had resulted in the dispersion of the order, the 1885 General Chapter was deferred, with the approval of Rome, until 1891. In the meantime in 1890, without the convening of a General Chapter, the General Council gained approval from Rome for Father Chevalier's term as General Superior 'to be prorogued for twelve years'.[112] Interestingly, Piperon – whose grasp of dates is not always accurate – also makes discreet mention of this crisis. Piperon ponders whether the crisis was precipitated by the fact that Father Chevalier continued his charismatic style of leadership whilst at the same time continuing in his role as Archpriest of Issoudun 'at a time when the growing order needed the intellectual powers and the labours of man solely occupied with the formation and government of the young Society'.[113] Whatever the truth of the matter, Piperon records that 'the malcontents seized the pretext of certain irregularities, the result of the exceptional circumstances in which the Congregation had been placed, with the exigencies of parish ministry and also the too great distance between the various houses'.[114] To complicate matters further, it was about this time that Father Jouët, one of the key figures in the crisis and one against whom Piperon records 'war … was waged',[115] left the order. At the time of this crisis Father Jouët was Superior of the Issoudun community as well as being Procurator General[116] of the order. Despite his many talents Jouët was no administrator[117] and was made to bear the responsibility of

[112] Cuskelly, p.187. Chevalier had first been elected General Superior for 12 years in 1867. In both 1881 and 1882 his term had been extended for a year, taking him to 1881. This happened again in both 1883 and 1884. From 1885 to 1888 nothing happened but Chevalier remained in office. In 1889 his position was extended for a further year and then, in 1889, he was prolonged in office for a further 12 years on the basis of a decree from the Cardinal Protector. Cuskelly, p. 189.
[113] Piperon, p. 74.
[114] Piperon, p. 74. Piperon comments further: "The time has not yet come for us to judge with maturity and wisdom all that happened in this painful period."
[115] Piperon, p. 81.
[116] The Procurator General was the chief financial officer of the Order.
[117] Cuskelly, p. 216.

the administrative chaos into which the order was plunged. One might wonder however if part of the responsibility ought not to have been shared by those who elected him to an inappropriate position within the order. Nevertheless, for what he saw as the ultimate good of the order, Fr Jouët[118] left the order in 1891. By this time the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart had been established in Italy – ironically by Father Jouët – and had also become established in America.[119]

By the time of the meeting of the General Chapter of 1891, there were three main issues to be dealt with. The first was the Constitutions of the order – the regulations governing its existence which had been approved by Rome. The old Constitutions had been approved for ten years in 1877 and were again adopted and ratified by Rome in July, 1891.[120] The second matter dealt with the general administration of the order. Under this heading there were many who both supported and opposed the contemporary administration. The debate was provoked in large measure by the decision of the major superiors, during the period when there had been no regular Chapters, to make decisions on behalf of the order without consultation. When this matter came up for debate the argument revolved around who had the right or responsibility to make decisions on behalf of the whole society. The Major Superiors within the order had seen this as their right and had so acted. However this choice 'excited a violent discontent in the houses of the north'.[121] The debate turned on whether it was the right of the Major Superiors to act in this way or whether, by so acting, they had 'usurped the rights which belong by law and by right to the Society as a whole – in and through the General Chapter'.[122] Cuskelly sees this as a defining moment in the transition from a charismatic to a democratic leadership structure. He also suggests that, from the standpoint of the present (1975), validity falls on the side of the protesters and critics.[123]

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[118] For much of the period from 1870 Jouët was also seriously ill. Piperon, pp. 108-109.
[119] Piperon, p. 84. It was Piperon who oversaw the establishment of the MSCs at Watertown in America in1876.
[120] Cuskelly, p.186.
[121] Cuskelly, p. 187. Cuskelly quotes Chevalier in this comment.
[122] Cuskelly, p. 187.
[123] Cuskelly, p. 187.

Nonetheless Cuskelly sympathises with those of the administrative group who felt themselves unfairly under attack and who attempted to justify themselves by pleading for consideration of the particular circumstances which pertained in France at the time. At some point in the debate the General Council itself became split with two members, Fathers Guyot and Delaporte, taking the side of the critics, the younger men in the Society. It seems to have been at this point that Father Jouët was clearly targeted. At this stage of the debate, as so often happens, clear lines of demarcation appeared between the majority of the incumbent General Administration on the one hand, who stressed the need for religious obedience to the Founder and Superiors and, on the other hand, the 'Dissidents' who even raised questions as to the canonical validity of Father Chevalier's position as Superior General for the past number of years, particularly from 1883 to 1889. The end result of all the recrimination and argument was that the chapter was dissolved by Rome and the order was placed under the administration of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith.[124]

The chief architect of this outcome, Father Xavier Klotz, the Superior of the MSC house at Tilburg, a promising young Alsatian canon lawyer whom Chevalier had hoped would follow him as Superior General, wrote in 1925, long after these events:

> When you give an account of those disturbed years, take care not
> to suppose that there was bad faith on either side. Each man
> acted according to his conscience. Our misunderstandings are
> explained by the events. If in 1891 I had had the experience of 1925,
> as the documents passed through my hands to be read at the
> Chapter, I would not have had the imprudence of making
> public the irregularities which I discovered in them.
> I would have taken Father Chevalier aside, I would have drawn up
> an appeal to Rome, and he would certainly have signed it. And
> Rome, in its indulgence, would have given a 'sanatio in radice'[125]
> at the simple request of a Superior General. This would have

[124] Cuskelly, pp. 189-198. (The Sacred Congregation was, in an earlier incarnation, the Sacred Office of the Inquisition.)
[125] Literally 'a healing to the roots'.

> established order where there was disorder, with no fuss,
> no shocks, no hurt. But then I was just in the thirties. At that age
> one is not as much in control of his impressions as at 67.[126]

The actions generated in the heat of youth had, however, been taken and Rome continued to administer the Order from 1891 until 1896, by which time Father Chevalier was able to write to the Pope:

> Little by little, calm has been restored, spirits have been
> pacified and hearts united by bonds which can not be broken
> again. We can bear witness that, at this moment, perfect agreement
> and harmony exists between superiors and subjects, as also between
> all the members of our Congregation.[127]

In summing up this period of the order's existence, Cuskelly quotes what he calls 'a delightful document in the General Archives, under the date of June13th'[1891]. It says: 'The Founder and Superior General of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun, in the Archdiocese of Bourges, humbly explains that, in his institute a few irregularities have occurred …'.[128] Cuskelly summarises these 'few irregularities' as 'perhaps he was not Superior General for several years …. some superiors were not really delegated to receive profession of subjects … some religious were perhaps … invalidly professed … Therefore he asks a "santio" for any irregularities and from such censures as may have been incurred here and there'.[129] It is evident that Chevalier in all likelihood had no idea of the depth of passion of his opponents at the time. Cuskelly, in analysing the situation which arose, comments that 'the tragic thing about this crisis was that these were good men who were caught up in misunderstanding that caused much personal heartache'.[130] Cuskelly suggests that the crisis arose from the collision of two basic ideologies about the government of the Society. One claimed that 'the era of the Foundation is closed. Henceforth the Chapter legislates, the Superior administers'.[131] The other claimed that, 'the Superior

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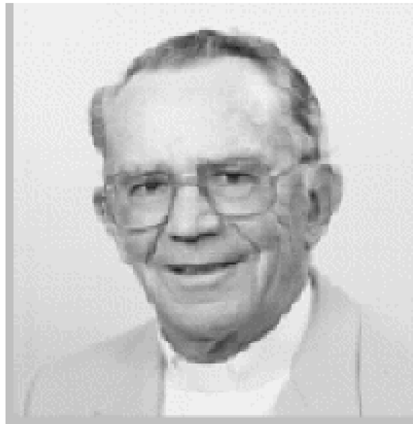
126 Cuskelly, pp. 189 – 190, citing Peeters, Manuscript: *Congrégation MSC, Croissance et Jeunesse, IV*, no date, p. 42.
127 Cuskelly, p.198. Citing a letter from Chevalier to the Holy Father, 30 December, 1896.
128 Cuskelly, p. 193.
129 Cuskelly, p. 193.
130 Cuskelly, p. 199.
131 Cuskelly, p. 199. Citing a letter from Fr Delaporte to Chevalier, September 1891.

General … (the Founder) is not an ordinary Superior … He is the head and the root … It is for us (Assistants) to be the principal members and the chief branches living with the same life and the same sap, in order to communicate it to others'.[132]

Cuskelly is even-handed in his analysis. He notes that Father Klotz 'regarded himself as a sort of religious Robin Hood, ready to right the wrongs being done' especially by Father Jouët 'who must have used some unfair means to engineer the dissolution'.[133] Piperon, on the other hand – and on the other side of the debate – merely laments that 'I don't see the Spirit of God in all this tempest. Where respect is lacking and charity and obedience too, there can not be the action of God. It is this that frightens me …'.[134] Cuskelly sees over-dramatisation of the events on all sides of the debate. As the events unfolded Father Klotz was temporarily expelled and Father Reyn, another of the MSCs from Tilburg, resigned and left the order – taking with him Father Jules Vandel and some of the students.[135] Cuskelly himself has gained a reputation within the MSCs as being the man who, both in his life and work as an MSC and through his writings, has finally brought some resolution to this critical period of MSC history and who has renewed Chevalier's charism in ways that are relevant to the world of the twenty first century. Ordained to the priesthood, as an MSC in 1948, E J (Jim) Cuskelly became Superior General of the MSC congregation from 1969 until 1981,[136] without – as is usual – having first been a provincial superior. He was the eighth Superior General of the order and, at the time of his election, was 48 years old.[137] Cuskelly was the incumbent Superior General when three Spanish members of the order were shot by a Guatemalan death squad,[138] an event that he found a shattering personal experience as well a shocking event for the order. A theologian by training and inclination and a prolific writer, he was ordained Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Brisbane (titular Bishop of

[132] Cuskelly, p. 199, citing Fr Jouët, letter to the Archbishop of Bourges, 6 March 1891.
[133] Cuskelly, p. 202, citing Fr Piperon, letter to Fr Jouët, 26 February 1893.
[134] Cuskelly, p. 202.
[135] Cuskelly, pp. 209-210. Father Jules Vandel was the nephew of the previously mentioned Father Jean-Marie Vandel. He would become an early member of the Australian Province.
[136] *Symposium in Memoriam E.J. Cuskelly, Issoudun, September 15 – 28, 2002*. (Proceedings) English Edition. p. 40.
[137] Symposium, p. 40.
[138] Symposium, p. 22.

Altino) in 1982.[139] He retired in 1996 and died in March 1999. Many MSCs regard him not only as a great figure within the congregation but virtually as its re-founder, a man who shared the same mission in life as Jules Chevalier.[140] He is credited with putting 'into words the charism of Jules Chevalier for our new world'.[141] It was Cuskelly who was able to put 'the Chevalier way' into the words 'the way of the heart' which now encapsulates the charism of the MSC Order.[142] It was Cuskelly too who, as Superior General, who introduced the idea of a renewal team, Cor Novum, for the Congregation, to be based at Issoudun with the express task of renewing the Chevalier charism.[143] Literally 'cor novum' means 'a new heart'. It became 'the way of the heart:'



Auxiliary Bishop E.J. (Jim) Cuskelly MSC.
Source: EJ Cuskelly, Walking the way of Jesus : an essay on Christian spirituality. Homebush: St Paul's Publications, 1999, Rear cover.

Presiding at a national pilgrimage to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun in 1995, Cuskelly said:

> The way of the heart has led me once again, perhaps for the last time, to Issoudun. I am most grateful to those who have given me this opportunity. Once again I am happy to be with my confreres of the French/Swiss province, with whom I have journeyed the 'Chevalier way' for so many years.[144]

Father Frank Fletcher, MSC refers to one the MSCs who had a significant influence on Jim Cuskelly, Father Darcy Morris MSC, as 'a Vatican II man who

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139 Symposium, pp. 25-26.
140 Symposium, p. 20.
141 Symposium, p. 20.
142 Symposium, p. 5.
143 Symposium, pp. 30-35.
144 Excerpt from the *Golden Anniversary Book of the MSC Community of the Basilica*, Issoudun, 1995.

died **before** the Council'.[145] Behind the influence of Father Morris and Cuskelly's spiritual director, Father Pat McGuane, Fletcher also sees the influence of the 'father and founder of the Australian province', the Swiss MSC Father Pierre Marie Treand.[146] Despite his death in 1927, Treand's influence was still a significant presence in the seminary during Cuskelly's time there, according to Fletcher.[147] With such a theological pedigree it is hardly surprising then that Cuskelly himself would be a Vatican II man, the right man to lead the MSCs internationally into adapting to the challenges of the new and increasingly secularised world – a world, ironically, not unlike that of Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary France in which secularism appeared to be rampant.

During the 1960s the Councils of Vatican ll endeavoured to renew the structures of the Roman Catholic Church. The medieval image of the Church Triumphant – and often distant from the world of the laity – was replaced by the image of the Pilgrim Church, a body of believers on the way, as it were. Among the manifestations of this change were the use of vernacular languages replacing Latin as the language of the Mass; the relocation of the priest during the celebration of Mass;[148] a greater involvement of the laity in liturgy and a significantly decreased emphasis on many of the traditional 'devotions' which had long been practised by devout Catholics. Given that, in all probability, most devout Catholics had little understanding of Latin (and therefore of the details of the Mass) and the Church tended to present an image of a distant and awesome if not unapproachable God, many devout Catholics pinned their faith on the personal devotional practices of more accessible routes to God: prayers to Mary or particular saints or the Holy Spirit,[149] trusting in the wearing of the scapular,[150] devotion to the Sacred Heart and so on. These are still regarded as

[145] Symposium, p. 28.
[146] Symposium, p. 28.
[147] Symposium, p. 28.
[148] Prior to Vatican II, when the Mass was said in Latin, the priest usually stood in front of the altar (between the people and the altar) with his back to the people.
[149] For example, the Novena – a nine day cycle of prayer to a particular saint for a particular outcome.
[150] The scapular – a small cloth 'pendant' worn by a believer. It is a symbol of the clerical garment of the same name (the long clerical tunic or tabard). The wearing of the scapular is believed to confer benefit on the wearer and it is a sign of devotion.

'sacramentals'[151] in the Catholic Church but their popularity has waned since Vatican ll.

In the nineteenth century however, such devotional piety was characteristic of much Catholic practice. It was, says, Cuskelly, 'an age of Marian piety'.[152] And it was in this context that Chevalier's faith had developed. The adage 'To Jesus through Mary' was a time honoured one for Catholic Christians of the time 'who responded more readily to popular devotions in honour of the Madonna than they would have done to practices which today might be considered more "theological and liturgical"'.[153] In an age when new titles and special devotions played a much more significant part in the life of the faithful than they do today, Chevalier's decision to dedicate his small congregation to 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart' was consistent with the spirit of the age.[154] Nevertheless the Vatican had to approve any new devotion. Chevalier envisaged 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart' initially as a simple juxtaposition of Mary and an image of Christ and he wanted the first chapel at Issoudun to include a stained glass window which represented his vision.

> First he took a well-known image of Mary Immaculate, standing with her hands extended towards the earth, signifying that she makes grace rain upon the earth. In front of this [image] he placed the figure of the Christ child, indicating his heart with his left hand and pointing to his mother with his right – as if to say 'It is through my Mother that the treasures of my heart are poured out on earth'.[155]

[151] Sacramentals are things (sacramentalia) set apart or blessed by the Catholic Church to manifest the respect due to the Sacraments, and so to excite good thoughts and to increase devotion, and through these movements of the heart to remit venial sin, according to the Council of Trent (Session XXII, 15). *Office for the Catechism* par. 1668: Sacramentals are instituted for the sanctification of certain ministries of the Church, certain states of life, a great variety of circumstances in Christian life, and the use of many things helpful to man. In accordance with bishops' pastoral decisions, they can also respond to the needs, culture, and special history of the Christian people of a particular region or time. They always include a prayer, often accompanied by a specific sign, such as the laying on of hands, the sign of the cross, or the sprinkling of holy water (which recalls Baptism). http://www.usccb.org/catechism/text/pt2sect2chpt4.htm.
Sacramentals are seen as analogous to, but not reckoned among, the Sacraments of the church. (OED).
[152] Cuskelly, p. 31.
[153] Cuskelly, p. 31.
[154] Cuskelly, p. 32.
[155] Cuskelly, p. 33.

In 1856, two years after Father Chevalier founded the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Pope Pius IX made his *ex cathedra*[156] announcement of the dogma of The Immaculate Conception of Mary.[157] This infallible statement from the Pope gave a new impetus to devotion to Mary – but was later to lead to some conflict as the Papacy attempted to superimpose its own image of 'our Lady of the Sacred Heart' on the church and on Chevalier's community. After some little time of debate Chevalier retained his own image.[158] The image in the picture below of the modern Basilica in Issoudun represents a modern version of Chevalier's vision. It stands in the sanctuary of the Basilica of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at Issoudun. In the background still stands the original statue commissioned by Chevalier. In much the same way that the young and idealistic Father Chevalier had begun his order in a time of anti-religious secularism in the wake of the French Revolution, so the older Chevalier might be forgiven for thinking not much had changed. Having weathered the impact of the Ferry Laws which in turn had triggered internal congregational crisis for his order, towards the end of his life secularism and capitalism were again on the rise. Given that he died on 21 October 1907, the older Chevalier was at least spared the horrors of the First World War which would see his order once again divided into isolated units separated from the Mother House in Issoudun.

Interior of the Basilica of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Issoudun showing the Sanctuary.
In the background, centre, is the original statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart commissioned by Jules Chevalier.
Source: www.issoudun-msc.com

[156] Literally 'from the chair' (of St Peter). That is, an infallible statement of the Roman Catholic Church.
[157] www.ad2000.com.au/articles/1994/feb1994p20_818.html . This is one of only three infallible statements made by the Papacy. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception refers to the Church's contemporary belief that Mary herself was conceived without sin – as befits the Mother of God. Downloaded 12 February, 2006
[158] Piperon, p. 85.

A representation of Chevalier's original design for the statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart from the Spanish province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

Source: www.issoudun-msc.com

Source: MSC internal publication

The Basilica of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Issoudun, France.

Source: www.issoudun-msc.com

Father Jules Chevalier MSC towards the end of 1906. Chevalier died in 1907.
Source: Piperon, p. 23.

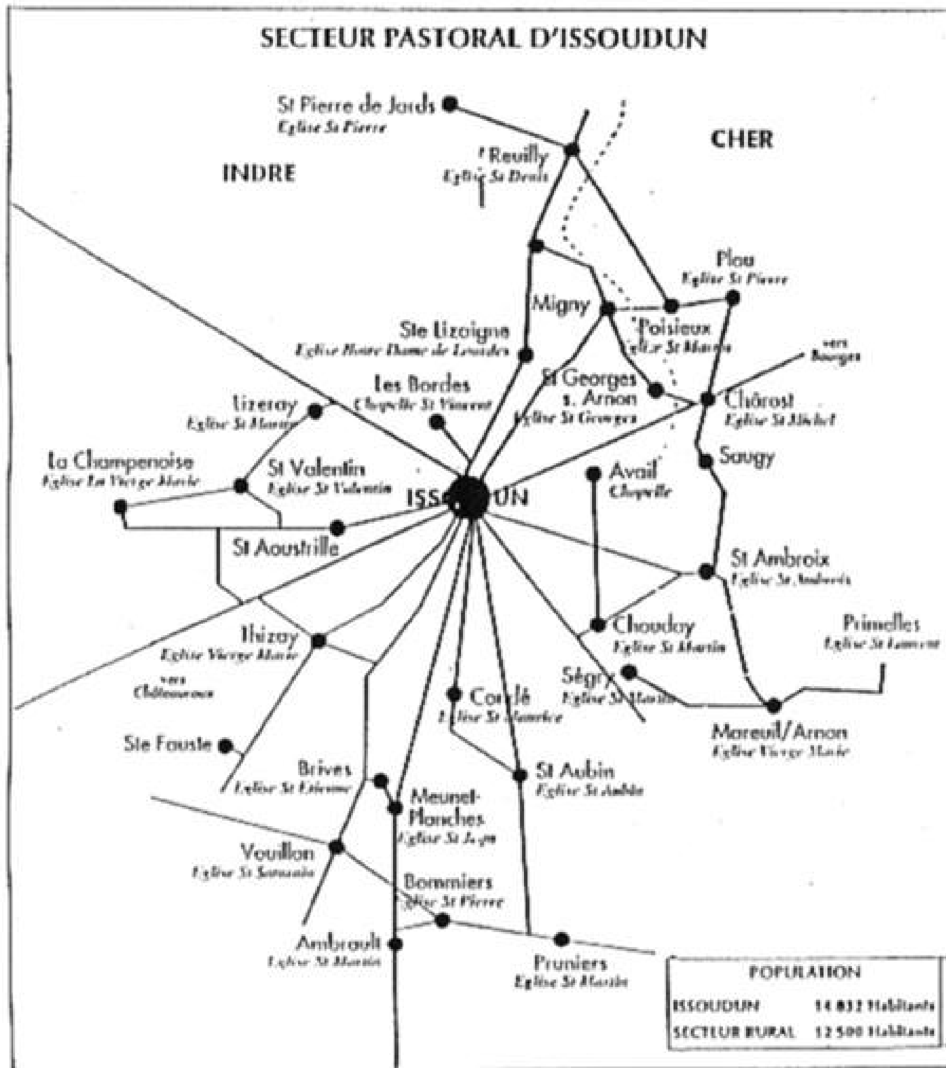
Source: MSC internal publication

The house in Issoudun in which Father Chevalier died.

Photo: John Kelliher MSC

AND TODAY

Today, there is in the presbytery of Issoudun, at 13 Rue Grande Narette, a community of MSCs, four priests and one brother, who take care of the parish of Issoudun and the surrounding 29 villages. The FDNSCs, also take an active role in the life of the parish and the surrounding districts.



Source: MSC internal publication

5. Landscape 3: The evolution of missionary activity in Australia.

It may well be claimed that, in much the same way as Jules Chevalier sought to confront the rising tide of secularism in nineteenth century France, so his religious descendants, the members of his order who worked as missionaries in the Northern Territory inherited a similar battle. In nominally Christian Australia, however, the battle has historically been not only one of religion versus secularism, but also an ongoing sectarian battle.[1] The three contemporary MSC missionaries who are the focus of this study have found themselves at the centre of the battle between a rising tide of secularism and religion as well as, at times, being part of what some would regard as an unholy alliance between Church and State. Secularisation theory suggests, very simply, that 'the more modernity, the less religion'.[2] Philosopher Charles Taylor argues that 'secularism and faith come from the same well and secularism emerges not through [the advancement of] science but through history'.[3] The American sociologist Peter Berger, on the other hand, claims on the basis of what he calls empirical data that we 'don't live in an age of secularity; we live in an age of explosive, pervasive religiosity'.[4] The clash between religion and secularity as Chevalier understood, goes back to the Enlightenment which, 'in Europe at least was very anti-clerical and to some extent even anti-Christian',[5] although this was not the case in America, Francis Campbell argues. Campbell suggests that the reason for the rise of secularism and the decline of religion as a consequence of the enlightenment in Europe has to do with the fact that 'European religion was premised on territory. It was built largely on the parish system which historically was civic as well as ecclesiastical'.[6] In America such was not the case. In Australia, with the early colony relying on religion – particularly Anglicanism – to bolster good civil order there was much that was common to the impact of the European

[1] Hilary M Carey, *Believing in Australia: A cultural history of religions*. St Leonards NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1996, pp. 93-95.
[2] Francis Campbell, "No future in the ghetto". *The Tablet*, 2 February 2008, p.12.
[3] Campbell, p. 12.
[4] Campbell, p. 12.
[5] Campbell, p. 12.
[6] Campbell, p. 13.

enlightenment. It is perhaps not surprising then that, although Campbell claims that 'faith does not have to be a casualty of the Enlightenment',[7] in Australia as in France the common perception is that it must be.

The Enlightenment notwithstanding, alongside the burgeoning missionary activity recorded in an earlier chapter, the late eighteenth century also saw the British colonisation of Australia with the first convict settlement at Port Jackson in 1788. Almost immediately the attempts to Christianise the Indigenous people began – probably less motivated by a desire to convert them than by the hope of 'civilising' them.[8] This sets the stage in many ways for the later alliance between Church and State as the agencies of the government of the day found it expedient to make use of Christian missions to variously 'civilise', 'assimilate' or 'integrate' Indigenous Australians into mainstream Australian society.[9] Certainly, in Governor Phillip's time, the Wangal man Bennelong and his companion Colby (or Colbee), who were initially kidnapped, became 'cultural mediators' for the British administration of the penal colony. The majority of the Indigenous people, however, were regarded unfavourably by those for whom the young and developing settlements were providing unexpected opportunities to farm the land and develop trades. The instructions issued to Captain James Cook in 1768, in anticipation of his discovery of 'The Great Southland' read in part: '**with the consent of the natives** take possession of convenient situations in the name of the King … or if you find the land uninhabited take possession for His Majesty'.[10] This instruction was in keeping with the practice of the time and in keeping with British actions elsewhere in the world. Far from British settlement, at an administrative level, assuming the automatic dispossession of any Indigenous inhabitants, such a declaration as this was more a matter of foreign policy – asserting British rights to the territory in defiance of contrary claims from other European nations such as the Dutch or the French.

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[7] Campbell, p. 13.
[8] Carey, pp. 55 and 58
[9] It needs to be remembered that Australia was a singularly monocultural nation until after the end of World War 2.
[10] Cited in 'Dreaming Online: Indigenous Australian Timeline', www.dreamtime.net.au/timeline. Australian Museum 2004. Downloaded February, 2004. (My emphasis.)

The same is true of Captain Bremer's taking formal possession of the North Coast of Australia at Port Essington in the name of George IV. Bremer established a settlement at Fort Dundas on Melville Island. Given the fact that the Torres Strait and the north coast had already been explored and named by Dutch and Spanish explorers and, even earlier than that, had been part of a regular trade network of Macassan trepang fishermen and traders, this again was seen as a prudent action to establish British sovereignty. The Spanish de Torres had sailed through the Strait which now bears his name in 1606. Dutchmen Carstensz and van Colster had sailed along the northern coastline in the yachts *Pera* and *Arnhem* and named Arnhem Land. They reported several encounters with Aboriginal men and Carstensz described the local people as 'poor and miserable looking with no knowledge of spices'.[11] The discovery of new reliable sources of spices of course was the preoccupation of the Dutch at the time. The British interest in the northern coastline was influenced by the pre-existing competition already at work between the British and Dutch explorers and traders in the region.

Maps of 'Australia' which were available in Cook's time show the continent to be incompletely mapped and named New Holland.[12] Maps and charts of this region of the world bore predominantly Dutch or Portuguese names. Dalrymple's chart and others of the same time show the west, northern and part of the south-western coast of the continent as having been charted. The east coast was as yet uncharted and unknown. Cook's chart would complete the eastern coastline in 1771 and, by his second voyage in 1772 – 1773, Cook had established that the long held belief in *Terra Australis Incognita* was now resolved by the discovery of New Holland. A chart from Hawkesworth's *Account of the Voyages* ...[13] in 1773 shows an almost completely circumnavigated and charted New Holland after a series of British expeditions. However the persistence of the name 'New

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[11] Alan Powell, *Far Country: A Short History of the Northern Territory*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2000, p. 34.

[12] A copy of a chart from Alexander Dalrymple's "Account of the discoveries made in the South Pacifick Ocean previous to 1764" in Paul Brunton (ed*), The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks.* Angus and Robertson: Sydney, 1998, Plate 3.

[13] John Hawkesworth, 'An Account of the voyages undertaken by order of His Present Majesty for making discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere, vol 3. London 1773' cited in Brunton , Plate 20.

Holland' (and 'New Zeeland') attests to the ongoing Dutch influence in the region.

Matthew Flinders' General Chart of Terra Australis or Australia.

London. G & W. Nicol, 1814.

Map Collection – nla map 1570. National Library of Australia.

The presumed existence of the 'unknown southern land', *Terra Australis Incognita,* lies as far back as the first century of the Common Era when the Greek cartographer and astronomer Ptolemy proposed the idea that the Indian Ocean was enclosed on its southern fringe by a landmass. The reasoning supporting this notion was that there needed to be a great southern land mass to balance as a counterweight to the extensive land masses of the Northern Hemisphere. From the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries the proposed *Terra Australis Incognita* appeared on maps of the world although the various voyages of discovery slowly reduced its size and slightly altered its location. During the seventeenth century the Basque explorer in charge of a Spanish expedition, the devoutly Roman Catholic Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, believed in 1606 that he had finally found the unknown land which he named ***Austrialia*** *del Espiritu Santo*, the 'Great Southland of the Holy Spirit'. He had in fact come upon the islands which were later called the New Hebrides, present day Vanuatu, the main island of which still bears the name de Quiros gave it: Espiritu Santo. In de Quiros's memorial, appearing in 1610, the name *Australia incognita* appeared on the title page. In literature the term 'Australia' was used from about 1676 onwards. Cook's account of his voyage in the Endeavour in 1773 makes it clear

that he in fact thought that de Quiros's land lay further to the north east of his own discovery which he called New South Wales.

When Arthur Phillip arrived at Botany Bay, his jurisdiction was confined to the area designated New South Wales: that is, the area east of 135° East longitude. The area west of 135° East was still called New Holland. Parts of the coast of New Holland, if not most of it, had been mapped by the Dutch. But the common belief remained that these were two land masses separated by sea. It was not until Matthew Flinders circumnavigated the continent in 1802–3 that it was clear that both New Holland to the west and New South Wales to the east were in fact part of the one continent. In his account of his Voyage to Terra Australis in 1814, Flinders wrote 'Had I permitted myself any innovation upon the original term *Terra Australis*, it would have been to convert it into *Australia*'[14] (my italics). In 1817 Governor Macquarie used the word *Australia* officially in his correspondence thereby setting the official vice-regal seal upon it. In some quarters, however, the composite name of *La Australia del Espritu Santo* – the Great Southland of the Holy Spirit[15] – remains a vision which motivates many who aspire to see contemporary Australia as a great Christian nation. Gordon Moyes, for example, cites a letter from a Spanish diplomat to King Phillip III (1598 – 1621) as asking 'that no time be lost in discovering that Australia region so far unknown, so these people may have knowledge of the Gospel and be brought into spiritual obedience' – to the Catholic church is the clear inference, since these were Catholic explorers serving a pious king. Moyes cites a pre-Cook map as showing Australia's then mythical east coast. It consists of a line running from Van Diemen's Land to New Guinea and including Espiritu Santo. The coastal note translates: 'I suppose that the land of Van Diemen can join with the land of the Holy Ghost but this is without proof'. Further, Moyes claims that this map also contains a Dutch inscription on what was proposed as the North Queensland coast which proclaims 'Land of the Holy Spirit discovered in 1606 by Fernandez de Quiros'.[16]

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[14] Quoted by Rev Gordon Moyes in *The Makers of Australia series – no 1: The Explorers*. http://www.gordonmoyes.com/2003/06/08/the-explorers-02/ Downloaded 14 March 2004

[15] http://www.gordonmoyes.com/2003/06/08/the-explorers-02/

[16] http://www.gordonmoyes.com/2003/06/08/the-explorers-02/ Moyes cites an article on de Quiros in *Enciclopedia Italiana* (1949) as his source.

De Quiros's proclamation made on the Day of Pentecost, May 1606 in the belief that he had indeed at last found *Terra Australis Incognita*, is a statement of both his piety and his missionary vision for this land.

> Let the heavens, the earth, the waters with all their creatures, and those present, witness that I, Captain Pedro Ferdinand de Quiros … in the name of Jesus Christ … hoist this emblem of the holy cross on which His person was crucified and whereon He gave His life for the ransom and remedy of all the human race … on this day of Pentecost, 14th May … I take possession of this part of the south as far as the pole in the name of Jesus … which from now on shall be called the southern land of the Holy Ghost … and this always and forever … and to the end that to all natives, in all the said lands, the holy and sacred evangel may be preached zealously and openly.[17]

De Quiros Commemorative Stamp Vanuatu 2006.
Source: http://www.christianhistoryresearchaustralia.com/celeb14 Downloaded 12 January 2007.

In the nineteenth century some Australian Catholics, particularly those of Irish descent who found themselves again living under a Protestant ascendancy, claimed that de Quiros had in fact discovered Australia in advance of the Dutch and English Protestants, Tasman and Cook. Cardinal Francis Moran, Archbishop of Sydney from 1884-1911, asserted this to be historical fact and it was taught as

[17] Col Stringer, *Honouring Australia's Christian Heritage.* http://www.swcs.com.au/aust2.htm Downloaded 14 March 2004.

such in Australian Catholic schools for many years. Moran claimed that the site of de Quiros's 'New Jerusalem' was near Gladstone in Queensland. The Australian poet James McAuley (1917–76), in his epic poem 'Captain Quiros' (1964), depicted de Quiros as a martyr for the cause of Catholic civilisation. His poem however was not well received. It is ironic that the missionary aspirations espoused by de Quiros became one of the planks of Australian sectarianism during the early twentieth century – and equally ironic that in the twenty-first century in what many people regard as a post-Christian Australia, de Quiros's vision of the Great Southland of the Holy Spirit is now being evoked by both Catholics and Protestants alike in an attempt to counter the rising tide of secularism. That the secularist tide is rising, and rising fast, is supported by such matters as the increasing agitation in the Northern Territory and elsewhere to have normal trading hours, for example on Good Friday and Christmas Day – the two days which in the Christian world are regarded as sacrosanct.[18]

Currently, in relation to Indigenous Australians, a widespread perception of Australian history since European settlement is that it has gone through three major phases: extermination, assimilation and integration. While it is a discomfiting recognition, it is nevertheless in keeping with the history of Christian missionary activity around the world to acknowledge that the Christian missions in Australia have certainly been involved in the second and third phases of assimilation and integration. It would be an evasion of the truth to say that they have not also been involved in some way or other in the first 'extermination' phase as well. As demonstrated in an earlier chapter, any examination of the history of world mission activity[19] demonstrates the complexities of what might seem to be the fulfilment of a simple charge to 'go and preach the gospel'. While many of the explorers, administrators and missionaries were motivated by that desire it was often the case that they found it difficult to separate the gospel from the (European) culture in which it had become embedded. Thus, however well-meaning, the Eurocentric understanding of Christianity and the ways in which

[18] Ben Langford, "Xmas Beer beef a War of the Times". *Northern Territory News*, 20 March 2008. See also http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,20902093-2682,00.html .Downloaded 24 March 2008.

[19] See chapter 3 of this thesis: "The Mission Imperative".

the Church was often inextricably involved in the political and commercial exploitation of new lands and their Indigenous peoples meant that it was almost inevitable that often there would be some conflict between the needs of the Indigenous peoples whom the missionaries sought to convert and the pastoral (and political) needs of the colonising populations whom they also served.[20] Even in remote mission situations missionaries, especially clergy or religious, were expected to minister to other non-Indigenous people in the area (whether on the mission or not) as well as the Indigenous people. This often caused a dilemma for the missionaries. For example, when the Reverend John Flynn of the Australian Inland Mission was establishing his 'mantle of safety' over the outback, his primary concern was for white settlers although he did not ignore the needs of Indigenous people. On one occasion when he attempted to hospitalise Aboriginal patients at his Cloncurry Bush Hospital, the white patients refused to allow him to do so.[21] This was but one demonstration of the inherent difficulties of mission work. The establishment of the NTFL (Northern Territory Football League) team St Mary's by the Catholic Church (through the persons of MSC missionaries such as Fr Aub. Collins) in order to give Tiwi Islanders who were based in Darwin an opportunity to play in the established Australian Rules competition was yet another example. The existing competition operated under an unstated but generally accepted colour bar, although Waratahs and Buffaloes possibly fielded teams with unnamed and unannounced Aboriginal players being included. The foundation of St Mary's Football Club, like the establishment of the Tiwi Bombers in 2007, was designed specifically to counter the racial barriers and allow skilled Aborigines to compete in the competition.[22]

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[20] See, for example, Powell, p. 125.

[21] Flynn himself has been accused of deliberate or unintentional racism – See, for example, Brigid Hains, "Inland Flynn. Pioneer? Racist? Or product of his time?" in *Eureka Street*, May 2003. This article notes that " Flynn was …equally deeply involved with the white community who sponsored it [the AIM], and which it served—a white community whose commitment to racial separation was entrenched…". See also comments by Rev Tracey Spencer. (Minister of John Flynn Memorial Uniting Church, Alice Springs) http://www.nit.com.au/community/story.aspx?id=14258 Downloaded 27 March, 2008.

[22] For further detail, see the work of Matthew Stephen regarding the history of sport in the Northern Territory e.g. 'The Role of Sport and Recreation in the Northern Territory before 1911'. Lecture given at the Northern Territory Historical Society, March 2006. Brother John Pye MSC has expressed his disapproval of the Tiwi Bombers, a team founded to give opportunity to Tiwi Islanders, importing non-Tiwi players into their side. Conversation, 2008.

In Australia, as had been the case elsewhere in the world, the prevailing attitude of the colonial period was, arguably, one of extermination, based on a profoundly Eurocentric view of the world, including the Antipodean colonies. The initial white settlers – be they administrators, military or convicts – struggled to establish a foothold in 'New South Wales'. Even the place names, and the early written and artistic descriptions or evocations of both the landscape and the Indigenous people took little account of the reality which faced them but rather recast the landscape in European terms (while bemoaning the pallor of the foliage) and presented the Indigenous people as either 'the noble savage' or as subhuman.[23] Whilst a very few Indigenous people such as Bennelong were conscripted, assimilated or exploited – depending on one's point of view – most were regarded with suspicion and hostility. And this conflict deepened as the colony not only survived but began to grow. The settlers began to expand their enclave, searching firstly for arable land and water in order to become self-sufficient in food supplies. Later, land grants were made to soldiers, such as MacArthur, who chose to settle rather than to return 'home'. And, in time, ex-convicts and emancipees likewise were granted to land in order to help sustain the growing settlement. Since many of them could not afford repatriation, and/or did not desire to return to England or Ireland, this was a sensible means of turning them into productive citizens. Some, of course, chose more opportunistic criminal pursuits and risked secondary transportation to either Norfolk Island or Port Arthur.

Where then do Christian missionaries fit into this view of Australian history? The first recorded 'missionaries' were Richard Johnson and Samuel Marsden, chaplains to the garrison and convicts of Sydney Cove. Christianity was used to bolster order and decency in the colony – a problem which some would say has remained with it ever since. Two of Marsden's letters, written in 1794 and 1807, reflect some of the difficulties that they experienced in the young colony. Johnson, who had accompanied Philip and the First Fleet, was a good man within his limits, but had no great force of character, not much tact, and a habit of

[23] http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/barani/themes/theme1.htm. This is but one example. Downloaded March 2004.

complaining. By the time his assistant Samuel Marsden arrived in the colony in 1794, Johnson had fallen out of favour with the administration particularly with the Lieutenant Governor, Major Grose. For the first four years of the colony's existence church services were held in the open air. Eventually Johnson built a church to house 500 people with his own money. It was destroyed by fire a few years after its completion. One of Marsden's early letters comments both on Johnson's parlous position and also 'how uncomfortably we are situated in point of Religion. … things in that respect were never anything like so bad as at present, there is so little attention paid even to mere morality'.[24] Johnson had been encouraged to join the First Fleet by William Wilberforce, William Pitt the younger and John Newton – all of whom were known for their evangelicalism, social action [25] and missionary zeal. However by the time of his arrival, Marsden observed that 'Nothing can be done at Sydney while Mr Johnson and the Governor are so at variance'.[26] Marsden goes on to describe the reality of their mission task:

> Things are better upon the whole than I expected to find them among such abandoned people. I am not surprised to see them cast such contempt upon God and Religion knowing the human heart to be so full of enmity to Christ and his Gospel. … I cannot describe our situation: it is such an uncommon one. All the higher ranks are lost to God and Religion, and you may so form an idea of the characters of the lower orders.[27]

Marsden was not without ideas as to what might be required to redress the

> moral and religious state of the colony of New South Wales … [where] … it is to be lamented that since its commencement to the present time there has scarcely appeared a germ of virtue on which to build a hope of the general character changing for the

[24] Letter from Rev Samuel Marsden to [unknown], 24 August 1794, in G. Mackaness, *Correspondence of the Rev Samuel Marsden*, pp. 6-7. Cited in B N Kaye, *Anglicanism in Australia. A History*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press. 2002. p. 9. n. 16.

[25] Wilberforce especially was particularly notable with regard to the abolition of slavery, the Emancipation of Catholics and establishing the Factory Acts. Newton, a former master of slave ships, had been converted both to Christianity and to the anti-slavery cause.

[26] Marsden's Letter of 1794, cited in Kaye.

[27] Marsden's Letter of 1794, cited in Kaye.

> better. The depravity and vice which pervades a large portion
> of the community does, by its preponderating influence, effect the
> whole, and gives to the individual habits and manners much
> to be deplored.[28]

Marsden's particular concern as he surveyed his particular mission field was for the children who were, he said, 'exposed to a contamination fatal to body and soul'.[29] Marsden pointed out to the Colonial Office in London that, when William Bligh became Governor of the colony in 1806, there was a population of 7,840 souls, spread up to sixty miles from Sydney. He also pointed out the need for both clergy and school masters to be appointed to the colony – and that, given the nature of the colony, they could not expect the peaceful living or sedentary lifestyle they might expect as country parsons in England. In every way the challenge would be that which traditionally faces missionaries – hard and unrewarding work and deprivation. It was no doubt Mardsen's preoccupation with re-establishing the rule of both moral and religious law in the colony that led Robert Hughes in his discussion of the draconian scope of Georgian law – the statutes of which were largely responsible for the transportation of felons to New South Wales – to assert that the 'growth of the Rule of Law (as distinct from any particular statute) into a supreme ideology, a form of religion … began to replace the waning moral power of the Church of England'.[30] In the colony this Rule of Law was once more, in Marsden's view, to be conjoined with the moral strictures of Christianity. His letter to Under-Secretary Cooke in 1807 demonstrates this interconnection.

> Wise political arrangements, good example, and Christian
> knowledge have always been the most successful, whether
> at home or abroad and I am of the opinion that if these are
> immediately applied the young of both sexes may be saved
> from the destruction that threatens them, and the colony become
> valuable to the mother country.[31]

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28 Letter of Rev Samuel Marsden to Under-Secretary Cooke, 21 November, 1807. cited in Kaye.
29 Marsden's Letter of 1794, cited in Kaye.
30 Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore*. Collins Harvill: London, 1987, p. 29. See also Carey, p. 57 where she quotes Aboriginal activist Gary Foley as saying that 'Christianity brought more misery and suffering to the world than any other single disease in the history of mankind'.
31 Marsden's letter to Cooke, 1807, cited in Kaye.

For Marsden, then, the cultural concept of good order was as important as the salvation of souls. In this same letter to Cooke, Marsden looks to the future and ponders a future in which this growing population will, because of their geographical situation, virtually be destined 'to convey to numerous islanders in the Pacific Ocean the blessings of civilization and knowledge of the Divine Truth, and perhaps to add strength and wealth to the parent state'.[32] In the expression of such sentiments as these we hear echoes of the 'gold, glory and gospel' cry of earlier centuries. But, despite his concern for public order and national benefit (which no doubt motivated him in time to accept a role in the colony as a magistrate and hence earned him the appellation of the 'The Flogging Parson'), Marsden, like Bishops Gsell and O'Loughlin MSC, so much later, seems first and foremost to have been concerned with the moral and religious welfare of the individuals in the colony, especially the children. He had no doubt about the calibre of men necessary to embody his vision for the betterment of the colony – and he clearly sees the missionary endeavour as requiring not only clergy.

> Next to health, personal piety and an earnest desire to communicate Christian knowledge is necessary; and if he does not possess these he may as well stay at Home, for no real good can be effected by him. The schoolmasters should also be of this mind and disposition. Their task is very great. In August 1806, the number of children amounted to 1,832, of whom 1,025 were illegitimate, and many of them convicts and forsaken by their parents.[33]

At this stage, however, in the evolution of colonial life the focus of missionary activity is on reclaiming the settlers. That they were seen as being 'heathen' enough to need converting meant that little or no thought was as yet given to the conversion of the Indigenous inhabitants. Given the stress on Christianising the world at the time – and even Marsden's link of Christianity and the rule of Law – there was undoubtedly, from the beginning of settlement in New South Wales, likely to be a tension between the need to respond to the demands of

[32] Marsden's letter to Cooke, 1807.
[33] Marsden's letter to Cooke, 1807.

governments and settlers on the one hand and the desire to evangelise Indigenous people on the other. Deborah Bird Rose comments that, in much the same way that American settlers regarded both the Indians and forests as their enemies, and strove to destroy both, so the attitude of Australians is still 'If it moves shoot it: if it stands still chop it down'.[34] Such was the attitude that motivated the early missionaries to develop their various missions with the Aboriginal people. Although later missions may have become quasi Government agencies, in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries most if not all missionaries were responding to the Great Commission to 'Go and preach…' as well as to a desire to protect the Aborigines from encroaching and hostile European settlement. In the early stages the Aboriginal people were basically treated by the settlers with indifference – if indeed they were considered at all. And perhaps they were only considered, and then negatively, when the interests of the settlers – and their desire for more land – led to some direct conflict. Early letters and drawings from New South Wales either depicted, as mentioned before, 'the noble savage' or 'the subhuman'.[35] In the early days of the penal colony it was not only the Indigenous people who were subject to attitudes of indifference or antipathy.

The Irish convicts were regarded in much the same way. Indeed Marsden, who was rabidly anti-Catholic, took the view that 'it is more than probable that if the Catholic religion was once allowed to be celebrated by authority, the colony would be lost to the British Empire in less than one year'.[36] In this Marsden was reflecting the anti-Irish and anti-Catholic feeling of the time. Edmund Campion claims that the early Irish convicts were open to the ministrations of the Rev Johnson in the absence of any priests of their own persuasion. Marsden however was another matter.[37] Hilary Carey points out that, despite the presence of the missionary chaplains, there was no formally established religion in the early colony of New South Wales.[38]

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[34] Deborah Bird Rose, *Love and Reconciliation in the Forest: A study in Decolonisation*. Hawke Institute Working Paper Series, No. 19. Magill S A: Hawke Institute. University of South Australia. 2002. pp. 1-2.

[35] http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/barani/themes/theme1.htm. Downloaded 5 March 2004

[36] Patrick O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia 1788 to the present*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2000, p. 8.

[37] Edmund Campion, *Catholics in Australia*. Ringwood: Penguin, 1988, p.8.

[38] Carey, pp. xv, xvi, 1.

A Botany Bay Savage. J. Ihle 1795
From a sketch made in Port Phillip.
Frank Welsh, *Great Southern Land : A new history of Australia*.
London: Allen Lane. 2004.

From bottom to top: **the evolution of Aborigine. humanity - monkey, native, European.**
Nott, J. and Gliddon, G., *Types of Mankind*
Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, and Co. 1854.

The first Roman Catholic priest, Father James Dixon, did not arrive in the colony until 1800 – and then as a convict himself. He was granted conditional emancipation and allowed to minister to the Catholics in and around Sydney Cove. His behaviour was reported by Governor King to be exemplary although that of his fellow convict priest, Father Harold at Norfolk Island, was regarded as being seditious.[39] Unfortunately the unsuccessful 'Castle Hill Rebellion' in 1804 – known to the Catholics as the 'Battle of Vinegar Hill' after a similar event of the same name earlier in Ireland – led to the revocation of Dixon's right to say Mass. He left the colony shortly afterwards. The Catholic convicts had been without Mass from 1789 till 1803 and were to be without it again from 1804 until 1820 when the first officially appointed Roman Catholic chaplains to the colony arrived. They were Fathers John Therry and Philip Connolly. None of these three, however, necessarily united their Catholic flock. Later, the early Catholic church in Australia would become something of a theological battleground between the Benedictines and the Jesuits but, for now, it was more a battle between the Irish and the institutional Church.

[39] Letter from Governor King to Lord Hobart, May 1803. Quoted in J A Morley, 'Convict priest was in favour … and out'. Sydney: *The Catholic Weekly*, 11 May 2003.

In the meantime Marsden's success was not great either in evangelising his fairly recalcitrant 'flock'. But his lack of success was probably no greater than that of his counterparts working amongst urban poor of Britain. Poverty and lack of faith and virtue seemed to be equated at the time. Marsden saw the function of Christianity not only as being to reclaim lost souls but also to civilise them and to bolster good government. When he moved his focus to New Zealand he applied this same approach to the Maori: 'civilisation before conversion'. It was not dissimilar to the methods which the Jesuits had applied historically in their own missions – but a reversal of the policy later followed by Bishop O'Loughlin in the Northern Territory. Marsden and the Jesuits saw 'civilisation' as an essential prerequisite for evangelisation. O'Loughlin assumed that evangelisation would prepare the people for civilisation and eventual integration. Ironically Marsden's great missionary work amongst Indigenous people took place in New Zealand, which was his main focus after 1814. It was not until 1825 that, as President of the Sydney Branch of the Anglican Church Missionary Society (which had been formed in England in 1799), Marsden commissioned the establishment of the first mission station and farm for Aborigines in Australia. It was to be another century before the CMS would send missionaries to Northern Australia – and then it would be at the invitation of the government to establish mission stations to care for mixed-race children. Marsden's successor, Rowland Hassall, had been accepted as a missionary with the London Missionary Society (which was to dominate the Pacific region for many years). He was described as 'a rather illiterate but stout young man'[40] – referring to his moral rather than his physical stature. Intended to serve as a carpenter in Tahiti, he and his family returned to Sydney in 1798 where he was employed by Governor King in several superintendent positions as well as maintaining an active preaching ministry throughout the colony.

Benjamin Carvosso**,** a Wesleyan Methodist missionary working in the colony from 1820-25, reported to the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* of 1823[41] that drunkenness and debauchery still prevailed amongst the colonial population. The

[40] *South Land of the Holy Spirit*. ch 8. p. 5 of 11. www.chr.org.au. Downloaded 13 April, 2005
[41] Benjamin Carvosso, "An Account of some Awful Deaths in New South Wales", letter dated August 1822, Sydney, *The Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, April 1823. Digital version. HDM 1997. www.wesley.nuu.edu/wesleyctr/books. Downloaded 6 May, 2005

very focus of this report may be an indicator that the main missionary effort was still focused on the colonists rather than Indigenous people. Macquarie, during his time as Governor, had sought to educate Aboriginal children with a view to assimilating them into the colonial workforce. To do this he had established both the Parramatta 1814) and Blacktown (1823)[42] Native Institutions.[43] After Macquarie's departure in 1821, in a sectarian swoop, Marsden contrived to have control of these institutions pass into the Anglican hands of the Church Missionary Society, rather than allow the Wesleyan Methodists to take them over. At this stage the reason for separating children into their own institutions was the belief that they needed to be away from their families and culture in order to learn – and also that they needed to be separated from the corrupt elements of white society such as convicts.[44] The first mission established by the Anglican Church Missionary Society was at what is now called the Maynnggu Ganai site in Wellington NSW near the junction of the Bell and Macquarie Rivers. This operated as a mission to Wiradjuri people from 1832 until 1844 before being abandoned to development as a colonial settlement.[45]

Meanwhile, another London Missionary Society missionary, Lancelot Threlkeld had been ordained 1816 and was sent initially to the Society Islands. After the death of his wife, he and his children returned to Sydney where the LMS asked him to establish a mission for Aborigines at Lake Macquarie. The Ebenezer Mission, begun in 1824, continued to operate officially until 1838 and lasted another three years after Threlkeld's departure[46]. However by 1838 there were few Aborigines left at the mission. In what would become an all too familiar story, they had either been enticed to the nearby settlement (in this case, Newcastle) by the lure of rum and prostitution or had been killed by settlers to whom they were simply a nuisance to be exterminated. Threlkeld who, like

[42] The Institution moved from Parramatta to Blacktown in 1823. http://www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au/our-city/history/the-region/important-dates. Downloaded 12 May, 2005
[43] http://www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au/our-city/history/the-region/important-dates
[44] *Mayngu Ganai Historical Site Wellington Valley 1825 – 1844. Draft Conservation Management Plan*. ACT: NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service. June 2004, p. 65. 14 June, 2005. Downloaded 28 September, 2005
[45] *Maynggu Ganai Historic Site Draft Conservation Management Plan*. ACT: NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service. March 2004, p. 1 .11. Downloaded 28 September, 2005
[46] Threlkeld took charge of a Congregational Church in Sydney after leaving the mission.

many other missionaries, 'always and everywhere championed the cause of the blacks',[47] noted that many of the colonists insisted that 'the blacks had no language at all but were only a race of the monkey tribe'.[48] His work with Aborigines could be divided into three categories: protector, interpreter and evangelist, 'although there was not a lot he could do to protect them from the vices of white colonists'.[49] It was as interpreter he was of most help to the Aboriginal people. His learning of the language allowed him to recognise, among other things, that they had their own laws and culture.

By learning their language Threlkeld was preparing himself to evangelise the people. In so doing he was emulating the methodology of the Jesuits who had long since realised that, in order that the 'Indians' with whom they worked could understand the Gospel, they needed to be able to read (or hear) the Gospel in their own language. To read they need to learn; to learn they needed to attend school; to attend school they needed to be settled; to be settled they need to hunt less; to hunt less they needed to learn to farm. So missionary work required much practical instruction before the missionaries were in a position to consider evangelisation and theological teaching.[50] This was still the case when Father Gsell MSC began his missionary endeavours on Bathurst Island in 1911. When asked what he had achieved Gsell replied, 'I taught the Aborigine how to work'. However, although the early Christian missionaries in Australia did much to highlight the injustices and dispossession faced by Aborigines, there was little concerted attempt to cultivate any sense of respect for Indigenous culture and language.[51]

In the formative days and years of Australia most, if not all, the mission activity was primarily focussed on the fairly recalcitrant settler population rather than the Indigenous people and it was almost exclusively the preserve of various Protestant denominations. The Colonial Government until 1842 directed some funding towards Christian missions in the expectation that they both improve

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[47] *South Land of the Holy Spirit*, p. 7 of 11.
[48] *South Land of the Holy Spirit*, p.7 of 11.
[49] *South Land of the Holy Spirit*, p.7 of 11.
[50] Tim Herbert, *History of Missions in Methodism*. Louisiana Conference of the United Methodist Church. 1997-99. www.la-umc.org/misshist.htm. Downloaded 9 May, 2005.
[51] *South Land of the Ho y Spirit*. p. 8 of 11.

race relations – mostly for the benefit of the settlers, one suspects, although Viscount Goderich is on record as anticipating 'much advantage to the natives themselves, as well as to the European settlers who are at present exposed to the mischievous consequences of the predatory lives and habits of their neighbours'[52].

When the Roman Catholic clergy arrived in an official capacity in 1820 there were about six or seven thousand Catholics in the colony. Father Therry's presence was not without its problems. Although popular with some Catholics he was unpopular with others and a concern to the Governor. Therry was preoccupied with building a Catholic church in Sydney and Governor Macquarie eventually laid the foundation stone of St Mary's Cathedral in 1821. However it was not until the arrival of the English Benedictine William Ullathorne in 1832 that the Catholic church had clear and decisive leadership. Prior to this the 'Catholic' community had been assertively Irish but at the same time anti-clerical[53]. Ullathorne's management of the Catholic community was further strengthened by the arrival of another Benedictine, Bede Polding, as Bishop of Sydney in 1842. But their focus for some considerable time was on the establishment of the institutional Roman Catholic Church in Australia. In 1842 Polding sent Father (later Bishop) Brady to Perth to minister to the Roman Catholic population there. Four years later Brady sent Father Angelo Confalonieri and two companions north to establish a mission in the vicinity of Port Essington. Again the primary function was to minister to the settlers but, this time, the possibility of a mission to the Indigenous people was also part of the plan.

In Torres Strait, however, their vessel joined the long list of ships wrecked in the area. Captain McKenzie and Father Confalonieri, the only survivors, were rescued by a passing ship which delivered Father Confalonieri to the settlement at Port Essington where the Superintendent took care of him. He then chose a spot near Point Smith, about twenty miles from Port Victoria, as the base for his work with the Aborigines. Confalonieri realised the need to learn the language of

[52] *Maynggu Ganai Historic Site Draft*. pp. 3.28-3.29.
[53] O'Farrell, pp. 42-45.

the local people and, having a ready facility with languages, was soon able to converse with them. He was able to translate some prayers and New Testament readings and compiled the first dictionary of an Aboriginal language in this part of Australia. He also drew up a map of Port Essington showing the tribal groups on the Coburg Peninsula. On 31 May 1848, Captain McArthur reported that Father Angelo was 'seized with a treacherous attack of fever'. Confalonieri died on June 9, and was buried two days later. In his two years he had won about 400 followers.[54] Nothing more, however, is heard of these 400 followers.

Confalonieri's Map of the Coburg Peninsula. While Confalonieri names the tribes in the Cobourg Peninsula area, he also notes on the map that the bulk of the continent is 'unknown land'. The original map is held in the Mitchell Library. Sydney.

The Anglicans, on the other hand, had been represented in the colony since its inception as chaplain missionaries. The Wesleyan Methodists had first arrived in 1818 – again to found a mission to convicts in New South Wales.[55] The first Roman Catholic clergy arriving in 1820 also saw themselves as reclaiming their traditional but unchurched flock – a mission in itself. Interdenominational Protestant missions such as the London Missionary Society were also working in

[54] Thomson & Niall, *NT Dreaming*, p. 6.

[55] "(Wesleyan) Methodist Missionary Society/Methodist Church Overseas Division Archive". *Mundus: Gateway to Missionary Collections in the UK.* http://wwww.mundus.ac.uk/cats/4/910.htm, p. 3 of 7. Downloaded 16 May 2005.

and from New South Wales from the latter decades of the eighteenth century. The Baptist Missionary Society began almost by default in Australia in the 1850s as missionaries came to New South Wales and Port Phillip from India to recuperate from illness. However they seem to be one of the mission groups which used Australia as a base for foreign mission outreach while not conducting missions within Australia. It also needs to be said that the London Missionary Society was founded by an English Baptist.[56]

To the south and moving into the centre of the continent from 1866 were German Lutheran missionaries who, from their base at Tanunda in South Australia, established missions to the Aboriginal people at Killpaninna (Bethesda Mission) and Hermannsburg.[57] The Lutherans also established smaller missions around the country as, for example, did the (German) Moravians from Victoria who developed the mission at Mapoon on the Cape York Peninsula for the Presbyterian (later part of the Uniting) Church[58] in 1891. Ironically here, as at Ernabella (1937) and elsewhere within Australia, the missions of the Presbyterian church to the Aborigines came under the control of the Foreign Missions Board of the church.[59] (The bulk of the Presbyterian Church of Australia joined the Uniting Church in 1977.)

The Australian Inland Mission of the then Presbyterian church (today the Frontier Services arm of the Uniting Church) was established by Presbyterian minister, the Rev John Flynn in 1912, following on in the steps of the 'Smith of Dunesk' missionaries in the northern parts of South Australia[60]. The primary mission of the Smith of Dunesk missionaries, established by Henrietta Smith in the 1830s,[61] was to support and evangelise all the people (which in fact meant

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[56] Thomas Hiney, *The Missionary Trail* cited by Ashley Albert, *The London Missionary Society*. http://athena.english.vt.edu p. 1 of 2. Downloaded 6 May 2005

[57] *German Australia*. http://www.teachers.ash.org.au/dnutting/germanaustralia. Downloaded 12 April 2004.

[58] Rev. Arch Grant, *Aliens in Arnhem Land*. Dee Why: Frontier Publishing Inc, 1995, p. 19.

[59] See for example, *A Brief History of Mapoon*. http://www.capeyork.pcq.org.au/. Downloaded 19 April 2004.

[60] Ivan Rudolph, *John Flynn of Flying Doctors and Frontier Faith*. Rockhampton: Central Queensland University Press, 2000, pp. 40-41.

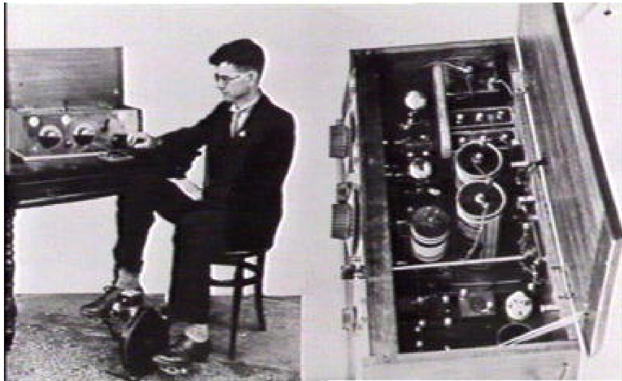
[61] *The Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia*. Flinders Ranges Research. http://www.southaustralianhistory.com.au/royalflying.htm. Downloaded 14 April 2004

the European settlers) in the remote areas of south central Australia.[62] Originally the rental income from land in South Australia purchased by Henrietta Smith in 1839 had been set aside to develop a mission to the Aboriginal people. This money was administered by the Church of Scotland for that purpose. But Smith was told that the Aborigines were a dying race and that her money, thus used, would be wasted. Although some of the money was used to establish the MacLeay Mission to Aborigines, the support stopped in 1896 and the Presbyterian Church of Australia invested the money until it was used to found the Mission at Beltana in 1894.[63]

The prior completion of the Overland Telegraph Line from Adelaide to Darwin in 1872 and the consequent development of 'The Track' to service the line had enabled and encouraged European settlers to venture further and further inland and outback but their existence there was very precarious. The death of Jimmy Darcy at Halls Creek was just one example of how harsh outback life could be.[64] Flynn's emphasis again was on reaching the European settlers of the outback and providing what he called a 'mantle of safety' which would enable them to open up the outback without facing the hazards to which they had been used. The pedal wireless, the transceiver and finally the Flying Doctor all fulfilled these aims.

Miss Jessie Chalmers, (later Mrs. Geoff Holt of Delmore Down) daughter of Charles and Cora Chalmers, seated at a pedal wireless set installed at MacDonald Downs by Skipper Partridge and John Flynn. John Flynn made the table out of the case in which Alfred Traeger forwarded the set from Adelaide. Note the stone walls and lime cement.
DATE 1936.
Source: Picture NT.
Photo number: PH0057/0089

[62] Rev Robert Mitchell began working north of Beltana, S.S. in 1895 and Sister E A Main began the Oodnadatta nursing service in 1907. *Assembly Letter*. Uniting Church of Australia. January 2002. http://assembly.uca.org.au/home/. Downloaded 21 December 2004.
[63] *Royal Flying Doctor Service*.
[64] Rudolph, pp. 1-10.



Alfred Traeger and his wireless transmitter. Traeger is operating the
pedal wireless. On right, details of electrics in wireless box
DATE 1924
Source: Picture NT
Photo number: PH0057

Flynn has on occasion been called racist[65] for focusing on the non-Indigenous settlers – although it needs to be noted that he made himself, and his medical teams especially, available to anyone who needed them regardless of colour. But, given the pre-existence of the Foreign Missions arm of the church already working with Aborigines, he felt that the need of the time was for the non-Indigenous settlers. And, unusually perhaps for a missionary, he viewed his work in terms of national development. Flynn's concern for the Northern Territory was sparked also by a letter from Jessie Litchfield who, before her marriage, had been a member of the Richmond (Victoria) Presbyterian Church and who had written to the church newspaper, *The Messenger*, in 1909 asking why the church could not send a missionary to the north. She pointed out that, in 500 000 square miles of country there were some '1500 whites, 2000 Chinese and 5000 blacks'. The only ministers in the whole Northern Territory she said, were 'a Catholic priest, an Anglican clergyman and a few Methodist lay preachers' all within the Darwin vicinity.[66] The vexed question of mission and ministry to both races was still alive in the 1980s in parts of Northern Australia. In his 1998 Mission Australia[67] address, John Harris noted that Presbyterian missionary Charles Duguid was among the first to publicly acknowledge this dilemma in 1934 (writing of Alice Springs) while country clergy in 1998 reported the same dilemma in their

[65] Hains, 'Inland Flynn' in *Eureka Street*, May 2003.
[66] Rudolph, p. 34.
[67] 'Mission Australia' is a national organisation comprising the former Methodist, (now Uniting) Church City Missions of the capital cities.

ministries.[68] This did not stop Duguid criticising Flynn on the same matter however.

While these developments were taking place the Roman Catholic church was also moving to develop mission in the North. The Austrian Jesuits who had established their base at Sevenhill in the Clare Valley, South Australia, saw the need for a mission to the Aboriginal people within twenty years of their arrival but they did not have the personnel to undertake the work. However, about 1878, Father Duncan McNab[69] who worked with Aborigines in Queensland and had some knowledge of the indigenous situation in the Northern Territory prevailed upon Pope Leo XIII to address the needs of the Australian Aborigines. The Pope commissioned the Jesuits to undertake the mission and this in turn became the responsibility of the Australian province of the Austrian Jesuits, under the leadership of Father Anthony Strele.[70] The four Jesuits – Father Strele, Father John Evangelist Neubauer, Father John O'Brien (the first Australian born Jesuit) and Brother Gregory Eberhard –sailed into Darwin on 24 September, 1883. Once here they too, like other missionaries before and after them, discovered that their task was the dual one of meeting the religious needs of the settlers as well as the needs of the Aboriginal people.[71] Their focus, however, was working with the Aboriginal people.

Father Anton (Anthony) Strele SJ, leader of the Jesuit mission to Rapid Creek and Daly River.
Source: David Strong SJ, *The Australian Dictionary of Jesuit Biography 1848-1998*. Sydney: Halstead Press. 1999. p. 334.

[68] John Harris, *1998 Address to Mission Australia: Reconciliation with God and Each Other The Church's Ministry with Indigenous Australians*. Bush Church Aid Society. 2000. www.bushchurchaid.com/au/Resources/Resource1.htm Downloaded March 2004.
[69] Father McNab was a relative of Mother Mary and Father Donald MacKillop SJ.
[70] Thomson, p. 7.
[71] Thomson, p. 7.

Mission staff at New Uniya. 1890. Back: Bros Vincent Scharmer. Anton Haelbig. Augustin Melzer. James Longa. Josef Girschik. Alois Pfalzer. Front: Frs Stefan Marschner. Josef Milz. Josef Conrath. Augustus Fleury. Sitting: Houseboys and schoolboys.

Jesuit missionaries and Indigenous schoolboys at Daly River Mission.

Source: Strong, p. 236

Using the method of 'réductions' (mission colonies) which had worked so well in Paraguay the Jesuits set up their first mission at what is now Rapid Creek – a square mile of land[72] reaching inland from the sea and with the creek running diagonally through it. The 'réductions' had been developed on the principle of developing an area remote from European influence in an attempt to protect the people from corrupt and corrupting that influence and to enable them to develop the skills of survival in a world which now contained white settlers. Rapid Creek was, Strele thought, far enough from the adverse influences of white settlement of Palmerston on the Indigenous people. The Indigenous groups in the region were the Woolner, Alligator[73] and the Larrakia.. All too soon, though, the destructive influence of the encroaching settlement with its temptations to grog and prostitution, as well as inter-tribal disputes, led the Jesuits to abandon Rapid Creek in favour of the Daly River. In 1886 they moved to the first of their

[72] I square mile = 2.59 square kilometres.
[73] John Pye MSC, *The Daly River Story: A River Unconquered*. Darwin: Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, 1976, p. 8.

Mission stations on the west bank of the Daly at Uniya, a traditional meeting place of the local tribes (the site of Mango Farm today).

Deborah Bird Rose asserts that the Jesuits assumed that the Indigenous people were a 'tabular rasa' – a blank page – on which Christianity could be imposed. She claims that their view was that the Indigenous people were 'wandering in the darkness and [the missionaries] were the bringers of light'.[74] However this pejorative hindsight ignores the efforts the Jesuits made to take a realistic view of their work. One of the original group of Daly River Jesuit missionaries commented that, in fact, 'Our work requires virgin soil – the free savage [sic] with all his vices, but with his only'.[75] In other words the Jesuits, like sound teachers anywhere, recognised that education is easier when the students do not first have to unlearn material which is 'wrong'. This is not the same thing as assuming a 'tabular rasa'.

Certainly, in using the réduction model which had worked so well in South America both to educate, civilise and evangelise the Indians as well as, significantly, to protect them from the predations of European settlers, the Jesuits had the same aims for the Aborigines. In 1892, Father Conrath SJ wrote 'it is the plan … to settle the Aborigines on the ground and to turn them into a farming population. If we succeed in this we are convinced to succeed in bestowing Christian civilisation upon them'.[76] The Jesuits were merely one group among many who were deceived by the apparently fertile soils of the Daly River region into believing that viable agriculture was possible. Like many others they had not taken sufficient account of the fact that the Aborigines' 'nomadism' was, not least, dictated by the nature of the country they inhabited. To settle them permanently in one place was going to prove nigh impossible.

When the Jesuits arrived at the Daly River in 1886 there had already been some copper mining by Europeans in the region. In 1884 five of these miners had been

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[74] Rose, *View from the North*, p 2 of 8. Downloaded 11November 2005. See also Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country,* p. 131.

[75] G J O'Kelly SJ, Jesuit Missions in the Northern Territory. 1882 – 1899. B.A (Hons) Thesis, Monash University, 1967, p.22. Cited in Peter Hearn, *A Theology of Mission: Diocese of Darwin 1949 - 85*. Kensington: Nelen Yubu Missiological Unit. 2003. p. 16.

[76] Hearn, p. 16. See also O'Kelly, p. 57.

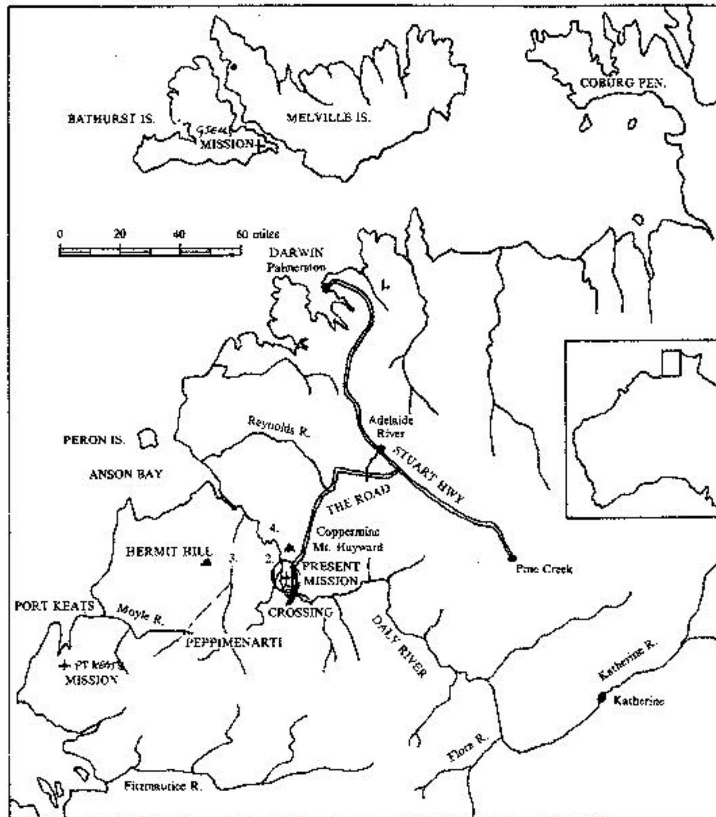
inexplicably wounded or killed, presumably by their Aboriginal assistants. The reprisals were inevitable and merciless. So, in fact, the Jesuits were coming into a situation where the Aborigines needed some protection, as they had in Paraguay. The initial development at Old Uniya was established in 1886 under the leadership of Father John O'Brien SJ. It was wiped out by the 1888 Daly River flood and a new settlement developed further west[77] at Serpentine Lagoon. Here again the gardens were developed together with a canal system developed to water the gardens near Hermit Hill. This site functioned from1889 until 1890 before the land again became unproductive. The initial station, near the river and obviously subject to flooding, was always intended to be a prelude to the main station – Sacred Heart – which was later established further west at Serpentine Lagoon. The Serpentine Lagoon site was favoured for its remoteness from the influences of settlers – and its presumed safe distance from the river itself. Despite the difficulties of the site and the situation the Jesuits nevertheless planted gardens – tropical fruits such as mangoes, tobacco – and developed herds of goats, cattle, horses and donkeys.[78] The arrival of Father Donald MacKillop as Superior of Daly River in 1890 saw a reorganisation and relocation of the mission to New Uniya, on the eastern side of the river near the junction of Bamboo Creek and the Daly where he deemed the land to be better. This site was known as St Joseph's or New Uniya. The Jesuit Daly River Centenary booklet notes that the Jesuit Superior General, Father Anthony M Anderledy SJ 'caused the mission to be inaugurated and remained a firm supporter of it'.[79] His successor, Father Peter Bekx SJ, was not so committed to the mission and several times asked the pope for permission to close it. This permission was refused but Father Anderledy's death in 1891 and the amalgamation of the Austrian and Irish branches of the Jesuits in Australia provided the opportunity to close the

[77] 35 km west of the Daly River Crossing.

[78] Peter Forrest, *The Spirit of the Daly*. Daly River NT: Daly River Community Development. Association, 1994, p. 30. See also Carey, p. 80 and Rose. *Reports from a Wild Country*, pp. 131 – 148. Rose emphasises the contribution of (or confusion contributed by) Father Kristen SJ to this mission despite knowing that this particular priest suffered a nervous breakdown soon after his arrival direct from Austria. It seems unwise to focus on one priest whose views are obviously not typical of his order or the time. (See also Strong). The Jesuits' approach is typical of what Eugene Stockton calls 'the immersion heater' approach in 'Maverick Missionaries' in Tony Swain and& Deborah Bird Rose (eds), *Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions*. Adelaide: Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1988, pp. 201- 212.

[79] *Daly River Centenary Booklet*. Melbourne: Jesuit Publications. 3 December, 1986. p.1.

mission.[80] The mission had received a Visitator[81] in 1896 And 1897. The final Visitator, Father Milz SJ, arrived on 20 June, 1899 and the following day the mission was closed. 'Anything of value was packed, the stock sold to local pastoralists, the buildings dismantled, the Aborigines sent away and the Jesuits sent back to Europe or South America'[82] (not to Sevenhill whence they had come.)



JESUIT ABORIGINAL STATIONS IN THE N.T. 1882-1899

1. Rapid Creek, Oct. 1882 - Dec. 1891.
2. (Old) Uniya, Oct. 1886 - July 1891.
3. Serpentine Lagoon, Oct. 1889 - July 1891.
4. New Uniya, July 1891 - June 1899.

Source: Pye MSC, *The Daly River Story*. Inside front cover.

By the time the mission closed in 1899, the Mission Superior, Father MacKillop had installed an irrigation pump and planted vegetables and fruit, coconuts, tobacco and sugar cane. Leather was being made from the goat and bullock hides. A steam engine drove the pump and a sawmill. MacKillop established a

[80] *Daly River Centenary Booklet*. p.1.
[81] A 'visitator' is a member of the order sent by the General to carry out an inspection of the work on his behalf.
[82] *Daly River Centenary Booklet*, p. 2.

school and the children were taught in their vernacular languages.[83] Several Aboriginal boys were sent to Jesuit schools interstate – but on their return disappeared into the bush. All seemed to be progressing well until the Mission was struck by a combination of a cyclone in 1897, an unknown disease which reduced the cattle herd by about a third[84] and the floods in 1899. By this time the mission was home to about eighty Aborigines with about fifty children in the school and twelve families settled on their own land.[85] The combined disasters, together with a manpower shortage and, more particularly, changed priorities within the Jesuits, led to the abandonment of any Catholic missionary presence from 1902 until 1906. Nevertheless, when the Niemanns settled on the St Joseph's, New Uniya site, Mary Niemann noted that ' the missionaries had made their Daly Station an earthly paradise…'.[86]

Left – Right:
Blessed Mary MacKillop, Father Donald MacKillop SJ and Annie MacKillop.

Adelaide c 1900.
Jesuit Archives. See also Strong, p. 229.

A significant part of the blame for the failure of the Jesuit mission was also laid at the feet of Father Strele himself. Although he was a man of 'great zeal, great personal holiness and tireless activity … these qualities were not matched by the

[83] Strong, p. 298.
[84] Forrest, p. 32.
[85] Forrest, p. 32
[86] Forrest, p. 34.

virtue of prudence'.[87] Notwithstanding his enthusiasm and passion, 'his powers of organisation and administration proved insufficient for the task and the mission was mismanaged'.[88] Strele's failure to establish a firmly organised supply base (either in Austria – the province responsible for the mission – or in Australia) meant that for much of the time the mission was poorly supplied and money was short.[89] In both the Rapid Creek and Daly River foundations he had failed to adequately reconnoitre the situations.[90] Rapid Creek was never going to be a satisfactory location, despite its apparent suitability to minister to both the local settlement and the aborigines. The land given by the government at Daly River was unsuitable for prolonged agricultural development. The limited resources available to the mission were further tested by the decision at first to maintain Rapid Creek while developing the Sacred Heart Mission at Uniya.[91]

To this point in time missionary activity could still be described as 'traditional'. Despite the advances in thinking initiated by the Jesuits with their 'réductions', mission philosophy had not changed greatly since the eighteenth century. Missionaries, whether they were lay, clerical or religious, in Australia particularly had at least initially a dual task of evangelising the recalcitrant colonists as well as attempting to both protect and evangelise the Indigenous people. The twentieth century would see mission activity changing inasmuch as the efforts of the churches, missions and government would more often be interwoven.

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87 Strong. p. 334.
88 Strong. p. 334.
89 Strong. p. 334..
90 Strong. p. 334.
91 Strong. p. 334. See also Forrest, p. 27. Forrest names the mission as The Holy Rosary Mission. Hearn, p. 15. names it 'Queen of the Holy Rosary Mission'.

March 1899 flood at the Jesuit Mission, New Uniya. By this time the Mission was flourishing and self-supporting.

Pye, *The Daly River Story.* p. 9.

Austrian Jesuit Missionaries who served in the Northern Territory

	Surname	Given name	Came to Australia	Grade	Died	Location in 1902	NT service
1.	Everhard	George	1866	Br	1912	Australia	1882-92
2.	Strele	Anthony	1867	Fr	1897	Dead	1882-92
3.	O'Brien	John Francis	*1870	Fr	1925	Australia	1882-1902
4.	MacKillop	Donald	*1874	Fr	1925	Australia	1886-97
5.	Neubauer	John	1876	Fr	1910	Europe	1883-84
6.	Conrath	Joseph	1884	Fr	1932	Europe	1884-98
7.	Scharmer	Vincent	1884	Br	1923	Australia	1884-99
8.	Kristen	Adolf	1884	Fr	1907	Europe	1884 -94
9.	Sboril	Joseph	1889	Br	1922	Europe	1884-95
10.	Marschener	Stephen	1889	Fr	1910	Europe	1889-99
11.	Haelbeg	Anthony	1890	Br	1927	Europe	1889-00
12.	Melzer	Augustine	1897	Br	1911	Australia	1889-01
13.	Hulka	James	1897	Br	1915	Australia	1890-97
14.	Longa	James	1898	Br	1937	Europe	1890-99
15.	Milz	Joseph	1898	Fr	1915	Europe	1899
16.	Kramer	John	1898	Br	1917	Europe	1897-99
17.	Fleury	Augustine	1898	Fr	1931	Australia	18898- 01
18	Girschik	Joseph	1898	Br	1930	Australia	1898-99

Source: Jesuit Archives. Austrian NT Mission Arrival order. 4818b.xls

Although the majority of Jesuits who served on the Jesuit Missions in the Top End endured relatively brief periods of time, some were involved in missionary activity for ten years and the longest serving, Father John O'Brien (one of the two Australian born Jesuits of the time), remained for twenty years. The 1986 Centenary booklet includes, in addition to those mentioned above, Brothers Aloysius Pfalzer, Frederick Schwartz and Bernard Kunerth.[92]

[92] *Daly River Centenary Booklet*. p. 10.

6. Landscape 4: Aboriginal affairs … the contexts

One might think that research into the historical aspects of mission and missionary activity, as well as the situation of the Aborigines, should be free of contextual fluidity. The reality is, however, that the contemporary contexts of both the missionary activity and the research into it are subject to the wider contexts in which both occur. These are almost inevitably both social and political. Equally inevitably, the social and the political are also inextricably entwined. It is also a fact that mission activity in the Northern Territory has always been closely linked to government policies in relation to Aboriginal people and an exploration of government policy discloses the reality of almost constant change and of distance – geographical, philosophical, political and economic – between the makers and receivers of those policies.[1]

Writing in 1963, Charles Duguid, founder of the Ernabella Mission in northern South Australia, declared that 'Most Australians have little knowledge of our aborigines [*sic*], and show little interest in their future'.[2] If one were to consider 'the person in the street', one might argue that this is still the case – particularly amongst Australians whose daily existence is far removed from any experience of or contact with Aborigines. Nevertheless one must also acknowledge that what has increasingly come to be called 'the Aboriginal question' has become a highly politicised subject of discussion both amongst sections of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities within Australia. It has also, on occasion, become a subject for international recrimination against the Australian government, with the treatment and plight of Aborigines being compared to that of black South Africans. Historically that comparison was more likely to have been made with the negroes of the United States of America, whereas it perhaps more properly should have been a comparison with the treatment and plight of the North American Indians.

1 This is arguably true also of the Commonwealth Government Intervention in the Northern Territory, beginning in June 2007.
2 Duguid, *No Dying Race*, Preface.

Prior to 1863, the area now known as the Northern Territory was regarded as either part of New Holland or as part of New South Wales. With the initial settlement at Port Jackson, the jurisdiction of the Colony of New South Wales, itself in the hands of the British Colonial Secretary, extended as far west as 135º East. The area west of 135º East was designated as part of New Holland and was thought to be a distinct land mass separated from New South Wales by sea. It was not until Matthews Flinders' circumnavigation of the continent in 1802–3 that it was clear that there was only one land mass, and that New South Wales was situated on the eastern coast. However, it remained for Phillip Parker King's exploratory expeditions along the northern coastline (1817-1820) to refine Flinders' work and establish, for example, the fact that Bathurst and Melville were islands separated from the mainland.[3] During the course of his northern survey King would also discover the Liverpool, East, South and West Alligator Rivers; the Vernon Islands and chart the northern coast of Arnhem Land as well as the Cobourg Peninsula. In 1819 he sailed past and noted the opening to Darwin Harbour although he did not enter it.[4] It would not be until a further expedition led by John Wickham (1837–41) and John Lort Stokes (1841–43) that Darwin Harbour itself would be entered and explored.[5]

In the meantime though, in the years between these two expeditions, there were two attempts by the British to establish settlements on the north coast. Both of these settlements were established with the intention of confirming British possession of the entire continent of Australia and of defending the coast against possible predations of the Dutch (who were active – arguably with aggressive commercial intent – in the East Indies) as well as the French and the Portuguese both of which nations' explorers had previously sailed through the Torres Strait. An added impetus for the idea of settlement came from the East India Trade Committee which persuaded the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Earl Bathurst,[6] that such a settlement could be the base for trade with the eastern

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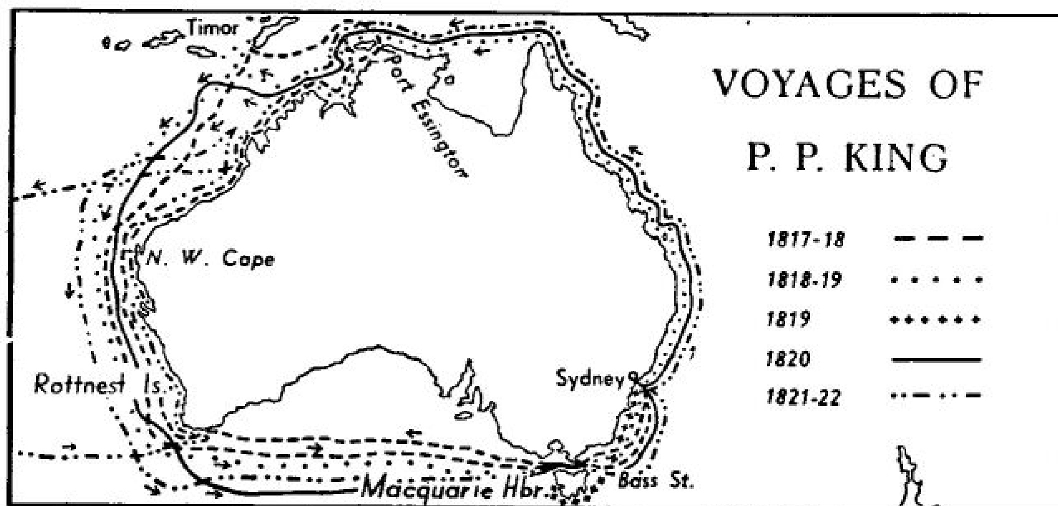
[3] Alan Powell, *Far Country,* p. 47.
[4] Powell, p. 47
[5] Powell, p. 48.
[6] Bathurst Island was named for Earl Bathurst.

islands of the East Indies and even, ultimately with China, citing the activities of the Macassan trepangers[7] as a basis for this optimistic notion.

Flinders' Map of Australia, 1814.
Note the incomplete coastline.
Source: adapted from http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk
Downloaded 29 June, 2006.

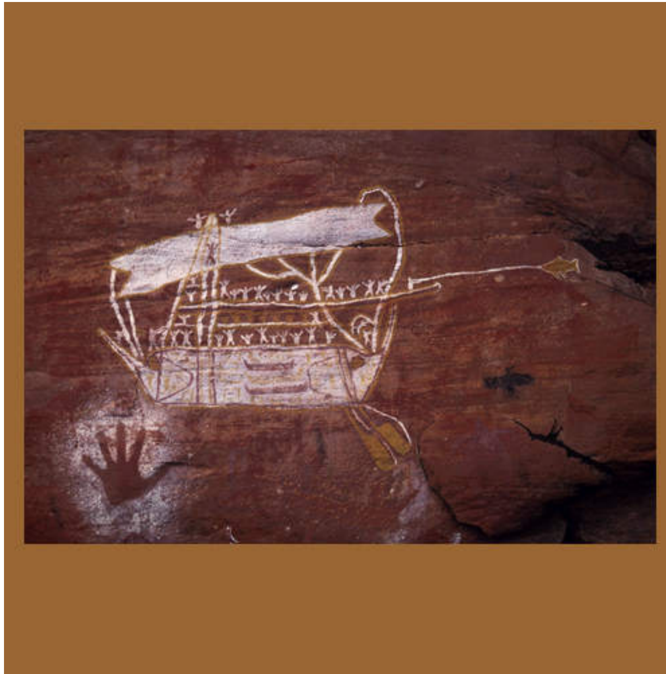


Source: http://gutenberg.net.au/pages/king.html Downloaded 29 June, 2006.

In 1824, the first of these two settlements was established at Fort Dundas on Melville Island. As it turned out the site was not well-chosen. It was surrounded by mangroves and jungle – and belligerent Aborigines. The anticipated Macassan traders failed to materialise. Only later was it realised that the Macassans traded further to the east,[8] traditionally with the Yolŋu of East Arnhem Land. Within

[7] Powell, p. 51.
[8] Peter Spillett, *Forsaken Settlement: An illustrated history of the settlement of Victoria, Port Essington North Australia 1839 - 1849*. Dee Why NSW: Lansdowne Press, 1972, p. 14.

fifty-three months the settlement was abandoned as a commercial failure. In 1827 a second settlement, Fort Wellington, was established further north and east at Raffles Bay on the Cobourg Peninsula. This settlement was on the direct routes of the Macassan trepangers and it seemed probable that trade would be established there. Keith Cole notes that sixty-four Macassan praus[9] visited Raffles Bay in 1829.



Rock Painting of a Macassan Prau.
Ayuwawa, Groote Eylandt, Northern Australia. About 1600 – 1900.

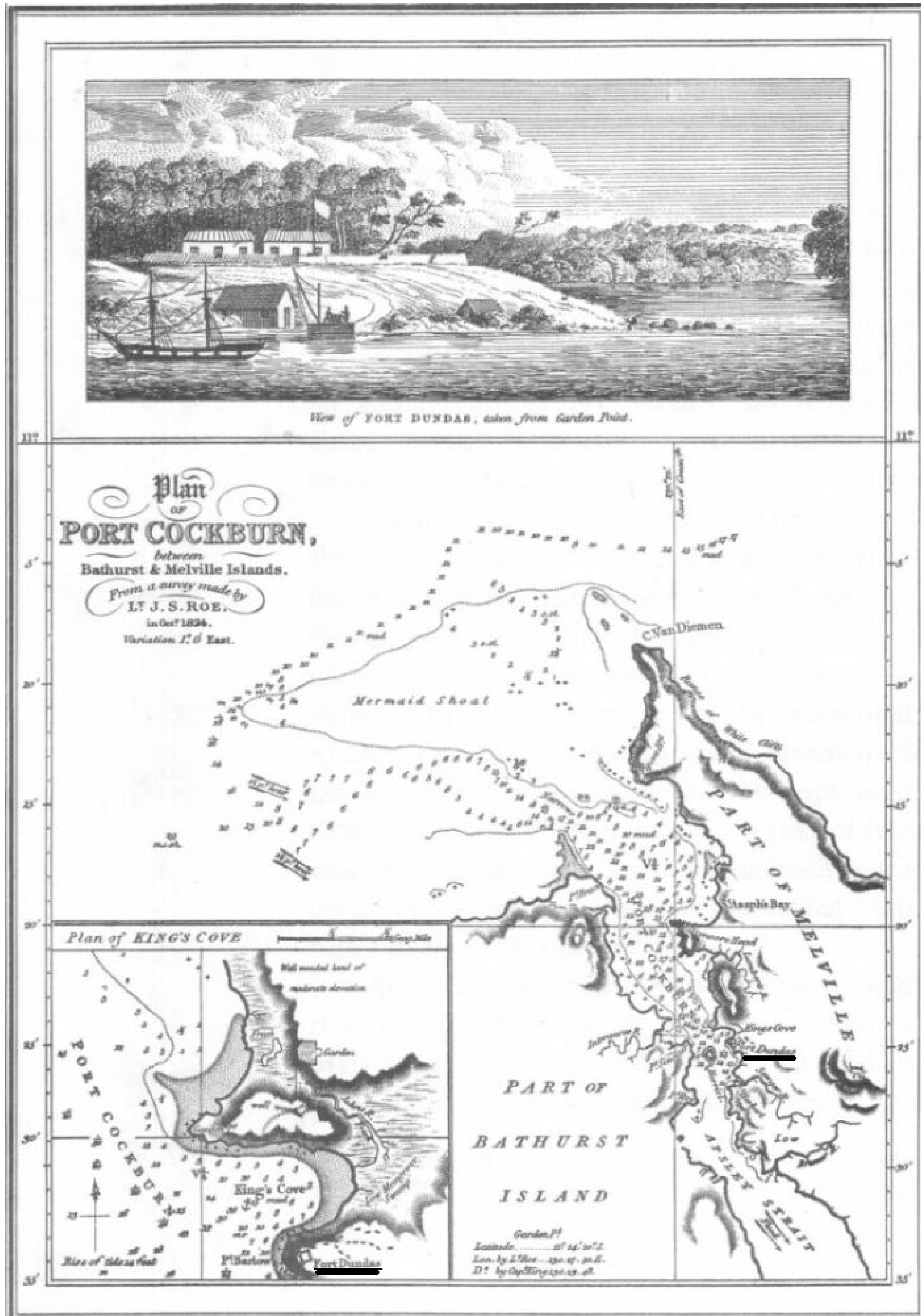
Source: www.samuseum.sa.gov.au
Downloaded 28 June 2006.

But Cole also notes that, of the 1056 men who left Macassar, thirty-seven died on the voyage, three had been speared by Aborigines, and one died at Raffles Bay.[10] Clearly it was not an easy trade. In 1829 this settlement took over the stores, plants and animals left by the defunct Fort Dundas. The building of permanent fortifications was delayed, however, since the garrison expected to be relocated to Port Essington. However, when the instructions arrived, they were to abandon the settlement completely, without relocation[11].

[9] A prau is a fast, sharp-ended rowing or sailing-boat widely used in Malayan water and once popular with Malayan pirates. The prau is long and narrow, rugged with one or two fore-and-aft sails. Modern praus are usually open and relatively small. In earlier times they were decked and up to 60 feet or 18 metres long. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 9, p. 668 2c.
www.iol.ie/~spice/nautglos.htm Downloaded 17 August 2006.

[10] K. Cole, *The Aborigines of Arnhem Land*. Melbourne: Rigby, 1979, p. 57.

[11] Spillett, p.16. John Morris disputes this version, noting that Barker expected the Fort to be re-occupied as a result of his own report. John Morris, “An outline of the history of the settlement



Nautical chart of Apsley Strait showing the location of Fort Dundas on Melville Island.

Chart drawn by Lt J.S. Roe on King's second voyage.

Source: http://freeread.com.au/ebooks/e00028-images/king2-09.jpg Downloaded 19 May 2008.

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at Fort Wellington, Raffles Bay, NT" in *Fort Wellington, Raffles Bay, Northern Australia,* Darwin: HIstorical Society of the Northern Territory, 1971, pp. 14 – 40.

Cobourg Peninsula

Source: Natmap. Geoscience Australia. Commonwealth Government. 2007.

In 1838 a further attempt was made to settle Port Essington where, in 1824, Captain Bremer had taken possession of the north coast of Australia between 129º east and 135º east.[12] Dom Rosendo Salvado, one of the Benedictine founders of New Norcia in Western Australia cites the shipwreck of the *Charles Eaton* and the murder of all its crew as a reason for re-establishing a settlement on the north coast.[13] Bremer, now Sir Gordon Bremer, named the new settlement Victoria. It had the advantage of a good site, being on the trading routes of the Macassans and having a good harbour.[14] It was at Victoria that, having survived shipwreck, Roman Catholic Father Angelo Confalonieri arrived in 1846 as the first missionary to work with the local Aboriginal people. In his time on the Cobourg Peninsula Confalonieri demonstrated a facility for learning the Aboriginal languages and also mapped the Peninsula.[15] In his 'mission work', he

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[12] Spillett, p. 26.

[13] Rosendo Salvado, *The Salvado Memoirs* (tr & ed E.J.Stormon). Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 1998, p. 243.

[14] Powell, p. 59.

[15] See page 160 of this thesis.

worked predominantly with the Aboriginal children, observing that he despaired of converting the adults and feared he was not making any impression on them.[16] He would not be the last to feel like this. Nevertheless the local Aborigines appear to have both liked and accepted him 'for the way in which he tried to reconcile tribal differences, [for] his generosity in sharing his provision and [for] the way he adopted their nomadic way of life'.[17] Despite his regard for the Aboriginal people, Confalonieri was a man of his time and, as such, believed that they 'had no concept of religion or any form of idolatory which could be gradually replaced by Christian beliefs'.[18] Within two years, in 1848, Confalonieri was dead, having succumbed to fever. He was buried at Port Essington.

From 1824 this northern outpost of Australia was still effectively part of New South Wales. Salvado records that despite Bremer's publicly stated belief in the potential of the area around Victoria[19] for settlement, and the contemporary population growth of other areas of the country such as Australia Felix and Adelaide, the northern settlement languished.[20] Salvado suggested two reasons for this. One was the inconsistent reports of the place. While Bremer, in his 1839 report, praised the location, the potential of the soil and the climate others, such as Dr Wilson and Captain McArthur (Bremer's successor at Victoria), cited the oppressive tropical heat as the main reason precluding any further development.[21] The second reason suggested by Salvado is 'the series of regulations issued in Sydney for the sale of land'.[22] These regulations 'remained unchanged only because no-one was interested in Victoria'.[23] The colonial Governor in Sydney was the representative authority for the British Secretary of

[16] Despatch of 14 October 1847, McArthur to Colonial Secretary. Cited in Spillett, pp. 146-7.
[17] Despatch of 14 October 1847, McArthur to Colonial Secretary. Cited in Spillett, pp. 146-7.
[18] Despatch of 14 October 1847, McArthur to Colonial Secretary. Cited in Spillett, pp. 146-7.
[19] Salvado consistently uses 'Victoria' to refer to the settlement on the shores of Port Essington. Many people today refer to Port Essington, perhaps to avoid confusion with the Australian state of the same name.
[20] Salvado, p. 245. Spillett makes no mention of Dr Wilson. See also Alan Powell, *Far Country: A Short History of the Northern Territory*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press. 2000, p. 56ff for a detailed discussion of the settlements at Fort Dudnas, Raffles Bay and Port Essington.
[21] Salvado, p. 245.
[22] Salvado, p. 245.
[23] Salvado, p. 245.

State for the Colonies.[24] Salvado also mentioned a cyclone in 1839 which devastated the settlement, and several earthquakes. He further recorded that 'the British Government decided that, as the colony of Victoria has not proved successful it should be relinquished from 10 June 1849'.[25] Powell notes that, by the time the British 'burnt the reeds and thatch of their cottages in November1849 and went away', McArthur's feelings about the place had come out 'in the address he wrote in his notebook: "Victoria, North Australia, World's End".'[26]

This situation, which saw the Northern Territory as part of New South Wales, pertained until 1863 when the region was designated the Northern Territory of South Australia, a situation that continued from 1863 until 1911. The *South Australia Act* (also known as the *Foundation Act*) of 1834 established the colony of South Australia as a convict free settlement which was to be financed by the sale of land in

> that part of Australia which lies between the meridians of the one hundred and thirty-second and one hundred and forty-first degrees of east longitude, and between the southern ocean and twenty-six degrees of south latitude, together with all and every the islands adjacent thereto, and the bays and gulphs[27]

Map of Australia, 1839, showing proposed boundaries of South Australia.
Source: David Rumsey Collection.
www.davidrumsey.com

[24] Salvado, p. 245.
[25] Salvado, p. 246.
[26] Powell, p. 64.
[27] *South Australia Act 1834 (UK)*. National Archives of Australia. www.foundingdocs.gov.au Downloaded 27 June, 2006.

The Letters Patent establishing the Province of South Australia, issued by William IV in February 1836, reasserted the boundaries of the Province of South Australia, declaring that all the said land 'consists of Waste and unoccupied lands which are supposed fit for the purposes of Colonization'.[28] Although this may appear to support the notion of *terra nullius*, the document continues:

> provided that nothing in those our Letters Patent contained shall affect or be construed to affect the rights of any Aboriginal natives of the said Province to the actual occupation or enjoyment in their own Persons or in the Persons of their descendants of any Lands therein now actually occupied or enjoyed by such Natives.[29]

Map of Australia 1850 showing North Australia, New South Wales, West and South Australia.
Source: R.M Martin & J&F Tallis, *World Atlas.*

However, although this document appears to afford protection to the rights of the Indigenous people to enjoy their traditional use of their lands, no similar protection seems to be afforded specifically by the *Northern Territory Act of 1863* which annexed to South Australia

> so much of the colony of New South Wales as lies northward of the twenty-sixth parallel of south latitude, and between the one hundred and twenty-ninth and one hundred and thirty-eighth degrees of east longitude.[30]

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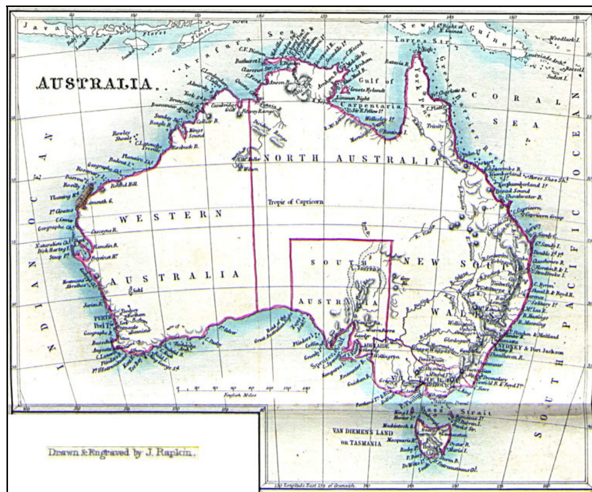
[28] *Letters Patent establishing the Colony of South Australia. 1836*. National Archives of Australia. www.foundingdocs.gov.au Downloaded 27 June, 2006.
[29] www.foundingdocs.gov.au Downloaded 27 June, 2006
[30] *Northern Territory Act 1863*. National Archives of Australia. www.foundingdocs.gov.au Downloaded 27 June, 2006.



Left: ***Map of Australia, 1860*** showing the boundaries of South Australia prior to 1863.
Source:
www.firstpr.com.au/geog/australia_1860_2.jpg Downloaded 21 July, 2006.

Below: ***Map of Australia from a School Atlas, prior to 1911,*** showing the Northern Territory of South Australia.

Downloaded 21 July 2006.

As a result of this annexation, the South Australian government was now the agency responsible for Aboriginal affairs, such as they were, in the Northern Territory until the 1907 *Act of Surrender of the Northern Territory to the Commonwealth of Australia*. The Commonwealth enacted legislation to accept the annexation of the Northern Territory in 1911.[31] Both the 1907 South Australian Act and the Commonwealth Act of 1910 seemed to be preoccupied with the ownership and extension of railways. Neither act specifically mentioned Aborigines. In December 1910 the South Australian Government passed the

31 *Act of Northern Territory Acceptance, Nov. 1910*. Melbourne. Government Printers Office.

Northern Territory Aboriginals Act.[32] The provisions of this Act were administered by the Commonwealth Government after the transfer of the Territory from one jurisdiction to the other. They remained in force until the Commonwealth enacted the *Aboriginals Ordinance 1918.*[33] In 1874, however, the *Northern Territory Times* had carried an article entitled 'Government of the Northern Territory' which, among other things set out at least some of the 'regulations issued for the guidance of officers in the Northern Territory'. The bulk of these regulations concerned the duties of the Medical Officer who was also, apparently to be the 'Protector of Aborigines'.[34] Apart from taking responsibility for the sanitation and health of the European settlement and acting as Quarantine Officer, the Medical Officer was also

> to show kindness and humanity, not only as a means of reconciling the two races but of affording you an opportunity of studying the diseases which may be found endemic in the Territory ….[35]

Clearly the work of 'reconciling the two races' was linked with further research into any diseases which might have an adverse impact on the European settlers. In addition, the Medical Officer was instructed to

> endeavour to acquire as soon as possible some knowledge of the languages of the tribes … so that you may be able to act as interpreter between them and the settlers … and make them understand that they are British subjects. Care should be taken to let the natives understand that their lives and liberties will be protected by the Government.[36]

Not only was the task, as set out here, impossible for any one man to accomplish, but it reflected, as Grant says, 'the idealism and lack of understanding on the part of the Government Officers in Adelaide responsible for drafting these

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[32] *Northern Territory Aboriginals Act, 1910*. Cited in Tony Austin, *Simply the Survival of the Fittest: Aboriginal administration in South Australia's Northern Territory 1863-1910.* Darwin: Historical Society of the Northern Territory, 1992, Appendix 2.

[33] *Aboriginals Ordinance 1918*. National Archives of Australia. www.foundingdocs.gov.au Downloaded 29 June, 2006.

[34] *Northern Territory Times*, January 1874. Cited in .Arch Grant, *Aliens in Arnhem Land*, p. 1 and Arch Grant, *Palmerston to Darwin*, p. 23.

[35] Grant, *Palmerston to Darwin*. p. 23.

[36] Grant, *Palmerston to Darwin*. p. 23.

regulations'.[37] And, in keeping with the times, such thinking assumed that the imposition of British citizenship on the Indigenous people was something that they would necessarily welcome. From an idealistic viewpoint such regulations afforded 'protection' to the Indigenous people and their way of life. In practice, it provided no such certainty but served, over time, to 'control' them in the interests of European settlers. Certainly at least some of the 'Protectors of Aborigines', such as W G Stretton and Percy Woods, saw their task of 'protection' largely as looking after the interests of the white settlers.[38] Indeed Austin cites Stretton as looking forward to the day when Australia would be benefited by the extinction of the Aborigines.[39] Police Inspector Foelsche found it necessary in the 1880s to caution police that

> it is to be borne in mind that the system termed 'dispersing the natives' which simply means shooting them is not to be practised and for this the officer in charge will be held strictly responsible.[40]

In many ways the story of Aboriginal voting rights is indicative of their treatment since white settlement. An Australian Electoral Commission document[41] notes that, although most Australians believe that Aborigines received the right to vote in 1967 as the result of a referendum, they actually already had the legal right to vote during the colonial period. The article notes that the constitutions of Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia, as framed in the 1850s, 'gave voting rights to all male British subjects over twenty-one, which of course included Aboriginal men'.[42] In 1894, when South Australia gave women the right both to vote and to sit in Parliament, the same rights extended to Aboriginal women. Only Queensland and Western Australia actually excluded

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[37] Grant, *Palmerston to Darwin*, p. 23.

[38] Austin, p. 36 See also, for example, Bain Attwood and Andrew Markus, *The Struggle for Aboriginal Rights: A Documentary History*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1999, pp. 8 and 120ff where the authors cite a letter from Norman Harris to Jim Bassett, 19 April, 1927 in which the Western Australian Protector of Aborigines A.O. Neville is roundly condemned as being 'a rotten B'.

[39] Austin, p. 36

[40] Austin, p. 21. Austin quotes F. Merlan, '"Making people quiet" in the pastoral north: reminiscences of Elsey Station, *Aboriginal History*, 2. 1978, p. 84.

[41] P.Stretton, *Aborigines and the Vote*. Australian Electoral Commission. www.aec.gov.au/content/when/history/abvote.htm Downloaded 28 June 2006.
See also Attwood and Markus, p. 10.

[42] www.aec.gov.au/content/when/history/abvote.htm

Aborigines from such rights.[43] Needless to say, since little or no effort was made to inform them, very few Aborigines knew of these rights so very few exercised them. One of the few examples of Aborigines exercising their rights to vote came when a polling station was established at the Point McLeay mission station near the mouth of the Murray River in the 1890s. Aboriginal people voted there in South Australian elections during the 1890s, and voted for the first Commonwealth Parliament in 1901.[44] However, when the Commonwealth Parliament addressed itself to voting rights, three groups of people attracted specific attention: women, Aborigines and some non-whites (usually Chinese or Indian) who had become permanent residents before the establishment of the White Australia policy (*Immigration Restriction Act 1901*), given that the rights of these voters varied from state to state. The resultant *Franchise Act* of 1902 gave women the right to vote in Commonwealth elections but specifically excluded Aborigines and other coloured people,[45] unless they could establish their entitlement under the provisions of section 41 of the Constitution. Section 41 of the Constitution guaranteed the right to vote in Commonwealth elections to any person who could vote in a state election.[46] It seemed that this should guarantee that Aborigines entitled under their State constitutions to vote should therefore be able to vote in Commonwealth elections.

When an interpretation of Section 41 was called for, Sir Robert Garran, the first Commonwealth Solicitor General, interpreted it to mean that only those voters who were already enrolled in the states in 1902 could vote in Federal elections. Thus no new voters could ever be added to the Commonwealth electoral roll – 'and of course the existing ones would die out'.[47] All this was reflective of the social tenor of the times. Garran's interpretation of Section 41 was challenged in 1924, not by an Aborigine but by an Indian who had been granted the right to

[43] Stretton, www.aec.gov.au/content/when/history/abvote.htm

[44] Stretton, www.aec.gov.au/content/when/history/abvote.htm

[45] Commonwealth of Australia *Franchise Act 1902*. Paragraph 4. National Archives of Australia. NAA: A1559/1, 1902/8 See also Bain Attwood, *Rights for Aborigines*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin. 2003. p.39.

[46] Stretton, www.aec.gov.au/content/when/history/abvote.htm Section 41 was inserted into the Constitution at the behest of South Australia to protect the rights of South Australian women to vote in all elections. In the event the Commonwealth enfranchised women so this section was superfluous.

[47] Stretton, www.aec.gov.au/content/when/history/abvote.htm

vote in Victoria. The magistrate ruled that Section 41 gave to any voter enrolled by any state at any time the entitlement to vote in Commonwealth elections. Rather than amend their interpretation of the Constitution, the Commonwealth legislated to allow all Indians to vote whilst still specifically excluding Aborigines and other 'coloured peoples'.[48] Such an action was in keeping with the social and political tenor of the times. Indeed Charles Duguid comments on the fact that

> with one solitary exception – [presumably Pastor E. E. Kramer, whom he mentions specifically] – the Inland missions of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches did not include Aborigines in their ministry and the Presbyterian Inland Mission Hostels did not in any circumstances admit Aborigines.[49]

Duguid goes on to comment that while the Methodist minsters whom he met 'were not unsympathetic towards the Aborigines … [but] every padre of the Australian Inland Mission whom I met at that time regarded the natives as unworthy of attention, and they treated them accordingly – with contempt and scorn'.[50] Duguid was particularly critical of the Reverend John Flynn in this regard, but Flynn's primary aim was to develop 'a mantle of safety' for white settlers in the outback. Whereas Duguid was shocked by the woman he met in Alice Springs whom he quotes as saying, 'You don't want to worry about abos [sic]. The sooner they're dead the better',[51] Flynn was well used to the sentiment and, whether he condoned it or not, he realised that he could not treat both Aboriginal and white people under the same umbrella – or in the same hospitals. Duguid comments that 'in the next three weeks I was to find this was a common attitude in the inland'.[52]

Duguid's 1935 visit to Central Australia opened his eyes to both the conditions in which Aborigines existed and the attitudes of the white population. On his return to Adelaide he presented his findings to the South Australian Minister responsible for Aborigines, Sir Herbert Hudd. Hudd presented Duguid's report to

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[48] Stretton, www.aec.gov.au/content/when/history/abvote.htm
[49] Duguid, p. 24.
[50] Duguid, p. 24.
[51] Duguid, p. 23.
[52] Duguid, p. 23

Cabinet and, several months later, Duguid was invited to submit to Cabinet 'a scheme that would save the tribe I had encountered and help to eliminate the breeding and neglect of illegitimate and half-caste children'.[53] Upon submission of this scheme Duguid was informed that, if he could 'get a responsible church to give continuity to the scheme and collect a thousand pounds, the Government would give a similar amount'.[54] Within a year Duguid had persuaded the Presbyterian Church of Australia to underwrite the venture.[55] This led to the Australian Inland Mission overseeing work with Aborigines as well as the medical and pastoral work of John Flynn. The work of both Duguid and Flynn – and the fact that each worked in a separate sphere – is testimony to the prevailing attitude to Aborigines at the time. When Duguid visited Scotland in 1937 and, during the visit, represented the Presbyterian Church of Australia at an Ecumenical conference at Oxford, he asserted, as one might expect, that 'there is no room for any differentiation between the races as to their intrinsic value…'.[56] He commented that his 'speaking at this conference gave some of the delegates their first knowledge that we had any coloured people in Australia at all'.[57] Later, at a meeting of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society[58], Duguid's comment that the Australian Government had no clear policy to save Aborigines, was supported by Professor Wood Jones, F.R.S. who commented (in Melbourne) that

> No Australian Government has ever had any desire to preserve
> the native race. Unless something is done to move the public
> and the Governments in 30 years Australia will be indelibly branded
> with the brand of Cain.[59]

Even allowing for the passion which might colour the opinions of Duguid and Jones and lead them to generalise, it has to be accepted that the Aborigines were,

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[53] Duguid, p. 34. It is worth noting that Duguid made this submission to the South Australian Government although by this time the Commonwealth was responsible for Aboriginal Affairs in the Northern Territory. While Duguid travelled as far as Alice Springs, the focus of his submission to the South Australian Government was the 'Pitlands' of northern South Australia. The Aborigines of this region were not constrained however by State and Territory boundaries drawn across their traditional country.
[54] Duguid, p. 35.
[55] Duguid, p. 52.
[56] Duguid, p. 53.
[57] Duguid, p. 53.
[58] Attwood and Markus, p. 15 provide information about this organisation – the first active society to campaign on behalf of Aborigines. Other similar organisations followed.
[59] Duguid, p. 54.

at the very least, commonly regarded as inferior to white Australians. It is hardly surprising that Duguid, like many others who shared his concern about the welfare of Aborigines, would become a strong supporter of assimilation – if by assimilation was meant a policy that would assist Aborigines to 'take their place on a basis of economic and social equality with white Australians'.[60]

If the *Franchise Act* of 1902 removed the right to vote from the majority of Aborigines, then the *Northern Territory Aboriginals Ordinance 1918* certainly did nothing to improve their situation. The *1910 Northern Territory Aboriginals Act* had made 'provision for the better Protection and Control of the Aboriginal Inhabitants of the Northern Territory'.[61] While the legislation focussed on the protection and control of Aborigines through the agency of the Chief Protector and his assistants, under the jurisdiction of the Northern Territory Aboriginals Department, its practical outworking saw a greater focus on control than protection. The 1910 Act established a Department of the South Australian Government to be responsible for Aboriginal welfare.[62] It also appointed the Chief Protector as 'legal guardian of every aboriginal and every half-caste child … until such child reaches the age of eighteen years'.[63] The Act also allowed for the establishment of Aboriginal Reserves (paragraph13) and, while allowing for the enforcement of penalties against Aborigines who resisted the provisions of the Act, it also designated a number of exempt categories of Aborigines (paragraph 17). The paragraph dealing with the establishment of Reserves included provision for Missions to be established on reserves 'for any term not exceeding twenty-one years … in blocks not exceeding in any case two hundred square miles of rectangular shape as nearly as practicable, and not less than one hundred miles apart'.[64] Such an administrative designation of the areas to be established as reserves clearly takes little notice of the traditional lands of the Aboriginal peoples it sought to 'protect'. The *1918 Ordinance Relating to*

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[60] Rani Kerin, Abstract of paper 'Charles Duguid and Aboriginal Assimilation in Adelaide, 1950-1960: the nebulous "assimilation" goal' presented at the Australian National University, March 24 2005.
[61] The long title of the Act. See footnote 31.
[62] *1910 Act*, paragraph 4. Austin, p. 103.
[63] *1910 Act*, paragraph 9 (1). Austin, p. 105.
[64] *1910 Act*, paragraph 15 (1). Austin, p. 106. 200 square miles = 518 square kilometres; 100 miles = 151 kilometres.

Aboriginals extended the definition of 'Aboriginal' and, while not using such terms as 'quadroon' or 'octoroon',[65] clearly encompassed such mixed race individuals within the meaning of the Act.[66] An exception is made for half-caste women legally married to men who were 'substantially of European origin or descent' and who are living with their husbands.[67] Once again the legislation called for the Chief Protector to

> exercise a general supervision and care over all matters affecting
> the welfare of the Aboriginals, and to protect them against immorality,
> injustice, imposition and fraud.[68]

Essentially such legislation as this imposed on the Aboriginal people a regime of segregation and dependence and, while the legislation was couched in terms of 'protecting' the Aborigines, its application was almost always motivated by the interests of white society. The legislation was drawn up in an era when it was generally supposed that the Aboriginal people were a dying race which needed protection. Such was certainly the motivation for the efforts of the early missionaries such as the Jesuits and the Church Missionary Society.[69]

In the period immediately before 1911 the control of Aboriginal matters had been in the hands of the South Australian Minister for the Northern Territory, William Joseph Denny, who was also Attorney General in the government of Premier John Verran. It was Denny to whom Father Gsell had appealed in 1910 for action on his application for land to be granted for the establishment of a Roman Catholic Mission at Nguiu on Bathurst Island, once he realised that Denny's subordinates were stalling his requests, and allowing Bathurst Island 'to become the prey of speculators'[70] as Bathurst Island already was. Once the Commonwealth assumed responsibility for the Northern Territory, at least during and immediately after Andrew Fisher's term as Prime Minister[71], matters concerning the Northern Territory and Aboriginal Affairs were handled by the

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[65] These terms were still in use in 1929 when J W Bleakley published his report: *The Aboriginals and Half-Castes of Central Australia and North Australia*. Melbourne: Commonwealth Government, 1929. NAA. Series A1. 1932/702. p. 17, 27ff.
[66] *1918 Ordinance Relating to Aboriginals.* Paragraph 3.
[67] *1918 Ordinance Relating to Aboriginals.* Paragraph 3.
[68] *1910 Act*, paragraph 5 (1) (f).
[69] See, for example, Cole, p. 1.
[70] Gsell, *The Bishop with 150 Wives,* p. 43.
[71] Andrew Fisher was Prime Minister of Australia for three terms, from 1908 – 1915.

Departments of Territories and External Affairs from July – December 1908 and April 1912 – September 1916.[72] At other times these matters came under the purview of the Department of the Interior or, much later, under John Howard, the Prime Minister's Department. One might surmise that the reason for this was much the same as that advanced by Clare Martin, Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, when attempting to justify her own position as Minister for Indigenous Affairs in the Northern Territory as recently as 2006. Martin's argument was simply that as Chief Minister she had taken on the portfolio in order to signify its importance to the Government.[73] Given that there were then six elected Indigenous members of the Territory Government,[74] her argument seems to imply that to give the portfolio to an Indigenous member of Parliament might somehow smack of some notion of apartheid.[75] The fact remains however that, historically, Aboriginal Affairs have been subject to probably more change in terms of Government ministerial responsibility than almost any other area of government bureaucracy.[76] Perhaps the major reason for the 1967 Referendum[77] was that it seemed that the time had come for the Commonwealth Government to take responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs across the nation.

Historically Aboriginal Affairs were under the control of the States and, while there may have been a broad general agreement in terms of policy, there were significant differences in the situation of Aborigines across the nation. This was partly as a result of policy, but partly also a result of location. The Northern Territory had been subject to Commonwealth Government control effectively in

[72] Administrative Arrangements – Territories of Australia. Attorney General's Department. Australian Government. The Prime Minister was not himself the responsible minister. http://www.ag.gov.au/www/agd/agd.nsf/Page/Territories_of_Australia_Territories_of_Australia Downloaded 21 August, 2008. This was effectively the case from 1910 when the Commonwealth assumed responsibility for the Northern Territory

[73] Clare Martin, June 2006. (Comments in multiple media.)

[74] The sixth indigenous ALP member was elected in August 2006 at a by-election caused by the resignation of Dr Peter Toyne. The Indigenous members in 2006 were Malarndirri (Barbara) McCarthy, Marion Scrymgour, Matthew Bonson, Alison Anderson, Eliot Mc Adam and Karl Hampton .

[75] Alternatively, it may recognise that, should any Aboriginal Minister be given the portfolio they may be expected by their own skin or language group to give them preferential treatment.

[76] J W Bleakley, *The Aborigines of Australia*. Brisbane: Jacaranda Press, 1961, p. 241. Bleakley notes that 'between 1911 and 1928 there had been thirteen different parliamentarians in the Ministerial chair; some reigning only a few months.'

[77] The referendum concerned the counting of Aborigines in the census. Previously they had been ignored.

the matter of Aboriginal Affairs from 1911 until the Territory gained Self Government in 1978. However, under the *Northern Territory Act (Self Government) 1978*, the Commonwealth retained, among other things, power over Aboriginal Land Rights, while the Territory Government became responsible for Aboriginal housing, education and welfare. An overview of Commonwealth Departments responsible for Aboriginal Affairs since 1911 gives some idea of the disparate agencies which have, at some time or other been responsible for the overall welfare of Aborigines in the Territory.

In 1911 responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs was in the hands of the Department of the Interior. From 1913 – 1916 the Department of External Affairs was the relevant department. In the 1950s and for much of the 1960s the responsible department was the Department of Territories and then the Department of External Territories, which was for a time responsible for Papua and New Guinea as well as the Northern Territory. For the latter part of the 1960s the Department of the Interior was responsible before the Department of the Northern Territory took responsibility in the 1970s. From 1972 through to the 1990s, responsibility lay with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. Throughout this period however, various other agencies such as the Departments of Health, Housing or Education also shared some areas of responsibility.[78] Since 2000, the responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs has been in the hands of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs and in 2006 was transferred to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Some, but very few, of these administrative changes are the result of changes in Government. More are the results of reorganisations within the government of the day but the variety of departments which at various times have been responsible for Aboriginal policy suggests that, over time, Governments have been struggling to find some sort of solution to what is usually regarded as ‘the Aboriginal problem’. An example of this is cited in an editorial in the electronic version of the *Australian Medical Journal*, where the authors write:

> In 1990, while the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in

[78] See ‘Administrative Arrangements – Territories of Australia. Attorney General’s Department. Australian Government’. See also, for example ‘Lists of positions and salaries of the Prime Minister’s Department. Fisher Government Appointments’. NAA A1, 1913/15554; NAA A1, 1913/3540.

> Custody was in progress, a group of Aboriginal women requested a meeting with the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs so they could talk with him about issues of deep concern. They were granted 10 minutes. Two minutes into the meeting, as they told the Minister of the escalating incidence of violence within their communities, the Minister interrupted: 'I know the problem. You tell me some solutions'.[79]

A brief overview of the Commonwealth Cabinet ministers responsible for Aboriginal Affairs reflects the extent of the 'problem'.[80] In almost all cases the responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs is subsidiary to other matters as, for example, when it is part of the Department of Interior or Department of Northern Territory or else, in listings of Cabinet responsibilities, it is either a part of the Prime Minister's Department under the oversight of a junior Minister or a minor portfolio in terms of the Cabinet hierarchy.[81] Relatively few of the ministerial names (before 2001) remain particularly well known. It is increasingly in the nature of things governmental that it is the on-going bureaucracy rather than the minister of the day which has the greatest influence over matters of policy and action, despite government initiatives. Governments tend to have a far shorter life than bureaucracies. Nevertheless, any fortuitous combination of Government policy, a passionate Minister and a bureaucracy willing to change can see some alteration in Aboriginal affairs. It would be perhaps too much to claim that such changes are necessarily always improvements although, at the time at which they occur, they are almost without exception based on the best advice available at the time – from anthropologists and others who work with Indigenous people – although, until very recently, not particularly from the Indigenous people themselves. J.W. Bleakley, writing in 1961, observed that the progress of the administration of the Northern Territory and of Aborigines who lived there was

> hampered because the seat of government at Canberra was at the

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[79] V Judy Atkinson, Jenny Graham, Gloria Pettit and Liz Lewis, "Broadening the focus of research into the health of Indigenous Australians" in *eMJA* (*electronic Medical Journal of Australia*). 2002: 177. (6). p. 286 http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/177_06_160902/atk10444_fm.html Downloaded 11 July 2006.

[80] See Appendix 4.

[81] See Appendix 4.

> other end of the continent and no important action could be taken without the special approval of the Minister. Between the years 1911 and 1928, there had been thirteen different parliamentarians in the ministerial chair; some only reigning a few months. With each new appointment, all matters were usually held over until the new occupant had personally visited the Territory to see things for himself. This frequently meant a change of policies and consequent stagnation. Expenditure for necessary improvements was generally held up for lack of funds.[82]

It would seem that some things do not change. The geography – both physical and political – remains the same: Canberra is still a long way from the Territory. Each new ministerial incumbent with responsibility for Aborigines comes to see the situation for him/herself. Some aspiring politicians, such as Brendan Nelson who visited while still the President of the Australian Medical Association, also undertake 'fact finding tours'. Writing in *Eureka Street*, columnist Jack Waterford comments that 'Brendan Nelson has visited more Aboriginal communities than anyone in Labor apart from Warren Snowdon – the only man who thinks that saying something positive about Aborigines won't lose votes'.[83] Votes and money seem to be the recurring theme so far as governments are concerned. Writing of more recent events Paul Toohey remarked that 'federal minsters did little but sit back and sign off on title deeds'.[84] Toohey commented on three recent ministers. Phillip Ruddock, he said, 'tried to look at the problems but – one suspects – was so appalled by the wasted money he saw on Aboriginal communities that he could not justify spending more'.[85] Of Amanda Vanstone he commented, 'She was tough …[but] … she didn't change anything'[86] either.

[82] J W Bleakley, *The Aborigines of Australia*, p. 241.
[83] Jack Waterford, 'Lost in the Wilderness' in *Eureka Street.* 1 June 2004. Also online: http://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aeid=742 Downloaded 31 October 2008.
Brendan Nelson was at the time an aspiring Liberal Party candidate. Warren Snowdon is a long time member of the Labor Party, representing the Northern Territory in the Commonwealth House of Representatives. In late 2008 Nelson became leader of the Liberal Opposition. until he was replaced by Malcolm Turnbull.
[84] Paul Toohey, 'Territorial Territorians' in *The Bulletin*, 30 May 2006.
[85] Toohey, 'Territorial Territorians'.
[86] Toohey, 'Territorial Territorians'.

Despite visiting Wadeye and establishing a COAG[87] protocol involving a partnership between the local community, the Territory Government and the Commonwealth Government in 2002,[88] Vanstone 'couldn't see [the troubled community]. She didn't want to. Towns were cleaned up for her arrival and the neat, clean kids with big white teeth were presented to her for inspection'.[89] This may be an unduly cynical comment, although many share the frustrations which underlie it. However, Xavier Desmarchelier, a former missionary priest at Wadeye and, at the time of the COAG trial, seconded by the Northern Territory Government to work at Wadeye to help implement the agreement noted that, despite widespread popular animosity towards and mockery of Senator Vanstone, 'At least you could rely on Vanstone. She did whatever she said she would do'.[90]

Waterford, writing in 2004, observed that 'Aborigines have for too long been portrayed as the victims of government policies, tossed like corks in the ocean of a wider politic'.[91] Waterford commented that 'politicians will do what they can get away with' but equally, he said, some of the blame falls on ATSIC[92] whose leaders, 'failed to be articulate spokesmen and women, whether to governments, the wider population or, perhaps most damningly, to Aborigines themselves'.[93] Toohey noted that, all things considered, it was probably fortuitous that the new minister, Mal Brough, should arrive in Wadeye in time to become an eye witness to a riot which erupted around him in May, 2006. 'He saw the truth of Wadeye for himself and he saw the town camps of Alice Springs. And to make his point he went back to the town camps …'.[94] Elsewhere, Brough's response to the Wadeye riot is reported to have been brutally frank and blunt. When the riot calmed enough to make himself heard, Brough reportedly told the Judas Priests (one of the two rival gangs at Wadeye[95])

> 'I'm the man from Canberra . I control all the bloody money that comes in here for Centrelink … If you boys go over the hill tonight

[87] Council of Australian Governments.
[88] www.inidgenous.gov.au/coag/docs/Transcript.doc 8 October 2003. Downloaded 11 July 2006.
[89] Toohey, 'Territorial Territorians'.
[90] Conversation with Xavier Desmarchelier. Darwin. June 2006.
[91] Waterford, 'Lost in the wilderness'.
[92] Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission.
[93] Waterford.
[94] Paul Toohey, 'The Problem with Clare Martin' in *The Bulletin*. 30 May 2006
[95] The other gang is the 'Evil Warriors'.

> to fight those guys [the Evil Warriors], I will cut your money off. Do you fucking well understand what I'm saying?'[96]

Apart from expressions of surprise and questions about the fate of the rival mob, no other response from the gang members is recorded. Shand notes that usually language like that comes from the police.[97]

This riot, which coincided in the media with reportage of the 2006 riots in Timor Leste, was portrayed as being an equally violent episode as those events happening in Dili. However, despite the fact that visitors (other than politicians) and short term workers at Wadeye may feel uneasy at what they perceive to be the underlying tensions inherent in the community, and the potential for violence just beneath the surface, many of those with a longer experience of the community take a different view. OLSH[98] sisters, Therese-Marie Hillis and Emmanuel Chapman, who have worked with the people of Wadeye and Daly River for many many years, have a different view of the recent riots. Sister Therese-Marie commented that, as the rioting was developing, she headed into the community centre from the local convent to collect the mail. As she did so the old women appeared very anxious for her either not to go or, if they could not persuade her to do that, then at least not to linger but to return directly to the convent. Sister Therese-Marie went anyway but her comment was: 'It was not that they were afraid that anyone would deliberately try to hurt me – but they were primarily worried that a stray stone might damage the Sisters' vehicle!'[99] Sister Therese-Marie also commented that 'Those people are deadly accurate with a spear. If they intend to hit you, they don't miss. The fact that nobody was hit or killed [in any of the rioting] means that they did not intend to kill anyone. As for "trashing houses" – well, they've been doing that for years. It's almost a way of life'.[100] In so saying she was not condoning the relentless vandalism. Nor do any of the sisters, brothers and priests who have worked with the people. But they do recognise that the vandalism and ritualised violence stems from the long

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[96] Adam Shand, 'Mal on a mission' in *The Bulletin*, 16 May 2006.
[97] Shand.
[98] OLSH: Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.
[99] Conversation with Sister Therese-Marie Hillis and Sister Emmanuel Chapman OLSH. Darwin, 13 August 2006.
[100] Conversation with Sister Therese-Marie Hillis and Sister Emmanuel Chapman OLSH. Darwin, 13 August 2006.

term frustration and boredom which in turn has been a result of the receipt of ‘sit down money’ over the past forty or so years. As Father Peter Hearn MSC, former Mission Superior and missionary priest at Port Keats[101] observed, for him the real tragedy of the people is that when he was there as priest they were proud of having built the mission settlement themselves: of having made the concrete blocks, lumbered the timber and constructed the buildings. When he was there and wanted to build a path around the church, he noted, the local men were far more skilled than he so they actually directed the task while he acted as the navvy under their direction. Now, he says, they have lost those skills.[102] Ninety year old Sister Emmanuel, not to be left out of the excitement and hearing of the impending ‘riot’ in 2006, took it upon herself to walk along the main street where the gangs were gathering to confront each other and, as they faced off, to greet both groups with ‘Hello boys!’. The response was a courteous and enthusiastic “Hello Sister” in reply. Both sisters agreed that, for the ‘gang members’, seeing their photos in the national and local papers as they posed as ‘Evil Warriors’ would have represented the height of their achievement to that time.[103]

Members of the Evil Warriors gang at Wadeye preparing for another night’s fighting with their opposition gang, the Judas Priest boys. Both gangs are named after heavy metal bands. Photo: Terry Trewin, *The Age*, 23 May 2006.

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[101] Father Peter Hearn MSC was ordained in 1976. In 1978 he was appointed to Port Keats as assistant priest. (Father John Leary was the priest in charge.) Father Hearn remained at Port Keats until 1982. Eighteen months after he arrived at Port Keats he was the sole priest at the mission which was then staffed, in addition, by 3 MSC brothers, 8 OLSH sisters and 20 lay missionaries and staff. During his time there the lay missionaries were replaced by paid staff. The Aboriginal population grew in that time from about 900 to 1100. Hearn, *A Theology of Mission*, p. 12.

[102] Father Peter Hearn MSC, Response to an Occasional Paper presented by Father Martin Wilson MSC. Darwin: Nungalinya College, 16 August 2006. And further conversation with Father Peter Hearn.

[103] Conversation with Sisters Therese-Marie Hillis and Emmanuel Chapman OLSH, 13 August 2006.

During the life of the Labor Government[104] in the Northern Territory, the Chief Minister, Clare Martin[105] placed Indigenous Affairs within the Chief Minister's Department arguing that so doing reflected the importance that her Labor Government gave to Indigenous Affairs. However, journalist Paul Toohey (no friend of Clare Martin) declared that in fact, in her handling of her portfolio of Indigenous Affairs, Martin demonstrated considerable political astuteness, whilst being morally wrong.[106] Toohey's article was sparked by the leaking of a letter written to his Indigenous colleagues by a Member of the Legislative Assembly, Matthew Bonson, declaring that the time had come for the Chief Minister to hand over Indigenous Affairs to one of the Indigenous members of her government. Bonson was forced into what has been called by a number of sources 'a humiliating backdown'.[107] Toohey asserted that 'the unhappy truth is that while the Northern Territory – Darwin in particular – is dressed up as a multicultural wonderland, it remains a place of deep-seated racism'.[108] According to Toohey, 'the smouldering aggression towards Aborigines has never dissipated in the north'.[109] He conceded that Martin would suffer a backlash from white voters if she were seen to be 'overspending on blackfellas'.[110] The widely reported rioting in the apparently socially dysfunctional Aboriginal township of Wadeye (formerly the Port Keats Mission) of May/June 2006, seemed only to justify the disquiet of many non-Indigenous inhabitants of the North. To some extent, Duguid's comment that introduces this chapter remains true, at least insofar as 'Most Australians … show little interest in the future of Aborigines'.[111]

[104] The first Labor Government in the Northern Territory was elected in 2001 and re-elected in 2005.
[105] Clare Martin stepped down as Chief Minister in January 2008 and was replaced by Paul Henderson.
[106] Paul Toohey, 'Black and white mischief', *The Bulletin* Web exclusive comment 27 June, 2006.
http://bulletin.ninemsn.com.au/bulletin/eddesk.nsf/articleIDs/c0ac6c17ce691ef5ca257194001dd3ac ... Downloaded 10 July 2006.
[107] For example, *The Darwin Research Centre*.
http://www.darwinresearchcentre.com/murphy001.asp?id=320. See also 'The Bonson Memo', Northern Territory *Stateline.* ABC TV 23 June 2006.
[108] 'Black and white mischief'.
[109] 'Black and white mischief'.
[110] 'Black and white mischief'.
[111] Duguid, Preface.

A popular contemporary response to the history of Aboriginal affairs in Australia generally and in the Territory in particular is to decry the interaction between Europeans and Aborigines in terms of genocide, either deliberate or accidental. If, however, one considers the major phases of Aboriginal policy and action over time one might conclude that the decisions have been in keeping with the best available understandings of the situation at that time, although political expediency is always a factor. It is surely unreasonable to expect that policies and decisions of the past could have been made with the presumed knowledge and understandings of today. In broad terms one could argue that, from the time of European settlement until the late 1930s, Government policy, whether stated or informal, was a matter of protection and segregation. It is often assumed that government policies were formulated without the benefit of any input from those who might be considered 'experts' in the field. However the evidence contradicts this assumption.[112]

W E H Stanner observed that 'the study of the Aborigines did not take on anything like the rigour of modern research until the 1890s … a full generation after the subjects becoming known as ethnology, ethnography and anthropology has been recognised academically in Europe and America'.[113] The Department of Anthropology at Sydney University, which would later be of vital importance in the training of Government Patrol Officers and Native Welfare Officers, was not founded until 1925.[114] Bishop F.X. Gsell, in *The Bishop with 150 Wives*, which was published in 1956, noted that 'Fifty years ago when I started my missionary life, anthropology was still in its infancy. If it had been developed as it is in our days [the 1950s], it would have been useful to me and would have helped me to avoid many mistakes. …'.[115] Stanner, writing in the early 1960s following the 1961 Conference on Aboriginal Studies which was held at the Australian National University as the result of a proposal by W C Wentworth MP, noted that by the time modern anthropological study was undertaken in Australia much that was

[112] Bain Attwood, *Rights for Aborigines*, p. 104ff
[113] W E H Stanner, in W E H Stanner & H Shiels (eds), *Australian Aboriginal Studies*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1963, p. xiv.
[114] Bleakley, Foreword.
[115] Gsell, p.174.

> inexact, often spurious information about the Aborigines [had] found its way into print, and more damagingly, into the unexamined assumptions of scholars and the public alike. The masquerade of preconception, fiction and half-truth as demonstrated fact was well under way before empirical anthropology began in Australia. Some of the products are still with us. Public opinion, never well informed on the true nature and quality of Aboriginal life, draws on an old deep well of misinformation.[116]

Stanner may well be both disappointed and unsurprised to know that, from the standpoint of the early twenty first century, not much has changed in some respects. Public opinion remains in many ways loath to change, even in the face of anthropological studies and reports. To some extent at least this may be reflective of the fact that for most 'mainstream Australians' – for which read white Australians of Anglo-European descent – the Aborigines remain 'other'. As Edward Said observed when writing about Orientalism, 'Orientalism is premised upon exteriority. … What [the Orientalist] says and writes, by virtue of the fact that it is said or written, is meant to indicate that the Orientalist is outside the Orient, both as an existential and as a moral fact'.[117] Said continued, noting that 'Orientalism [is, among other things] a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient'.[118]

He went on to comment that 'No-one has ever devised a method for detaching a scholar from the circumstances of life, from the fact of his involvement (conscious or unconscious) with a class, a set of beliefs, a social position, or the mere activity of being a member of society. These continue to bear on what he does professionally'.[119] Said was not arguing that all scholarship is necessarily or deliberately biased but he was alerting his readers to the fact that all ideas are produced within particular contexts, political, social or personal, and therefore

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[116] Stanner, p. xv.
[117] Edward Said, *Orientalism*. New York : Random House, 1979, p. 21. See also Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country*, pp. 1 – 2.
[118] Said, p. 3.
[119] Said, p. 10.

one needs to be suspicious even of the notion of 'pure scientific truth'. Said wrote that

> the web of racism, cultural stereotypes, political imperialism, dehumanising ideology holding in the Arab or the Muslim is very strong indeed, and it is this web which every Palestinian has come to feel as his uniquely punishing destiny.[120]

He might well have been writing about Aboriginal affairs in Australia. In the Australian context, if one replaced the terms 'Arab, Muslim and Palestinian' with 'Aborigine' or 'Aboriginal' one might come close to an understanding of what remains a significant body of public opinion regarding the Aboriginal people. There is a real sense in which public opinion reinforces itself on the basis of repetition, confirmed by little or no interaction with those people who are being cast as 'other'. Thus it becomes easy for non-Aborigines to create an image of the 'other' – the Aborigine (as much as the Arab, Indian, Oriental) – as 'gullible, "devoid of energy and initiative", much given to "fulsome flattery" intrigue, cunning, unkindness to animals … [unable to] walk on road or a pavement …; [they] are inveterate liars … lethargic and suspicious and in everything oppose the clarity, directness and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race'.[121] To be fair, Said made it clear that these are initially the views of Lord Cromer, English 'overlord' of Egypt between 1882 and 1907. Said questioned whether humanity can survive the consequences of the 'division of human reality … into clearly different cultures, histories, traditions, societies, even races …'.[122] He suggested that if one uses such oppositional categories 'as both the starting and end points of analysis, research, public policy … the result is to polarise the distinction'.[123] This polarisation into binary oppositions – in which one party is almost without exception superior to the other – becomes a straitjacket out of which it is very hard to break. Public policy in particular is very slow to move away from traditional concepts, and the nervousness of public policy makers with one eye

[120] Said, p. 27.
[121] Said, p. 39. Said noted elsewhere (p. 46) that even as powerful a figure on the world stage as Henry Kissinger polarised the United States as an entity separate from and dominant over the rest of the world in much the same way as the Orientalists objectified and subjugated the Orient. One could argue that the recent and ongoing 'history wars' in Australia are an attempt to unravel the same sort of approach to Australian Aboriginal history over time.
[122] Said, p. 25.
[123] Said, p. 25.

on 'the public' and another on their political masters of the day virtually guarantees that the status quo will remain entrenched.

Said argued that the traditional view of the Orientalist is so powerful that it still prevails in many quarters.[124] Certainly, for a man of his time such as the surveyor of the Palmerston settlement in the 1870s, George Goyder, it was a simple matter to regard the Aborigines as 'treacherous', and as 'miserable specimens of humanity'.[125] Nevertheless Goyder recognised that

> we were in what to them appeared unauthorised and unwarrantable occupation of their country, and where territorial rights are strictly observed by natives, that even a chief of one tribe will neither hunt upon nor remove anything from the territory of another without first obtaining permission; it is scarcely to be wondered at if, when opportunity is allowed them, they should resent such acts by violence upon its perpetrators …[126]

If one refers back to the comments of Toohey and Duguid[127] it becomes clear that public opinion is very slow to change – and indeed, one could argue that the closer people are to the manifestly other, the slower it is to change. Thus the prevailing 'myths'[128] on both sides regarding the historical treatment of Aborigines in Australia.

It seems clear that Aboriginal policy such as it was in the first century or so of Australia's non-Aboriginal settlement and development was largely a matter of segregation and protection, after Phillip's short-lived attempts at integration were largely unsuccessful. Such policy as there was was based on the accepted proposition that the Aboriginal race was a dying race. Even the intervention of the early missionaries was largely based on the presumption that they were overseeing the demise of the Aboriginal people. However in 1929, the minister in charge of the Northern Territory, (Minister for Home Affairs) C L A Abbott,[129]

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[124] For an example, see Duguid, Preface.
[125] Austin, p. 13.
[126] Austin, p. 13.
[127] See pages 186-187, 193-194 and 197 of this chapter.
[128] See Rose, p. 3 for reference to the Aboriginal myth of colonisation.
[129] Charles Lydiard Aubrey Abbott, Minister for Home and Territories and Minister for Home Affairs, became the Administrator of the Northern Territory from 1937-1946. The Head of

called a conference of pastoralists, missionaries and humanitarian leaders to advise him on Aboriginal affairs, particularly on matters of employment.[130] The goal of government policy at this time, though, was still the protection of Aborigines.[131] But the general belief in the imminent of demise of the Aboriginal race was changing. The growth of anthropology following its establishment as a discipline at Sydney University meant that anthropologists were increasingly influential in shaping government policy. The establishment of anthropology as a discipline was itself given impetus when the foundational studies undertaken by missionaries, explorers and pastoralists such as Threlkeld, Salvado, E.M. Curr, John Fraser and others[132] was bolstered by what Elkin calls the 'fortuitous … arrival in 1887 of W. Baldwin Spencer' as Professor of Zoology at Melbourne University.[133] Before long Spencer and F.J. Gillen, Alice Springs postmaster, had carried out two field trips through central and north central Australia.[134] In 1912 Spencer was appointed as Protector of Aborigines in the Northern Territory, a position he relinquished, frustrated, within a year. By 1929, then, there was growing interest within both the scientific and the humanitarian communities in Aboriginal matters. By 1931 Elkin himself had convinced The Association for the Protection of Native Races (in Sydney) that the government policy of protection had failed and that the only viable hope for the future of Aborigines lay in the development of positive health education and employment measures to prepare them for life in the wider Australian community, since they were clearly no longer dying out.[135]

Thus, when the National Missionary Council met in Sydney in 1933 the way was already prepared for their suggestions of 'A National Policy … for the Better

Department, while Abbott was Minister, was Joseph Aloysius Carrodus. See also David Carment, 'Abbott, Charles Lydiard Aubrey (1886-1975)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 13, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1993, pp. 2-3. Downloaded 19 September 2008.

[130] C.E. Barnes M.P, *The Australian Aborigines*. Canberra: Department of Territories. 1967. p. 36.

[131] Attwood, pp. 100-101.

[132] A P Elkin, 'The Development of Scientific Knowledge of the Aborigines', in W E H Stanner and H Sheils (eds), *Australian Aboriginal Studies*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1963, pp. 4 – 7.

[133] Elkin, p. 11.

[134] Elkin, p. 11.

[135] Attwood, p. 101.

Government of Aborigines'.[136] In 1935 a Science Congress in Melbourne emphasised the same need. In the face of this growing groundswell of informed opinion there was also agitation for a single unified Aboriginal policy[137] and, at a Conference of State and Commonwealth Ministers in 1936, it was agreed that it 'would be advisable to have periodic conferences of the various Government authorities controlling Aboriginal Affairs, to discuss matters of control and welfare'.[138] The next meeting did not occur however until 1947. Meanwhile in 1935, the Commonwealth commissioned Dr Donald Thomson to undertake a two year study of Aborigines in Eastern Arnhem Land. As a result of his research, Thomson recommended the complete segregation of Aboriginal people in inviolable reserves and generally the creation of an entirely separate jurisdiction to deal with all matters pertaining to Aboriginal people.[139] However, by 1938, when Thomson's report was completed, the tide was already turning against isolation and segregation in favour of a more 'positive' government policy, at least in the sense that it was no longer based on the premise that Aborigines were a dying race. The Honourable (later Sir) John McEwen, Minister for the Interior, as the minister then responsible for the administration of the Northern Territory, including Aborigines, 'with the active help of J A Carrodus, Head of McEwen's department and [the anthropologist] Professor A P Elkin',[140] drew up a document for Cabinet consideration. The document was known at the time as 'the New Deal for Aborigines'.[141] Subsequently, in 1939, E W P Chinnery was appointed as the first Director of Native Affairs in the Northern Territory. Chinnery, prior to his appointment, had conducted a six months survey of Aborigines in the Territory. He had concluded that there was 'no inherent reason why they could not take their place in modern civilised life provided opportunities were given to

[136] Barnes, p. 37. Attwood, pp. 107-112, notes some of the complex issues confronting the Government at this time. Not least were the dubious events that took place at the Aurukun Presbyterian Mission in December 1932. Donald Thomson wrote to Duguid to complain of these matters and that the Presbyterian hierarchy ignored his reports. See also Attwood and Markus. pp. 143-144. William Cooper, letter to the editor, *The Age*, 16 March 1933.

[137] Until 1967 the management of Aboriginal Affairs remained a matter for State Governments, except in Territories administered by the Commonwealth.

[138] Attwood, p. 114. See also Barnes, p. 37.

[139] Attwood, p. 113 ff. See also Barnes, p. 38.

[140] Attwood, pp. 117 – 118. See also Barnes, p. 38.

[141] Attwood, p. 118. Attwood notes that by this time Thomson had lost faith in McEwen. See also Barnes, p. 38. A search of both Cabinet documents and McEwen's papers at the National Archives of Australia has, however, failed to find any trace of this document. (*The Northern Territory. Commonwealth Government's Policy With Respect to Aboriginals*, Canberra: Department of the Interior. 1939)

them'.[142] As had always been the case previously, however, that final proviso would prove to be the difficult aspect of the policy. In essence these events of the late 1930s set the stage for the development of the policy of assimilation which would effectively continue until the 1967 referendum would bring about the next major change of policy.

By the time of the Second Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Welfare Authorities in 1948, some eleven years after the first, governments appeared to have recognised the breadth of their obligation to Aboriginal welfare nationally, despite the carriage of Aboriginal Affairs being largely in the hands of the states.[143] The Conference not only included the Heads of Departments of Aboriginal Affairs but also the heads or their deputies of the Commonwealth Departments of the Interior, Health, Social Services and Education. This conference proceeded with the fundamental understanding that Aborigines were to be part of the general Australian community – economically, socially and politically. Thus there was also a recognition that education was fundamental to such an outcome.[144] The officers of these departments met again in 1951 and 1953 and, under the leadership Minster for Territories, Paul Hasluck, met regularly between 1961 and 1967. At the 1951 meeting, led by Mr Hasluck, the Ministers – State and Commonwealth – adopted assimilation as their common policy.

Despite considerable post-World War 2 immigration to Australia from Europe, both north and south, the Australian community was still largely monocultural. The assumption was that migrants would learn English as their dominant language for communication and cultural exchange and that they would adapt to 'the Australian way of life', which itself had largely derived by this time from Anglo-Celtic roots. Within such a social context as this the notion of assimilation

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[142] Barnes, p. 38.

[143] Attwood, p. 120 ff. A national referendum in 1944 to cede control of Aboriginal Affairs to the Commonwealth had been defeated, despite much advocacy in favour of such a move. Barnes, p. 41. By now the emphasis had begun to move from 'full blood' Aborigines to 'mixed blood' as Thomson preferred to call them. Whilst Thomson advocated complete segregation as the only means of protecting 'full bloods' from the adverse impact of white colonisation, he favoured assimilation for 'mixed bloods', provided this did not mean the annihilation of their culture. Attwood, p. 124 for example.

[144] Attwood, p. 124; Barnes, p. 38.

was far from intended to be, as it has often since been interpreted to be (for largely political reasons, I suspect), a repressive policy based on an unexpressed but no less real desire to exterminate the remaining Indigenous peoples of Australia.[145] At no time did this government policy foresee as part of its agenda any intention of encouraging interbreeding with the avowed intent of breeding out identifiably Aboriginal physical characteristics. Indeed, at the time, policy makers noted that

> the general trend is for Aborigines to marry Aborigines and for the various castes to marry within their several castes, with some marriages between people of different castes. As for the part-Aborigines, the signs are of stabilisation around the quarter caste degree. At any rate, for generations to come, indeed for many generations, Australia's population will include a group or groups definitely Aboriginal in features.[146]

Nor did the policy of assimilation necessarily assume that, in ultimately attaining full citizenship, the Aborigines would lose their cultural identity, pride of race and the value of their traditional culture as the price for being absorbed into the mainstream community. There was no intention – as often misinterpreted – in the phrase 'are expected eventually to attain the same manner of living as other Australians' that this should mean that Aborigines would have to forfeit their own cultural values.[147] This was, as already noted, simply a reasonable expectation of a monocultural society – that eventually, as with migrant groups, they would become part of the mainstream of Australian society. In 1951, when the policy was promulgated, there was not yet the strident mood of grass roots political activity and resistance to government policy that would be unleashed in the wake of the Vietnam War moratoria, nor was there yet any real sense of Australia as a developing multi-cultural community.

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[145] During the 1970s and 1980s in particular such Aboriginal leaders as Michael Mansell (Tasmania), Charles Perkins (NSW) and Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Qld) were politically active in pushing for Aboriginal Land rights and other rights – even to the point of proposing an independent Aboriginal nation with its own passports. See, for example, http://www.faira.org.au/lrq/archives/199809/stories/back-to-basics.html Downloaded 1 November 2006.

[146] Barnes, p. 40. Attwood, p. 68, quotes Indigenous leader William Cooper as affirming that 'Aborigines generally were "proud of [their] race … and had no aspirations to be white"' which seems to confirm the bureaucratic viewpoint.

[147] Barnes, p. 42.

Indeed, as early as 1949, Professor A. P. Elkin had referred publicly to the 'intelligent parasitism'[148] of Aborigines in Northern Australia – by which term he too meant nothing offensive. He used the term to express the symbiotic relationship which he saw as having developed between the Aborigines and pastoralists in areas where the two 'co-existed'.[149] For Elkin the term was a recognition that, where once the Aborigines had established such a symbiotic relationship with nature, now that relationship had adapted to an economic reliance on the white pastoral industry – or missions – and 'a continuing social and spiritual role with the tribal tradition'.[150] Little more than ten years later, at the 1961 Aboriginal Research conference in Canberra, Professor R M Berndt, reflecting on his research into the effects of European settlement on Aboriginal communities, reported that of nine settlements in the Northern Territory, only two – Yuendemu and Port Keats – were 'traditionally oriented but becoming less so'.[151] Since by the time of his research Port Keats had been missionised for about thirty years and comprised a mixture of tribes, for the majority of whom this was not their own country, we might reasonably assume that these groups were in fact probably already demonstrating the 'intelligent parasitism' of which Elkin wrote. Certainly the people of the Daly River demonstrated it.[152] This symbiosis itself is very different from what would later be termed 'sit down money', in which there was actually no symbiotic relationship. 'Sit down money', even when disguised as Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP), has done little more than contribute to the stripping of both skills and dignity from many communities.[153] There is no-one who has worked with Aborigines who has not concluded that, while many of them wish to maintain

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[148] Russell McGregor, 'Intelligent Parasitism: A.P. Elkin and the Rhetoric of Assimilation', *Journal of Australian Studies* 50, 1996, p. 121.

[149] See also Polishuk with Lockwood, *Life on the Daly Rive*r.

[150] McGregor, p. 121.

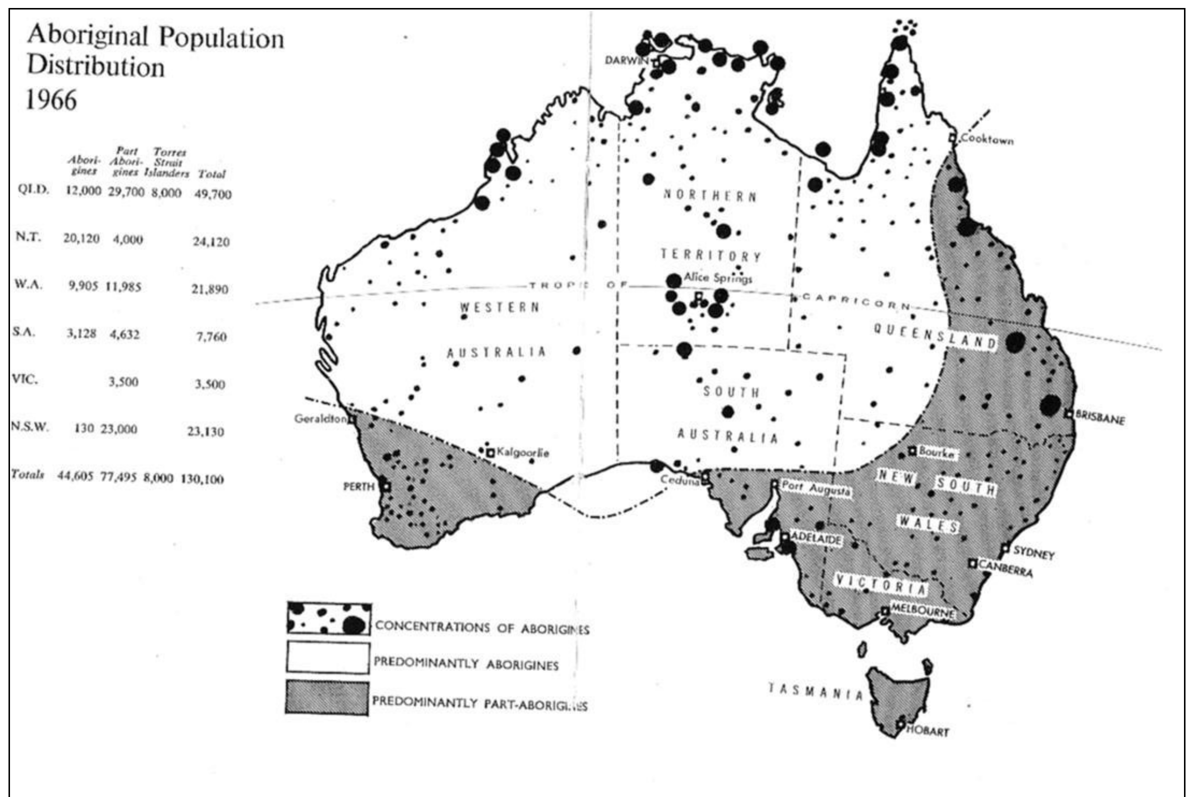
[151] R M Berndt, "Groups with Minimal European Associations" in Stanner and Sheils, pp. 388-389.

[152] See for example, Polishuk with Lockwood. Polishuk's account of her family's life on the Daly River unashamedly takes for granted the symbiotic relationship between the local Aborigines, the missionaries and the settlers.

[153] See comment by Father Peter Hearn MSC, on p. 196 of this thesis. This is not necessarily true of all communities. At Ramingining for example, CDEP funds the land and sea rangers projects. Conversation with Noel Bleakley, Darwin, January 2008. At Daly River CDEP funds are used to support the building maintenance programme within the community, as well as, to a degree, Merrepen Arts.

their traditional culture, none wishes to forgo the benefits of modern Australian civilisation, particularly in terms of sanitation, water and electricity supply and vehicles.

The map of Aboriginal population distribution in 1966 shows the reality of the impact of European settlement. The most densely settled areas are those of the early colonies – and the predominance of part-Aborigines in these areas demonstrates the reality of both Berndt's observation that few Aboriginal communities remained unaffected by white settlement, and Elkin's earlier observation of the symbiotic relationship which tended to develop between the white settlers and the Aborigines, once the initial period of attempted extermination had passed (often due to mission intervention). The Northern Territory, unsurprisingly, is dominated by areas of Aborigines – although again it would be a mistake to assume that all these were full-blood Aborigines, even in 1966.



Aboriginal Population Distribution 1966

	Abori-gines	Part Abori-gines	Torres Strait Islanders	Total
QLD.	12,000	29,700	8,000	49,700
N.T.	20,120	4,000		24,120
W.A.	9,905	11,985		21,890
S.A.	3,128	4,632		7,760
VIC.		3,500		3,500
N.S.W.	130	23,000		23,130
Totals	44,605	77,495	8,000	130,100

Source: *The Australian Aborigines.* Canberra: Department of Territories. 1967.

In 1951 Paul Hasluck, in introducing the policy of assimilation noted

> We know that culture is not static but that it either changes or dies. We know that the idea of progress, once so easily derided, has the germ of truth in it. Assimilation does not mean the suppression of the Aboriginal culture but rather that, for generation after generation, cultural adjustment will take place. The native people will grow into the society in which, by force of history, they are bound to live.[154]

To ensure that this could not be misread as a statement of compulsion, the Ministers' Conference in 1965 further modified the definition of assimilation to read:

> The policy of assimilation seeks that all persons of Aboriginal descent will choose to attain a similar manner and standard of living to that of other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community – enjoying the same rights and responsibilities and influenced by the same hopes and loyalties as other Australians. Any special measures taken are regarded as temporary measures, not based on race, but intended to meet their need for special care and assistance and to make the transition from one stage to another in such a way as will be favourable to their social, economic and political advancement.[155]

Assimilation then was to be seen as a temporary stage on the road to the full integration of Aborigines into the Australian mainstream. The ultimate goal of governments was their full integration. In a somewhat paternalistic tone, the Department of Territories text notes that

> All Australian citizens, irrespective of racial or cultural origin, must conform to certain accepted standards of living, hygiene and behaviour insofar as what they do affects other persons. Children are required to attend school, and so that they will not develop a pauper of parasitic attitude, those beyond school age, especially males, must become employable in the general

[154] Barnes, p. 43. Attwood, p. 139, notes that the Council for Aboriginal Rights warned that 'Sincere people who have the interests of the Aborigines at heart would do well to be cautious … [because] … most of the old injustices are continuing unchanged'. Attwood also notes that while Council spokespersons at first regarded Hasluck as being 'quite sincere' they soon came to see him as 'naïve' and very unrealistic about the Northern Territory situation.

[155] Barnes, p. 44. See also Attwood, p. 139 ff.

economic structure.[156]

The government was well aware, however, that such a general requirement of the whole population would impact more on the Aborigines than on many other groups since it would demand fundamental alteration to their traditional semi-nomadic 'food gathering, social, economic and ritual life'.[157] The Government recognised the inherent difficulty of integrating Aborigines into the mainstream Australian community. On the one hand, they recognised that 'no-one with an understanding of Aboriginal culture and their past'[158] would want that culture to be lost. Nevertheless they also recognised that, the more successful the training and education of Aborigines for participation in general Australian life, the less meaning would be left for them of their inherited rituals, beliefs and manner of living.[159] Ultimately, this meant that either Aborigines would, at the expense of much of their traditional lifestyle and culture become integrated into the mainstream of Australian life or else, effectively, integration would merely be a passing phase and the Aborigines would necessarily revert to an existence of dependent segregation and isolation. While the development of a more multi-cultural – and less overtly paternalistic governmental attitude to the Australian community generally – might have been expected to see more flexibility in dealing with Aboriginal affairs, the reality has remained as fraught as it ever was, with the Commonwealth Government in 2006, through the agency of Minister Mal Brough in particular, becoming – if anything – more paternalistic and directive than ever under the guise of demanding 'responsible co-operation' from Aboriginal communities as the price for continued funding. The overwhelming impression given through the media is one of a continuing and apparently insoluble 'Aboriginal problem'. However this ignores many of the advances made by particular Aboriginal communities which have taken charge of their own affairs and taken great strides towards solving their own 'problems'. It has to be noted that, while many of these solutions stem from a mission background

[156] Barnes, p. 44. See also Attwood, p. 169ff. Andrews and others realised that winning equal rights would mean little if there was no 'special financial assistance' to enable Indigenous people to reach the same standard of living as white Australians.
[157] Barnes, p. 45.
[158] Barnes, p. 46. See also Attwood pp. 209 - 211.
[159] Barnes, p. 46. Compare with Attwood, p. 210.

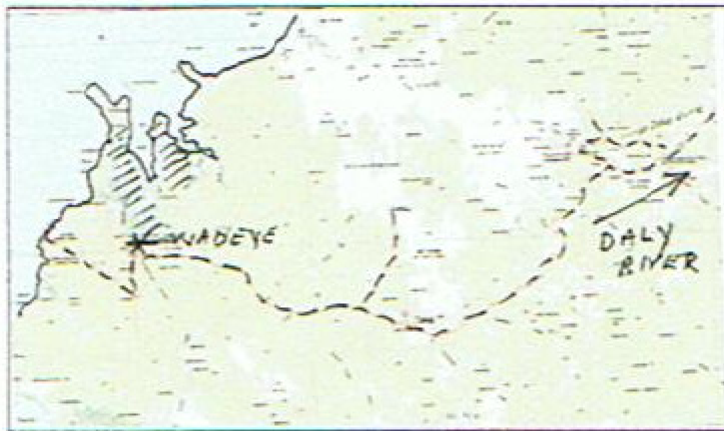
and continuing church presence as well as government assistance, some of these problems also stem from earlier mission and government activity.

As has already been mentioned, Father Leary attempted to address these problems at Daly River although not all his fellow missionaries agreed either with his methods, nor with his assessment of the amiability of the people. Father Tony Caruana MSC who had what he regards as the 'misfortune to spend a month at Daly River as relieving priest en route home to Sydney from [his] missionary service in Papua New Guinea',[160] was far from impressed by the people there. His view may have been jaundiced by both his experience of the people of Papua New Guinea whom he had come to appreciate, and by his 'welcome' at Daly River. Father Caruana was singularly unimpressed when he was welcomed to Daly River by a group of young girls who volunteered to 'come home with you, Father, and look after you and give you anything you might want'. When Father Caruana declared that he would look after himself the offer was repeated, and again rejected. The girls were clearly affronted and thereafter he was ignored by the greater part of the community for the duration of his stay. Father Caruana's refusal of their offer was based on his understanding that the girls were offering sexual favours rather than housework. He also found the people on the whole to be sullen and lacking a sense of humour. Again he may well have been influenced by his experience of Papua New Guinea where he found the people to have a ready sense of humour and a willingness to listen and laugh. On reflection, though, he noted that it seemed easier to convert the Papuans because their desire to please led them to mimic what the white man did without necessarily any understanding or commitment. 'In that respect, with the Aborigines, what you saw was what you got!'[161] Father Caruana is the only Missionary of the Sacred Heart whom I have heard expressing this view. Most would echo the views of Father Leary, as would Brothers Burke and Merritt. On the other hand many would also be critical of the support – or lack of it – provided to the missionaries by their own Provincial Council from time to time.

[160] Conversation with Father Tony Caruana MSC at Kensington Monastery, NSW. January 2007.
[161] Conversation with Father Tony Caruana MSC at Kensington Monastery, NSW. January 2007.

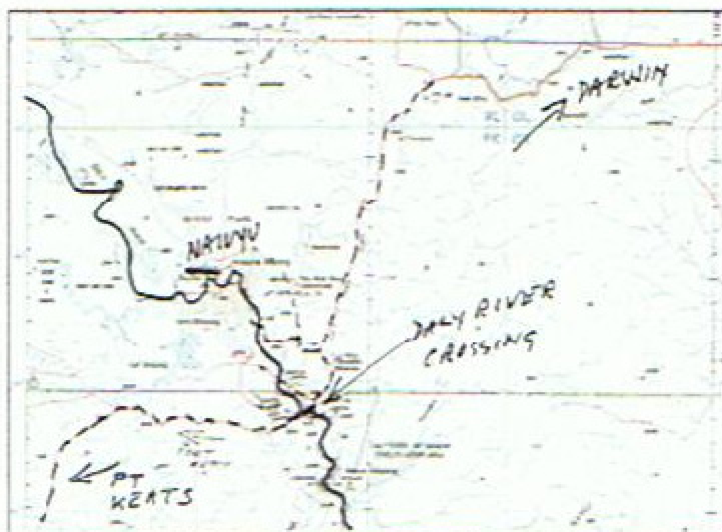
7. Portrait 2: Father John Leary MSC, the priest.

About thirty-five years before *The Bush Tucker Man* launched himself into the lounge-rooms of Australia through the medium of television,[1] Father John Leary MSC was undertaking similar adventures in the black soil paperbark country some 150-400 kilometres south-west of Darwin. This is rugged and trackless terrain, often subject to flooding. Unlike the Bush Tucker Man, most of Leary's adventures were undertaken either on foot or even, on one amazing occasion, on pushbike. His reason for being there was also rather different from that of Les Hiddins.



Map of the area around Port Keats and the Moyle River black soil plains, showing the former Port Keats mission, now Wadeye, and the road to the Daly River community.

Source:
Port Keats 1:250 000 map. Natmap. Commonwealth of Australia 2005.



Map of the Daly River area showing the Daly River Settlement and crossing and the roads running southwest to Port Keats and north east to Darwin. The country in this region is rocky and known as the paperbark country. Like the Moyle plains it too is subject to flooding.

Source:
Pine Creek 1:250 000 map. Natmap. Commonwealth of Australia 2005.

[1] *The Bush Tucker Man* (Major Les Hiddins). ABC TV 1987.

This chapter focuses on the missionary work of Father John Leary MSC, particularly in the Daly River region where he was ultimately to be responsible for both the Daly River and Port Keats missions as well as the Christian Leadership Centre (later the Spirituality Centre) which he established at the Five Mile[2] at Daly River. Much of the information in this chapter is based on Father Leary's own accounts.[3] This is partly because, as Noel Loos points out, both the Indigenous people with whom they worked and the missionaries themselves were 'fringe dwellers of the Aboriginal culture they chose to live among, and fringe dwellers of their own faith and culture'.[4] From my own experience I am aware that Protestant and inter-denominational missionaries who came home on furlough were expected to 'do deputation work' for much of their furlough. For them a furlough was less of an essential rest from their work and more of a time to advertise and promote their work and to seek financial support to continue it.[5] It is the nature of missionary work, particularly that of religious, that it is rarely publicised or promoted and, as is evident from the lives of these men, that their personalities and work become submerged to a greater or lesser degree within the corporate 'personality' of the order. Nevertheless, over the almost sixty years in which he worked with Indigenous people, Father Leary became an outspoken advocate for 'his people'.

When Father John Leary arrived in the Northern Territory in 1953 he understood that he would be going to Port Keats as Priest-in-Charge. However, the illness of

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[2] 'The Five Mile' is not actually five miles (eight kilometres) from the former MSC Daly River Mission but that is the name by which it has been known since settlement began in the area. In 2008 the Centre was used as a Spirituality Centre. Previously (in the 1990s) it was also used as an Alcohol Rehabilitation Unit supervised by Rosemary Murdock. Information from Mrs Eileen Farrelly, 15 August 2008.

[3] Peter Hearn MSC, *A Theology of Mission.* p. 358ff. Hearn lists some twenty letters and articles written by Father Leary to Bishops John O'Loughlin and Ted Collins regarding his mission work and mission theory. Hearn also cites a number of articles written by Father Leary.

[4] Noel Loos, *White Christ Black Cross.* p. ix.

[5] For example, Marion Lakey who worked in remote Papua with the Asia Pacific Mission was required to use her furloughs to give information to her supporters and to find ongoing financial support for her work. CMS missionaries such as Barbara Bourchier (Numbulawar, Umbakumba and Alyangula) and Meryl Rowe (Oenpelli) were expected to do the same. Catholic missionaries who were members of religious orders were both sent and supported by their orders while lay missionaries usually had to finance themselves to a significant degree.

another missionary[6] at Melville Island saw him spending his first two and a half years as Priest-in-Charge of the Garden Point Mission. Although he could not know it at the time, Leary would spend several more stints as a missionary in the Tiwi Islands.

As mentioned in Chapter 4,[7] the motto of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, as befits a religious order whose charism is built on the love of God for his people as demonstrated by the Sacred Heart, is ‘May the heart of Jesus be everywhere loved’. C S Lewis points out in *The Four Loves*[8] the English word ‘love’ is often insufficient to the task it is asked to do. Lewis designates four separate ‘loves’. The first of these is *affection* (Greek: *storge*) by which he means filial love or affection, the love of families or the love which comes from long familiarity between people. The second is the love which is based on a strong bond born out of common interests or activity (Greek: *philia*). This Lewis calls *friendship* but he has in mind something narrower than simply the companionship of people who are thrown together. For Lewis, friendship in this sense derives from a shared passionate interest or commitment to a common idea. The third kind of love derives from the Greek *eros*. This is the *physical love* associated with, but not identical to, sexual attraction. This love is linked to pleasure and devotion. The fourth and final love of which Lewis writes is *caritas* or *charity,* the *self-giving love* which derives from the Greek *agapē,* the unconditional, self-giving love demonstrated by Jesus Christ. In this chapter when I speak of Father Leary’s love for the Aboriginal people it is in this fourth sense that word is used. The love which the people return to him seems to be more characteristic of the love between family members, parents and children or people and their pastor.

In such terms as these then, Father Leary was, and still is, much loved by the Tiwi Islanders he served there. One of the Garden Point mob,[9] Faye Gavenlock

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[6] The missionary Leary relieved was Father Albert Cuneo MSC. Thecla Brogan, *The Garden Point Mob,* p. 3. Also John Leary, ‘Out bush in the NT 2’ Typescript, p. 1.

[7] Chapter four , p. 94.

[8] C S Lewis, *The Four Loves*. Harmondsworth: Penguin. 1963. p. 19.

[9] ‘The Garden Point Mob’ refers to the former residents at the Garden Point Mission for mixed race children which was begun in 1940, in line with government policy of separating mixed race children from their families, and which catered for such children born to the south west of

(née Minchin) who was 'given to Sister Annunciata' by her mother when she was six weeks old,[10] is an example. Although Sister Annunciata OLSH called her 'little Mousie Minchin', Gavenlock describes herself as something of a wild child.[11] In her contribution to *The Garden Point Mob*, Gavenlock makes the following comment about Father Leary:

> To Father Leary who has remained a very good friend and who has continued the same love and interest in me after all these years, I say 'Thank You' for caring. You have a special place in my childhood memories and a little corner of my heart.[12]

Gavenlock remembers that Father Leary was, in his turn, relieved by Father Alan Corry MSC[13] when Leary had to be medically evacuated for treatment after getting a splinter in his eye. Despite her obvious gratitude, respect and love for the priests, brothers and OLSH sisters who cared for the Garden Point children, Gavenlock nevertheless recognises that there were, for all the children, times of great loneliness, heartbreak and isolation.[14] Nevertheless, as adults in post-mission days, many of those of the 'Garden Point Mob' were to become the core of the St Martin de Porres Catholic Church at Casuarina. This congregation was established in 1988, and remains an Aboriginal congregation supported by the Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity (Mother Teresa's nuns) and priests of the Missionaries of God's Love.

Darwin (in areas predominantly served by Roman Catholic missions). As well as former residents who still live on Melville Island, the self-named and self-identified Garden Point Mob also includes those who now live in Darwin and in 1988 formed the St Martin de Porres Catholic Community at Casuarina (in a covenant relationship with the Holy Spirit Catholic Parish). Information from Father John Leary and Father Stephen Hackett MSC, 16 May 2008.

[10] Brogan, p. 38.

[11] Brogan, pp. 38 – 45.

[12] Brogan, p. 45.

[13] Father Alan Corry would later take charge of the construction of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Nhulunbuy. This he did with generous help from the various companies involved in the area. Nabalco supplied the design drawings for the church and the girders which form its frame were also donated by local contractors. It was not unusual for locals seeing Father Corry to comment 'Here comes Corry Constructions'. Conversation with parishioners from St Mary's Cathedral. Also Thomson & Niall, *NT Dreaming,* p. 89.

[14] Brogan, p. 45.

Father John Leary MSC (left) and Mr Joe Cooper, collecting eggs on Seagull Island.

Photo: Br John Pye MSC *The Tiwi Islands*. 1985.

This is not the only reading of the Garden Point experience, however. Sue Stanton refers to 'inmates' of Garden Point, as though they were prisoners in a concentration camp. She refers as an example to 'Evie'[15] who was 'incarcerated at two months of age at Garden Point Mission and an inmate from 1950 to 1964'[16]. Evie's story undoubtedly represents some of the worst aspects of the era in which mixed race children were removed from their families. After a brief stay at the Retta Dixon Home in Darwin, Evie was moved to Garden Point, where she remained from the age of two months until she was fourteen. Evie's mother before her had also been removed from her family in Hermannsburg and placed at The Bungalow before being sent to New South Wales.[17] Evie told the Bringing Them Home Commission that

> While in Garden Point I always say that some of it was the happiest time of my life; others it was the saddest time of my life. The happiest time was, 'Yippee! all these other kids there'. You know, you got to play with them every day. The saddest times were the abuse. Not only the physical abuse, the sexual abuse by the priests over there. And they were the saddest because if you were to tell anyone, well, the priests threatened that they would actually come and get you.[18]

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[15] 'Evie' is the pseudonym given to confidential witness 577 at the Stolen Generations Enquiry. *Bringing Them Home Report.* http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/bth_report/index.html 30 June 2004.

[16] ibid. See also Sue Stanton, Coloureds and Catholics, p. 45.

[17] Evie's evidence. http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/bth_report/index.html Downloaded 30 June 2004.

[18] Evie's evidence. http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/bth_report/index.html Downloaded 30 June 2004.

Stanton notes that 'Evie's evidence [of child abuse] was dismissed by Peter Hearn, … in his thesis'.[19] Stanton claims that Hearn was writing as a representative of the Catholic Church. He was not. If he was writing as anything other than a doctoral candidate, it was rather as the individual who had been Superintendent of the Northern Territory Catholic Missions at the time of some of the alleged offences.[20] Hearn points out that, although both the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and the OLSH sisters have attempted to test these allegations in court, they have been unable to do so because of the anonymity given to witnesses. As Hearn observes, the priests and sisters allegedly involved are readily identifiable to many people still living in the Territory.[21] This writer is aware of only two cases of abuse being brought to court from the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Darwin. Both cases were brought during the 1990s and only one concerned abuse on the Tiwi Islands. That case involved a Christian Brother who was convicted in the Darwin Supreme Court but his conviction was later overturned on appeal.[22] The other case involved a teacher at a Catholic School in Alice Springs. That conviction was upheld. No cases of abuse have been proved against Missionaries of the Sacred Heart or the OLSH sisters however, despite allegations such as Evie's. The Government policy of removal was based in a belief that full blooded Aborigines were dying out and that mixed-race individuals would be better assimilated in some way into the dominant white culture. There can be little doubt that the Protector of Aborigines in Western Australia, A. O. Neville, influenced by the social Darwinist theories of his day, took the view, along with other government officials that

> within one hundred years the pure black will be extinct. But the half-caste problem was increasing every year. Therefore their idea was to keep the pure blacks segregated and absorb the half-castes into the white population. Sixty years ago … there were over 60,000 full-

[19] Stanton, p. 45

[20] During his first stint in the Northern Territory, 1979-82, Father Peter Hearn was initially parish priest at Port Keats and then Superintendent of Missions.

[21] Hearn, p. 56, fn 137.

[22] The Hon Grant Tambling who was at the time Commonwealth Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Senator for the Northern Territory commented to the author (23 April 2008) that the health reports which he had seen as part of the investigation into Evie's allegations contained evidence of abuse. It is not possible from the records though to say who perpetrated the abuse.

> blooded natives in Western Australia. Today [in 1937] there are only 20,000. In time there would be none. Perhaps it would take one hundred years, perhaps longer, but the race was dying. The pure blooded Aboriginal was not a quick breeder. On the other hand the half-caste [sic] was. In Western Australia there were half-caste families of twenty and upwards. That showed the magnitude of the problem …..[23]

In Neville's view, skin colour was the key to absorption. Children with lighter skin colour would automatically be accepted into non-Indigenous society and lose their Aboriginal identity. But almost as Neville was making these statements there was already, in recognition that Aborigines were not a dying race after all,[24]a move towards providing welfare for them. By the mid 1960s, as Hearn points out, the removal of children was being replaced by other forms of integration.[25]

Paul Collins, in a comment on Catholic missions, notes that in the nineteenth century the church attempted to convert as well as to protect Aborigines.[26] He goes on to note that missionaries such as Salvado, the Jesuits and Gsell, attempted to learn the Indigenous languages and 'worked hard to understand and appreciate Aboriginal habits, customs, rituals and spiritual values'.[27] Collins also goes on to note that Bishop Gsell's successor, Bishop John O'Loughlin,

> was influenced by government assimilationist policies and was opposed to missionaries learning Aboriginal languages. One who worked his way around this was Father John Leary … [who] began learning Murinbata, Port Keats' language, and spent much time in the bush with the local people. He came to admire their incredible bush skills and deep spirituality and realised that knowing the language was the only way to know what they were thinking.

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[23] Tony Buti, 1995: `They took the children away', *Alternative Law Journal* Volume 20 Number 1/ *Aboriginal Law Bulletin* Volume 3 Number 72 pages 35-6. cited in: http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/hreoc/stolen/stolen08.html Downloaded 8 May 2008.

[24] This was not least due to the efforts of the various missionaries who had been working with Aborigines since the 1880s.

[25] Hearn, p. 56.

[26] Paul Collins, *Believers*, p. 14.

[27] Collins, p. 15.

> The O'Loughlin prohibition didn't prevent Leary, as well as Father Mervyn Bailey [and, later, Fathers Leo Weardon and Xavier Desmarchelier and Brother Merritt] working on the Murinpatha language.[28]

For Father Leary, though, the Tiwi Islanders, the people of Port Keats (Wadeye), and the 'young people of Aboriginal descent at Garden Point' are those he credits with helping him 'in their own unique way to be at home with traditional Aborigines. They were the link'[29] between the white world of Leary's previous experience and what would become his life's work with the Aborigines of the Top End for which ultimately he would be awarded Membership of the Order of Australia.[30] By the time that Father Leary arrived at Garden Point the traditional Tiwi Islanders had grafted the 'Garden Point Mob' into their own culture. From Garden Point Father Leary would go on to spend most of his time in the Daly River or Port Keats areas. At times, however, it could take all his ingenuity not to appear to favour one Aboriginal group over another. At the time of Cyclone Tracy and its aftermath, Leary, then living at the Ranch in Nightcliff,[31] had a cat named PK. The cat, predictably, disappeared during the cyclone and did not reappear for a very long time. When it did, a group of Tiwi people who witnessed its return were very put out when Father Leary told them the cat's name. For them the question was 'Do the Wadeye people mean more to you than us?' Leary hastened to assure them that this was not the case and that the PK simply stood for 'Pussy Kat'. The people were satisfied.[32]

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[28] Collins, p. 16. These are the missionaries whom Eugene Stockton would undoubtedly label 'mavericks'. Eugene Stockton, 'Maverick Missionaries: An Overlooked Chapter in the History of Catholic Missions' in Tony Swain and Deborah Bird Rose (eds), *Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions,* pp 200 – 210.

[29] John Leary MSC, E J Cuskelly Memorial Lecture, Brisbane, 2003. p.4.

[30] Father Leary was made a Member of the Order of Australia in January, 2000. The citation of the award reads: 'For service to the spiritual, educational and health needs of the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory as a priest and missionary of the Catholic Church.' http://www.itsanhonour.gov.au/ Downloaded 10 April 2008.

[31] That is the original building called The Ranch, which was destroyed by the Cyclone.

[32] Conversation with Father Leary, 2004.

"The Quail". The Quail's arrival on the shore of Melville Island on 6 June 1942 caused initial panic then excitement amongst the Mission personnel. At first they though it was part of a Japanese invasion as it came to the shore bristling with 17 rifles trained on the missionaries. When a voice from the boat asked in an American accent where they were and the reply "Melville Island" came, the rifles were thrown in the air in relief. The men, commanded by Lt John Morrell USN were the survivors of the US minesweeper Quail which had been scuttled at Bataan. A few days later the "Quail" was found at anchor at Fort Hill wharf in Darwin Harbour having passed unnoticed through the Harbour defences. The boat was donated to the Melville Islanders by the US Navy.

Pye, *The Tiwi Story*. pp. 80 – 81.

Although Leary would be the last person to make any comparisons between himself and Jules Chevalier (about whom he would have known little enough during his seminary days), it is possible to see him in a similar light. Chevalier was driven by a vision of creating the order which he believed God had called him to found. Leary, as Priest-in-charge of the MSC's Francis Xavier Mission at Daly River for most of its life, and later as Mission Superintendent for the Daly-Port Keats area, had a similar vision – not only for that particular mission but for the betterment of traditional Aborigines in general. In Leary's terms 'betterment' meant not necessarily assimilation or integration into the dominant Australian culture, but rather that the people would be in a position to choose for themselves the life and culture they wanted in much the same way as do members of mainstream Australian society. Although it was Bishop O'Loughlin who responded to requests from both the local people and the Administrator (who had been approached by the senior men of the Daly River)[33] to found the Francis Xavier Mission at Daly River mission (now the Naiuyu Nambyu community), it was Father Leary who arguably made the largest impact on it during its existence. During his time in the Northern Territory, Leary was largely and effectively responsible for establishing the Daly River Mission in 1955 as well as what is now the MSC retirement home in Darwin: The Ranch, at Nightcliff.

[33] J. Leary MSC, "Mission Lands Handover". Typescript. p. 1. See also Hearn, p. 22 – 23.

A young Father John Leary with Daly River mission kids in the Austin Champ jeep.

Photo: Russell Drysdale. 1956.

Peanut Farm. Daly River 1965.

Source:
John Pye, *The Daly river Story.* Darwin: Coleman. 1996.

In the early days of building the Daly River Mission, 'the peanut farm that became a community',[34] Father Leary notes that the skilled work was done by MSC Brothers Dave Fitzgerald (carpenter), Gabriel (Chick) Crowley (plumber), Luigi Seraphini (horticulturalist) and Keith Welsh (Jack of all trades). Father Leary himself provided the unskilled labour.[35] After the establishment of the Mission at Daly River and its evolution into an independent community, Father Leary also established the Leadership Training Centre at Five Mile, Daly River in 1986.[36] At Port Keats, during the 1950s, Father Leary also worked alongside the anthropologist W.E.H. Stanner for whom the people and cultures of the Port Keats–Daly River area were vital to his research. As one reads the work of both men it is clear that there was considerable cross-pollination of ideas. Father

34 Leary, Mission Lands Handover. p. 1. See also Hearn, pp. 22 – 23.
35 Leary, Mission Lands Handover, p. 2.
36 MSC Archives, Kensington NSW. 0241/1986.

Leary was also influenced by the work of the Liberation Theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez[37] and the Brazilian educationalist/social anthropologist Paulo Freire.[38] In the case of the Daly River Mission in particular it could be said that it was Father Leary who put the flesh on Bishop O'Loughlin's Mission skeleton. And all this was a far cry from his father's vision of his son becoming a jockey or a professional tennis player.

John Peter Leary was born in Dubbo, New South Wales on 15 June 1922 to Thomas and Leah (née Morley). At the time of his birth Leary's family was farming wheat and sheep in the Dubbo region of New South Wales. John's father, true to his Irish heritage, also bred and trained race horses. For the first ten years of his life, the young Leary lived with his mother, father and two younger sisters, Margaret and Mary, on the family farm west of Yeoval in central western New South Wales. When young John was about ten years old the family moved to Randwick in Sydney. Father Leary's earliest memory is one of being in a sulky driven by his father. Still a baby, the young John was in his father's arms as they were driving in to Dubbo. The road had been washed out in places by heavy rain and one wheel of the sulky went into a washout, overturning the vehicle and throwing both John and his father out onto the ground. Even now John Leary remembers quite clearly that he 'decided to pretend to be dead'.[39] When they finally returned home his father related the incident saying, 'The little bugger was acting!'[40] This sense of mischief was to remain a characteristic of the man. So too is his reticence regarding any further references to his family of origin. As mentioned elsewhere, this reticence or self-abnegation appears to be part and parcel of the 'professional' religious life. Despite retaining their own names at the time of taking their final vows, each of these men to a greater or lesser extent appears to regard the order of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart as their current 'family' and they are all chary of making any comments on the record about their siblings or extended family of origin. Nevertheless it is clear that they remain very close to their surviving siblings and extended families. In this respect it is almost as if they either have no pasts, other than their lives in

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[37] G. Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation..*

[38] P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972.

[39] Conversation with Father Leary, Darwin, 2004.

[40] Conversation with Father Leary, 2004.

religion, or that the two lives occupy quite separate worlds, with the world of family and friends being almost totally hidden from public view.

Yeoval, NSW and surrounds.
Source: Geoscience Australia: Commonwealth of Australia. 2005.

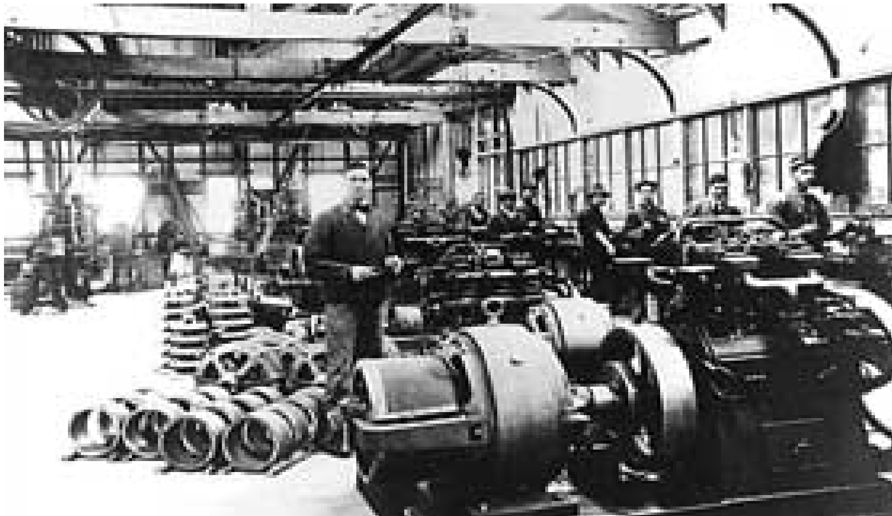
As a small boy, Leary began school later than usual because he had spent thirteen weeks in isolation in Dubbo Hospital with diphtheria, scarlet fever and consequent complications. Both diphtheria and scarlet fever were infectious diseases treated by prolonged isolation in an Infectious Diseases Hospital. Typically, Infectious Diseases Hospitals themselves were isolated from the rest of the community. The weeks in isolation in hospital, although undoubtedly irksome and boring to a child, no doubt strengthened young Leary's already developing awareness of his family's comparative isolation as a rural family on a farm some distance from town. Apart from the isolation, the other significant memory Leary has of this time is again fairly typical. For some time he was treated by his family as 'delicate'. During his illness and convalescence, one of his sisters had knitted him a pair of long woollen socks which he was then forced to wear to school – much against his will. It was yet another embarrassing

isolating factor in his young life. Despite this, until he was ten years old, Leary's experience was pretty much that of any other 'bush kid'. His father, Thomas Leary, was a hard working farmer and they were a typical family which experienced little social interaction beyond their own circle. In talking to Father Leary it is this almost overwhelming sense of isolation which seems to have left an indelible mark on the man he became and still is. This isolation was not broken until the family moved to Randwick in Sydney. Sydney in 1932 was already a bustling metropolitan city with trams and ferries providing public transport, and the Sydney Harbour Bridge a brand new link across the Harbour. Randwick itself was a suburb which had seen rapid growth in the 1890s followed by strong development throughout the 1920s. By the 1930s the population had grown from 50,841 (1921) to 78,957 in 1933, about the time the Leary family moved there.

Leary's mother, Leah, had persuaded his father to sell the farm and take the family to Sydney primarily in order to have the three children educated. In Randwick young John, who had learned to ride a horse almost as soon as he had learned to walk, saw his isolation slowly break down through school and his tennis lessons. Leary's skill with this social game could have taken him to great heights had he pursued a career in tennis. His father, conscious of his son's small and light stature, was hoping that he would become a jockey. But neither sporting career was to eventuate.

Above: **1930s Randwick .**

Source:
www.nsw.nationaltrust.org.au
Downloaded 18 April 2008



Father Shaw's Wireless works (Fr Shaw MSC) established his radio work initially at the Kensington Monastery as a fundraiser for the missions, but then needed larger premises .
Source: http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/ Downloaded 18 April 2008

Randwick Tramway Workshops, which employed a workforce of some 400 men and boys. It was a major employer of local labour up to and including the 1930s. In 1939 it became a munitions factory.

Source:
http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au
Downloaded 18 April 2008

Instead, the ten year old John Leary was warming to the influence of the Brigidine Sisters who ran the primary school, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, which he attended with his sisters. Later the Marist Brothers who also taught him at Marcellin College, Randwick[41] and the MSC priests of the local Randwick parish, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, were to have their own influence on him. The MSC influence continued when Leary, then aged fourteen, went on to the Apostolic School, St Mary's Towers, at Douglas Park, run by the MSCs. Leary

[41] Marcellin College had opened in 1923. At the time Leary was there it was still a relatively new school.

undertook his secondary schooling at the Apostolic School at Douglas Park, where co-incidentally one of his classmates and friends in the Leaving Certificate was Jim Cuskelly.[42] His experiences of the MSC influence culminated in his going to the MSC seminary at Croydon in Victoria for further studies in preparation for priesthood. Along with Jim Cuskelly, John Leary entered the MSC novitiate there in 1942, aged 20. He was professed in the order in 1943, when he took his vows, and was ordained priest in 1949.[43]

As a child and as a young person John Leary always loved the 'country'. He claims that he 'seemed to have the smell of wheat and ploughed ground (and horses) in [his] nostrils'.[44] Leary's childhood experiences perhaps explain this – and they certainly fitted him well for his later work in remote areas of the Northern Territory. His early years at Yeoval were interrupted only by a relatively brief interlude in suburban Sydney – although Randwick was even then the home of the racing fraternity – before the country was once again to be his home. Bowral, the location of Douglas Park, in the 1930s was still a country town. The first State High School in Bowral was not built until 1930, and it took students from all over the Highlands.[45] The MSC Seminary at Croydon in Victoria was similarly located in what was then the countryside on the fringe of suburban Melbourne.[46]

Leary first became aware of a call to religious life when he was serving as an altar boy at Randwick. The group of MSC priests in the parish at Randwick clearly but unwittingly influenced his decision. Among other things that impressed the young Leary was the fact that, although they had no car, that did not stop them visiting their parishioners on a regular basis – and always on foot.

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[42] Jim Cuskelly would go on to study in Rome and later become Bishop E J Cuskelly and Superior General of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart for twelve years. Cuskelly is credited within the order with rediscovering Jules Chevalier's charism and renewing a sense of purpose in the order.

[43] Information provided by Archivist Father Tony Caruana MSC from Kensington Archives. March 2004.

[44] Conversation with Father Leary, 2004.

[45] History of Bowral. www.highlandsnsw.com.au/past_present/bowral.html Downloaded 27 July 2005.

[46] As a girl growing up in Melbourne in the 1950s, I can remember going to Croydon (and the beachside suburb of Aspendale) for Sunday school and Church picnics. Both locations were then in 'the bush'. They are now no longer even on the urban fringe.

There were seven priests, all of whom were different from each other and yet, even as a young boy of ten, Leary could detect that they had something in common that both set them apart and attracted people to them. It was only later that he would learn the word ‘charism’.[47] As he looks back, Leary’s recollection of his entry into the seminary focuses on his extreme youth and his inexperience of living away from home. His late start to school after his hospitalisation meant that he was unprepared for the rigorous education he was about to receive. He was deeply homesick and felt out of his depth. The emphasis on discipline at the school at Douglas Park did little to make this transition any easier. From his present vantage point Father Leary feels that he left home too early. Nevertheless this experience may well be what made him the man he became. In his dealings with the Aboriginal people his words and actions are marked constantly by the Murinpatha notion ‘thawait’ which is best translated in English as ‘carefully-slowly’.[48] Father Leary, in his Cuskelly Lecture, notes that he came to the Northern Territory ‘intending to work FOR Aborigines’. He believes, however, that he ‘quickly ended up working WITH them’.[49] Over time Father Leary became absolutely convinced that no-one, in his ‘field at least, can become an effective giver unless he or she first becomes a learner’.[50] While many mission critics would perhaps treat this observation with cynicism, the ongoing relationship which Father Leary still enjoys with the Aboriginal people of the communities in which he ministered is surely testament to the sincerity of this approach. Bishop Eugene Hurley has observed that ‘Father Leary came to the Territory to convert the Aboriginal people but the Aboriginal people ended up

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[47] In general usage the word ‘charism’, or more commonly ‘charisma’, refers to ‘a divinely conferred power or talent; the capacity to inspire followers with devotion and enthusiasm’ *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press. 2002. When used in relation to the Church the word ‘charism’ is taken to mean ‘a special gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church’. Pope Paul VI was the first to label ‘charism’ specifically in relation to religious institutes. In a religious congregation, the charism is spoken of as a gift to the founder or founders, ‘their own particular way of understanding and concretising the following of Jesus in the People of God.’ The charism is described as a mysterious energy and passion which inspire the founders to show a new face of Christ to the world. http://www.sosj.org.au/mary/r_charism.html Downloaded 29 July 2005.

[48] Leary, Cuskelly Lecture, pp. 6 and 18.

[49] Leary, Cuskelly Lecture, p. 1.

[50] Leary, Cuskelly Lecture, p. 1. Leary’s emphasis.

converting him'.[51] The accuracy of this statement was confirmed by Dr Miriam Rose Ungunmerr of Daly River who added confidently, 'We did too!'.[52]

Although his 'formation'[53] began with his schooling at the Apostolic School, Father Leary's formal MSC training began in the Novitiate at Douglas Park and then continued with a focus on Theology and Philosophy (with much of the teaching in Latin) at the seminary in Croydon, Victoria. The novitiate was a strict regime for which Leary was, by his own admission, not quite ready at the time but, as he says, 'It prepared me for anything!' In common with many other religious[54] Leary found the experience of the novitiate under Novice Master, Father Hoy, rather dehumanising. But it was probably no better or worse than the experience of many other young religious of the time. The docu-drama, *Brides of Christ,*[55] demonstrates the kind of rigid disciplines and practices that were common to religious training seminaries and novitiates until the 1960s at least. Leary's experience certainly prepared him for the hardships and isolation of places like Melville Island, Daly River and Port Keats. One of the less orthodox aspects of this training, though, was the 'Sandwich Stunt' devised by Jim Cuskelly while they were at Croydon. The 'Sandwich Stunt' consisted of each of the participants preparing a sandwich the night before the stunt. The stunt itself was actually a walk, the approximate destination of which was decided by the

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[51] Bishop Eugene Hurley speaking at the Diocesan Leadership Conference, Berrimah. 15 May 2008.

[52] Miriam Rose Ungunmerr speaking at the Diocesan Leadership Conference, Berrimah. 15 May 2008.

[53] Catholic education focuses on the formation of Catholic and Christian character and values. Traditionally this happened within the specific tradition of the religious order which owned and staffed the school. It is no co-incidence that students from such schools, especially boarders, were often then drawn to the religious life themselves. The increasing laicisation of Catholic schools has seen a significant lessening of the traditional influence of religious orders in education, and a concomitant lessening in candidates offering themselves for the religious life. The Catholic belief that the family is the first agent of religious formation, while true in Leary's generation, is in the present all too often more of a statement of optimism than fact.

[54] See for example, *Brides of Christ*. ABC TV. 1991. While this series was based on the experience of the Mercy Sisters in Australia in the immediate post Vatican II era, a time of upheaval in both the Australian Church and society during the era of the Vietnam War and Vatican II, the fictitious order of religious women reflected many practices which had been common to religious orders – both for men and women – at the time. These practices had remained largely unchanged for decades. Discussions at the time of viewing the original screening with my then colleagues, the Loreto Sisters at Mandeville Hall, Toorak, (Sisters Margaret Callaghan and Ruth Winship IBVM, Melbourne, 1992) confirmed the accuracy of this series although it was made as a docu-drama series. The series highlighted the often demeaning and mindless activities and punishments invoked to establish unquestioning obedience to one's superiors.

[55] *Brides of Christ*.

consensus of the group of walkers. The walk occupied all the available daylight hours – with half the daylight hours allowed to reach the destination and the remaining half to return to the Seminary. The sandwich was fitted in 'wherever possible'.[56] As Father Leary notes, this love of walking developed in him 'not only a certain stubbornness, but also proved a useful introduction to [his] future with traditional Aborigines'.[57]

Once in the Territory, walking was to be part of his work from time to time. In later years Father Leary's method of dealing with troublesome issues was often to disappear for a time and gain some thinking space. This earned him the title of 'Father Walkabout'. The title was well merited. Not long after he arrived in the Port Keats-Daly area he undertook, with a couple of the young men from Port Keats, to attempt to cycle from Port Keats to the Daly River Mission 'following the old blackfellow [sic] road' in a single day. The trip began well but soon they found themselves carrying their bikes rather than riding them. Father Leary was loath to part with the bikes, despite the exhaustion induced by dragging them over the glutinous black soil of the Moyle floodplain. Eventually Father Leary was so exhausted that he began to have visions of an ice cold can of beer floating ahead of him. His next vision was of an enormous aeroplane on the ground about four kilometres away. This time he asked his companions if they could see it too. Much to his relief they could. It was a U.S bomber that had crash landed there during the war. Eventually the bikes were dumped – to be collected by the young men on their return journey. They finally reached the Daly River Mission but the one day walk had taken fifty hours. Father Leary flew back to Port Keats.[58] Some years later he oversaw an army exercise which pitted a group of highly trained soldiers against a random selection of men from Port Keats in two different exercises. In the first, a group of experienced soldiers was given a two hour head start and then were tracked by the Aborigines. Despite their head start, and a few diversions along the way by the Aboriginal trackers, the trackers caught up with them within an hour. The next was a survival exercise which

[56] Leary, Cuskelly Lecture, p. 3.
[57] Leary, Cuskelly Lecture, p. 3.
[58] Leary, 'Out in the Bush', p. 1.

again saw a group of experienced and well-equipped soldiers[59] heading overland from Port Keats to Daly River. The Aborigines, and Father Leary, were equipped only with their spears, a shotgun and their bush knowledge. They relied on their knowledge of their own country to find food, water, shelter and their way. They arrived well in advance of their rivals. When the soldiers arrived one of the officers expressed his surprise, saying 'These blokes could live off the land easily. It's amazing!' Father Leary forbore telling him that was after all what they had been doing for thousands of years.

While Leary was training in the Apostolic School and in the Seminary, the Second World War had overtaken Australia as it had other parts of the world. For the young men in religious training, though, the war was an almost unmentioned reality lurking in the background. Whilst wartime rationing would have impinged on the Seminary as anywhere else, Father Hoy deliberately never mentioned the war to the seminarians. Singapore had fallen to the Japanese as Leary entered the Novitiate in February 1942. Despite Father Hoy's silence on the matter, the students were nevertheless aware that the Japanese were thought to be swiftly heading south. Within the Seminary as elsewhere in the Australian community there was a sense of uncertainty and apprehension.

It was usual for all members of the order to spend some time in schools before being sent to any other mission. In the case of MSC priests in training their study for the priesthood continued in the seminary after their profession. Before heading north to the Territory, Leary taught for two years at Chevalier College[60] at Bowral NSW and then for a year at Downlands, the MSC College at Towoomba[61] in Queensland. Father Leary, as he now was, enjoyed his teaching stint and his involvement with his students, particularly in sport and in his pastoral work with them. He reflects that, unlike some teachers today, he seemed to have little trouble with classroom discipline.[62] However it was, he adds, a

[59] The soldiers were equipped with tents, food, boots, and compasses – all the usual military paraphernalia. Conversation with Father Leary, 2005.
[60] Chevalier College, run by the MSCs, opened in 1946.
[61] Downlands had opened in 1931.
[62] Priests working as teachers in the classroom carried extra authority, of course. 'They could send you directly to hell!' Conversations with Cliff Campbell, Garry Blackett and others who experienced such teachers. November 2007.

difficult life when the burdens of teaching were added to the requirements of religious life. As well as a full day of teaching and extra-curricular activities it was a matter of rising at 5.00 a.m. each day for a time of meditation followed by Mass. And in the evening and at night there were the responsibilities of being in charge of a dormitory in the boarding school. But all this while Father Leary had 'a strange desire to work in the Top End'[63] of the Northern Territory. Perhaps this was in some way engendered by his early life on the farm and his enduring love of the land in preference to the city. But this desire was also tempered by an underlying concern about the tropical heat which would be an integral part of such a life, as well as the disconcerting image of 'Aboriginal children with runny noses' as they were so often portrayed in the contemporary media. The adults were also often portrayed as having a propensity to violence and anti-social attitudes, even in the 1950s.[64] But, for better or worse, Father Leary arrived in Darwin in January 1953 and, since then he has lived, worked and retired in the diocese. In that time he has become one of the most loved and admired of all those who have worked with the Aboriginal people of the Tiwi Islands, Port Keats and Daly River. His work with as a missionary with the Indigenous people of the Top End was recognised with the award of the Order of Australia Medal in 2000.[65]

Father Leary's first day in the Territory was a long one – and most of it was spent getting there. He began by saying Mass in Sydney at 4.00a.m. on Saturday 28 February, 1953, before leaving on a flight which touched down en route at both Charleville and Longreach before finally reaching Darwin's old airport at 7.10 p.m.[66] – virtually a twelve hour flight. Father Leary was to discover that he was stranded at the airport some eight kilometres out of town. No telegram announcing his arrival had been sent, so he arrived unannounced and unexpected at St Mary's presbytery in Darwin. It was there he discovered, to his surprise, that he would be sent to Melville Island. He had little enough time to recover

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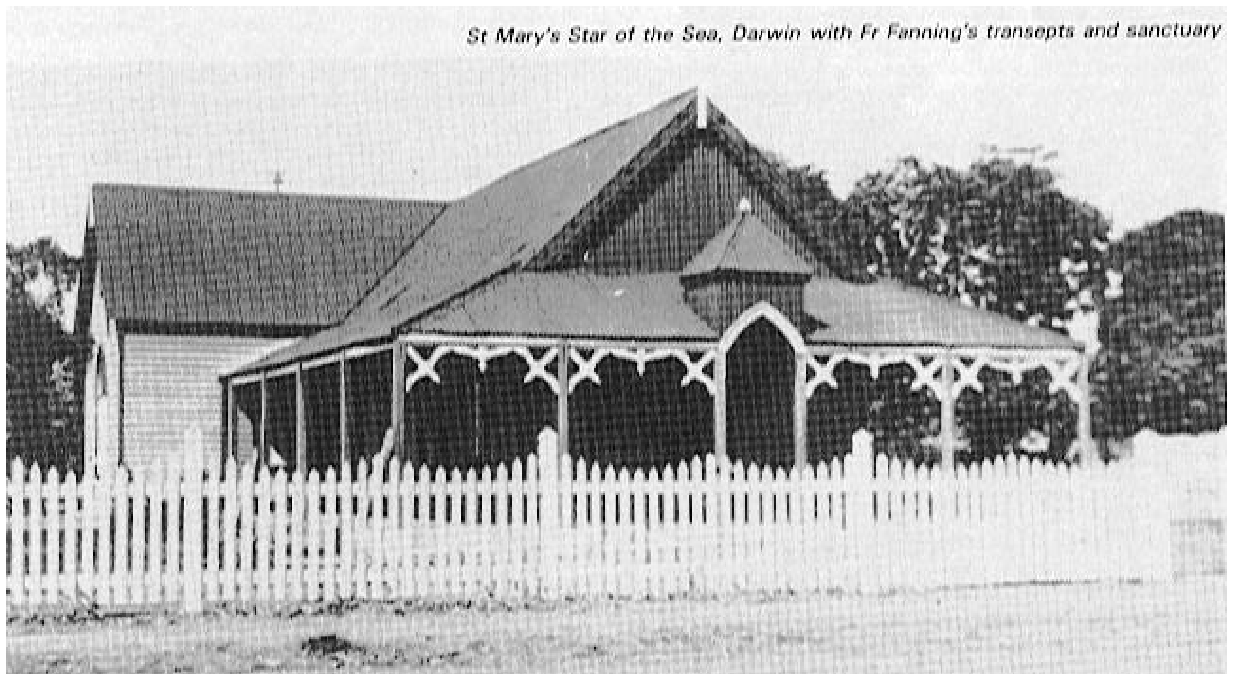
[63] Conversation with Father Leary, June 2005.

[64] A situation – and an image –which still pertains. See the *Northern Territory News* 5 December 2006 which carried a report of weekend rioting at Wadeye.

[65] The citation reads: 'For service to the spiritual, educational and health needs of the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory as a priest and missionary of the Catholic Church'. http://www.itsanhonour.gov.au/. Downloaded 10 April 2008.

[66] John Leary MSC, 'Out bush in the NT 2'. Typescript. p.1.

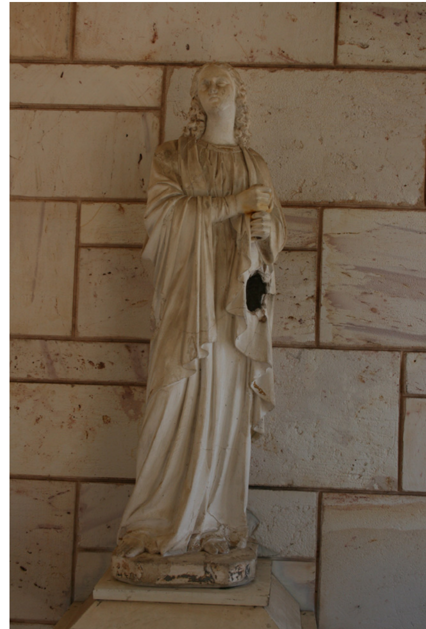
from the journey and to adjust to the Top End's Wet season. Leary was in town long enough for Father Aubrey Collins MSC, then curate at St Mary's, to take him for a drive around the town in his utility truck, during which time he could see for himself the remaining scars of the war: three sunken ships in the harbour. He was also there long enough to notice that, in St Mary's (old) Cathedral, in the two paintings of angels at either end of the altar, each angel had a bullet hole almost identically through the chest. Of the angel statues that stood at either end of the altar, one had also been shot right through[67] while the other was unscathed. The next morning saw him joining the barge taking supplies to the Channel Island Leprosarium where he was greeted on arrival by the Sisters and Brother Lilwall MSC, Superintendent of the Leprosarium from 1950 - 1956[68].



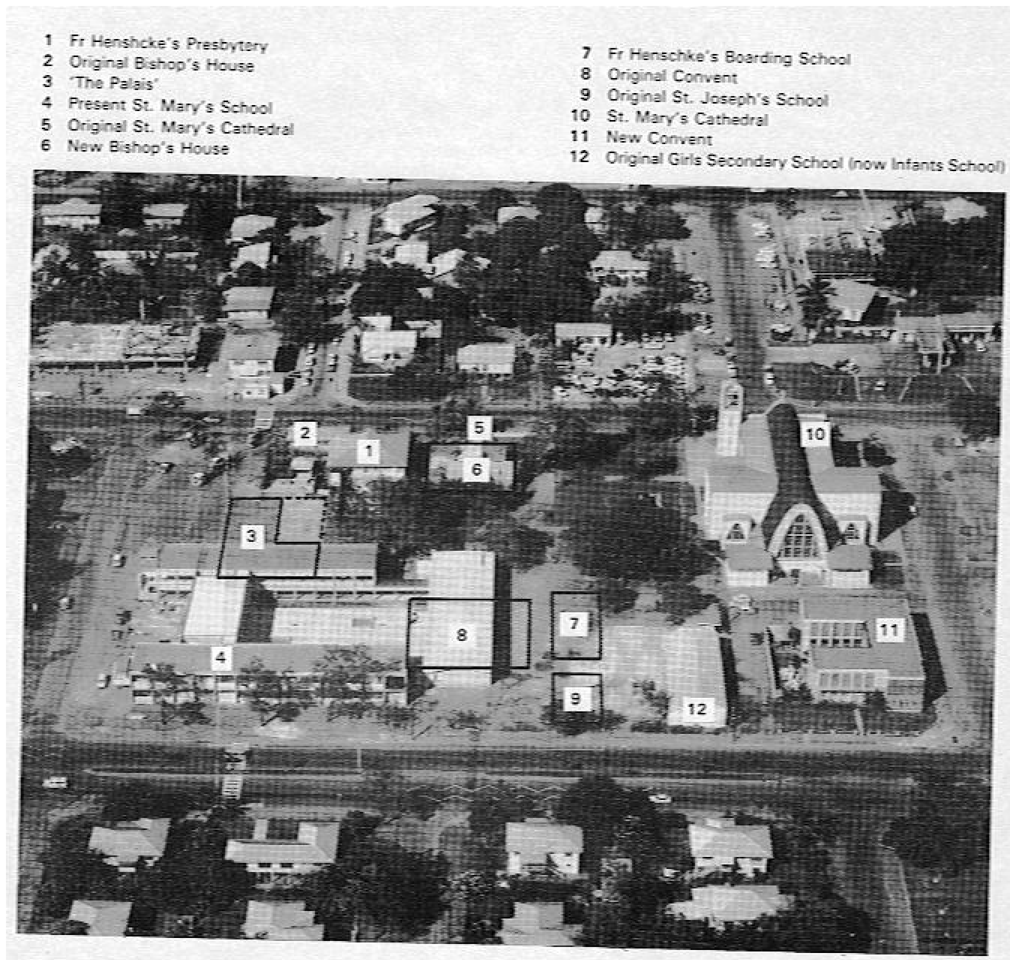
The former St Mary's Cathedral.

Photo: Thomson and Niall, *NT Dreaming*. p. 19.

[67] This statue, now known as The Wounded Angel, stands today in the southern alcove of St Mary's Star of the Sea Cathedral, Darwin.
[68] Father Timothy Brennan, MSC, Centenary Homily, Kensington Monastery NSW. 10 December 2005. http://misacor.org.au. Downloaded 11 April 2008.



The Angel which remains intact. **The wounded Angel.**
Photos: Wendy Beresford-Maning 2006



This photo shows the former and present buildings on the Cathedral site in Darwin.

Source: *NT Dreaming.* p. 16

Two aerial views of the Channel Island Leprosarium which was initially established as a Commonwealth Quarantine Station in 1884 and then as an isolation hospital in 1914 in response to influenza and whooping cough epidemics.

The site operated as a Leprosarium for patients from both the Northern Territory and Western Australia from 1931 until 1955 when, because of overcrowding, it was relocated to East Arm.

Sources: www.nt.gov.au/nreta/heritage Downloaded 11 April 2008.

Photo above: Bert Smart Collection. Northern Territory Library.
Photo below: Stanley E Barry; PH0421/0091. File 35\35249 Picture NT

During his brief stay at Channel Island, Father Leary became the first priest to say an evening Mass in the Territory under the new Papal regulations which for the first time allowed Mass to be said regularly on Saturday evening as a vigil Mass for the following day.[69] Prior to this, regular Masses were only said on Sunday, with the exception of the Easter and Christmas Vigils.

[69] Father Leary was also to be probably the last priest to hear confessions according to the Third Rite (General Confession and Absolution without Individual Confession) the canonical legality of which was withdrawn by Pope John Paul II, 7 April 2002. (The Rite was introduced in 1999 but was never intended for general use, nor was it intended to supplant individual confession.) See: *Code of Canon Law*, 960; *Ordo Paenitentiae*, 31; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1484. Cited by the Liturgical Commission of the Roman Catholic Church.

With his posting to Darwin in 1953 came Father Leary's first permanent mission appointment – as missionary and Priest-in-charge at Garden Point, Melville Island. Garden Point, a settlement for part-Aboriginal children, had been established in response to Commonwealth Government policy of removing half-caste children from their communities. At Garden Point, Father Leary's chief task, as he saw it, was to be a father figure to the children who were missing such a figure in their lives. He gained great satisfaction from working with the Garden Point people and their reciprocal love and respect for him is still evident today.[70] Father Leary observes in his own writing that while many children at Garden Point were sent there by the government, many were also brought or sent by their parents who hoped that by putting their children in the care of the Sisters they would receive a good education in the boarding school. The missionaries' role was to become substitute parents for these children. That they managed this is borne out by the number of the children who called the sisters, particularly Sisters Annunciata and Anne Gardiner OLSH, either 'Mother' or 'Grandma'. This is not to claim that these children did not miss their own parents, particularly their mothers, terribly, but the magnitude of this loss was perhaps something to be realised fully later, once they were adults with their own children. Father Leary certainly realised the enormity of their loss – and often of their rejection by their white fathers. He recounts an incident where, in Darwin, as he was driving with a teenage girl in the car, he saw her white father outside a store. The man had never shown any interest in any of his three children. Nevertheless Father Leary stopped the car and after some thought told the girl that this man was her father. Despite Father Leary's warning of possible rejection the girl approached her father and spoke to him. She did not even have time to identify herself before the man turned his back on her, a clear rejection which not only devastated the child but also Father Leary. It was, he said, not untypical.[71] Peter Forrest and Nancy Polishuk both note that, in terms of white fathers accepting their mixed race children, the Daly River settlement was exceptional in that the majority of white fathers willingly accepted these children.[72]

[70] Each year there is a celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart at the Ranch and each year the 'Garden Point Mob' are very well represented.
[71] John Leary MSC, 'Garden Point ... The Garden Point People'. Typescript, p.1.
[72] Peter Forrest, *The Spirit of the Daly*. Daly River NT: Daly River Community Development. Association. 1994. See also Polishuk with Lockwood, *Life on the Daly River*.

Father Leary left Garden Point in March 1955 and went to Daly River to start the new mission there. His work at Daly River was primarily that of building: setting up the mission, getting to know the people and winning their confidence. In 1958 he was appointed to Port Keats (Wadeye), again as missionary and Priest-in-charge. Once more Leary saw his task as getting to know the people and their country and customs. To him this entailed more than mere surface knowledge. He wanted to understand the people and to work on the enculturation of the faith. This had also been his approach at Melville Island when he went there. Such an approach inevitably meant taking time to earn the confidence and respect of the people and a willingness to learn from them rather than to 'tell' them how to do things. At Melville Island, Leary says, 'I was a curate'[73], focusing on developing a friendship with the people in order to come to know them. In adopting such an approach Father Leary was following in the footsteps of the first MSC missionary to the Tiwi people, Bishop Gsell. At Daly River and Port Keats he would become more proactive in attempting to improve the lot of the people.

Both Daly River and Port Keats have almost iconic status within the Northern Territory. Port Keats is one of the older missions and was established by Bishop Gsell in 1935, in response to government requests. The founding Priest-in-charge, Father Richard Docherty MSC, was accompanied by W E H. Stanner, who was then the Commonwealth Government Anthropologist, at the official founding of the mission which was named Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Although the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were asked to establish the Port Keats Mission in order to bring some peace and order to this area which had – and still has – a reputation for violence, some of the people at least seemed to anticipate the coming of the missionaries. One of the old men had had a vision in which 'a lady' appeared to assure him that peace would come to his people. When the missionaries arrived they equated the lady of this vision with the Virgin Mary. When a grotto was built with its back to the sea and facing the

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[73] Conversation with Father John Leary. Darwin. 2004. A curate is virtually an apprentice priest, usually acting as an assistant to the Parish Priest.

mission settlement, the statue of Mary somehow mysteriously kept turning to face the sea, the direction from which the missionaries had come. In the end it was left that way.[74]

An account of Father Docherty's first night at the Port Keats mission, on his return in 1941, was perhaps an omen of the future of the mission. On his first night Father Docherty and Brother John Pye, who had joined him, found themselves called to the Aborigines' camp to remove a spear from the neck of one of the men. Some years later Father Leary, sick of such belligerence and the tradition of payback both at Port Keats and at Daly River, called the men's bluff. Summoned yet again to mediate between the warring parties he pointed to the school building which had been built at their request to educate their young people. He asked them why they had wanted it if all they were going to do was to provide an example of violence and traditional payback. The men were stunned and agreed that there would be no more such incidents. At Daly River, Father Leary records, there were no more such incidents.[75] Port Keats was a different story however. The seeds of the continuing discord that were there at the beginning remained. The land on which the mission was situated was one of eleven Murinpatha 'countries' around the coast. People had been brought into the area with scant regard for their tribal identities and loyalties. Because of the considerable range of languages[76] three, representing those groups with the greatest numbers, predominated. But despite this, Father Leary notes that as long as the Elders in each group retained respect and exercised authority over their own groups and the missionaries provided some sort of overarching security and continuity, there was peace.[77] However, when the Government asked the Port Keats people to form a self-managed Community, 'discipline failed to function'.[78] There were undoubtedly several reasons for this. The education of the young; the culture of drinking and dependency of the old men which robbed them of respect; the futility of seeking non-existent employment were some of these reasons. But so too was the view expressed by one old woman who

[74] Conversation with Xavier Desmarchelier, former parish priest at Port Keats. Darwin, 2006.
[75] Leary, Cuskelly Lecture. p. 5.
[76] Leary, Cuskelly Lecture, p. 7. The people living on the mission belonged to seven different language groups. Leary, Cuskelly Lecture, p. 7.
[77] Leary, Cuskelly Lecture, p. 7.
[78] Leary, Cuskelly Lecture, p. 7.

bemoaned her lack of control over her family. 'I cannot speak up and assert myself,' she said, 'because this is not my country. I have no such right here'.[79]

At Daly River where there were also a number of language groups, this problem was not so acute. The area was traditionally one of movement and, over time, although the country was traditionally that of the Malak Malak and Mantgala people, traditional people from both south and north of the Daly had settled in language groups. Nevertheless the Daly River Mission defied the traditions of most missions. It was established, virtually at the end of the traditional Mission era. It was also requested by the Indigenous people of the Daly River area themselves. Most of the Indigenous people in the area were employed by and housed on surrounding cattle stations. They recognised the advantages that would accrue to their children if they could have an education and be kept healthy. To that end they requested both the Administrator and Bishop of the day to establish a mission with a school, dormitories and a health centre. The land for the Mission was not granted by the Government but was bought by the Catholic Church from landowners already there. The Mission settlement in fact was on the site of Cecil Goodman's peanut farm. The MSC archives record an expedition to the Daly River on 2-3 June 1954 by Bishop O'Loughlin, Father Copas MSC and Cecil Goodman.

> ... 18½ acres[80] cleared ... possibly 60 acres of arable land. Tried to reduce Goodman's price of £1600[81] without success.
> Met [W E H.]Stanner, Smiler [a local Aborigine] Joe Parry [mixed race farmer], Risdale [landowner]. Property transfer handled by O'Keefe of Newell Solicitors.[82]

Aware of the fate that befell the local Jesuit missions of the 1890s – soil exhaustion and recurrent floods – the Francis Xavier Mission was built on the eastern side of the river opposite Mango Farm, the site of the first Jesuit Mission (Old) Uniya, the ruins of which remain some distance to the west of the river. When it opened the only access was by road from Darwin in the Dry Season, or

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[79] Conversation with Father Leary, Darwin. 2006.
[80] 18½ acres = 7.4 hectares.
[81] Not allowing for inflation, £A1600 would be the equivalent of $A3200.
[82] MSC Archives, Kensington NSW. Daly River Diaries 1954 – 57.

by boat up the river. The airstrip at the Mission was not built until 1956. Regular contact with Mission headquarters in Darwin was maintained by daily radio 'skeds'[83].

Not far from the Parry family graveyard, a chimney of one of the Jesuit buildings is all that remains. It is now a listed Heritage site.

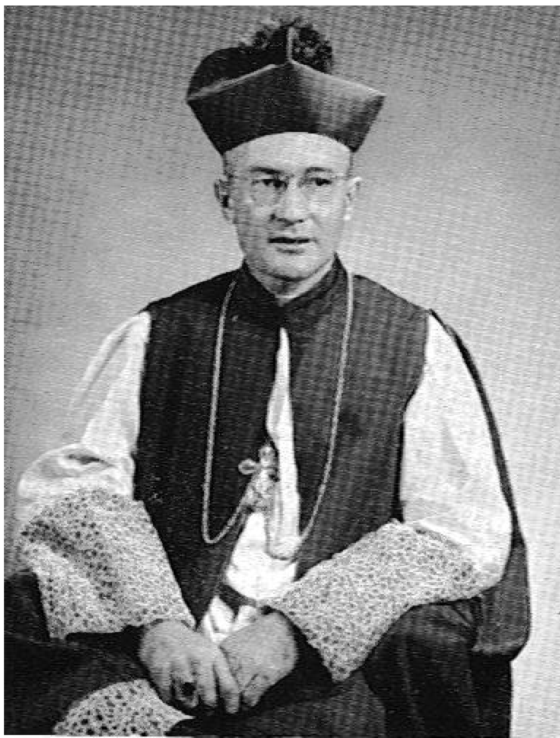
Photo: Wendy Beresford-Maning. 1994.

Two missionary bishops – F X Gsell and John O'Loughlin.
Photo. Father Frank Flynn MSC no date.

[83] 'Skeds' were regular radio broadcasts between the Missions and Mission Headquarters in Darwin using the transceiver designed by Traeger and Flynn. They were for a considerable time the only regular and reliable means of communication.

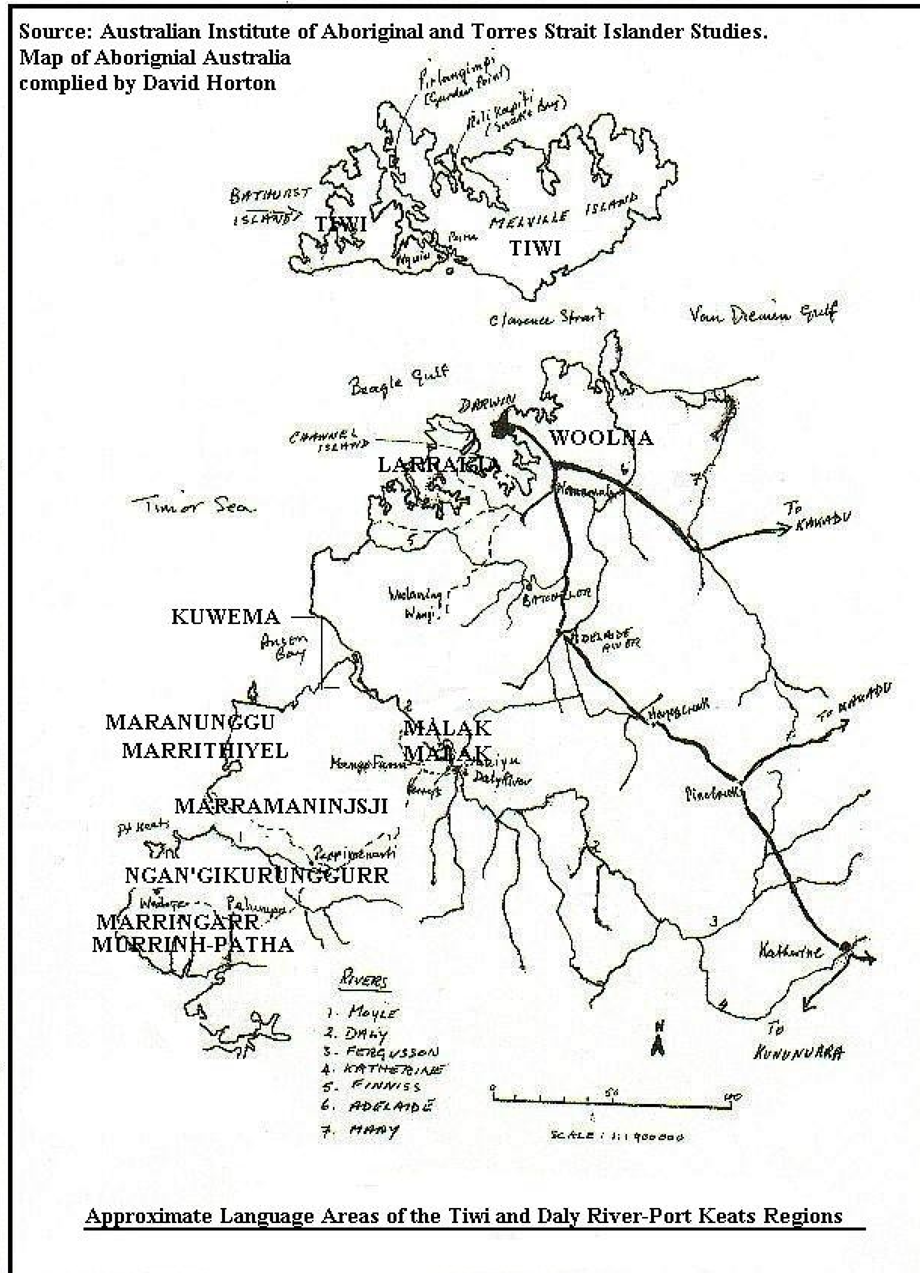
Bishops Bach and Gsell in formal attire. Melbourne

Source: *Picture Australia*.
Item: H38849/1716. Date: 1947.
State Library of Victoria.



Bishop John O'Loughlin.

Photo: Father Frank Flynn MSC. no date



Approximate Language Areas of the Tiwi and Daly River-Port Keats Regions

Former Northern Territory Chief Minister Paul Everingham, observed that

> The Northern Territory of South Australia was founded on the premise that tropical agriculture would spearhead development, and the banks of the Daly were thought to hold the most promise for farms and plantations. By the end of the 1870s hopeful farmers were on the Daly, and they were soon followed by miners, missionaries and pastoralists. … [However] settling the Daly was a chastening experience. … Both life and

> work styles had to be radically adapted if mere survival, let alone progress and prosperity were to be achieved.[84]

From the early twentieth century the Daly River had been the site of copper mining and later attempts at agriculture – sugar, maize, potatoes, rice, yams, tropical fruits, sorghum, millet, cashews, peanuts, tobacco, and stylo grass – but all were short lived. Either the soils rapidly became depleted, markets were saturated or the floods wiped out entire ventures. Settling the Daly was not an undertaking for the fainthearted.

Early Daly River settlers.

Photo: Father Frank Flynn, *Distant Horizons*. no date given

Nevertheless those white people who did settle there and remained for the long haul, such as the Dargie family, gradually developed a lifestyle which often included liaisons with the local Aborigines and indeed, by the time Nancy Polishuk and her husband arrived to take up a property in 1957,[85] there was a well established symbiosis between the whites and Aborigines along the Daly around the Crossing.[86] The white people provided tobacco, work and, when necessary, medicine and shelter. The Aborigines provided labour, both around the house and on the land as well as knowledge of bush survival techniques. This symbiotic relationship which today might be seen as exploitative was at the time accepted without question by all parties as mutually beneficial. Similarly the

[84] Peter Forrest, *The Spirit of the Daly*. Foreword, p. 4.
[85] Polishuk with Lockwood, *Life on the Daly River*, p. 21ff
[86] Polishuk with Lockwood, pp. 19 and 67.

settlers as well as the Aborigines accepted the Mission as part of their environment. The Polishuks, for example, arrived at the Daly in the Wet season and before long would experience for themselves the reality that the Mission was also an integral part of life on the Daly. Unfortunately for them their first season there also saw the 1957 flood, one of the worst on record, and they found themselves being evacuated in a small boat – at considerable risk to the lives of all – by Brother Welsh MSC and Ted McKenzie, without whose intervention they would undoubtedly have died. Father Leary recorded this flood, the rescue and the subsequent evacuation of the mission to the Five Mile[87] in his diary of the time.[88]

Prior to this there had been a similar example of community response, during the Dry season, when one of the Aboriginal women from the mission needed to be medically evacuated to Darwin. The rescue team consisted of Father Leary, local Constable John Lear, John Polishuk and two strong Aboriginal men from the mission. Heavily pregnant and with a poisoned knee, Mary was unable to walk. It was necessary to get her onto a plane and fly her to Darwin. In those days there was no airstrip at Daly River so Mary had to be taken down river to the airstrip near John Polishuk's place. During the Dry the river is some twenty metres below the level of the river bank so, firstly, Mary had to be manhandled down the bank into the mission boat. Then, at Polishuk's landing, the men had to reverse the process and haul her up the bank. Once there however it was another mile through the bush to reach the airstrip. They cast around for something with which to transport Mary. All they could find was a solid old wooden wheelbarrow. As John Lear was a big strong individual, he pushed the barrow. In theory that was fine. But when he lifted up the wheel barrow, the length of his arms meant that Mary shot off the front end of the wheel barrow. That clearly was not going to work. The next option was for Father Leary to push the barrow.

[87] As mentioned previously the Five Mile was less than five miles from the main mission but it was a very rocky ridge and traditionally during flood times the place to which Mission people evacuated. It was also where vehicles were taken for 'safety' at the first hint of an impending flood. The safety was relative since the vehicles usually (but not always) remained high and dry but the local ant population also evacuated to the same site and commonly ate through the electrical systems of the vehicles, rendering them inoperable. At such times transport between the Mission and Five Mile was by boat. Conversations with John Leary, Sr Therese Marie Hillis and Eileen Farrelly. August 2008.

[88] Pye, *The Daly River Story*. Darwin, 1996 (4th ed), pp. 21 ff.

Far from being big and strong, he was built like a jockey, small and wiry. So off they set with Leary pushing the barrow. It was no easy ride for Mary – nor an easy task for Leary – pushing the barrow along a bush track. When they arrived at the airstrip the pilot and a nurse were waiting. They were more than a little amused by the mode of transport for their patient. Eventually Mary was loaded safely onto the plane. In Darwin her knee was treated and she was delivered of a daughter, Pilawuk.[89] Because Pilawuk was a mixed race child she was soon sent to Garden Point[90] which was where the Catholic mission mixed-race children were sent under Commonwealth Government arrangements gazetted in 1940.

The Daly river at Naiuyu Nambyu (the former Daly River Mission) during the Dry. The banks are exposed and steep.
The wrack on the tree in the foreground shows the flood level during the Wet.

Photo: Wendy Beresford-Maning. 2007.

Father Leary's experiences as a missionary priest at both Daly River and Port Keats led him to develop the Christian Leadership Centre in 1986, a decade after the introduction of the Commonwealth Government's Training Allowance and Capital Subsidy Scheme which imposed 'on the Church the obligation and burden to become more involved in developmental works which could be at the expense of evangelisation'.[91] The debate for the missionaries in 1976 was not whether their task should be one thing or the other but rather how to balance the two tasks. The new training allowance had a significant effect on the Daly River Mission which had been intended to provide a boarding education for children

[89] This story was related by Father Leary and confirmed by Eileen Farrelly and Brother Merritt. Darwin. June 2005.
[90] Pilawuk related the story of her upbringing at Garden Point, and later as an adoptee in a white family in Adelaide at the Catholic Education Office, Darwin, 1998. Pilawuk is half sister to Miriam Rose Ungunmerr.
[91] MSC Archives, Kensington NSW. NT Box 7. Daly River 1976-86. Daly River Mission. 1976.

and a health clinic for their families, the Indigenous people who lived and worked mostly on pastoral properties in the vicinity. The new allowance – and a significant level of disemployment of pastoral workers when they were given wage parity with white stockmen – meant that a permanent Aboriginal village developed as part of the Mission. This in turn led to the Mission focussing on encouraging families to be responsible for their children rather than relying on the dormitory system. The local council of Indigenous people was encouraged to take responsibility for village discipline. Already at this stage of the Mission's life 'alcohol [was] becoming a significant problem. The missionaries however [were] adamant that the drinking problem is not a result of wages'.[92] However they noted at the time that 'there is an imbalance in the use of money between essential foods and luxuries'.[93]

Father Leary's vision for the Christian Leadership Centre is recorded in his report to the MSC Provincial Council in 1976. The proposal is firmly based in both the philosophy and language of Paulo Freire, particularly his concentration 'on education for adults based on culture and developing authentically out of culture'.[94] Leary was already concerned that the school was operating as an 'enclave ... something unreal ... unrelated to real life'.[95] 'If authentic cultural growth is to occur it must begin through education, with the adults',[96] Leary said in arguing for his Leadership Centre. The aim of the centre was to encourage the local people to be proud of who they were; 'to grow in their trusted (traditional) identity so as to become confident in a new world and to be able to make their own peculiar and essential contribution to the world at large'. Ultimately the aim of the Centre was 'to produce [Aboriginal] leaders who will be interested in the total situation of their people – temporal and spiritual'.[97] Leary's proposal, although it eventually took shape, was nevertheless subject to some 'infighting' about whether the control (and property) would be vested in the MSCs or the Diocese. With the arrival of the new Bishop, Ted Collins MSC, there also came the realisation that the Leadership Centre would not fulfil its potential until

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[92] MSC Archives. NT Box 7. Daly River 1976 – 86. Daly River Mission. 1976.
[93] MSC Archives. NT Box 7. Daly River 1976 – 86. Daly River Mission. 1976.
[94] MSC Archives. NT Box 7. Daly River 1976 – 86. Daly River Mission. 1976.
[95] MSC Archives. NT Box 7. Daly River 1976 – 86. Daly River Mission. 1976.
[96] MSC Archives. NT Box 7. Daly River 1976 – 86. Daly River Mission. 1976.
[97] MSC Archives. NT Box 7. Daly River 1976 – 86. Daly River Mission. 1976.

Father Leary was assigned an assistant priest since he was still both Priest-in-charge of the Mission, Superintendent of the two missions and responsible for the management of the Leadership Centre. (This may well explain his tendency to 'go walkabout' virtually as soon as any curate or assistant priest was assigned to him. He always had more to do than time and resources allowed.) In 1987 Father Xavier Desmarchelier MSC was appointed to assist Father Leary at the Centre.[98] In much the same way as Father Leary saw the Leadership Centre as a means of equipping Aboriginal people to control their own destiny, so he saw the development of homelands in such a light.

The first of the homelands was Peppimenarti, an outstation of Daly River, which was established in the late 1970s. In 1974 the Uniya Association had been formed with Harry Wilson as its first President and with Charlie Ariu as the first Council President. By this time the main tribes associated with the Mission were the Brinkin, Malak Malak, Nangomeri and Wagaman. The Uniya Association, which comprised the Aborigines of the Mission, undertook pastoral activities. In 1972 167 acres had been granted to develop tourist potential and forestry. Two acres were devoted to market gardening (mixed production) supervised by three horticulturalists.[99] Harry Wilson was also instrumental in establishing Peppimenarti. 'We are told', he said, 'that this is the time of Self Determination for us Aboriginals'.[100]

> It seems that everyone is telling us what we can do with our
> land. No-one is asking us what we want to do with our land.
> We want our Land and we want to live on it. It is our home
> as it was before the white man came. We did not spoil our land
> then and we will not spoil it now.
> ... We want to live a good life on our land and, to live that good
> life, we want to run our cattle station as a way of living. Human
> beings are more important than cattle. ... No-one seems to understand
> that we know something about cattle. We know we will need a
> manager until such time as our younger people are able to

[98] MSC Archives. NT Box 7. 1987 Daly River Report.
[99] MSC Archives. 0241/1974 Reports Daly River. Daly River Mission Report. Brother Andy Howley MSC.
[100] Pye, *The Daly River Story*, p. 35.

> do the necessary studies to help us. ... We want as many homes to be built in 1976 for the people who wish to live there. ... We need an airstrip and radio in case of serious illness during the wet season. We want all our people on this land, not just a few to run a cattle station while all the others stay around Daly River getting drunk.[101]

This was initially seen as a movement to establish outstations. Harry Wilson and his fellow Homelanders had a clear vision of what they wanted from their homeland and an equally clear vision for establishing its long term economic and community viability. Their vision, it could be said, was far more precise and carefully planned than are many government initiatives which remove the actual responsibility of self-determination from the Aboriginal people in ways that the Missions never actually did. Interestingly the Peppimenarti mob did not want to end their association with the Daly River Mission. They wanted their children to continue to attend the boarding school. Once the new homeland was established they made it clear that they

> would like a priest to live with us if possible. If this is not possible we would like to give land to the Church for church buildings, Presbytery, Convent for the Sisters, if at a later time we are able to have a school and a hospital. ... We are very grateful to the Mission for all that it has done for us but we want to move to our real home.[102]

Clearly the people, while understandably wanting to return to their own country, were not in any way rejecting the Mission or the Missionaries. From Harry Wilson's statements it is clear that they saw the Church as being a continuing part of their existence.

The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were excited rather than dismayed by these developments. At the 1975 Mission Conference a number of speakers saw the homelands movement as the realisation of what the missionaries had been trying to do. These 'breakaway movements' were seen as a potential second start – a

[101] Pye, *The Daly River Story*, p. 35.
[102] Pye, *The Daly River Story*, p.36.

chance to achieve what the earlier missions could not ‘due to the sociological limitations of the church in the pre-Vatican II era’.[103] For many of the contemporary missionaries the Homeland movement represented the fruition of the efforts made by their pioneers. They saw the people of Peppimenarti and elsewhere saying that they were happy to accept the Mission’s goals of socio-economic development and that, while they were grateful for the Mission environment which had thus far saved them and give them a new vitality, they now wanted to develop their own programmes of further development. What the Aborigines now wanted from the Mission was wise, non-directive, enlightening support and the continuing involvement of the Church through the presence of a resident priest and sisters.[104] So far as Father Leary is concerned, he believed then and still does that ‘self-determination without self-examination is self-extermination’. In this he is clearly influenced by Freire’s philosophy. Leary believes that those aspects which lead to the inauthenticity of Aboriginal experience include the nature of Aboriginal culture, the nature of the dominant culture, the position in which Aboriginal people are placed in relation to the dominant culture and the speed of change.[105] To Father Leary, in 1979,

> Aboriginal people represent little, scattered, island-like clusters
> of Third-world people in a sea of commercialism, competitiveness
> and all that goes with our world subject, whether they like it or not,
> to all the storms and currents of that sea. In many ways ...
> they have a threatened and dangerously unique position ...
> In relation to Aborigines, self-determination is a nice sounding
> word that might express the faint-hearted wish of a politican,
> but beyond that has little reality. ... the fact that there is too
> much too fast prevents authentic development.[106]

As Paul Collins notes, Father Leary was equally critical of both the assimilationist policies in place in the 1950s and 1960s and the policies of the Whitlam government in the 1970s. Although under the Whitlam policies there was greater emphasis on education, the

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[103] Pye, *The Daly River Story*, p. 37.
[104] Pye, *The Daly River Story*, p.37.
[105] Leary, quoted in *Tracks*. Special Issue recounting the Acts and Proceedings of the Northern Territory Missions Council, 1979. Daly River: Nelen Yubu Institute. 1979. (IATSIS S17.7/3)
[106] *Tracks*, 1979, p. 26.

> emphasis was on learning a European curriculum and it was essentially whites teaching Aborigines how to get on in modern Australian society. As result, Aborigines gradually lost their self-confidence, and the younger people have become confused and lost. They lack traditional knowledge and bush skills, and are caught between the two cultures.[107]

Collins goes on to observe that, despite being motivated by goodwill and sincerity, 'there was as much unconscious paternalism operative in this government policy as there was in past assimilationist policies'.[108]

> Modern education and government policy, as much as Catholicism, has contributed to the destruction of traditional culture.[109]

An audience with the Pope, who seems to be overcome by the visit of the Australian Aborigines and the dignity of Raphael Apuatimi.
BACK ROW: L to R: Bro. Pye M.S.C. (white shirt), Tiwi & Murinbata people.
FRONT ROW: Pope Paul VI, Raphael Apuatimi, Fr. Leary M.S.C., Deacon Bonaface Perjert (behind Fr. Leary) - (with cross on collar).

Source: Frank Flynn, no date.

When Pope John Paul II visited Alice Springs he told the Aboriginal people that

> You lived your life in spiritual closeness to the land, with its

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[107] Collins, p. 16.
[108] Collins, p. 16.
[109] Collins, p. 16.

> animals, birds, fish, waterholes, rivers, hills and mountains.
> Through your closeness to the land, you touched the sacredness of man's relationship with God, for the land was a proof of the power in life greater than yourselves ... You did not spoil the land, use it up, exhaust it, and then walk away from it. You realised that your land was related to the source of life.[110]

This view accorded with that of both Stanner and Father Leary who shared the opinion that 'Aboriginal religion was probably one of the least materialistic and most life-minded of any of which we have knowledge. ... The things they think most about are the things they speak least about'.[111] Stanner was convinced of the all pervading influence of Aboriginal Law and the vital religious dimension of their lives – their material poverty and the spiritual richness. Stanner, like Leary, was also struck by the sameness of the Aborigines' lives over centuries – the absence of change over thousands of years. It was this very lack of change, especially the lack of challenge from any other competing or invading culture, until the coming of the Europeans, that meant that the traditional Aborigines had no race-experience of adaptation.[112] Even with the coming of European settlers to the Daly River region, change had been slow – with the environment perhaps imposing more changes on the incomers than they on the environment or the local Aborigines. Nevertheless, Leary believed that it was this very tradition of stability that became the telling weakness of Aboriginal culture when the people were forced to adapt, especially to the money economy of mainstream Australia. With the Indigenous people, Leary argued, their economy was based on the spiritual, on ceremony and ritual.

> The Aboriginal people saw ritual as the means by which they produced what they needed. They then collected and hunted what they had created and produced through ritual. Through these life-increase ceremonies they had flora and fauna and humans themselves.[113]

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110 Quoted by Leary in the Cuskelly Lecture 2003, p.10.
111 Cuskelly Lecture, p. 10. Stanner's comments to Leary.
112 Cuskelly Lecture, p.11.
113 Cuskelly Lecture, p.12.

For Father Leary, the move away from Mission culture to the welfare culture of the post-mission days, has been integral to the disintegration of Aboriginal culture. As he says, the Catholic Missions – and indeed any Missions – had no right to refuse the acceptance of Government subsidies. But he still believes that it was the introduction of such subsidies, suddenly, that led to the undoubted dependence which has been so destructive of Aboriginal culture and confidence. It was the dependence on money – usually in the form of handouts or 'sit down money' that led to the destruction of traditional authority and the growth in indiscipline in the young.[114] Although at Daly River there has always been a 'no work no money' policy, there is still little evidence that many of the people have comfortably adapted to the money economy.[115] It runs counter to all the traditional ways of living, even the semi-nomadism which saw the people living in close sympathy with the land and its rhythms. The problem for missionaries such as Father Leary was not the increasing secularism of Aboriginal society per se, but the inherent dependence and despair which it largely engendered. Father Leary agrees with Richard Trudgen when the latter talks about the 'learned helplessness or disempowerment of the Aborigines'.[116] Learned helplessness occurs when people lose their economic independence and become dependent on welfare programmes. Through these in turn they experience 'the loss of roles, lost of mastery and helplessness. This in turn translates into destructive social behaviour including neglect of responsibility, drug use, family violence, self-abuse, homicide, incest, suicide'.[117]

Father Leary has many stories of his time working with Aboriginal people in the Top End of the Northern Territory. However there is one aspect of the MSCs' missionary endeavour that is rarely mentioned – by Father Leary or anyone else. That is the ordination and priestly experience of Father Patrick (Paddy) Dodson

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[114] Cuskelly Lecture, pp. 13-14.
[115] Wali Fejo, then Principal of Nungalinya College, commented on this in an interview in 2000. He noted that he spent a considerable amount of his time trying to teach his people how to budget, and how to provide themselves with the necessities of life before the luxuries. Like Father Leary, Rev Fejo was concerned that, in a culture which always relied on what the environment provided for survival, the Aboriginal people, having no understanding of a money economy, did not understand that money was a finite commodity.
[116] Richard Trudgen, *Why Warriors Lie Down and Die*. Darwin: Aboriginal Resource and Development Services Inc, 2000, pp. 5, 7, 58, 64 and 67.
[117] Cuskelly Lecture, p. 13. Citing Richard Trudgen.

MSC. Patrick, or Paddy, Dodson as he is better known, was orphaned at the age of twelve and, while his remaining family – particularly his mother's sister Mary Roe and her husband – were anxious to care for him and his younger siblings, that appeared to be impossible.[118] Instead the Roes, a strong Catholic family, were persuaded by the priest then at Garden Point, Melville Island that the best course of action would be to send the children to Garden Point. 'Their future would be placed in the hands of God and the missionaries'.[119] God appeared to have other ideas because, as they were waiting for the mission lugger *St Francis* to arrive to take them to Garden Point word arrived that the *St Francis* had sunk.

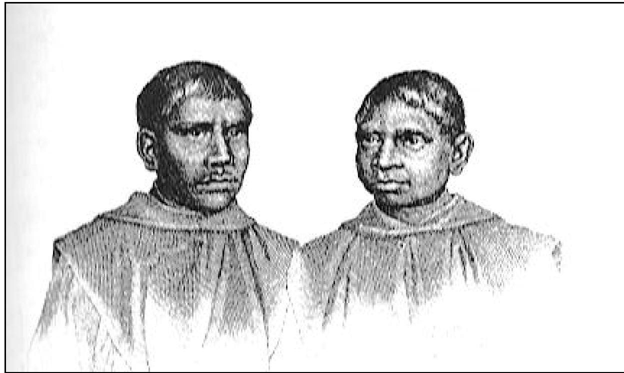
The mission lugger St Francis – before its sinking.
Source: *Picture NT.*
Item: PH0094/0166
Duncan Jenkins Collection.
Northern Territory Library.

Dodson's married half-sister Fay and her husband Ron Wade took Paddy back to Katherine to complete his primary schooling.[120] His other siblings were farmed out amongst members of the Roe family. When Dodson finished primary school in 1961 he intended to become a ringer on one of the local cattle stations. This was not to be though. Ron Wade died of a heart attack in the same year that he finished primary school. The family now opted to access a £300 annual Commonwealth Government Allowance, devised in co-operation with the churches, 'for each child selected by Mr Harry Giese', Director of Native Welfare,[121] to gain a secondary education. Given that the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were at the time the only priests in Darwin, they arranged for Dodson to go their Monivae Boarding College at Hamilton in western Victoria.

118 Kevin Keeffe, *Paddy's Road*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2003, pp. 180 -182.
119 Keeffe, p. 182. Father Leary was not the priest involved. He was then at Port Keats.
120 Keeffe, p. 182. John Morris and John Pye point out that the *St Francis* had already been sold when it sank off the China coast. Its replacement, the Margaret Mary sank in 1965. John Pye, *The Tiwi Islands*. Darwin: Coleman, 1985, pp 53-54 and 57.
121 Keeffe, p. 184.

At Monivae, where the majority of the students were the sons of Western District graziers or farmers, Dodson found he was the only Aboriginal student. The family of one of his fellow boarders provided him with a 'home away from home' where he experienced a stable family life whenever possible.[122] Eventually, in 1967, Dodson would become Captain of the school and, like Leary and others before and after him, influenced by the charism of the men who taught him, he felt a call to the priesthood. The influence of Catholic boarding schools in providing an environment that encouraged the religious life by daily Mass attendance as well as the living examples of men who had already given their lives to God either as priests or brothers, together with a Vocations Director who would seek out and encourage likely students to seriously consider a religious vocation, cannot be underestimated. Indeed the demise of religious vocations in the Catholic church today is often seen as being directly linked to both the rarity of Religious in schools and the demise of boarding schools. Nevertheless, encouraged not least by Father Malcolm Fyfe MSC, and already a devout Catholic, Dodson began to believe that he had a vocation to the priesthood.[123] Like any other novice, he made his first vows along with fourteen other novices at the end of his first year in the seminary, at Randwick. He was the first Aborigine to take this step since Pope Pius IX had accepted the vows of two young Aboriginal men from New Norcia as Benedictines in Rome in 1849.[124] Dodson's religious training followed the usual pattern of Novitiate at Douglas Park, Bowral followed by the seminary at Croydon, Victoria – the latter both before and after studying at the Australian National University and teaching at Daramalan (MSC) College in Canberra. Dodson was ordained in Melbourne in 1975 by Bishop John O'Loughlin, then Bishop of Darwin.

[122] Keeffe, p. 193.
[123] Keeffe, p. 205. A sense of vocation overrides any feeling of personal choice. It is a matter of responding to God's call.
[124] Keeffe, p. 207. See also *The SalvadoMemoirs* and Anouk Ride, *The Grand Experiment: Two boys two cultures*. Sydney: Hachette Australia. 2007.



Left: **The two Benedictine novices from new Norcia - John Dirimera and Francis Conaci – accepted by Pius IX in Rome.**
Source: Salvado, facing page 124. nd.

Below: **Father Paddy Dodson's ordination by Bishop O'Loughlin in St Patrick's Cathedral,** Melbourne.
Source: Les Teese, *The Advocate* Melbourne. 22 May 1975.

Father Dodson's ordination came after Vatican II and Keeffe notes that many of the leaders and priests who had been in the Church for years found the winds of change wrought by Vatican II hard to accept.[125] They were of course not the only ones. Many devout Catholics also found the liturgical changes equally hard to stomach. Dodson described the reaction of many of the clergy as 'tokenistic support for innovations like changes to the liturgy and the occasional folk mass but change was glacial below the surface'.[126] That experience would be familiar to many Catholics of the time – and even since the turn of the twenty first century. As the only Aboriginal priest, Father Dodson became something of an icon for the Church to show off. In 1973 he was given the task of organising an Aboriginal Conference as part of the Eucharistic Congress in Melbourne. His role at the Congress was seen differently by different people. Some saw Father Dodson's role as that of a mediator who was left trying single-handedly trying to save the conference.[127] Others like Father (later Bishop) Hilton Deakin saw his role as less central. However with penetrating insight, no doubt based on his

[125] Keeffe, p. 212.
[126] Keeffe, p. 212.
[127] Keeffe, p. 217.

anthropological as well as his theological understanding of Aboriginal people, Deakin believed that, for his own good, Dodson should be sent overseas to the Missions. In their wisdom, or lack of it, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart instead sent Father Dodson, unsupervised and unsupported for much of the time to Port Keats. Father Leary tried to rescue him from the equivocal attitude of both his fellow clergy and parishioners in Darwin[128] by organising a fact-finding trip on behalf of the Bishops' Conference, partly funded by the Commonwealth Health Department. This was to be a research project looking at the causes and ramifications of alcohol problems in Aboriginal Australia. Their findings formed part of a parliamentary report.[129] But this life on the road, however valuable its findings may have been, could not last. Soon Father Dodson was summoned back to Darwin to take up the role of Assistant Priest at St Paul's Nightcliff from 1973-1979.[130] At that stage many of the parishioners of St Paul's were former Garden Point people or 'ex-inmates' as both Keeffe[131] and Stanton call them. A Training Centre and hostel for former Garden Point residents had been established in Phoenix Street, Nightcliff, by lay missionary Terry McCarthy[132] to provide training and secure housing for young men particularly who had come to Darwin seeking work.[133] With such a large population of Aborigines attending Mass regularly at St Paul's, Father Dodson not unnaturally thought it would be a good idea to organise a social club for these people. He was negotiating with the Canossian sisters, also in the parish, for a suitable site when Bishop O'Loughlin got wind of his plans. The Bishop made no secret of his opposition to the plan. 'It would not assist their assimilation into the community', he argued.[134] Nothing Father Dodson could do would budge the bishop who, clearly, was not at all comfortable with his Aboriginal priest. Keeffe notes that, over the years, Bishop O'Loughlin gave his young priest Christmas gifts designed to deliver a clear if less than subtle message. The gifts included a stick of shaving soap, a razor,

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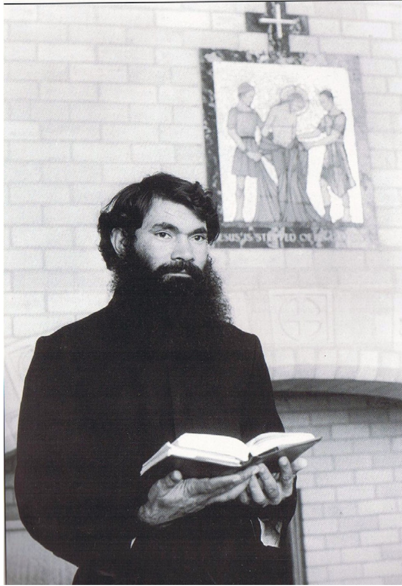
[128] Keeffe, p. 231.
[129] 'House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs - Alcohol Problems of Aborigines – Finding Aid'. Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. S33.1/3. See also J. Leary, P. Dodson, B. Tipoloura and L. Bunduk, *Alcoholism and Aborigines: A Report.* Interdepartmental Committee on Alcoholism and Aborigines, 1975.
[130] Thomson, p. 85.
[131] Keeffe, p. 237.
[132] Terry McCarthy would later become Speaker of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly.
[133] Conversations with Mary McCarthy (wife of Terry), Brother Gerry Burke MSC and Margaret Flynn (former lay missionary on the Tiwi Islands). Darwin. 2004, 2005, 2007.
[134] Keeffe, p.238.

razor blades and finally after-shave lotion.[135] Father Dodson was to become clean shaven and respectable.



Father Paddy Dodson at St Paul's Nightcliff.
Photo: Terry Phelan. Herald & Weekly Times Collection. nd.

Father Dodson with Daly River settlers.
Photo: John Pye, *The Daly River Story*. p. 77. nd.

Following his frustrating time at St Paul's, Father Dodson was sent to Port Keats as curate to Father John Leary. Bishop O'Loughlin presumably thought that working again with Father Leary would 'settle Patrick down'.[136] Father Dodson was happy to go – he was back in his own element here with the Aboriginal people but, even then, Port Keats was a volatile mix of different language groups. It seemed that the sole mediating or pacifying influence was that of the Church represented by Fathers Leary and Dodson, and the community of OLSH sisters who worked in the school and clinic. Father Leary would have been under no illusions as to why Father Dodson had been sent to him. The Bishop clearly expected Father Leary to 'sort Patrick out' and to turn him into a respectable priest after the Roman model. Unfortunately for O'Loughlin, Leary's sympathies were always going to be more with Dodson than with the bishop. The constant thread running through Father Leary's time working with Aboriginal people is the centrality of the people to his mission. In 2001, some considerable time after Vatican II, Pope John Paul II also reiterated that the role of the Catholic church was to 'help Indigenous cultures preserve their identity and maintain their

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[135] Keeffe, p. 239.
[136] Keeffe, p. 240.

traditions'.[137] Too often though Indigenous people were expected to conform to the traditional Roman way of being Church.

Father Leary became the meat in the sandwich between Bishop O'Loughlin on the one hand and Father Dodson on the other. Father Leary dealt with this invidious situation in the only way he knew how – he went walkabout for a while. Leaving Father Dodson, still his curate, in charge at Port Keats, Father Leary took himself off to Daly River. Although the MSC archives make it clear that there was little in the way of anthropological or missiological training for the missionaries, there was – dating back to 1946 – a directive that 'newly ordained priests to the Missions [had] to serve at least the first twelve months at a mission station with an experienced priest',[138] Father Dodson was left unsupervised. Once again he began to look for ways to help his people move towards self-reliance – much to Bishop O'Loughlin's horror. Increasingly he identified with the people and he encouraged the people to move towards self-government of the community although, as he admitted later, he was 'young and naïve and … there was no real leader in the community … no Vincent Lingiari'.[139] Eventually, Aboriginal life reclaimed Father Dodson from the church. In 1980 his first child, Grace, was born at Port Keats. This was not the first, nor would it be the last, time a child was fathered by a Catholic priest but by this time Father Dodson, as he still was, was irreconcilably at enmity with the Bishop who 'continued to act like an autocrat and feudal lord …. [and] Paddy was unable to ask for help and the MSCs were unable to give it'.[140] Father Malcolm Fyfe MSC, then Mission Superintendent and a supporter of the Bishop's stance in the matter, invited Father Dodson to take twelve months leave of absence to consider his vocation, with an indirect suggestion that he may find another way to serve God and his people.[141]

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137 *Social Justice Sunday Statement 2006*. Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference. (Pamphlet)

138 MSC Archives 0421/1938. 1946 Report Darwin. This same report also notes that courses in anthropology, first aid and motor mechanics should be provided for priests going to the missions. In Dodson's case this did not happen. Although Father Dodson was no longer newly ordained, this was his first experience as a missionary priest.

139 Keeffe, p. 244.

140 Keeffe, p. 247.

141 Keeffe, p. 247. Father Fyfe was the same priest who, at Monivae, had encouraged Dodson to join the priesthood. Most of Father Fyfe's active mission priesthood was, however, exercised in India where he spent more than twenty years.

Clearly there were many people involved with Dodson during his priestly life. Bishop O'Loughlin's entrenched opposition to Father Dodson's vision of his vocation cannot be questioned, nor can the fact that many of his fellow MSCs shared that view. Father Leary, one suspects, was one who was sorely tried by the ongoing confrontation given that, long before Pope John Paul II made his pronouncement, Leary believed that the church existed to serve the Aboriginal people and to enhance and deepen their spirituality. In the circumstances of the Church at the time, this was a subversive position. The continuing silence on Dodson's 'failed' priesthood by so many of the MSC priests is perhaps indicative of the level of discomfort and confusion that always seems to surround such situations. Even today in the twenty-first century, the ordained Catholic clergy seem to see any choice of a priest to have his vows dispensed as an unmitigated failure – usually of the individual, but sometimes (more rarely) also of the Church. It is, of course, quite possible to see Dodson as epitomising all that is best about the education provided by the MSCs in that he is clearly committed to seeking justice for his people. And seeking such justice is one of the missions of the Church.

Despite his sadness at what he sees as the invidious position of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory today, Father Leary retains his love of and hope for his people. It could well be said that Leary in many ways epitomises the mission statement of the MSCs: that the heart of Jesus be everywhere loved. It is Christ's love that has dominated his life and which he has shared with the Aboriginal people amongst whom he has lived and worked. Apart from his three years teaching at the beginning of his ordained ministry, Father Leary has spent all his priestly life in the Top End of the Northern Territory save for a six months period of study leave in Boston, United States in 1982. Leary's work with the Aboriginal people of the Top End was interspersed also with a stint as MSC Superior at The Ranch in Nightcliff from 1966 to1972. In 1990 Leary was appointed by Bishop Ted Collins to the position of Vicar for Aborigines, a ministry which continued until his retirement in 2003. 'Retirement' for men such as Father Leary is a relative term. Although in retirement he lived at The Ranch in Nightcliff, he nevertheless spent much time with his beloved Aboriginal

people, making trips to Daly River, Wadeye and Pirlangimpi (Garden Point) as often as he could. Since his retirement particularly (but before then as well) Leary has also made it part of his ministry to visit any of the people who came into Darwin for medical treatment, usually at Royal Darwin Hospital. Although he has worked with Aboriginal people for more than half a century and loves them dearly, he can still be 'taken for a ride' by them on occasion. One of the stories that Leary tells against himself demonstrates how much he loves and trusts 'his' people and they him.

Some scene setting is necessary here. The 'new' post Cyclone Tracy hospital in Casuarina had replaced the 'old' wartime hospital which had been built in the early 1940s on the site of the former Kahlin Compound above what is now Cullen Bay.[142] Whereas the old hospital had been a sprawling collection of largely single storey buildings with plenty of open space, grass and trees and thus less threatening to Aboriginal patients, the new hospital is a multi-storey unpainted dark brick edifice in which the Aboriginal patients do not feel particularly comfortable. The hospital is modelled on the Canberra Hospital at Woden which, in turn, was modelled on a public hospital in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Canada. Like Canberra, which built a tunnel linking the Nurses' Home and the hospital, Royal Darwin Hospital has a tunnel – which flooded during its construction – linking the Public and Private Hospitals. Not only that but it still has the design features necessary to shed heavy winter snow from the building. The result is that those Aboriginal patients who are ambulatory (or in wheel chairs) spend as much time as possible in the breezeway near the entrance to the hospital – or they did until the construction of a new Accident and Emergency Centre which has gobbled up the pre-existing open space and now links the Royal Darwin Hospital and the adjacent Darwin Private Hospital. Nevertheless, they still head out onto open ground near the Hospital entrance whenever they can.

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[142] Ellen Kettle, *A Brief History of Royal Darwin Hospital*. 1986.
Adapted for www.nt.gov.au/health/hospital_svs/tesn/royaldarwinhospital/general/history.htm

Darwin Hospital at Myilly Point. The wards were ground level buildings with plenty of open space around them. Aboriginal patients felt less intimidated and uncomfortable by the environment than that of the new hospital.

Source: *Picture NT*
Item:PH0139/1565
NT Dept of Lands Collection
no date.

Father Leary was visiting at Royal Darwin Hospital one afternoon and, as he was leaving, one of the old Aboriginal men who was sitting in the entrance breezeway, came up to him looking rather agitated. Father Leary recognised the man and asked if he needed anything. The story unfolded from there. The old man appeared to have 'lost' his wife – it was not that she had died, but he seemed to have mislaid her. Father Leary was quickly pulled into the search for the missing wife, firstly in the Public Hospital and then in the adjoining Private Hospital. The woman was nowhere to be found, much to the growing consternation of the old man and, by now, of Father Leary as well. By this stage Father Leary was running out of ideas.

The "new" hospital at Tiwi is a multi-storey building. Aboriginal patients often feel uncomfortable and take every opportunity to sit outside on the ground in front of the hospital entrances.

Source: *Picture NT*
Item: PH0095/0236
NT Government Photographer Collection. 1979.

Eventually he asked the old man, 'Do you think your wife might have forgotten where she should be and has gone home?' The old man frowned, then began to get excited. He thought she might have done just that. Ever helpful and now very

perplexed, Father Leary suggested he drive the old man home to check. So off they went in the car.

In a matter of minutes they were pulling into the appropriate driveway and, as they drove up, Father Leary could see the man's wife sitting happily on the front verandah. As they approached she looked up to see who it was. The woman stood up and came to the edge of the verandah, looking at Father Leary as they opened the car doors and both alighted

'Father,' she said, looking at her husband with some dismay, 'what's **he** doing here? He's s'posed to be in hospital. I only left him there a little while ago!'[143]

What the old man said is not recorded. Father Leary found the situation very funny and, in telling the story against himself, he pointed out that more than half a lifetime of working with the Aboriginal people had not made him infallible. Nor had it dampened his sense of humour or his sense of mischief. A number of the people with whom he worked on various mission stations (now communities), particularly the Garden Island/Pirlangimpi people, have moved into Darwin to live and they remain great friends of Father Leary's. If there is any celebration at The Ranch, relating to the Mission days, they will be there. Not only that but each year since he 'retired', until 2008,[144] Father Leary has returned to the Daly River for the Naiuyu Nambiyu Arts Festival which annually displays art works created by the local artists who work through their own Merrepen Arts Centre, established jointly by Father Leary and Eileen Farrelly, the then Women's Educator, in 1987. Merrepen Arts is now run by the local people themselves.

The hallmark of Father Leary's ministry as both priest and missionary has been his love of people. His guiding principles have always been born out of his love and concern for people, especially people who are marginalized, in need or

[143] Story related by Father Leary. Darwin, June 2006.

[144] 2008 marked the twenty-first anniversary of the Merrepen Arts Festival at Daly River. Despite a special invitation from the people, and his failing health, Father Leary would have been happy to go but he has been made to feel unwelcome there – not by the people but by the resident priest who practices a very different theology from his and that of the people. Conversation with Eileen Farrelly, Brother Merritt and Father Fyfe,Darwin, June 2008.

oppressed. It was for that reason that, very early in his religious life, people in mission countries took precedence in his thinking about his future. However, unlike many missionaries who felt primarily that they had something to bring to the people to improve their lot in life, Leary felt that he had something to learn from such people. He was distinctly uneasy about the prevailing contemporary climate of his youth which exuded confidence that the white culture was supreme, and the notion that the 'white' Church had all the answers. Although he may not have discovered Paulo Freire[145] until later in his ministry, Father Leary felt from the outset that not only he, but the church and society also, had much to learn from these people with whom he hoped to work.

In reflecting on his work in the Territory over the past fifty years Father Leary feels that he has come to appreciate the people with whom he worked – the Tiwi people, the Daly River groups and the Wadeye tribal groups. There is no sense of arrogance in his voice when he says this. It is simply his deep sense that, having spent so much time among them, he has come to know them and to appreciate them. He believes too that he has received an 'appropriate response' from them as well. When he reflects on his long term contribution to the life of the Aboriginal people amongst whom he worked, Father Leary feels that he has left them with a vision of a church in which they belong and a church which needs 'to be truly involved in their culture', so that it becomes not only a part of their culture but also a place 'where they feel truly at home'.[146]

When he ponders on the effectiveness of missionary work in terms of Church policy, Leary is somewhat less sanguine. Too often he feels – and the evidence would almost certainly support him – that although the Church professes a policy of true enculturation, what ultimately happens is that the Church and its missionaries eventually resort to the Roman way of doing things. 'So **we** feel contented and **they** don't belong', as he puts it.[147] The experience of Father Paddy Dodson would seem to bear this out. This is also one of the issues canvassed in an earlier chapter: the extent to which the whole notion of mission

[145] P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.
[146] Conversation with Father Leary, Darwin 2005.
[147] Conversation with Father Leary, Darwin 2005.

necessarily involves at least a potential, if not inevitable, clash of cultures.[148] The extent to which this clash will be realised often depends on the nature of the sending body – and if it is, as in this case, the Roman Catholic church which is of its nature very centralised and rigid in its doctrines, dogma and ritual, then the degree of flexibility open to any missionary is almost inevitably severely curtailed. But the end result of taking such a cultural short cut is that the Christian faith does not help the Aboriginal people in their day to day living as it ideally should, especially at times when they need such help. The 'faith' is not integrated with the life of the people. Father Leary, like so many other people who have worked with Indigenous Australians, points out that they are indeed a very religious people. Before the advent of white settlement the Indigenous inhabitants had a religious sense of the whole of creation and their place in it and they celebrated this through a whole range of rituals and even through their social organisation.[149]

Father Leary feels that, at Port Keats in particular, the Church pulled out of the lives of the people at a critical transitional time in their evolution as a people. The Church, he felt then and now, was needed to help the people with the transition from a mission culture to an independent community culture. The people trusted the Church. It was necessary at the time for the Church to step back from its previous position of dominance, given changes in Government policy and popular perceptions pertaining to the future of Aboriginal people, but yet it was equally necessary that it continue to be involved in such a way that it was available to the people as a resource which could provide both advice and a linkage between the two worlds – the traditional Aboriginal world on the one hand and that of mainstream Australian society on the other. Leary still feels very strongly that 'we were not there when the people needed us most'.[150]

Father Leary's most satisfying work throughout his time in the Top End missions was his involvement in developing and establishing the 'Daly River Leadership Training Centre' at Five Mile. The Homelands Movement in the early 1970s,

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[148] See chapter 1, pp. 26 and 28.
[149] See, for example, W E H. Stanner, *White Man Got no Dreaming*. Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1979, p. 113. See also Rose, *Reports form a Wild Country*, p. 54 ff.
[150] Conversation with Father Leary, Darwin, 2004.

became a precursor to the Land Rights movement and Father Leary was hopeful that the Leadership Centre would, as its name indicated, lead to the emergence of strong and well prepared Aboriginal community leaders for the future. For Father Leary the most difficult aspect of his work was to watch the people being 'forced' into a new world that was so very different from theirs. For example, while the mission movement had already begun gathering people of disparate groups on land/country which was not necessarily their own country, the belated recognition of Aboriginal people as Australian citizens following the 1967 Referendum – rather than as wards of the state as they had been – forced the people to dive into a fast flowing stream of change. Groups that were never meant to be together traditionally on a permanent basis were virtually forced into developing artificial authority structures (Community Councils) as well as new forms of education, and responding to health challenges relating particularly to the availability of alcohol, and so on.

One of the most obvious differences between European and Indigenous Australian ways of thinking and doing is evident in the matter of sharing knowledge and understanding. If a European wants to know something they will normally ask a question. What motivates the question is their own desire for the knowledge they are seeking. In Aboriginal culture knowledge is given as it is required – no sooner, no later. In other words, the knowledge has to be appropriate to the time, the individual and the task or tasks. It is not a matter, as it often is in European societies, of knowledge being power and therefore being hoarded by the powerful. In Aboriginal society, knowledge is linked to one's **need** to know as opposed to one's **desire** to know. An inappropriate question is therefore simply but firmly deflected or, perhaps, ignored. The answer will come in its own good time – or if the question has no real purpose other than the accumulation of knowledge it may not be answered at all.[151] A mindset and tradition such as this does not necessarily either sit well or adapt easily to the demands of bureaucracy.

[151] Richard Trudgen, *Why Warriors Lie Down and Die*, p. 113ff.

Father Leary has learned many things from the Aboriginal people with whom he has worked. One of the most important he feels, is ‘to hasten slowly’. Whilst he and the traditional people respect the need for change, they are convinced that it must be authentic change. Authentic change may come about more slowly than change which is imposed but, if it is change which the people evolve themselves from their own traditions, then it will be authentic and it has an infinitely better chance of being effective in the long term than change which is imposed upon the people from outside. However the non-Indigenous Australian community – and particularly government departments charged with managing change in an Indigenous context – often lack the patience to allow the Indigenous people to change at their own pace, and to learn from their mistakes. Leary feels very strongly that, if change is imposed rather than authentic, it can do far more harm than good to the people and their long term prospects. People can be destroyed by the new experience if it is not grounded in traditional culture.

From the non-Indigenous people with whom he has worked, his fellow workers on the missions and in the Church, Father Leary has learned the danger of impatience – the ‘take-over’ mentality which wants to get things done and then move on to the next thing. As with matters of Church, so with everyday matters. There is the danger of depriving the Indigenous people of the much needed experience of their own decision-making, however long it might take. To do things with greater expedience rather than giving the people the space to work things out in their own way is to repeat the fault that often besets the Church: to get things done and feel comfortable with the achievement but, by doing so, to disenfranchise the Aborigines from their own experience.

In reflecting on what he has learnt incidentally from the people with whom he has worked in the Top End, Father Leary immediately points to ‘the value of quietness’[152]. No doubt there are, for him, resonances with early childhood on the family farm at Yeoval and his period of isolation as a youngster in hospital. Over the expanse of a lifetime these snatches of time seem small but to a small child they are vitally important formative experiences. One wonders if Father

[152] Interview with Father Leary, Darwin, June 2005 and subsequent conversations.

Leary has a sense of coming home to something he has always intuitively known when he speaks of the significance of the 'quietness' of 'Dadirri' as Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann explains it:

> When I experience Dadirri I am made whole again. I find peace
> In the silent awareness of the bush. There is no need for words.
> A big part of Dadirri is listening.[153]

Leary has also discovered that Indigenous people instinctively recognise true friendship, as opposed to 'racism' or exploitative relationships. He believes that, for the most part, the Church through the agency of its priests, brothers, nuns and lay missionaries has brought genuine friendship and understanding to the Indigenous people amongst whom they have worked. Without that friendship and understanding Aboriginal people find it difficult to progress. Whilst these relationships are not identical to traditional tribal relationships, it is nevertheless true that Aboriginal life traditionally has been built around relationships of trust and interconnection which are sustained by cultural social organisation.

As to the Church's role in working with Indigenous people in the present and the future as opposed to the past, Leary believes that it is incumbent upon the church to uphold the rights of Aboriginal people. They are assured that the Church understands them and truly cares for them. In terms of Church worship and ritual, every effort must be made by the institutional Church to relate such worship and ritual to their culture. They must feel that they belong, that this is their Church as much as it is the church of white Australians. Father Leary believes passionately that they **do** belong – and, he believes equally passionately that the Church must make that obvious. It is also important that the Church takes its role in ensuring that the Aboriginal people become an integral and contributing part of mainstream Australian society. This is not the same thing as assimilation however. The Christian Gospel makes it clear that the church is to be the 'leaven' in society, the ingredient which makes real development and maturity possible. The Gospel also makes clear that this must penetrate all levels of our multicultural society, that justice prevails and that the rights of individuals are respected. Despite some voices which make contrary claims, Father Leary

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[153] Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann, quoted in Eileen Farrelly, *Dadirri the spring within*. Darwin: Terry Knight and Associates, 2003, pp. viii – ix.

believes firmly that 'the Christian Gospel proclaims that it is the role of the Church to promote the kingdom of God in the temporal as well as the religious world'.[154]

Leary's missionary experience has encompassed both good and bad. There have been some moments of high drama and great danger – such as the major Daly River floods of 1957 (and 1974 and 1998) which necessitated evacuating people from along the river bank in dangerous circumstances, often at night, and bringing them back to the relative safety of the mission.[155]

Daly River Community Sports Stadium

Waterhouse Creek Crossing in flood.

Daly River Community Houses[156]

Daly River in flood Cyclone Les, 1998[157]

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[154] Conversation with Father Leary. Darwin. 2007.

[155] Further significant Daly River floods which required the evacuation of the people occurred in 1998, 2000 and 2002.

[156] Flooding as a result of Cyclone Steve, 2000. This is typical of the recurrent flooding at Daly River Mission. © Copyright Commonwealth of Australia 2005, Bureau of Meteorology

[157] www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/events/DRG/SCENES/daly.htm Downloaded March 2005. The Daly River in Flood (looking towards the mouth of the Daly). The Nauiyu Community (the former Daly River Catholic Mission) can be seen along the eastern river bank (right hand side)

The Christian Leadership Centre at Five Mile, Daly River after the 1998 flood. Normally when floods threaten this is the place to which vehicles and people are evacuated. It is normally above the flood level.

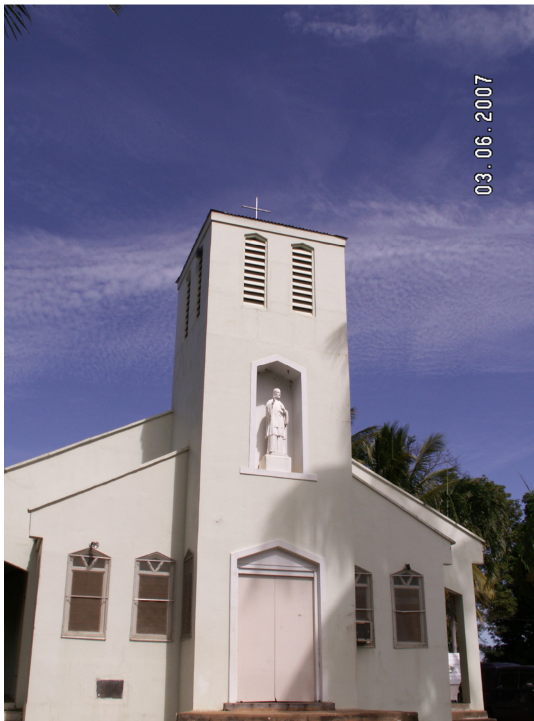
Source: *Flame in the North*. p. 123. nd.

Nevertheless Father Leary says his work as a missionary has been well worth it. 'Life as promised is a matter of warfare. The kingdom [of God] must suffer violence and only the violent take it away – even if that violence appears under the guise of meekness and humility.'[158] When asked if there were anything he would have done differently, Father Leary's response again puts 'his' beloved people at the centre. 'I think I should have talked more honestly with Church authorities about my approach to traditional Aborigines, their culture and their faith enculturation. [My time on the missions] was a critical time for them. Their traditional life was being challenged by the modern world and they needed help to grow authentically in the new situation.'[159] To Father Leary, the Punj ceremony he witnessed as part of the life at Port Keats exemplifies this dilemma of linking Aboriginal tradition and Church tradition. The Punj[160] ceremony is a death and resurrection type of ceremony – an Easter type ceremony. Young men and youths are taken off into the bush for two weeks, naked and smeared with blood. This is a separation from their mothers and their childhood. After two weeks they return as men. Their bodies are painted with white life symbols. They left as children and they return as men. Their departure is accompanied by wailing and dancing. Their return is greeted by dancing and celebration. For Father Leary this is evidence of the close link between traditional Aboriginal religion and Christian ritual. He believes that the Aboriginal people, far from being confused by Christianity, find it relatively easy to understand because of

[158] Conversation with Father Leary, Darwin 2006.
[159] Conversation with Father Leary, Darwin 2004.
[160] Pronounced "poonj" as in hoof.

their own traditional or 'old' religion. What does confuse them – and those working with them – is the frequency with which government policy, made by distant people in Canberra often with no experience of traditional Aboriginal people, changes. An exploration of those changes is the subject of the next chapter.

Mrs Eileen Farrelly, Father John Leary and Brother Ted Merritt at the Ranch, Nightcliff. May 2008. Photo: Wendy Beresford-Maning.



The Roman Catholic Church of St Francis Xavier at Daly River.
This is the former Mission church built by John D'arcy with the assistance of Aboriginal men.

Photo: Wendy Beresford-Maning 2007.

8. Landscape 5:
Catholic missionary activity in the Northern Territory.

By the time Francis Xavier Gsell, MSC arrived in Darwin in 1906, the Northern Territory had been without any resident Catholic priests since the last of the Jesuits departed in 1902. Following the representations of the Australian bishops led by Cardinal Moran, Archbishop of Sydney, to the Holy See of Rome the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were charged with the task of overseeing the development of the Roman Catholic Church in the Northern Territory of South Australia. The MSCs already had men working in Papua New Guinea. In fact, at the time the Jesuits were inspecting land at Rapid Creek for their first mission, the MSCs landed in Papua New Guinea having three months earlier passed through Port Darwin en route. In that brief stopover, Father Navarre MSC baptised three babies at the home of the Director of the Overland Telegraph.[1] One of these was a child of Mr Robert Pickford who was to be one of those who met Father Gsell, the leader of the first group of MSC priests to settle in Darwin, on his arrival.[2] Gsell inherited the tiny church and the bungalow left by the Jesuits.[3]

Bishop Gsell outside the Roman Catholic Presbytery. Smith Street, Darwin

Source: *Picture NT*

Item: PH0110/0472
Jessie Litchfield Collection
Creator: Jessie Litchfield
Date unknown
http://www.ntlib.nt.gov.au/NTLpicWeb/

1 Thomson & Niall, p. 17
2 Gsell, p.17.
3 Gsell, p. 17.

For the next five years Gsell focused on bringing some order to Catholic practice in Darwin and the Northern Territory in general since all of it came under his purview. The Reverend John Flynn of the Australian Inland Mission, visiting Darwin in 1912 'discovered that there were 374 Europeans, 81 Japanese, 442 Chinese and 81 other nationalities'.[4] Gsell, who travelled extensively and rapidly throughout the Territory[5] estimated that, of Territory population of 50,000 there were about '5,000 Europeans and 25,000 Aborigines living on various "reserves" and a balance of half-breeds and Asiatics scattered over an area greater than France'.[6] More than one thousand of these were living east of Alice Springs either as stock breeders or as miners. There were also, he estimated, a hundred or so pearl fishers from Manila.[7] In Darwin itself he observed that, in addition to the white population, there were numerous 'half castes' and a dwindling number of Chinese as a result of both the end of the gold rush and the introduction of the White Australia policy in 1901.[8] This then was the flock Gsell inherited, along with the small Jesuit Church[9] on the fringes of town in Smith Street.

Bishop Gsell outside St Mary's Church. This was the rebuilt Jesuit church that Gsell inherited. The original church had been destroyed by the 1897 cyclone and was immediately rebuilt. It stood on the site of what later became the old Bishop's Palace in Smith Street.

Source: *Picture NT*
No date. (probably 1920s.)
Item: PH0110/0307
Jessie Litchfield Collection
Creator: Jessie Litchfield

Within five years Gsell had set in place the necessary arrangements for the regular celebration of Mass and the other Sacraments; teaching and 'inculcating a

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4 Grant, *Palmerston to Darwin*, p. 91.
5 Gsell, pp. 18 – 19.
6 Gsell, p. 17.
7 Gsell, p. 17
8 Gsell, p. 17
9 St Mary, Star of the Sea had been built by the Jesuits to cater for a congregation of forty people. Gsell, p.17.

knowledge of the Catechism', as well as house-to-house visiting.[10] He also realised that some sort of census of his flock was essential but found that this was no easy task in a social milieu characterised by highly unstable mixed-race marriages as well as 'less irregular marriages'.[11] Like the efforts of the earlier missionaries from the fifteenth century on, Gsell's missionary task encompassed the needs of the settlers as well as the Indigenous people. Father John O'Connell MSC and Brother Lambert MSC joined Gsell during this time and together they set about remedying the lack of Catholic education for the twenty or so Catholic children who were then attending the government school. Both Father O'Connell and Father Gsell took on the roles of schoolmasters and, in so doing, 'laid the foundation of a convent and a school, both mainstays and effective props of all missionary work'.[12] On the ground that the Jesuits had been granted Gsell and his co-labourers – bolstered by the arrival of Brother Phillipe MSC, a builder – began to build the necessary buildings for a school and a convent, ordering the necessary materials from Sydney. When the school, St Joseph's, opened it boasted 100 pupils.[13] Gsell and his men were already demonstrating their resourcefulness and their ability to get things done. South of Darwin, Pine Creek became an important mining centre and it was decided to build a church there in 1913. Father Cros MSC was given a collection of disused mine girders with which he constructed the church. In the construction he used no nails – aware of the fickleness of mining ventures. When Pine Creek fell on bad times and his congregation dispersed the church was unbolted and removed to be reconstructed at Tennant Creek[14] in 1936.[15]

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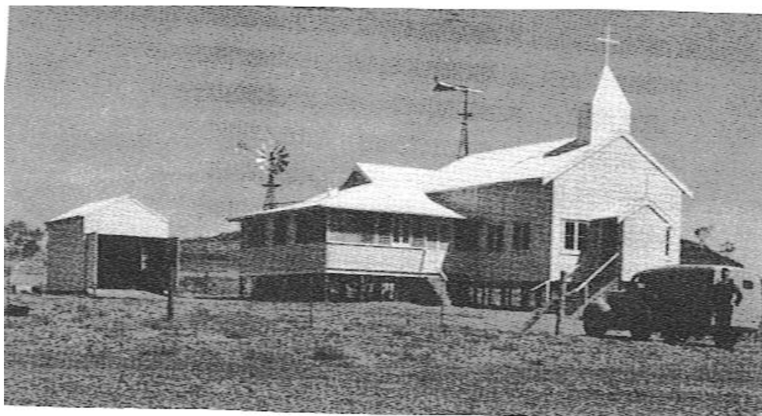
[10] Gsell, p. 18.
[11] Gsell, p 17.
[12] Gsell, p. 19.
[13] Gsell, p. 19.
[14] Gsell, p. 18.
[15] Thomson & Niall, p. 67.

St Joseph's Catholic school, Darwin. The original building on the left was built by Brother Phillipe MSC and the two storey dining room and dormitory were built by Father Henschke MSC.

Source: Thomson, p.18.



Christ the King Catholic Church Tennant Creek. The building had originally been the Pine Creek Catholic Church.

Source: Thomson, p. 66.

In 1908 the first five sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH) – Eustell Sayers, Dominica O'Sullivan, Bertrand McSweeney, Kieran Doyle and Hyacinth Lenehan arrived from Sydney to take up residence in the six room structure which would serve them as a convent in Darwin for the next sixty years.[16] By this time Gsell felt it was time to turn to his next objective – and his passion: evangelising the Indigenous people. Ironically the first OLSH sisters to join the new Garden Point Mission on Melville Island landed only four days before the first Japanese bombing raids on Darwin in February 1942.[17]

In 1911 the Northern Territory of South Australia officially became the Northern Territory of the Commonwealth of Australia and co-incidentally Gsell, who by now had another priest and a brother, and a number of Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to support him in Darwin, moved his focus and himself to the Tiwi

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[16] Thomson & Niall, p. 18. The original convent occupied the site of the present T – 2 block of classrooms at St Mary's Parish School.

[17] Frank Flynn MSC, *Northern Gateway*. Sydney: F P Leonard, 1963, p. 107.

Islands to begin his missionary work with the Aborigines there. But even here the Aborigines were not immune from the corrupt influence of Europeans – buffalo hunters and passing pearlers.[18] Gsell was to remain on Bathurst Island for the next twenty seven years. Later, when asked what he did at Bathurst Island, Gsell 'replied that he taught the natives to work. He was quite content to let a whole generation pass while he concentrated on the children; he made it a rule never to baptise adult initiated Aboriginals, unless they were close to death'.[19] Even today those who work in and with Indigenous communities as teachers comment on the 'hopelessness' of trying to work with or convert the old people, the old men in particular. Nevertheless they also recognize that the young have no voice, no standing in tribal life and these teachers often become frustrated with the education of young people into a lifetime of unemployment.[20] Like the Jesuits and other missionaries such as T T Webb, J R B Love and Arch Grant, Gsell saw a settled lifestyle as essential to the advancement and conversion of the Aborigines[21] but this was perhaps easier to achieve on the Tiwi Islands, because of their relative isolation, than it could ever be on the Daly River.

At that point in its development Darwin was even then more evidently linked to Asia than to the rest of Australia than it is today. 'Its 300 or so white residents were overwhelmingly outnumbered by more than 3,000 Chinese, Malays, Filipinos and others of mixed blood'.[22] It was a town oriented outwards via the sea. Pearling, exports of buffalo meat, crocodile skins and sea cucumbers made for a thriving port. Within the town itself Chinese market gardeners sold their produce in the streets or hawked vegetables and tropical fruits from house to house. Chinatown was a collection of wooden and galvanised iron shacks in the area of the present Cavenagh Street. The Jesuit-built St Mary's, Star of the Sea, Roman Catholic Church in Smith Street was on the outskirts of town. (The original church, designed to hold about forty people,[23] was destroyed in the 1897

[18] Gsell, p. 47 ff.
[19] Flynn. pp 16 – 17.
[20] Conversation between myself and Tim Meeth, teacher from Numbulwar, at O'Loughlin Catholic College, 29 September 2005.
[21] Gsell, p. 39.
[22] Gsell, p.1.
[23] Thomson & Niall, p. 17.

cyclone but had promptly been restored and strengthened.[24]) Until the Stuart Highway was constructed during World War II,[25] Darwin was still a town which relied on the sea to maintain its links with the outside world in terms of transportation of goods and people, although the Telegraph which began operating in 1872 enabled communications – originally in Morse Code – with other parts of the country. Prior to World War II the 'Highway' was little more than a rough track[26] to service the Overland Telegraph Line. The Telegraph Line itself roughly followed the track of John McDouall Stuart's north-south crossing of the continent. In 1942, the Allied Works Council took over the planning and supervision of road development for the war effort. Army and civilian construction authorities shared the task of developing the national road network. The main road authorities of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia jointly undertook the reconstruction and sealing of the Stuart Highway in the Northern Territory, which was then the main supply route running north from the railhead at Alice Springs to the railhead at Larrimah. Over 960 kilometres of road was converted from a rutted, dusty, often impassable dirt track to an all-weather sealed highway capable of withstanding heavy military traffic.[27]

Shanties in old Chinatown.

Source: *Picture NT*
Item: File17\17491 PH0238/0431
Peter Spillett Collection.
Creator: Peter Spillett. nd.

[24] Flynn, p. 22.
[25] Alan Powell, *Far Country*, p. 191.
[26] Even in 2008 it is still referred to by Territorians as The Track.
[27] www.engineersaustralia.org.au

The Jesuit designed St Mary's

Source: Picture NT

Item: File 08\08365
PH0112/0046.
Moyle Collection nd.

From 1915 Father William Henschke MSC assisted Father Gsell, joining him on Bathurst Island for some seven years. During that time, which encompassed the duration of World War 1, Father Henschke kept the mission viable by developing a semi-commercial sawmill, using local Bathurst Island cypress pine. Timber[28] from the Bathurst Island sawmill was not only used to extend St Mary's but also to build the Methodist Mission on Goulburn Island, much of Chinatown and several long since demolished hotels in Darwin.[29] Meanwhile there had been steady stream of priests in Darwin between 1915 and 1921.[30] In 1922 Father Henschke returned to Darwin from Bathurst Island to take up the position of Parish Priest. He remained in this position until the Second World War at which time all his parishioners were evacuated and the church became virtually a garrison church to the incoming servicemen. Father Henschke was to serve in Darwin for almost forty-eight years. His contribution to the life of the Catholic Church in the Territory is commemorated by a plaque in St Mary's Cathedral and also by his face being given to a figure in one of the Stations of the Cross in the Cathedral.

[28] Cypress pine which grew naturally on the Tiwi Islands was found to be termite resistant and thus good building material. Flynn, *Northern Gateway*, p. 81.

[29] Flynn, *Northern Gateway*, p. 3.

[30] Flynn, *Northern Gateway,* p. 3. Fathers P Fanning, J Forrest, and W McCarthy, all Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, served in Darwin during this time.

The figure on the right supporting Christ is the likeness of Father William Henschke MSC.

Photo: Wendy Beresford-Maning 2007.

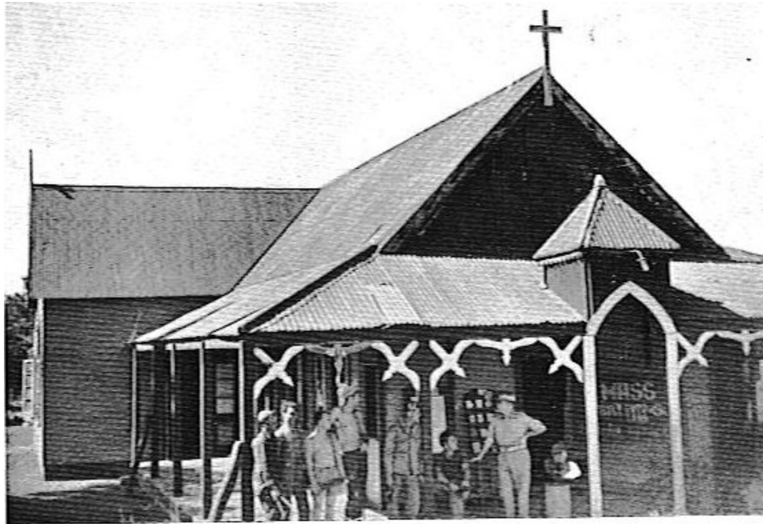
Father Henschke's arrival in Darwin also coincided with Vestey's clearing of the Bullocky Point site to build a local meat works for the killing of Vestey's cattle scattered on stations throughout northern Australia. The meat works project began in 1915. The abattoir, with its own water supply, opened in 1917 but by 1920 it had closed again – a spectacular failure. However the fresh water tank remained long after the rest of the meat works had become a ruin. Not only was it used for a time to supply water to the town but it was also a favourite recreation haunt for young and reckless Darwinians.[31] The Tank exists today as an Assembly Hall cum Gymnasium for Darwin High School which now stands on the former Vestey's site at Bullocky Point. As has been mentioned, prior to World War II the centre of Roman Catholic worship in Darwin was the Jesuit - built St Mary's church in Smith Street[32] which was then on the outskirts of town. Slowly but surely over the period of the 1930s defensive measures were being taken to prepare Darwin in the case of war. Oil storage tanks were built – the first as early as 1924 – and by 1936 there were nine such tanks. Coastal defence and anti-aircraft guns had been installed, notably at Point Emery (now Larrakeyah Barracks) and East Point. By 1938 the Darwin Mobile Defence Force of some 300 men had been raised and stationed at Darwin. A District Naval Officer had

[31] Austin Asche, sometime Administrator of the Northern Territory, recounts diving and swimming in Vestey's Tank as a youngster. So too does Shirley Hawthorne, née Richards, whose parents ran a bakery in Darwin. Mr Richards had taken over the Army DX Bakery after the war at the Bullocky Point site before moving to Cavenagh Street, the then designated 'industrial area of Darwin' – that is the old Chinatown. Conversation with Norm Hawthorne, 25 May 2008.
[32] The original church was built on the site of the present Bishop's House, Smith St.

arrived and an Air Force Squadron was based at the civil airfield (at Parap[33]) while an RAAF base was constructed four miles out of town along the Stuart Highway.[34] At the end of 1941 all women and children, other than nurses and missionaries, were withdrawn from Darwin on the orders of the War Cabinet[35] and Darwin became a restless garrison town.

All these advanced preparations came to nothing however when, beginning on 19 February 1942, Darwin was bombed, Over the next eighteen months there would be a total of 65 bombing raids. The coastal defences were primarily prepared to ward off a possible sea invasion. The major gun emplacements at East Point were so heavily protected that the guns could not be sufficiently elevated to hit the incoming aircraft and it was left to a number of more mobile anti-aircraft batteries out of town to attempt to ward off the inevitable.[36] St Mary's did not escape the effects of the bombing. In the first raid it lost most of its windows and, although it never sustained a direct hit, subsequently the roof and walls were damaged by shrapnel. The High Altar and Sanctuary were damaged. In the Jesuit church there were two angels, one at either end of the High Altar.[37] One was destroyed by shrapnel while the other was pierced from front to back without shattering. It has since come to be known as the Wounded Angel and stands in a niche at the back of the present Cathedral. By 1943, unsurprisingly, the composition of the congregation at St Mary's had changed. The congregation comprised British, American and Dutch servicemen. The church having become too small to accommodate all of them, a group of US Army engineers working voluntarily enlarged the nave. The extended church was functional though not necessarily a thing of beauty.[38]

[33] Ross Smith Drive which connects the Stuart Highway and Dick Ward Drive at Parap is the old runway of the first civilian aerodrome. One of the old hangars still exists in McDonald Street, Parap.
[34] Flynn, *Northern Gateway*, p. 7.
[35] Flynn, *Northern Gateway*, p. 7.
[36] East Point War Museum.
[37] Flynn, *Northern Gateway*, p. 9.
[38] Flynn, *Northern Gateway*, p. 10.



OUTSIDE ST. MARY'S, STAR OF THE SEA—DARWIN. The author with some of the Americai Army Engineers, who enlarged the Church in 1944.

Father Frank Flynn MSC in front of the extended St Mary's with the American Army engineers who built the transepts. 1944.
(Father Flynn is dressed as an Army Chaplain.)

Photo: Frank Flynn MSC in *Distant Horizons*. Kensington: Sacred Heart Monastery, 1947. Facing page 97.

Following the bombing in 1942 the administration of the Diocese of Darwin was conducted from Alice Springs where, by then, Bishop Gsell had relocated following the civilian evacuation of Darwin although Father Henschke and Brother Quinn MSC remained in Darwin where they were joined by two Army chaplains, Fathers Frank Flynn MSC and John Cosgrove MSC. The Bishop remained in Alice Springs until 1945.[39] Bishop Gsell retired in 1949 and died in 1960, after living quietly in retirement at the MSC's Kensington Monastery in New South Wales.

From the Gsell family photo album.

A relatively young Bishop Gsell and his extended family in Alsace.

Source:
Gsell Centenary Exhibition, NT Library August 2006. Original photographer and date unknown.

Photo: Wendy Beresford-Maning. August 2006

[39] Thomson & Niall, p. 20.

From the Gsell family photo album.

An older Bishop Gsell with his nephew and niece in Alsace

Source:
Gsell Centenary Exhibition,
NT Library August 2006.
Original photographer and date unknown.
Photo: Wendy Beresford-Maning.
August 2006

Bishop Gsell with some of his 150 'wives' and three OLSH sisters. Bathurst Island.
Photo: Pye , *The Tiwi Islands*. p. 31. no date.

The post war program of the Roman Catholic Church in Darwin was, from 1949 until 1985, in the hands of Bishop John Patrick O'Loughlin, the first Australian - born MSC to be ordained Bishop. O'Loughlin's arrival coincided with the discovery of uranium at Rum Jungle and the Territory experienced one of its characteristic spurts of development. Although before coming to Darwin O'Loughlin's main focus had been education, he quickly established his priority as building the church in the Northern Territory. It was a task he took almost literally. He was responsible for building the church of St Joseph at Katherine as well as a number of new schools in Darwin – St Margaret Mary's in Fannie Bay (now the home of the Missionaries of Charity and their Women's Refuge in

Lampe Street) and St John's College for boys, then a day school.[40] The parish school attached to St Mary's in Darwin was originally called St Joseph's and faced Cavenagh Street. By 1932 the school, under the oversight of the OLSH[41] sisters, had grown with an enrolment of 102 pupils of whom 26 were boarders.[42] St Joseph's continued to provide co-educational primary, secondary and commercial education until the establishment of St John's at which time the older boys moved to the new school while the girls remained at St Joseph's.

It was not until the 1970s that, with government assistance, the new St Mary's Primary School was established on the Lindsay Street side of the Cathedral block.[43] O'Loughlin also oversaw the shift of the Arltunga mission to its new home at Santa Teresa and, at the behest of the Government, arranged the transfer of the Leprosarium from Channel Island to East Arm. His major project however was the building of the War Memorial Cathedral of St Mary Star of the Sea in Smith Street to replace the old St Mary's. The new cathedral was built on the site of the World War II US Army Camp[44] (and McLachlan Street, which was rerouted for a block.[45]) Stone for the church was quarried from the church's own quarry at Larrakeyah, often under O'Loughlin's personal supervision.[46] The Cathedral, with its distinctive parabolic nave was completed in 1962 – still with a view of the sea as it looked from the main west doors[47] towards Darwin Harbour. When the complex housing the then Beaufort Hotel and the Darwin Performing Arts Centre[48] was being built on the block between Mitchell Street and the Esplanade, blocking the Cathedral's view of the sea, Bishop O'Loughlin

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[40] Thomson & Niall, p. 15.
[41] Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, sister order to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.
[42] Thomson & Niall, p. 18.
[43] Thomson, p. 25.
[44] Flynn, *Northern Gateway*. p. 224.
[45] Flynn, p. 227
[46] Thomson & Niall, p. 15. The late Mesdames Molly Feeney and Carmel Thomas, together with Mrs Jo Lewis and Mrs Pat Palmer often recalled, in conversation with the author, how O'Loughlin in overalls would be working at the quarry when they brought morning 'smoko' for the men.
[47] The main doors of the Cathedral are the 'ecclesiastical' west doors. Geographically they face south west.
[48] In 2005 these were known as the 'Holiday Inn Esplanade' and the 'Darwin Entertainment Centre'.

prevailed upon the planning authorities to insist that a central atrium be built into the design to allow a continued visual link between the Cathedral and the sea.[49]

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The Cathedral of St Mary Star of the Sea, Darwin.
Left: the West door and bell tower showing the parabolic arch construction. 2008.

Below left: The bell tower undergoing repairs in 2006 and the nave of the cathedral.

Photos: Wendy Beresford-Maning 2006.

One of the characteristics of mission development in both the Northern Territory and in Australia generally is the link between the Churches or denominations and their missions on the one hand and Governments on the other. It may have

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[49] Information from Mrs Pat Palmer and Sr Jan Niall IBVM. This visual link has now largely disappeared.

become fashionable over recent times for Prime Ministers and other politicians to declare that the Church has no role in politics[50] but, for most of the period of Australian history, governments have been only too happy to use the churches as agents of order and decency. Today is little different although the clientele and focus may have changed. With the imposition of the various Aboriginal Protection Acts, it was the churches that were often called upon through their missions to provide for the housing and education of mixed-race children in particular.

In 1910 the South Australian Aborigines Protection Board Act gave the Board 'legal' control over Aborigines on stations and reserves but not on missions in the NT. In 1911 the Commonwealth assumed governmental control of the Northern Territory. The twentieth century then saw a burgeoning of missionary activity directed at the Aboriginal people. In 1908 the Church of England's Church Missionary Society had established their first missionary station at Roper River. The Methodist Overseas Mission began its work with Aboriginal people in Northern Australia in 1914. During that year representatives of the Anglican, Presbyterian and Congregational churches joined with the Methodists in approaching the Commonwealth Government regarding their plans for developing missions. As a result of these discussions specific areas of the Northern Territory were assigned to the various churches in 1916.[51] The area assigned to the Methodist Church was

> All that portion of the Northern Territory of Australia, commencing at Cape Gray, Caledon Bay, thence westerly for two hundred for two hundred and one miles, thence northerly for sixty eight miles, thence westerly for about 70 miles to the sea coast, Van Diemen's Gulf, thence northerly, north westerly, easterly and southerly along the coast to the point of commencement including the adjacent islands.[52]

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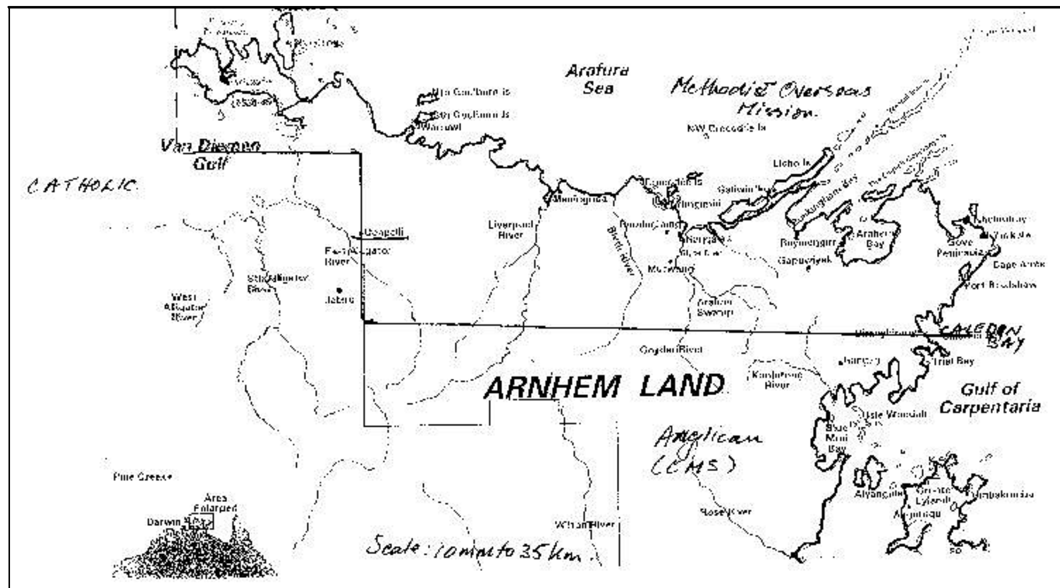
[50] For example Mark Latham as Opposition Leader, 8 November 2004, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 November 2004; Kevin Rudd, *Courier Mail* 13 December 2004; and the exchange between Prime Minster Bob Hawke and Archbishop Peter Hollingsworth of Brisbane in December 1991.
[51] Grant, *Aliens in Arnhem Land*, p. 10.
[52] Grant, *Aliens in Arnhem Land*, p. 11.



Map showing mission areas as designated by 1914 agreement.

As a result of this determination by the Commonwealth, the Methodist Overseas Mission began its first mission on South Goulburn Island in 1916. Prior to this the Wesleyan Methodist Church had conducted its missionary activities predominantly amongst the European and Chinese settlers in Palmerston/ Darwin.[53]

The 1918 Aboriginal Ordinance Act 'ensured that Aborigines could not drink, possess or supply alcohol or methylated spirits; could not come within 2 chains (44 metres) of licensed premises, have firearms, marry a non-Aboriginal without permission or have sex across the colour line'.[54] In 1920 Groote Eylandt was named as an Aboriginal reserve. The Aboriginal population was then estimated to be 60,000 and they were widely believed to be a dying race.[55] In 1934 Arnhem Land was also declared as an Aboriginal Reserve. Meanwhile in 1925 the Anglican Church Missionary Society had established a mission station at Oenpelli, taking over the cattle run of Paddy Cahill. Following the opening of missions at Elcho Island in 1922 and at Millingimbi in 1925, a mission was also established at Yirrkala by Methodist Overseas Missions (MOM), after consultation with the local people in 1935. Responsibility for this mission was later taken over by the United Church of North Australia (UNCA) and this was

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[53] Grant, *Aliens in Arnhem Land*, p. 13.
[54] www.dreamtime.net.au/indigenous/timeline3.cfm p. 2 of 10. Australian Museum. 2004.
[55] www.dreamtime.net.au/indigenous/timeline3.cfm p. 2 of 10. Australian Museum. 2004.

one of the early missions to use Fijian Methodist ministers as missionaries. Also in 1935, on the other side of the Territory, the Roman Catholic Church established the Port Keats mission under the supervision of Father Docherty MSC. The original mission was moved further inland to the present site of Wadeye after the initial site proved prone to flooding. In Central Australia, the Presbyterians established a mission at Ernabella in the Pitlands in 1937.[56]

A Native Affairs Branch was established in the Northern Territory and in the 1940s most Federal social security benefits were extended to Aborigines. To a large degree this extension of social benefit implies that the semi-nomadic lifestyle was giving way to a more settled way of life, often based around mission settlements. Most missionaries over time reported that the population on the mission tended to wax and wane. If there was plenty of food available there, the people would flock in. If times were harder they would dissipate again. Such had been the traditional pattern of their lives anyway. In the 1940s, in response to Government policy and requests, the Methodists established a mission on Croker Island for mixed-race children. In general the mixed-race children born west or south west of Darwin – in the region of the Roman Catholic missions – were sent to Garden Point, Melville Island. Those born east and south east of Darwin were sent to Croker Island.[57] In Central Australia, The Bungalow which moved to the old Alice Springs Telegraph station in 1932, had operated as a town camp since 1914. It became a similar institution, under Anglican auspices, until its closure in 1942. As the years passed so changes came for the Aboriginal people. In 1942 the UNCA re-opened the mission on Elcho Island which had been closed and evacuated during the war. After World War II legislative changes were affecting Aboriginal people.[58] In 1949 Aboriginal ex-servicemen were enfranchised and in 1962 the Commonwealth Electoral Act was amended to give the vote to all Aborigines on the basis of voluntary registration.[59] The mid-century also saw an increase in Anglican mission activity with the Church Missionary Society

[56] Duguid, *No Dying Race*, p. 52
[57] Grant, *Aliens in Arnhem Land*, p. 13.
[58] *Tracking Family*. National Archives of Australia.
www.naa.gov.au/naareources Downloaded 26 July 2008.
[59] www.aph.gove.au/Senate/pubs/Hamer/chap02.htm. Downloaded 26 July 2008. (Applicable to Northern Territory and Western Australia since other Indigenous Australians were already enfranchised.)

establishing new missions at Numbulwar in Arnhem Land (1952-78) and Umbukumba on Groote Eylandt (1958-66).[60]

Meanwhile in the western part of the Northern Territory the Roman Catholic Church had developed missions at Santa Teresa in 1953 and Daly River in 1955. Santa Teresa had begun in Alice Springs in 1936 then moved to Arltunga in 1942 before finally moving again to Santa Teresa where there was a plentiful water supply. Santa Teresa was planned to be a centre for the Aborigines rather than a permanent self-contained settlement.[61] Its proximity to Alice Springs, 90 kilometres to the north-west, meant that the people could travel to and from Alice Springs for regular employment. Much the same was the intention of the new mission at Daly River which was established by Bishop O'Loughlin in 1955 in response to requests from the Aboriginal people, the Daly River settlers and the Commonwealth Government.[62] It was always intended that Daly River would be a centre of education for the children and that it would provide medical services for the adults who would maintain their work on properties within the region. Within a decade of the establishment of Daly River legislative changes affecting the status of Aboriginal people altered all that.

In a speech to a Missions Administration Conference in Darwin in July 1961, the then Minister for Territories, Paul Hasluck, said:

> I value the aid of the Christian missions in those temporal matters which are the concerns of Governments, not merely because they have a number of dedicated workers … but because one hopes that they give us all a faith to work by, and to the Aborigines a faith by which to live joyfully and hopefully …
>
> Speaking in very broad terms, I would say that in the final outcome, missions and Government settlements, in the form they are now known, will disappear. Our eventual success will be to work ourselves out of a job. I hope we do so, for the purpose of our endeavours is not to keep the Aborigines as a perpetual charge

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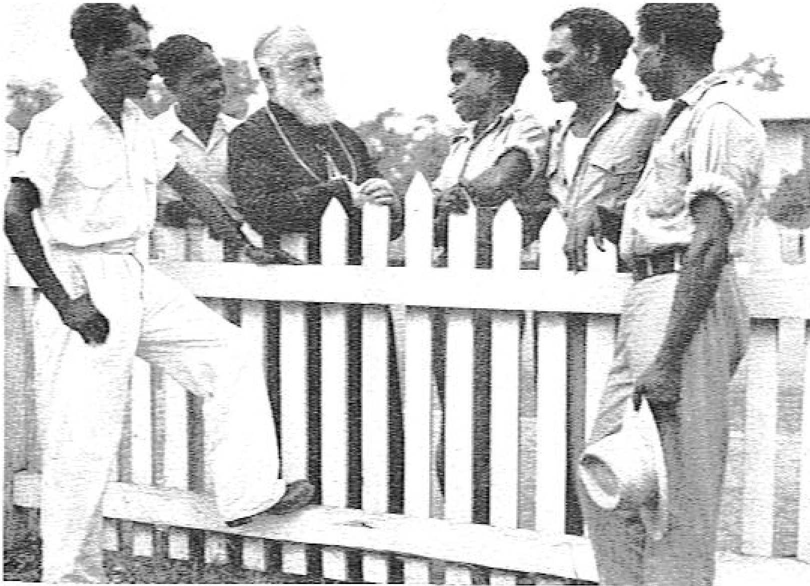
60 www.cms.org.au/resources. 2002. Downloaded 26 July 2008.

61 Thomson, p. 55.

62 Hearn, *A Theology of Mission,* p. 22.

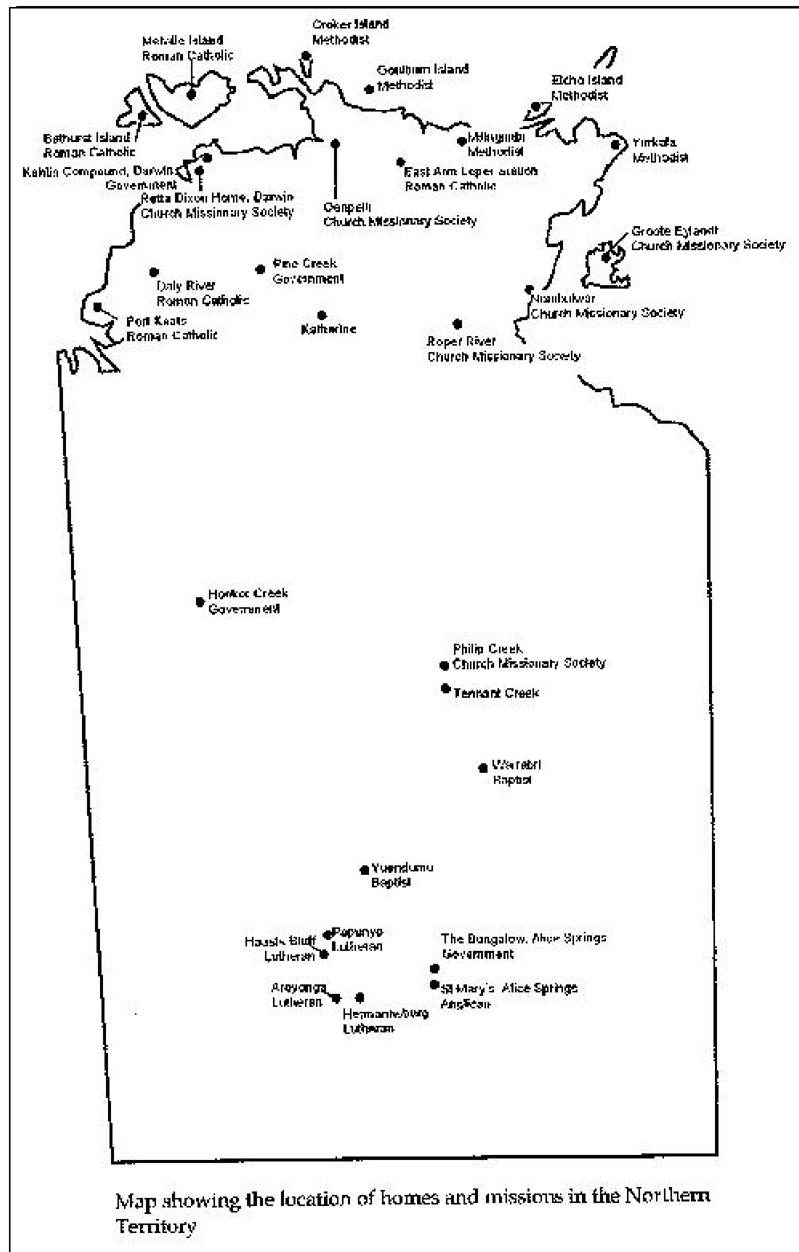
> upon the community, but to help them become self-respecting and self-supporting members of the Australian community, living and working wherever they choose to live and work. We have no interest in spending money to build missions or to build settlements for their own sakes. Our interest is in advancing the Aborigines.[63]



Bishop Gsell chatting with Bathurst Islanders.

Photo: Frank Flynn MSC in *Distant Horizons*. Facing page 77.

[63] Flynn, *Northern Gateway,* pp. 15-16.



Map showing the location of homes and missions in the Northern Territory

Source: *Tracking Family*. National Archives of Australia. www.naa.gov.au/naareources Downloaded 26 July 2008.[64]

Hasluck, himself from a Christian (Salvation Army) background, had his first encounter with Indigenous Australians as a boy. His parents were in charge of a boys' home in Collie, in rural south-western Western Australia.[65] Among the work force there was a Nyoongar who sometimes acted as a black tracker and who had become a Christian. In the phraseology of the time he was regarded by those who knew him and worked with him as being 'as good as a white man'.[66]

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64 There were some anomalies such as the existence of the Leprosarium at East Arm, Darwin.
65 Bolton, 'Paul Hasluck: An Intellectual in Australian Politics', p. 1.
66 Bolton, p. 2.

It seems that his early experiences led the young Hasluck to form the then rarely held view that Indigenous people were 'as good as white people'. Bolton surmises that his experience of the boys' home – although it must be stressed he was not one of the inmates – may have led him to believe that neglected children could sometimes best be served by institutionalised care.[67] Implicit in this becoming a justification for the institutionalising of mixed race children – those who would later become known as the Stolen Generation – as a tenet of the Government's assimilation policy is the assumption that such children were almost of necessity to be regarded as 'neglected children'. This was all too easily linked with the notion that traditional Aboriginal society was doomed to extinction but that the mixed race children could be 'saved' by their assimilation into mainstream white society, albeit as some sort of domestic servant class (if they were female) or as unskilled rural labourers (if they were male).

Looking to the future for its Aboriginal people, the Church Missionary Society had in 1963 signed an agreement with BHP guaranteeing both lump sum and royalty payments to be held in trust for the people of Groote Eylandt.[68] In 1965 the policy of assimilation was replaced by a policy of integration which supposedly was to give Aboriginal people more control over their own lives. This was followed in 1966 by the Wave Hill strike which began when the Gurindji stockmen walked off the job on Lord Vestey's property[69]. By the time it ended the Gurindji were demanding their own land at Wattie Creek. A National Referendum in 1967 ended constitutional discrimination against Aboriginal people. Full citizenship rights were extended to all Aborigines and, from then on, all would now be counted in the national census. In 1968 Aboriginal pastoral workers included under Northern Territory Cattle Industries Award were granted equal pay for equal work. Ironically this did little to improve their situation as many property owners could now no longer afford to employ them and significant unemployment amongst the men followed. This in turn often led to their loss of authority, dignity and position within their tribal groups.

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[67] Bolton, p. 2 .

[68] http://law.ato.gov.au/atolaw/print.htm?DocID=JUD%2F130FLR218%2F00002 Downloaded 26 July 2008. See also, Bain Attwood and Andrew Markus, *The Struggle for Aboriginal Rights,* pp. 233-237.

[69] Attwood, *Rights for Aborigines*, pp 188–92; 257ff. See also Attwood and Markus, p. 237ff.

The 1967 legislation also led to the final demise of many, if not most, of the missions and the withdrawal of the churches from their involvement with Aboriginal people as the people were encouraged to establish self-governing communities and councils. By the 1970s most former mission stations had become self-governing entities. This was not without anguish for both the missionaries and the Aborigines in many places. The churches retained a presence in most of the former missions and now work with local community councils. In some cases the churches have been invited to participate more actively – for example, at Yirrkala, the Council has invited the Uniting Church to take control of the farm and it has now developed a profit-making banana and paw-paw plantation with views to further expansion.[70]

Ironically the 1960s nevertheless also saw a fairly steady stream of young Christian Australians still offering themselves for missionary service – but for overseas destinations. Asia, India, Africa, the Middle East, South America were still open to missionary endeavour. Many are still operating although in many cases now they are working as agents of AusAid[71] – and the goal of conversion to Christianity is secondary to the provision of health and education services. Interserve (which began life in the mid-nineteenth century as the Zenana Mission and then became the Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship in 1957 before becoming Interserve in 1987) is one such example. Mission to Australia's Aboriginal people was always seen as a very difficult task and few were willing to undertake it. Today is little different. And today, where the churches remain involved with Aboriginal people, much of the missionary work is now shared between the Aboriginal people themselves, white people and other Indigenous people such as Fijians (in the case of the Uniting and Catholic Churches) or Papua New Guineans (in the case of the MSCs).

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[70] Information given by Rev Hala Tuopo from Yirrkala to the 29th Annual Meeting of the Northern Synod of the Uniting Church, Darwin: Charles Darwin University. 3 May 2005.

[71] For example, 'Volunteering to make a difference' in *Focus*. AusAid, December 1999, p. 27. See also Stockton, 'Maverick Missionaries' Swain and Rose (eds), *Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions,* pp.202 -203.

Despite the almost universal condemnation at the beginning of the twenty-first century of the assimilationist policies of people such as Hasluck, he was at the time one of a very few citizens of Perth who became active in movements for Aboriginal advancement.[72] Later, as Minister for Territories,[73] his responsibilities included the responsibility for Aboriginal people particularly in the Northern Territory. At the time his policies regarding 'Native Affairs' were regarded as being enlightened.[74] His view was that:

> Assimilation is the objective of native welfare measures … Aborigines and people of mixed blood are expected eventually to attain to the same manner of living and to the same privileges of citizenship as white Australians and to live, *if they choose to do so*, as members of a single Australian community, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes and loyalties as other Australians.[75]

It was not Hasluck's intention to intervene directly to break up traditional Aboriginal communities. From his viewpoint the policy of assimilation was a response to what he saw as the pre-existing break up of traditional ways of life[76] – not least by the interaction which was producing mixed race offspring – and the 'movement of coloured people away from the desert and the bush towards settlement [that was] already taking place'.[77] Hasluck, like many of his contemporaries expected that traditional society would decline through attrition[78] – a view that some missionaries and churches had held since the early days of European settlement.[79] The earliest Christian missionaries – chaplains Johnson and Marsden – focused on converting the heathen convicts and gave little or no thought to the Aborigines. Indeed, Marsden focused more on the Maori than on

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72 Bolton, p. 2.
73 Prime Minister Robert Menzies appointed him to this position in 1951. Bolton, p. 5.
74 Bolton p. 10.
75 Bolton p. 10. My italics.
76 Bolton, p. 11.
77 Bolton, p. 11
78 Bolton, p. 11
79 Even Governor Macquarie in 1821 was so concerned about the impact of European settlement on the indigenous population that he proposed setting aside 10 000 acres of land at Moss Vale where they could be relatively undisturbed. John Miller, 'Australia Day Address to the Hawkesbury Historical Society 2002.' www.hawkesburyhistory.org.au/members/macq_miller.html Downloaded 28 July 2004.

the Australian Aborigines when he began to think of evangelising the Indigenous inhabitants of the South Pacific region.[80] What Hasluck ignored, however, was the Aborigine's attachment to country which, to be fair, was little understood at the time. However, in the articulation of educational policy in the Northern Territory in 1954, Hasluck noted in a ministerial minute that

> [t]he reason for trying to establish schools on pastoral properties is the belief that for at least one generation ahead natives whose family and tribal life is already definitely linked with a particular pastoral property are likely to find their most happy and useful future if they remain on the stations instead of being attracted away either to missions, Government settlements or towns.[81]

This was a view that was shared by Bishop O'Loughlin in the establishment of the Daly River Mission which was to provide education for the local tribal children while their families continued to work on surrounding pastoral properties and farms. Whether deliberately or serendipitously, Hasluck was acknowledging that the Aborigines tended to work on the pastoral properties that were established on their own traditional country. They rarely moved a long way away unless influenced by the missions, pastoralists or Government.[82]

Some months prior to the establishment of the Daly River Mission Bishop O'Loughlin stated that the aim of the new mission was 'to care for the remnants of the Daly River Tribes … so that the descendants of the once powerful tribes, the Mulluk Mulluk, Brinken, Nangiomeri and Moil, who seemed doomed to extinction, may now look more confidently to the future'.[83] In his speech at the opening of the Mission, Bishop O'Loughlin reiterated his belief that the tribes were now in decline when he stated that the mission policy was 'to provide schooling for the children, medical care for the sick and ailing, and for mothers and babies especially [as well as] a centre both cultural and spiritual around which may rally the remnants of once powerful tribes'.[84] O'Loughlin went on to

[80] *South Land of the Holy Spirit*. Ch 8. Christian History research Institute. Australia. www.chr.org.au/sl/slhs7.html Downloaded 26 July 2004.
[81] Bolton, p. 11.
[82] Bolton, p. 11.
[83] Interview with Bishop O'Loughlin, 24 June, 1955. Darwin Cathedral Archives [DCA] B141, cited in Hearn, p. 24.
[84] Hearn, p. 23.

assert that all the educational, medical and welfare activities of the mission were a corollary to the Mission's main purpose which was 'to preach the Gospel to a pagan race. It is my firm conviction that as detribalisation proceeds and a religious and philosophical vacuum envelopes the Aboriginal – it is essential, if he is to survive, for him to be guided by the Christian faith and Christian philosophy of life. … It is too much to expect the Aborigines to survive and be assimilated without the faith'.[85]

Hasluck's presumptions in the 1950s and those of Bishop O'Loughlin almost a decade later were both predicated on the assumption that the pastoral industry would continue to be a major employer of local Indigenous people as would local farming along the Daly River and other primary industries such as timber felling on the Tiwi Islands and peanut growing elsewhere.[86] No-one could have foreseen the impact that the awarding of equal wages by 1965 and the increasing use of mechanisation would have on the employment of local Aborigines. Once the Indigenous workers were no longer a source of cheap labour much of their previous work dried up, leaving them often with little option but to drift into missions, government settlements or towns where, often with no meaningful work to do and reliant on government payments, the men particularly lost their dignity and their authority within their traditional tribal structure. It could well be argued that, ironically, the introduction of equal wages coupled with the 1964 decisions to recognise Indigenous people as Australian citizens with all the rights that entails – particularly the legal right to buy and consume alcohol which had been previously denied to them – did more to hasten the attrition of tribal communities than any policy of assimilation had ever done.

Father Frank Flynn MSC, writing in the early 1960s, reflected the tenor of the times and particularly the attitude of the Christian churches when he noted that:

> assimilation is a very real issue with the [Roman Catholic]
> Church in Darwin, particularly now that Bathurst Island with its
> soaring population is offering new problems as the third largest
> centre of population in the Territory. But material considerations,

85 Hearn, p.24.
86 Such as Maningrida, Arnhem Land.

> however important, remain secondary to the main purpose of the missions which is to preach the Gospel to a pagan people.[87]

(Father Flynn shared Bishop O'Loughlin's view that the Aboriginal people were 'pagan'. Bishop Gsell on the other hand had held that the Aborigines were a people of deep spirituality.[88]) By 1962 though, Government policy had already begun to switch from 'assimilation' to 'integration', and many of the previous restrictive laws were repealed – including the ban on alcohol. The integration policy was a response to the increasing criticism that Aboriginal people were being denied the basic human right of the choice of living in their own way. The aim of the change in policy was to allow Aboriginal people to retain aspects of their traditional culture whilst increasing the development of equal rights.[89] The anthropologist A P Elkin, who had a central role in influencing policy makers from the 1930s, stated that it meant Aboriginal people could 'remain a group apart, to be integrated with the white or European group of citizens in a plural social and political system. It is a protest against absorption'.[90] One could reasonably assume that Elkin's viewpoint had changed since the beginning of the assimilation policy.

Certainly it was evident by the time of the 1967 referendum[91] that the long held view – virtually since the time of European settlement – that the Aborigines were a dying race was no longer widely held. Despite the erosion in the numbers of full blood Aborigines it was evident that many, if not most, of the mixed-race people were reclaiming their Aboriginality. The Australian poet Kath Walker, for example, returned to her tribal name of Oodgeroo of the Noonuccal tribe in 1988 as a protest at the celebration of the bicentenary of European settlement of

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[87] Flynn, p. 16.

[88] Peggy Brock(ed), *Indigenous Peoples and Religious Change*. Leiden/Boston: Brill Publishers. 2005. Brock notes in her Introduction (as, in practice, did Gsell and Leary) that 'the receiving community is the key to understanding the process of change … [and] change suggests that beliefs, rituals and spirituality existed in societies when new understandings were introduced which altered, modified, transformed or replaced pre-existing religions', pp 3 and 6.

[89] *National Report on Aboriginal Reconciliation. Volume 2: The Integration Years*. Paragraph 20.3.18. Reconciliation and Social Justice Library. Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. Australasian Legal Information Institute http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/rciadic/national/vol2/279.htm Downloaded 8 January 2005.

[90] http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/rciadic/national/vol2/279.htm Downloaded 8 January 2005.

[91] http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/bp/1996-97/97bp11.htm#1967 Background to the 1967 referendum to change the Australian Constitution , Section 51. Downloaded 8 January 2005.

Australia. In fact the bicentennial celebrations provided a focus for the reassertion of Aboriginality in a way not seen quite so clearly since the 1967 referendum, although Aboriginal activists such as Gary Foley and Dennis Walker had been vocal for some time.[92] On Australia Day 1972, an Aboriginal Tent Embassy was established on the lawns outside the Federal Parliament in Canberra to protest the inaction of the government since the referendum, especially inaction on the Gurindji land claim and the High Court's rejection of the Yirrkala peoples claim against Nabalco.[93]

The Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra in front of Old Parliament House, 1972.

Source: http://indigenousaustralia.frogandtoad.com.au/embassy.html

The assertion of the importance of Aboriginal identity was confirmed again by the *Bringing Them Home Report* into the children of the Stolen Generation.[94] What Hasluck, undoubtedly with the best will in the world and as a man of his time and influenced by his own early experiences, had failed to consider was that it was entirely possible, within the mixed race people, that a sense of their Aboriginal identity 'might not die out with the old men around the ashes of their campfire'.[95] As has proved to be the case, 'Aboriginal identity, modifying in a changing environment, adapting new concepts from other cultures [has survived] tenaciously among Australians who for more than half a century had been excluded from participating in citizenship because the law defined them as

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92 Attwood and Markus, p.254 ff

93 http://indigenousaustralia.frogandtoad.com.au/embassy.html citing N Parbury, 1986, *Survival: A History of Aboriginal Life in New South Wales*, Sydney: Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, pp. 131-132. See also Attwood and Markus, pp. 256 – 267.

94 Ronald Wilson, *Bringing Them Home Report*, Canberra: Commonwealth Government, 1997. The Report presented findings from hearings around Australia which began in 1975.

95 Bolton, p. 12. See also Charles Perkins, 'Letter to the Editor', *The Age*, 8 April 1968 in which he explains why mixed race people choose to describe themselves as Aboriginal. Cited in Attwood and Markus, pp. 241-242.

Aborigines'.[96] Bolton points out that Hasluck's device of making most Aborigines in the Northern Territory 'wards of the state' was meant to minimise racial factors in Aboriginal policy but may well have had the opposite effect. Unfortunately, despite his earlier good will and intentions, by the 1960s Hasluck was unwilling or unable to readjust to the changing political scene and to accept that the integration of Aboriginal people into society as citizens entitled to control their own destiny like other citizens was a policy far more acceptable than assimilation.

Bishop O'Loughlin, however, was another case. His views were driven by a rigid view of the traditional Church and his limited experience of traditional cultures. Father Frank Flynn MSC asserts in *Northern Gateway* that the primary purpose of the missions is 'to preach the Gospel to a pagan people'.[97] No-one would dispute that preaching is certainly one of the major threads of the missionary endeavour, although to stress it in these terms is both a departure from the strategies used in the Northern Territory by the first Roman Catholic missionaries, the Jesuits, and a presumption that the people to whom the missionaries go have no pre-existing belief system, certainly not one which can be adapted to Christian spirituality. Flynn quotes Bishop O'Loughlin as saying, presumably in 1961:

> The missionary comes not so much to gain adherents as to establish the church, a process which involves, especially among Aboriginals, years of painstaking labour. Moreover his task is primarily religious and spiritual, so that it would be a mistake to regard the missionary as merely a high-minded social worker or philanthropist. This aspect of his work is secondary, although it is by no means neglected. …
>
> successful missions developed according to a fairly regular pattern. A settlement was established, usually on a native reserve and preferably away from outside influence. Gradual contact was made with Aboriginals in the locality and slowly the work of instruction began. It was carried out by practical,

[96] Bolton, p. 12.
[97] Flynn, *Northern Gateway*, p. 16.

> patient men, with limited resources, hampered by isolation and faced with difficulties both material and spiritual … The successful ones were content to be farmers, saw-millers, first aid men, builders, biding their time.[98]

Father Flynn observed that under O'Loughlin '[m]ission work is entering a new phase; the accent must now necessarily be on assimilation'.[99] It was his expectation that increasingly native families from Bathurst Island and elsewhere would be taking their place in the economic life of Darwin. From the standpoint of the early 1960s that may have been a reasonable and predictable view to take, although years of experience may have suggested that this might not ever happen in the way they envisaged. On assimilation, Bishop O'Loughlin said – again in the early 1960s:

> The time will come, eventually, when the Christian native can, on religious and social grounds, take his place in the community at large. Aboriginals living on cattle stations can perhaps be evangelised by missionaries who visit them regularly and repeatedly. As long as the number of missionaries remains small, the work should be restricted to a relatively few stations in a particular area, for all admit that the sporadic visit of the itinerant missionary can result only in harm … The present time seems to offer greater opportunities than ever before for Christianising the Aboriginal. On our missions we have the benefits that come from some degree of isolation, yet the aeroplane and radiotelephone have removed many of the drawbacks.
>
> A benign Government offers generous assistance. On the side of the natives, the hard core paganism which hindered conversion has practically vanished. The *vacuum in the native mind*, which has been created by the loss of tribal organisation and tribal

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[98] Flynn, *Northern Gateway,* pp. 16 – 17.
[99] Flynn, *Northern Gateway*, p. 17.

> beliefs, is waiting to be filled with the teaching of the Gospel.
> May Almighty God prosper the work ….[100]

Although their reasons were somewhat different, Bishop O'Loughlin's focus on educating Indigenous children – both in the faith and in terms of secular education – and thus building up the church, rather than attempting to convert and baptise older people reflects the approach of Bishop Gsell who, in similar fashion refused to baptise initiated men or women unless they were on their death beds.[101] It may have been true that when Gsell went to Bathurst Island in 1911 the Tiwi were, in Frank Flynn's words, 'fearsome warriors, blood drinkers and polygamists',[102] although there seems to be little enough anthropological evidence for this view.[103] By the 1960s, however, there were few if any Indigenous people who had not been influenced significantly by the European presence – and by government control over their lives. Elsewhere Flynn notes that by the late 1960s 'the original Territorians are citizens. As soon as they are ready, Aboriginal families are moved into 'European' suburbs where they are accepted as neighbours – as quickly and completely as the half castes [sic] were a few years before'.[104] In 1966 the Wards Employment Ordnance came into operation, setting new minimum wages for Aboriginal workers and, from 1 December 1968, full award conditions applied to Aborigines working in the pastoral industry.[105] At this time Bishop O'Loughlin also observed that Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal workers were accepted by their white colleagues and 'worked happily with them, earned a sufficient family wage and had self-respect'.[106] O'Loughlin took the view that the important first step to integrating Aborigines into mainstream society was for the adults – particularly the men – to become trained tradesmen. Getting them through a University education could be left to the next generation, he believed.[107]

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[100] Flynn, *Northern Gateway,* p. 17. My italics.
[101] Flynn, *Northern Gateway,* pp. 91 – 92. See also F X Gsell, p. 32.
[102] Frank Flynn, *Northern Frontiers*. F.P. Leonard: Sydney. 1968. p. 122. Nowhere in his writing does Gsell suggest this.
[103] Bishop Gsell would certainly not have shared this view of the Indigenous people.
[104] Flynn, *Northern Frontiers*, p. 50.
[105] Flynn, *Northern Frontiers,* p. 126.
[106] Flynn, *Northern Frontiers,* p. 127.
[107] Flynn, *Northern Frontiers,* p. 127

In an address to the biennial Mission Administration Conference in 1967 Father John Leary more realistically, and based on his experience, said:

> Of all the problems associated with the Aborigine the one that looms perhaps largest of all is unemployment. The problem has a double aspect – firstly the provision of suitable employment for the Aborigine; secondly the preparation of the Aborigine to accept and fulfil, to normal requirements at least, the obligations of employment.
>
> All who have worked on missions and Government settlements, watching the growing population, must feel apprehensive about the whole question. Employment we realise is fundamental, vital and absolutely essential towards the advancement of the Aborigine. Yet, to an extent, it is precisely at this point that our work breaks down. Other aspects of Aboriginal welfare and advancement are under way and progressing; so much so that an outsider might be tempted to say that our endeavour seems to produce ever healthier bodies and more educated minds to swell the ranks of the unemployed. The problem is so large and so complicated we might well ask who, ultimately, must be responsible for its solution.
>
> Our motivation for work is simply not in him. With us the successful man is the hardworking man. Work is desirable because it is the necessary condition of our betterment, the security of families, our prestige. The Aborigine considers himself to have all of these outside of work. If there is to be work, then he will consider it very much a sideline; a thing not to be taken too seriously. Instinctively he feels that he has all these securities in nature and his ability to deal with nature.[108]

[108] Flynn, *Northern Frontiers,* pp 123-124.

If Father Leary is correct, then it would seem that education (and conversion to Christianity) alone are not the answers, in the short term at least, to providing a meaningful way of life for traditional Aboriginal people in the modern world.[109] Life on the missions and Government settlements – essential though these are – tends to remove the need for initiative on the part of the Aborigines, Father Frank Flynn noted.[110] Both the need and the urge to work are absent when the Indigenous people are provided with food, protection and shelter – a situation which O'Loughlin sought to avoid when he established the Daly River Mission, where, as already observed, he intended that the adults would remain working on surrounding pastoral leases and farms while the children were educated. When it comes to hunting, spearing fish, or painting with ochre, Flynn notes, 'the Aborigine shows a power of concentration which often he sadly lacks in situations of employment along more routine lines'.[111] It was to be another generation before the missions – or self governing communities – were to realise that these activities of the Aborigines, especially painting, could in fact become a means of employment in their own right.[112]

Despite legislation giving Aborigines full citizenship(1967), equal pay in the pastoral industry(1968) and protecting them from racial discrimination (Racial Discrimination Act 1975), the prevailing way of thinking was still to compare the Aboriginal people with 'traditional' white society and its values and mores. Father Flynn observed that,

> At 15 or 16 years a white child has usually begun to
> form an ambition.[113] At the same age a native [sic]

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[109] Indigenous Professor Mary Anne Bin Salik, was recently quoted as saying that 'the differentiation between traditional and urban Aborigines is unhelpful and only serves to divide Aboriginal people'. *Northern Territory News* 24 May 2008. p. 22. On the other hand such 'traditional' people as Rosemary Tipoloura of the Tiwi Islands resents urban Aborigines purporting to speak on behalf of traditional people of whose culture they know little or nothing. Conversation with Rosemary Tipoloura and Bob Collins, Darwin 2005.

[110] Flynn, *Northern Frontiers*, pp. 123-124.

[111] Flynn, *Northern Frontiers*, pp. 123- 124.

[112] As for example with the establishment of Merrepen Arts at Daly River. The Daly River Arts Festival, an annual activity of Merrepen Arts, celebrated its 21st anniversary in 2008. The centrepiece of the festival is the annual art auction of original paintings by Daly River artists.

[113] From my observations teaching in the Northern Territory in particular this is now far less true than it might once have been of any students. This is partly due to the probability that many will be permanently unemployed but also to the fact that many will work in jobs not yet created with technology not yet created. The provision of government support at almost every level of society also removes the perceived need to prepare for a lifetime of work.

> would be likely to say: 'I want to be one of my people – a blackfellow [sic]. I'm not going to ape the white man.' I have sometimes heard it said by one Aborigine to another who was endeavouring to appear too assimilated: 'What do you think yourself – a white man?' What is more, the native youth has none of the helpful examples that the white child has. The example he receives leads rather the other way. Even if he wanted to be a chemist, a mechanic … there are just too many obstacles in the path; the greatest of them all being the fact that he would be ostracised by his own people.
>
> The price of being somebody in the white man's world is the sacrifice of his identity as an Aborigine. Unfortunately the too few 'successful' Aborigines are literally lost to their people.[114]

This may have been the case when Flynn was writing in the late 1960s but one would have to argue that, even so, such a blanket dismissal of an Aboriginal work ethic is still not valid. Despite the fact that in some communities the people receive sufficient royalties from mining rights[115] to obviate the need for other employment, many others are now fully aware of the need for work. In many communities there is no longer any 'sit down' money. Even social welfare payments must be worked for – although CDEP[116] work is not always seen as 'real' work, except in communities where CDEP projects include building or maintaining community housing and facilities, establishing land and sea ranger services[117] or tendering for local NT Government projects such as road building. There was a recent suggestion by local community leaders that, in order to minimise unemployment at Wadeye, the community should become involved in building an architect designed grandstand for the football oval. Such leaders of

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[114] Flynn, *Northern Frontiers*, p. 125.

[115] For example, the traditional owners at Yirrkala (bauxite mining) and around Jabiru (uranium).

[116] The devaluing of CDEP work is more often something imposed from outside than within the communities themselves where CDEP often funds very real work such as Land and Sea Rangers, Road contract gangs and so on.

[117] For example, Daly River, Port Keats, Ramingining, Yirrkala.

the Aboriginal community as Galarrwuy and Mandawuy Yunipingu[118], MiriamRose Ungunmerr-Bauman,[119] Regina Wilson,[120] David Gulpilil,[121] Dinyinini Gondarra[122] and others have all established clear Aboriginal role models for people to follow. In 1967 Father Leary suggested the creation of job openings at award wages on each of the missions and government settlements. This could be done, he suggested, by developing the resources of each area and establishing industries such as a clothing factory to employ Aboriginal women. Leary went on to say

> I suggest the problem is so urgent, of such importance and magnitude in the welfare of our Aboriginal people, that a Commission should be set up to go into the matter, with power to take effective action. Such a Commission should be composed of (a) people who know the Aborigine well, who are sympathetic and anxious for his progress; (b) sympathetic, successful businessmen; (c) ranking Government officials who have influence in high places, able to override red tape and get things done.[123]

It is worth noting here Father Leary's emphasis on people **sympathetic** to Aborigines – by which he meant, I believe, people who had some understanding and experience of Aboriginal people rather than distant bureaucrats. It would take the Commonwealth Government another thirty one years to begin to take such steps – and then the 'Intervention' was planned, directed and executed from Canberra as a government operation.[124] Whereas Leary's proposal looks to use the skills and resources of the Aboriginal people and the resources available on

[118] Long time Chair of the Northern Land Council and school Principal and lead singer of Yothu Yindi respectively. Both are Yirrkala men.
[119] Former Chair of the Nauiyu Nambiyu Council and Foundation Aboriginal Principal of St Francis Xavier School at Daly River.
[120] Artist and co-founder with her husband Harry Wilson of the Peppeminarti outstation.
[121] Indigenous actor from Arnhem Land. (Not always the best role model given his not infrequent arrests for drug use.)
[122] Elcho Island Uniting Church minister and former Chair of the Uniting Church Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in Arnhem Land.
[123] Flynn, *Northern Frontiers*. p. 125.
[124] I use the word 'operation' deliberately since the Australian Army was used to enact the Intervention.

'their country', the Intervention as it is being played out appears to have no such agenda.[125]

As suggested in this chapter, the context of missionary activity is always going to be subject to geographical, political, cultural and theological change and any snapshot of missionary activity will be largely reflective of its historical context. In the Northern Territory the two significant forces in Catholic missionary activity have been Bishop Gsell, who can be credited with founding the modern Catholic missions and Bishop O'Loughlin who inherited his mantle. Bishop O'Loughlin, in refusing to baptise any initiated adults until they were on their death bed (if then) and in believing them to have a 'vacuum in their mind', believed himself to be an imitator of Gsell's approach to the indigenous people. Gsell, though, had recognised that the Aboriginal people 'possess a conscience; they are capable of mental, even intellectual and spiritual processes and, given the opportunity, can reach as high a standard as any of the best'.[126] But, far from believing that there was an inherent 'vacuum in the native mind', before or after tribal traditions had been 'watered down', Gsell recognised that 'the Aboriginal is a spiritualist [sic]'.[127] 'He [the Aborigine] had no doubts about the existence of spirits around him; and he is convinced of the survival of the soul after death …'.[128] Not all of these beliefs were necessarily compatible with Christianity but they nevertheless were clear indications that the Aborigines had a developed spiritual belief system which gave order and meaning to their lives. Whereas Gsell's approach to mission was characterised by patience and respect for the people's culture, Bishop O'Loughlin, writing in the 1960s – in the transitional era of assimilation and integration policy for Indigenous people – summarised his mission policy as being to 'Christianise, Civilise, Integrate'. This translated into policy for the Daly River Mission, established by O'Loughlin in 1955 which was expressed as:

A. Evangelise – establish church a) catechists, b) sisters, c) brothers and priests.

[125] See chapter 11 for further discussion.
[126] Gsell, p. 22.
[127] Gsell, p. 22.
[128] Gsell, p. 31.

B. Civilise – a) Christian family … home; b) schooling; c) livelihood: garden, stock, timber, arts and crafts.
C. Integrate – a) cattle stations; b) farms on Daly [River].[129]

It would fall to such men as Father John Leary and Brothers Burke and Merritt, together with many others, to turn this policy skeleton into a living entity. But their 'fleshing out' of the policy was not necessarily always aligned with Bishop O'Loughlin's agenda. As Peter Sherlock points out 'above all a call to mission was a call from God'[130] rather than simply a directive from the church. Eugene Stockton, as mentioned elsewhere,[131] calls such missionaries as Leary, Merritt and Burke 'maverick missionaries'[132]. While Sherlock points out that 'Christianity lends itself to adaptation [and thus] it could transcend and transgress colonial relationships',[133] Brock makes the point that where change followed the work of the missionaries (as in the case of Gsell, Leary, Burke and Merritt among others for example) this 'suggests that beliefs, rituals and spirituality existed in societies when new understandings were introduced which altered, modified, transformed or replaced the pre-existing religions'.[134] Brock also observes that 'the involvement of Indigenous agents in [religious] change is essential … Change can only occur with support from within the community'.[135] This is the vital element which differentiates the work of Gsell, Docherty, Leary, Merritt, Burke and some other MSCs from, say, the approach of Bishop O'Loughlin. Intuitively, as it were, the former involved the people in the transforming work of mission and attempted to enculturate the practices of the Catholic Church to make them relevant to the people. O'Loughlin, as can be seen from his approach to Father Dodson, was adamant that the people must adapt to the pre-existing forms of the Church. That a significant number of Indigenous people from the former Catholic Mission communities remain committed to the

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129 Hearn, p. 25.
130 Peter Sherlock, 'Missions, Colonialism and the Politics of Agency' in Amanda McGraw, Joanna Cruickshank, Andrew Brown-May and Patricia Grimshaw, *Evangelists of Empire? Missionaries in Colonial History*. Melbourne: University of Melbourne eScholarship Research Centre, 2008. http://msp.esrc.unimelb.edu.au/shs/missions p.17. Downloaded 14 September 2008.
131 See page 218 of this thesis.
132 Stockton, pp. 200 – 210.
133 Sherlock, p.19.
134 Brock, *Indigenous Peoples and Religious Change*, p. 6.
135 Brock, *Indigenous Peoples and Religious Change*, p. 7.

Catholic Church and that some have taken leadership roles within the church (although not as clergy) attests to the effectiveness of these missions over time and the fact that they not only did not disempower the people but rather empowered them to control their own destinies so far as might be possible within the wider context of Australian life.

9. Portrait 3: Brother Gerry Burke MSC, the teacher

When one speaks of Catholic missionaries in the Top End, the general understanding of people who live (and work) in and for the Roman Catholic Church in the Northern Territory is that one must have in mind those priests, brothers and nuns who worked on remote mission stations such as Port Keats, the Tiwi Islands, Daly River or Arltunga. If one is to include anyone else it must be the numerous lay missionaries who, until the late 1950s received virtually no monetary reward (above their keep) for their work.[1] Despite the obvious contribution made by those who were teachers in schools run by either the MSCs (until 1975)[2] or the OLSH sisters (from 1908-2008), they receive little recognition from those who lived and worked with them, or even who are members of the same order, as ‘missionaries’. This is particularly true, it seems of the MSCs. The work of the OLSH sisters has almost always been, in the first instance, either in teaching or nursing and the first mission of MSC priests has been almost without exception a teaching stint. The MSC brothers, whose training was largely manual labour in the gardens or kitchens of the MSC seminaries or boarding schools, often found themselves doing more of the same in their early missions as well. There seems to be little or no appreciation within the order (in the Territory at least) of the irony of referring to each placement of a religious as his or her ‘mission’ while simultaneously reserving the term ‘missionary’ to those involved primarily or solely with remote cross-cultural mission work. Indeed, one could argue that within the local MSC community in the Northern Territory there is a clear tendency to put missionary priests such as Gsell or Leary in a special category. Not even their fellow missionary priests

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[1] Bishop Ted Collins MSC, on his arrival as Mission Superior in 1963, was appalled at the financial situation of lay missionaries and set out to amend it, although they were still very poorly paid. Comments by Bishop Ted Collins in various homilies.

[2] The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were responsible for St John’s College which began as a day school for boys, then became a boarding school for boys on the Stuart Highway, the Gardens, until destroyed by Cyclone Tracy in December 1974. By then the OLSH Sisters were running a girls’ secondary boarding school on the Gilruth Avenue side of the same site. This was substantially damaged by Cyclone Tracy. On rebuilding the College became St John’s Co-educational Day and Boarding College with the Junior campus (Hartzer) on the site of the old boys’ school and the senior campus (Chevalier) on the site of the former girls’ school. The MSCs continued to provide staff (often Principals) for St John’s until the later 1990s when Sr Phillippa Murphy OLSH was appointed Principal. Sr Phillippa is due to retire from this position at the end of 2008. The college is now predominantly staffed by lay teachers.

necessarily share their limelight. They are seen, locally, as the experts in mission, although it must be said that this is not necessarily how they would see themselves.

However, when this project was mentioned to the MSC priests now living and working in New South Wales, either in the Provincial House at Coogee or at the monastery at Kensington, a number of the priests expressed surprise at the view taken by their northern colleagues. To them[3] it was obvious that any MSC, whether teaching or placed on a remote station, was nonetheless a missionary. In the light of the centenary celebrations of the OLSH sisters in the Northern Territory in May 2008, it might well be argued that the mission of the teaching religious is undoubtedly of vital importance. It is no co-incidence that the centenary of Catholic Education in the Northern Territory and the centenary of the OLSH sisters' service there occured in the same year. While Father Gsell waited patiently for his mission to the Aborigines of Bathurst Island to begin, it was not until the coming of the sisters to join him in 1908 that the first Catholic school was established in Darwin at St Mary's and some years later that he was able to begin schooling on Bathurst after the arrival of the first sisters there.[4] There is also considerable evidence that the decline of Catholic boarding schools, and of members of religious orders in teaching roles within Catholic schools has also led to a decline in the numbers of young men and women offering themselves for religious life in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The men whose lives are the focus of this research all speak of the influence of the religious who taught them, whether they were OLSH sisters, MSCs or Christian Brothers.

It is certainly true to say that the Church is no longer at the centre of Australian society in the way it was typically seen before the Second World War and this

[3] Two of these, for example, were Father Peter Hearn MSC, sometime NT Mission Superior and Administrator of St Mary's Cathedral, Darwin. Father Hearn is now Assistant Provincial and in charge of MSC vocations at Coogee. The other was Father Tony Caruana, MSC Archivist at Kensington. Other non-MSC religious in Darwin take much the same view as these men, as do the OLSH sisters.

[4] At least some of the nuns were Irish and all were unused to the tropical heat. There was no dispensation for them either from wearing their heavy woollen habits and veils. Living in tin sheds with few amenities it is surprising that more did not die from heatstroke.

too has been influential in lessening the appeal of religious life. The focus of society today is arguably more hedonistic than in some earlier times – and people can afford more options in terms of education, work and social involvement. It is possibly not too cynical to say that for many people the Church today is an organisation looking for a reason to continue to exist in a world in which traditional missions (in the sense of cross-cultural missions) are no longer viable, church schools are increasingly laicised and people generally are less 'churched'. The Catholic Bishop of Darwin, Eugene Hurley noted in May 2008 that 'Once, you would go into a youngster's bedroom and find pictures of St Teresa or Maria Goretti or some other saint on the wall. Now you find Kurt Cobain and all that he stands for …. suicide and nihilism. What are we doing to our children?'[5] The answer for Bishop Hurley is clear. 'We must go back to these symbols and reclaim our children.'[6] The Bishop sees the revival of the traditional Catholic Church in terms of reviving what I would call 'tribal Catholicism'. However it seems highly unlikely that that will be possible. Teenagers today are not going to replace Kurt Cobain with St Teresa, but dedicated teachers might persuade them to find new symbols to infuse with a new faith, reworking the traditions to become meaningful to themselves. While World Youth Day 2008 in Sydney may contribute to such an agenda,[7] in the long term it is only the teaching and example of dedicated teachers that can attract young people to the Christian or Catholic faith. The lives of John Leary, Ted Merritt and Gerry Burke all attest to the influence of teachers in their lives. A strong family faith is also important but is less likely to be significant in the lives of young people today than it was for these men.[8] It is in this context then that Brother Gerry Burke, MSC teacher at various MSC Colleges including St John's Darwin, is justifiably included in this research.

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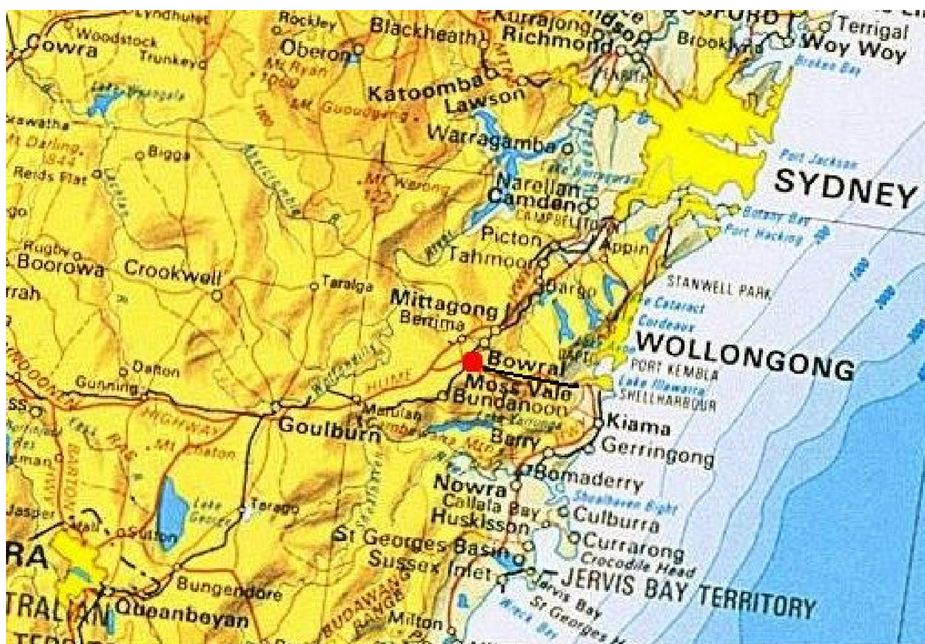
[5] Bishop Eugene Hurley at the Catholic Leadership Conference, 'The Heart of Policy', Berrimah NT, May 2008.
[6] Bishop Eugene Hurley
[7] Like other Youth Days before it, World Youth Day Sydney 2008 is seen by some as the way to revive the Catholic Church. Such people expect that many young people will experience a call to religious life. There is little evidence from previous World Youth Days that this actually happens.
[8] At O'Loughlin Catholic College, Darwin, for example, fewer than 3% of the students or their families are practising Catholics. Perhaps 50% are nominally Catholic – i.e. the children have been baptised. The remainder may be non-Catholic or profess no religion at all. Enrolment figures, O'Loughlin Catholic College. 2008.

Brother Gerry Burke was born in Hobart on the 21 August 1934, the only child of Eugenie Burke.[9] His earliest memories are of living in Bowral in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales with his mother's two sisters, Maisie and Kathleen. The house itself was large, having been built in the 1920s in the farming area of Bowral. The house was set on eight acres of land, enough for the family to keep cows for milking, some hens for eggs (and meat) and show horses which were used for polocross events. For the young Burke there were plenty of childhood chores such as mowing the lawn, milking the cows and looking after the horses. By the time Burke arrived there, the house had already been subdivided into eight self-contained flats or, in today's terminology, home units, seven of which were rented out. The Burke family shared one such flat. The original house still stands but the eight acres of land has undergone two subdivisions. The first in the 1960s or 1970s led to the erection of some sixty or seventy houses where there had previously been paddocks. The then population of some 2,000 had by the end of 2005 increased to about 10,000. As Burke was growing up, and even now, Bowral was and is something of a rural retreat and dormitory suburb for people who work in Sydney and commute partly by road and then by rail.



Location map of Bowral New South Wales.

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[9] Unless otherwise noted the information in this chapter derives from notes of interview in response to questions prepared by author, 2004, from a further interview with Brother Burke in August 2005 and a conversation in May 2008. Much of this is confirmed by the MSC Archival record.

Left: **Aerial view of Bowral, 1926.**

Below left: **Bong Bong Street, Bowral 1926.**
Source:
http://www.highlandsnsw.com.au/past_present/bowral_history.html

The Burke household was, however, very dysfunctional. Burke's mother, who was a nurse, had gone to England soon after his birth, leaving her young son to be brought up by his maternal aunts. One of her sisters, Maisie, was a spinster and the other, Kathleen, a widow with a son who was six years older than young Burke. Kathleen's husband had been killed in the war and she was no doubt embittered by the hand fate had dealt her. The elder of the two sisters, Maisie, was a wonderful influence in Burke's life, he recalls, 'because she was so normal and made my life normal'.[10] The widowed Kathleen, however, 'gave him hell'.[11] Their household arrangements were those of a divided house. Kathleen and her son John lived in their rooms, while Maisie and Gerry lived in theirs. The kitchen, bathroom and laundry facilities were shared. Kathleen never lost an opportunity to make life difficult for Maisie and the boy. In the days when houses had gas meters which one 'fed' regularly with pennies in order to ensure the gas supply, it almost always transpired, for example, that when Maisie came to prepare a meal for herself and Gerry there was no money in the meter – and no gas with which to cook. To this day Burke does not know whether Kathleen's attitude was born of jealousy, bitterness, resentment or anger. Her own son, who

[10] Brother Burke, interview August 2005.
[11] Brother Burke, interview August 2005

could do no wrong in his mother's eyes, took delight in bullying his younger cousin.

Like many boys who grew up in predominantly female households in which the husband and father was absent, presumably at the war – or during the 1930s, looking for work at a time of economic depression[12] – the young Burke imagined his father as a soldier, possibly a war hero, who had been killed in battle. His experience was perhaps not all that different at the time from hundreds, if not thousands, of other boys whose fathers were away working on government projects around the countryside trying to eke out a subsistence living for themselves and their families.[13] Although economists might assert that depressions have a finite time span, ordinary people often do not see it like that. Lowenstein records a 'bush worker' as recalling that 'There's always been a depression in Australia so far back as I can remember. I was walking the country looking for work from the end of the First World War until the start of the Second, till 1939'.[14]

Gerry Burke's Primary schooling was in the hands of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH) firstly at Our Lady of The Sacred Heart Primary School in Bowral. In the 1930s the OLSH sisters had three places in Bowral: the primary school in Centennial Road, a boys' boarding school further up the hill which opened in 1924, and the convent which is now a Retreat Centre, Hartzer Park, on Edridge Park Road. The young Burke was a boarder with the OLSH sisters for two years. As a ten year old he adapted to life as a boarder without difficulty. In some ways life in the boarding school was more normal than his life

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[12] In 1932 almost 32% of Australians were out of work. This was a time when there was no centralised Government unemployment scheme and, apart from the contributions of private charities (churches and philanthropists) destitute people relied on Government employment projects and public works projects such as road building for some sort of income. These were funded mainly by overseas loans. www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/greatdepression/ pp. 2 -3. Downloaded 3 May 2005.

[13] Wendy Lowenstein, in *Weevils in the Flour: an oral record of the 1930s depression in Australia.* Melbourne: Hyland House, 1978, records some of the stories of the Great Depression in Australia. She comments that 'People were forced into all sorts of tricks and expediencies to survive, all sorts of shabby and humiliating compromises …' . p. 2.

[14] Lowenstein, p. 1. I am also aware of at least one of my uncles having to 'go bush' and try to find work as part of a road building gang at this time. Since his wife had died, his daughters, although not Catholic, were placed in the Good Shepherd Orphanage Carlton Victoria during this time.

at home had been. The Principal of the OLSH Primary School during Burke's time there was Sister Ita Davis who had a significant formative influence on him and would later become a mentor to him again, not least during his time in Darwin. For his secondary schooling Burke became a boarder for four years at the MSC's Chevalier College that opened in 1946 in Bowral. Amongst the earliest students at the College, Burke loved school because it was an escape from his very dysfunctional home life. Although he was at boarding school during the War years Burke has little memory of the war having an impact on their existence. His only significant memory of the exigencies created by the nation being at war is that the boys had to present their food coupons. Butter in particular was in very short supply and at school the substitute was lard. Meat was very rare and 'often at night-time we were served hot milk and bread with sultanas'.[15] He remembers this as being 'good tucker!'.[16]

As a boy Burke's interests and hobbies revolved around horses and riding and playing school sports. But, as a child and later as a young person, Burke really had only one ambition in life. He wanted to become a Priest. 'Obviously my vocation was nurtured through my exposure to both the OLSH sisters and the MSC priests, particular by Ita Davis OLSH'[17] who he was to meet again several times as their various postings took them to the same regional locations. By the time he was in his third year of secondary school young Burke was already beginning to think really seriously about a call to religious life. 'When the Headmaster suggested a Vocation, I indicated that I wished to become a Priest. He suggested that I become a Brother, as I was very average academically – which was true. But on reflection he must have known of my birth.'[18] Being illegitimate would have been and still is – an insurmountable impediment to priesthood according to Canon Law.[19]

[15] Brother Burke, interview 2004.
[16] Brother Burke, interview 2004.
[17] Brother Burke, interview 2004.
[18] Brother Burke, interview 2004.
[19] Can. 241 §1 The diocesan Bishop is to admit to the major seminary only those whose human, moral, spiritual and intellectual gifts, as well as physical and psychological health and right intention, show that they are capable of dedicating themselves permanently to the sacred ministries. §2 Before they are accepted, they must submit documentation of their baptism and confirmation, and whatever else is required by the provisions of the Charter of Priestly Formation. http://www.deacons.net/Canon_Law/book_2.htm

Aerial view of Chevalier College, Bowral c 1947.
Source:
http://www.chevalier.nsw.edu.au

As well as the early – and ongoing – influence of Sister Ita Davis, OLSH[20], Burke was also very impressed with one of the MSC priests, his Boarding Master, who took a special interest in his welfare. This priest, Father Brian Scrivener MSC, worked hard to develop the young Burke's self-image as well as to enhance his reputation with his peers. For example, when Burke won an under-age Athletic Championship, Father Scrivener took the time and made the effort to make a big thing of this achievement in front of his peers. Consequently, as a young man looking for a father figure in his life, Burke then looked up to both Father Scrivener and his vocation. Seeing the man and the way he lived his life attracted Burke to the vocation which has since framed and inspired his own life. Without knowing it perhaps Burke, like Leary, had been attracted by the charism of the MSCs. Among the factors which influenced the early formation of Burke's ideas, ideals, conscience and commitment the most significant would have been the Roman Catholic faith into which he was born, despite the circumstances of his birth and dysfunctional family life. At school his Catholic teachers often used fear as a behaviour management tool. Students were fairly consistently presented with a judgemental God who inspired fear and punished

Downloaded 4 May 2005. It would appear that illegitimacy was viewed by Canon Law or its practitioners as a sign of immorality and therefore an impediment to ordination. The fact that the child has no responsibility for the condition into which he/she is born is immaterial. As the OLD Testament says, 'The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children', (Exodus 20:5). In the eyes of Canon Law, religious brothers and nuns are lay people.

[20] Sister Ita Davis OLSH died after a short illness in Kensington NSW in December 2005.

any misdemeanours. The God of the Roman Catholic school child of the 1930s, 1940s and into the 1950s was certainly not a God of love.

In December 1951 Burke finished his Intermediate Certificate, which was then Year 9 of Secondary School. He was sixteen and a half years old when he went to Douglas Park in January of the following year,1952, and as he says, 'The only option for me was Religious Life. I was too young and immature ever to think of the possibility of marriage or any other vocation or career'.[21] On reflection, he says realistically, 'Religious life was an escape from the home that I was living in'.[22] Brother Burke observes that in some ways it was not even a conscious decision. No other real options were ever given to him or even discussed by either his teachers or his family. For him there was hardly any conscious thought needed. It was simply the next logical step to take. There was no question either as to what order he should enter to fulfil his call to religious life. For him at the time it was a case of 'Are there any other orders?'.[23] His entire schooling had been at the hands of the OLSH sisters and the MSC brothers. Their charism, based on their shared founder, Jules Chevalier, was the only one he knew. Like any number of other young men of the time, Burke went straight from school to seminary. Indeed some other young men would have entered religious life even earlier as Junior Seminarians.[24] As mentioned earlier in this chapter, one of the arguments sometimes raised for the decline in religious vocations amongst both men and women is the general demise of the Catholic Boarding School, the regime of which – as Burke attests – in many cases led youngsters almost automatically to follow a religious 'vocation'.[25] Similarly the almost total absence of Religious (priests, brothers or nuns) amongst the teachers in Catholic schools in recent times has again lessened the exposure of students to the charism of any particular religious community.[26] Interestingly, when Burke finally went

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[21] Brother Burke, interview 2004.

[22] Brother Burke, interview 2004.

[23] Brother Burke, interview 2004

[24] For example, Father Ted McCormack MSC ran away from home in North Eastern Victoria and entered the Juniorate at Douglas Park when he was only fourteen years old. Conversation with Father McCormack, Nhulunbuy. 2000.

[25] Paddy Dodson is another example of a young man who progressed from MSC boarding School (Monivae, Hamilton, Victoria) to the seminary and priesthood.

[26] In Darwin for example there is a significant difference in the tone of the two Catholic High Schools, and in the attitudes of the students. At St John's, which also has boarders from remote

to the MSC novitiate at Douglas Park, it was the younger of his mother's sisters, Kathleen – the one who had made his life fairly miserable as a lad – who was most critical of his decision. At the same time as Burke was heading down this path of religious life her own son, John, had become 'a bit of a handful'[27] – drinking too much, giving up work and generally not making much of his life. Like Brother Burke he too had had the disadvantage of growing up with an absent father. It seems that the coincidence of her nephew entering religious life while her own son seemed to be taking a dangerously irresponsible path made her jealous of Burke's situation.

It may have come as a surprise to Burke on entering but, as with most other religious orders of the time, there was a clear 'class division' between those who were training to be priests and those who were training to become Brothers. In women's orders – and some men's orders – the same 'class division' could be seen between, for example, choir sisters or brothers on the one hand – the intending nuns, scholars, teachers, priests; and lay sisters and lay brothers on the other[28] – those who were destined to do the menial or servant work of the religious house. Even the use of the titles 'Father' and 'Brother' or 'Mother' and 'Sister' reinforced these class divisions. (In many women's orders the class distinction has for quite some time been obliterated by the universal use of the title 'Sister' for all female religious.[29] In the men's orders, however, the distinction remains, although one hopes that now it is more a matter of

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Aboriginal communities as well as Papua New Guinea and South Africa and where the charism of the MSCs and OLSH is inescapable, there is a sense that the College has a heart, a soul. At O'Loughlin College, founded in 1987 with a Christian Brother as foundation Principal and a Mercy Sister as Deputy Principal and named for Bishop O'Loughlin, there is no such sense since the school has inherited no such specific charism and, for most of its 21 years, has had no Religious as staff members.

[27] Interview, August 2005.

[28] Technically, according to canon law any person who has not taken Holy Orders – i.e. become and ordained Priest – is a lay person. Therefore all religious women and all religious men who are not priests are regarded as lay people – although most lay people living outside religious communities nevertheless regard all 'religious' as being 'holier' than ordinary lay people. (Author)

[29] Women's orders such as the Loreto Sisters changed from 'Mother' for teaching nuns as opposed to 'Sister' for the lay nuns who did the menial tasks of the convent at the time of Vatican II. It was also thought that the title 'Mother' as opposed to 'Sister' indicated an autonomy of decision making for one class which was denied to the other. The decision to use the one title 'Sister' was designed to denote both relationship to Christ and an equality of autonomy within the order although the traditional hierarchy of Superior General, Provincial and local Superior remained to facilitate organisation.

distinguishing between two very different roles within the church rather than a class distinction.) As recently as the 2005 General Chapter of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in Rome the Superior General commented to the effect that 'the old distinction between brothers and priests is certainly not as marked today as formerly', while at the same time remarking that the Order is 'not getting as many vocations to the brotherhood …'.[30] The distinction may not be 'as marked' but it still seems to exist. Superior General Father Michael Curran MSC also noted at the time that 'the number of our brothers is declining more rapidly than that of our priests, both through death and through departure from our community. We need also in their case to ask why they leave'.[31] His comments about the 'equality' of brothers and priests within the congregation drew a query from Gregory McCann MSC who asked 'Could someone tell me how many Brothers have been elected as representatives to General Chapters over the years? I'm just curious'.[32]

As brothers in the seminary at Douglas Park in Bowral the novices settled down from the outset to a life of work. The daily pattern was: conference with the Novice Master, normal daily prayer (morning, noon, evening), Mass and Rosary. In keeping with the 'class difference' between those seminarians aiming for the priesthood and those who were to be brothers, the Novice Master gave the Students (the 'first class novices' intending to be priests) and the Brothers (very much the 'second class novices') separate conferences each day. The Conferences were teaching times – inasmuch as there was any real teaching for the Brothers. In the Novitiate the Brothers never mixed with the Students except on Feast Days when the normal divisions were set aside for common celebration. Generally though it was very much an 'upstairs–downstairs' mentality which prevailed until the 1970s.

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[30] http://www.mscgeneralchapter2005/Superior General's Report on the Society.htm Rome: September 2005. Downloaded November 2005

[31] http://www.mscgeneralchapter2005/Superior Generals Report on the Society.htm Downloaded November 2005

[32] http://www.mscgeneralchapter2005/Superior Generals Report on the Society.htm. (13 September 2005.) I have been unable to find a response to this question. Downloaded November 2005

'The weakness of our training,' Burke observed, 'was that as Brothers we didn't do any real study and we weren't required to do any exams'.[33] While there was plenty of physical labour, there was no attempt at any intellectual, or even spiritual, rigour. It appears that, by 2005,

> in some Provinces at least all candidates now receive the same initial formation to religious life and for ministry (humanities, philosophy, theology), even though we can always allow for exceptions to this rule. We now have some cases of young religious who, having completed all the studies required for priestly ministry, prefer to remain brothers in order to serve in missionary options other than priesthood. We need to encourage the option for brotherhood in all our communities. It is a healthy defence against a certain temptation we face of being a substitute for the diocesan clergy.[34]

Not all MSC brothers are necessarily content to remain in that calling. In the Northern Territory, for example, Brother Frank Perry MSC was in charge of the administration of what was then, in 1976, St John's Primary School,[35] having already spent some years as a missionary Brother on Bathurst Island. He returned to Darwin in the 1990s as Father Frank Perry MSC to act as Cathedral Administrator for two years, before returning to the MSC parish in Coogee, Sydney.

The length of the novitiate for the Brothers in the 1950s was two and a half years: six months as a Postulant, followed by a two years as a Novice. The period spent as a Postulant is essentially a time of candidature during which both the individual and the Order test the individual's vocation or call to religious life. If the candidate is deemed to be unsuitable they do not proceed to the novitiate. The period as Novice is essentially a period of probation or apprenticeship. The

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[33] Brother Burke, interview 2004

[34] MSC General Chapter 2005. Father Michael Curran MSC, Superior General. Jules Chevalier laid down that his men were primarily to be missionaries and not to allow themselves to become 'comfortable' as parish priests. As mentioned elsewhere in this thesis, when Father Gsell first arrived in Darwin, the parish as well as the remote Indigenous peoples were both his missionary patch as it were. In 2008 the diocese, no longer designated a missionary diocese, had its first non-MSC bishop and an increasing number of non-MSC priests in the various parishes, although the MSCs established all of them.

[35] Thomson & Niall, *NT Dreaming*, p.26.

successful completion of this period is signalled by the taking after three years of the first of their religious vows, 'profession'. Thereafter, their religious vows are taken again after three years and then, as final vows, after a further three years. Brother Burke made his first profession in 1953. The year between first profession and first appointment allows the young religious to continue a period of learning. Brother Burke's final profession took place in 1959 at Croydon in Victoria. Despite the MSCs being, as their name indicates, a missionary order, their primary focus within Australia was education.[36] It would seem that a great many young men, Brother Burke among them, had little sense of a missionary vocation when they entered the order although some most definitely did. As a Brother, the future probably stretched out less as a means of fulfilling a vocation and more as a matter of doing what one was told where one was told. Nevertheless, if one takes as the missionary commission the threefold charge to convert or make disciples, to baptise and by so doing build up the church, and to teach the faith then, whether they were intentionally missionary focussed or not, the brothers as well as the priests fulfilled this charge in its latter two aspects simply by being part of the MSC schools and both by their teaching (such as it was, usually sport) and their example. Father Michael Curran's comments at the 2005 General Chapter in Rome[37] suggest that he, at least, sees the brotherhood as making a significant contribution to the missionary work of the Order and perhaps as a constant corrective to the tendency for some MSC priests to become too involved in parish work which might rather be undertaken by diocesan clergy, although their ranks are diminishing even more rapidly than those of the MSCs.

Brother Burke enjoyed his time in the Novitiate and worked for two years on the farm at Douglas Park, milking cows, tending the vegetable garden and doing general farm work. None of this work required much in the way of informed thought. On reflection, Brother Burke observes, 'We acted like robots, and I suppose we were dehumanised without knowing that that is what was

[36] This is even more true in the post-mission age in Australia, although the order was until the death of Father Ted Kennedy MSC in 2005 (and the advent of Cardinal Pell in Sydney) still responsible for Aboriginal parishes such as Redfern. Cardinal Pell has now given that ministry over to priests of the Neo-Catechumenate Way.

[37] Father Michael Curran, MSC Chapter, 2005.

happening'.[38] He says that, as novices, they never thought of questioning some of 'the stupid, silly practices that were imposed on us. The authority of our Superiors was all encompassing and we were programmed never to question anything'.[39] Brother Burke's time in the novitiate was still the time when petty 'misdemeanours' were punished as if one's salvation depended upon it. If a novice broke a cup he would have to carry it around his neck for a week. Spilling milk accidentally was likely to mean eating on your knees for a week. For other misdemeanours one might be required to wear one's habit back to front.[40] In many ways, as with the treatment of new recruits in the army, the only logic informing such a regime is to break the spirit of an individual by serial humiliation and to replace the individual's spirit with allegiance to a corporate identity. For the young religious, though, as for the soldier, this fairly mindless regime works to establish a self-discipline and resilience (unless, as in some cases, it breaks the individual's spirit totally) that enables them to face a range of challenges in the future – not the least of which might be a sense of isolation. It is unsurprising then that, despite some of the inherent stupidity of their training, Brother Burke thinks that it was of benefit inasmuch as in the early days the brothers simply endured the hardships of heat, long hours of work and lack of good food without either complaint or question. But perhaps even more importantly it taught them to accept loneliness, isolation and a reliance on personal prayer – without which they may not have survived.

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[38] Interview with Brother Burke, Darwin. August, 2005.
[39] Brother Burke, interview August 2005.
[40] Brother Burke, interview August 2005.

St Mary's Towers at Douglas Park, NSW is now a retreat centre run by the MSCs.
This was the novitiate during Brother Burke's time there. After finishing his own training Brother Burke remained at St Mary's Towers for some time as cook.
Source: www.visitwollondilly.com.au

Before coming to the Northern Territory in December 1974 marginally ahead of Cyclone Tracy, Brother Burke spent twenty-one years working in MSC schools or seminaries. In 1954-5 he was a 'cook' at Douglas Park, Bowral, NSW before moving to Downlands College in Toowoomba, Queensland, where he was based from 1956 to 1958. Downlands was a school with 450 boarders at that time. Here again Brother Burke was 'cook'. The term was used very loosely, he notes, since his job in these places was basically little more than that of a kitchen hand. His major responsibility was 'peeling spuds' and assorted other vegetables as well as washing up and cleaning the kitchen. In his 'spare time' he was expected to clean the dormitories and classrooms. It was here again that he met up with Sister Ita Davis OLSH who continued to encourage him. Brother Burke's time at Downlands was followed by a year back at the Seminary in Croydon, Victoria, as cook. It was during this time that he took his final vows.

Left: Downlands MSC College, Toowoomba. Queensland
Source: http://www.downlands.qld.edu.au nd

Right: Monivae MSC College Hamilton, Victoria.
Source: http://www.monivae.com nd

In 1960 he was moved to Monivae College, then an MSC boarding school for boys in Hamilton in Western Victoria.[41] The MSC archives describe his position there as 'cook' once more.[42] Brother Burke himself describes it as that of 'chief cook and bottle washer for three hundred staff and boarders!'.[43] For his last four years there he was Head Cook. He remained at Monivae until 1965. Whilst at Monivae he enjoyed his work very much although towards the end he became very tired from the hours of work expected of him and the other Brothers. Their duties required them to butcher their own meat – ten sheep and a steer each week. Their life was one of solid work with little time for recreation and virtually no time for reflection. Even during the school holidays when the boarders were absent the brothers were required to clean the school – a task which included routine maintenance such as painting and refurbishing classrooms. It was also while he was working at Monivae that, for the first time in his life, Brother Burke met his mother Eugenie.

In 1962, when he was 28 years old, Brother Burke's mother came back to Australia from England, where she had been nursing. To this point in his life Brother Burke knew nothing about his mother. Since he had never been aware of her, his life had revolved around the dysfunctional family unit which was all he had known. His Aunt Maisie Burke was the mother figure in his life as a child. On her return to Australia, Eugenie Burke took charge of the Accident and Emergency unit at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney. It was a great day for Brother Burke when he met her and heard her story – although it was also a story of great suffering for his mother who had never married. Strangely perhaps, during his childhood, Brother Burke had never actually contemplated the absence of both his mother and father from his life. He had never asked any questions, nor had he been offered any explanations. He simply accepted the situation in which he found himself. As mentioned earlier, he had imagined that his father had been killed at some time during the war when he was too young to remember. His

[41] Monivae is now a Catholic co-educational boarding and day school drawing students mainly from Victoria's Western District. The present MSC leadership Council – Fathers Tim Brennan (Provincial) and Father Peter Hearn (Assistant Provincial and Vocations Master) were educated as boarders at Monivae, as was their class mate Paddy Dodson.

[42] MSC Archives. Detailed account of Brother Burke's postings as an MSC provided by Father Tony Caruana MSC to the author, February 2004.

[43] Brother Burke, interview 2004.

absent mother does not seem to have impinged on his awareness at all. The meeting between them took place during the school holidays. His mother had made the trip from Sydney to Monivae College in Hamilton, Victoria, to meet him. From her Brother Burke gleaned a little information.

His mother was the youngest of nine children of Irish parents who migrated to Australia. When Burke was born his mother was 29 years old and single. She went to England as soon as possible after his birth – staying in Australia only long enough to take her baby to Bowral and leave him with her sister, Maisie. She never married. Prior to meeting her he had not missed her from his life, and even now, after this meeting, he knew little enough about the circumstances of both their lives. Whenever, on later occasions, he met his mother at family gatherings he referred to her as 'Aunt Eugenie'. She told him quite emphatically not to call her 'Mum' which seems to indicate that, even within the family, few people – perhaps apart from Maisie – knew the truth of Brother Burke's birth and identity. Even he was not to find out until he applied for a passport in 1986 that he was born in Hobart and not, as he had assumed, in Sydney. His attempts then to find out more through Jigsaw and similar agencies came to nothing. Eugenie's flight to Hobart, possibly for the pregnancy as well as the birth, was presumably a way of avoiding her Irish Catholic parents' wrath. Apart from the moral and social stigma, at the time, of becoming a single mother, there was basically no financial support available for single mothers in the 1930s. Although a Maternity Allowance was introduced by the Commonwealth Government in 1912, payable as a lump sum on the birth of a child, there was no further support forthcoming.[44] Child endowment as payment to parents was introduced in 1941, but this did not apply to unmarried parents.[45] Even Widows Pensions did not exist until 1942. It was not until 1973 that a Supporting Mother's Benefit was introduced to cover people not covered under the widow's pension scheme.[46] There was usually no option for single mothers in the 1930s other than to give their children up for

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[44] 'A History of Pensions and other benefits in Australia' in *The Australian Year Book* 1971. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics. 1971. pp. 1 – 6. See also http://www.facsia.gov.au/research/op12/sec4.htm Downloaded 16 April 2009.

[45] *Year Book* 1971. p. 2. See also www.facs.gov.au /internet.nsf /via/research _dss/ …

[46] *Year Book* 1971. p. 4 See also www.facs.gov.au /internet.nsf /via/research _dss/ …

adoption, either formally and often through one or other of the Church agencies, or informally through members of one's own family as Eugenie had.

Brother Burke's next placement after Monivae College was at his old boarding school, Chevalier College, beginning in 1966. This saw him take up different responsibilities. By now he was no longer a callow youth but a young man of thirty-two who had already had more than four years experience in boys' boarding schools. On his arrival at Chevalier, Brother Burke asked not to be appointed cook so, instead, he was appointed Sports Master and House Master. Chevalier was familiar ground to him as he had undertaken his own secondary education there. Brother Burke notes that he would have been the first Brother to look after a Dormitory in one of the MSC boarding schools. This is confirmed by one of his students at Chevalier, Xavier Desmarchelier, who would later become an MSC priest himself and spend time at Port Keats as Parish Priest and later as Town Clerk. It was, Brother Burke recalls, a daunting task. Each dormitory comprised eighty boarders with a Student (a young man who had just finished the Philosopher stage of his novitiate).[47] The role of a Boarding Master meant not only taking responsibility for the boarders during the week in non-class time but also arranging activities and outings at weekends. Brother Burke enjoyed his work at Chevalier very much and, as well as being a Boarding Master, became Sports Master for ten years, and Officer in Charge of the College Cadets for four years. All of these tasks held their own challenges, but they were immensely enjoyable. This period was 'the emancipation of Brothers for many of us',[48] as they began to undertake tasks and fulfil roles previously denied to them.

[47] A 'student' was a novice who intended to become an MSC priest.
[48] Brother Burke, interview 2004.

A fairly typical boarding school dormitory from the 1920s … often little had changed by the 1950s.

Source: Loreto, Normanhurst NSW

Order of Time.

6.20	Rise (Summer 1st October to 1st May.)
6.35	" (Winter. 1st May to 1st October)
7.15	Meditation (Summer months only)
7	Mass (Summer)
7.30	" (Winter)
8.10 (?)	Breakfast after Beds are made. After Breakfast - short recreation, then Study
8.45	Drill (when Mass is at 7 o'c.)
9	Classes
11.30	Lunch 11.45 Recess
12	Classes
2.50	Dressing Room
3	Dinner
3.40	Recreation
4.30	Study
6.20	Beads & Lecture
6.45	Visit & Tea
7.30	Recreation
9.20	Night Prayers

A typical daily timetable for Religious involved in working with the boarders. It includes religious duties as well as teaching and boarding house duties.

Source: Loreto, Normanhurst NSW

As Sports Master at Chevalier for these ten years Brother Burke enjoyed immense success as a rugby coach. Under his watchful eye and careful mentoring the Chevalier team remained undefeated for the entire time. Although he coached many good players only one, Allan McMahon, won an Australian

cap. McMahon went on to coach the Newcastle Knights in the NSW Rugby league competition.[49] Among other students whom he remembers from those days was Barry O'Farrell, in 2008 Leader of the Opposition in New South Wales. Several of his students (or fellow students) also went on to join the MSCs as priests, notably Peter Malone and Xavier Desmarchelier with the latter of whom Brother Burke was later to work for a time at Port Keats.

It was while he was working at Chevalier College that Brother Burke made his acquaintance with the Northern Territory's Top End. During his time at Chevalier he took two school tours to the Top End and understood some of the difficulties that he might encounter were he to work there. He came to Darwin at the end of the school year, in December 1974 'to have a look-see at St John's'.[50] He knew that he wanted to work in the MSC school, St John's College, in Darwin as that was his only training.[51] 'True missionary work was not for me', he says. 'The Cyclone sort of made up my mind', he added.[52] Like many of his fellow MSCs Brother Burke understood 'true missionary work' to be working with Indigenous people in their own environment as the Australian MSCs have done in parts of Australia, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. If, however, one takes the view that missionary work is designed to evangelise individuals, build up the church and to teach the faith, then there can be little doubt that that is what Brother Burke achieved in his time in the Top End, although perhaps not in the 'traditional' fashion.

Brother Burke recalls that, on his arrival in Darwin, like a great many of the faithful he spent a significant part of Christmas Eve at Midnight Mass at St Mary's Cathedral. He was by then already living at St John's College in The Gardens, an inner suburb of Darwin.[53] He remembers that Bishop O'Loughlin was criticised for going ahead with Midnight Mass despite a Cyclone Warning

[49] Allan McMahon died in May 2003 after a heart attack. ABC Archives. www.abc.net.au/archives/timeline/2000s.htm
[50] Brother Burke, interview 2004.
[51] As opposed to mission work at a remote location where manual, agricultural or mechanical skills were essential.
[52] Brother Burke, interview 2004.
[53] The grounds of St John's College abut those of the Darwin Botanical Gardens. There is no dividing fence between them.

being in place. Most of the citizens of Darwin, as has been well documented elsewhere, were relatively relaxed about the Cyclone Warning. There was another Cyclone Watch and Cyclone Warning[54] earlier in the month which had come to nothing and, as people watched the track of Cyclone Tracy, it seemed that it too would bypass the city. Bishop Ted Collins, then Father Collins MSC, was the commentator for Midnight Mass and, after Mass, he remained at the Cathedral and continued his commentary on the approaching storm.[55] It as well that he did. At the time he was living, as Mission Superior, at The Ranch in Nightcliff. The house was in a surge zone[56] which meant that the convergence of a high tide and the Cyclone totally destroyed the place.[57] Brother Burke, on the other hand, went back home to St John's after Mass and, through the early hours of Christmas Day, listened to the rising winds and the screech of flying and grinding sheets of corrugated iron – part of a multitude of roofs which Tracy randomly detached from houses around the suburbs and the city and which then either flew as missiles into other buildings or scraped resoundingly along the road pavements. After Cyclone Tracy had virtually demolished Darwin in the early hours of Christmas Day 1974, the previous Boarding Master at St John's College 'wanted out'. He was not alone in that. Many of the people who experienced that Cyclone and were evacuated chose never to return. Brother Burke was willing to stay. So he took over the role of Boarding Master at St John's College. Once again he was breaking new ground for an MSC brother. It was one thing to be a Sports or House Master but to be Boarding Master meant he was in charge of the entire Boys boarding house, not just a dormitory.[58]

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[54] The Bureau of Meteorology issues a Cyclone Watch when an tropical storm is expected within 48 hours. If the situation continues and intensifies then a Cyclone Warning is issued which indicates that the storm is expected within 24 hours. Once the initial Warning is issued it is now usually followed by continuing updated Cyclone Advice Bulletins every two hours.

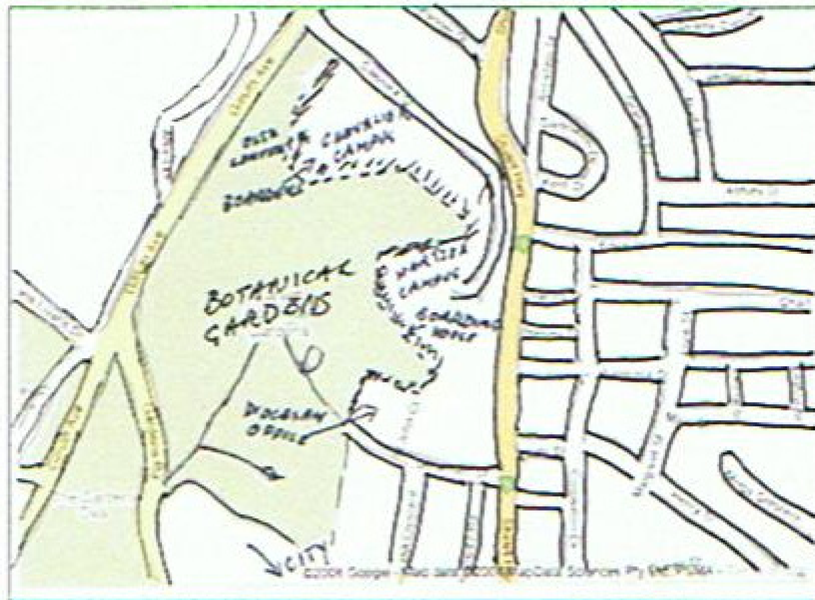
[55] It is Bishop Ted Collins' commentary which provides the sound track for the Cyclone exhibit at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.

[56] A surge zone is an area where the land is actually below the peak high tide level and subject to flooding if there is a convergence of a king tide and heavy rain as in a cyclone.

[57] The 'new' Ranch, built after Cyclone Tracy, on the site of the old building remains in a surge zone but is more securely built.

[58] A House Master was responsible for a single 'House' which may have included several dormitories whereas the Boarding Master was in charge of **all** male boarders in a number of Houses. He was also responsible for overseeing the boarding staff. One of the boarding houses at St John's has been named for Brother Burke.

Before Cyclone Tracy, as previously mentioned, St John's had been a Boys School, for both day scholars and boarders on the Stuart Highway at Stuart Park. Next door to St John's, on Gilruth Avenue, the OLSH sisters had run a sister school, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College at Salonika, for girls, both day and boarding students from 1972.[59] In January 1974 the Dominican Sisters of St Anne took responsibility for the new opened girls boarding house.[60] Both schools adjoined the Botanical Gardens as well as backing on to each other. St John's, the boys school on the Stuart Highway side of the block, was left practically unscathed by the Cyclone but the newer buildings of the OLSH college and boarding hostel on the Gilruth Avenue side of the block, closer to the shoreline, were totally unroofed and suffered major damage.



Post Cyclone Tracy St John's College and Botanical Gardens.
Adapted from Google maps.

[59] The Boarding Hostel was completed at the end of 1972 and took its first students in 1973. The hostel was staffed by nuns from the Filipino Dominican Order. Thomson, *NT Dreaming*, p. 26.

[60] The Dominican Sisters of St Anne were an Filipino order, as noted in the footnote above. Their control of the girls in the boarding school was much of the time fairly tenuous. In many ways Cyclone Tracy's devastation was a blessing in disguise as it allowed them to depart with no loss of face and the OLSH sisters, under the leadership of Deputy Principal Sister Regina Cawood OLSH to re-establish girls boarding house. Under the guidance of Father Tyson Donelly MSC St John's was rebuilt and reorganised into a co-educational College with a Junior and a Senior campus replacing the old boys and girls campuses.
http://www.stjohns.nt.catholic.edu.au/history.html

Much of this damage was due to the way in which it had been constructed. In order to save both time and money, and on Bishop O'Loughlin's instructions, the corrugated iron roofing had not been 'tied' to the roof trees.[61] As a result it was fairly easily ripped away by the cyclonic winds leaving the buildings open to further destruction from the cyclonic winds and rain. The Cyclone's impact was such that during the rebuilding phase – Salonika, the girls school, having been effectively destroyed – it was decided to combine the two schools into one co-educational secondary college, with a Junior and Senior campus on the site previously divided between the two single-sex schools. During the rebuilding phase, particularly in 1975, all final year secondary students in Darwin were taught at Darwin High School since it had survived Cyclone Tracy largely intact.[62]

'1975 was an interesting year', says Brother Burke with his customary understatement.

> Co-education was introduced. We were able to start school a week late and 140 students straggled in, the youngest being Primary boys in years 6 and 7. Towards the end of the year the numbers grew to over 400. A marvellous spirit of co-operation existed between those of us who were responsible for the school: three priests, myself, four OLSH sisters and the Filipino Dominican Sisters who looked after the girls boarders. Everybody did a great job.[63]

Brother Burke added that he was looking after the seventy male boarders on his own for the first six months of 1975 until an MSC Student arrived. Once some help arrived he then took responsibility for the Canteen and other 'odds and ends'.[64] 'It was a great time', he recalls.[65] During 1975 those buildings which

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[61] Brother Burke, interview, August 2005. The post-Cyclone Tracy building code requires that the roofs of all buildings are 'tied' to the foundations for stability.
[62] Darwin High School had been constructed and served as a public Cyclone Shelter during Cyclone Tracy.
[63] Brother Burke interview August 2005.
[64] Among these odds and ends was the responsibility for doling out the weekly 'coon cheque' as it was popularly known. This was the government hand-out, via Abstudy, to indigenous students to enable them to pay for food, tuition and other necessities. The students themselves and the community generally referred to this payment as the 'coon cheque'. Information from Brother Burke, Norm and Shirley Hawthorne. See also www.exploroz.com/Forum/Topic/46921/Not_happy_bro.aspx
[65] Brother Burke interview August 2005

remained more or less intact at the OLSH Salonika site housed the Darwin Community College (1974),[66] (which was to be the forerunner of the Darwin Institute of Technology (1985), Darwin University College (1987), the Northern Territory University (1989) and Charles Darwin University (2004)).[67]

It was while Brother Burke was at St John's for the first time[68] that he received news of his mother's death. Eugenie died in 1976. Brother Burke was on a canoe trip with St John's students in the Katherine Gorge when police came to give him the news. They took him back to Darwin where he asked his superior of the time if he could go to Sydney for the funeral. The answer was 'No. She's only your aunt.'[69] This was not so much an unfeeling response as a response born out of a typically tight financial situation for the MSC congregation.

Registration of Death for Eugenie Burke

Registration Number	Last Name	Given Name(s)	Father's Given Name(s)	Mother's Given Name(s)	District
13820/1976	BURKE	EUGENIE PATRICIA	JOHN	MARGARET	

Source: NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

However, when Brother Burke explained that actually Eugenie was his mother, he was allowed to go. The funeral, he says, was a strange experience. There was all the rest of the family gathered: mostly people whom he did not know and then there was himself – an unknown cousin whom virtually no one even knew existed. How did he explain himself and his presence? As he had been growing up he had never met his grandparents, much less any members of the family other than the two aunts and the cousin with whom he had lived. It is perhaps one of the benefits of a large (Irish) family that there are almost always cousins one has never met. That day he met more cousins than he had probably imagined he would ever have. Since then, however, he has maintained contact with several of

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66 Brother Burke interview August 2005

67 In 1974 new building began on the present Casuarina site of Charles Darwin University. *History of Charles Darwin University*. www.cdu.edu.au/visiting/abouthistory.html

68 Brother Burke was to be appointed to St John's College twice. MSC archives, Kensington, NSW.

69 Interview with Brother Burke. Darwin. August 2005.

his cousins. Indeed, he grew very close to the older cousin, John, with whom he had grown up, before the latter's death.

After his first four years at St John's College, Brother Burke spent two years, in 1979-80, managing the Gsell Centre, then situated on the corner of Pheonix Street and Nightcliff Road in Nightcliff. The Gsell Centre was established to provide accommodation for trainees and apprentices from Melville Island when they came to Darwin as part of their training.[70] As part of this work Brother Burke came to know the people from Garden Point and spent time with the community there. During this time Father Tim Brennan MSC was the Priest in Charge of the Garden Point community on Melville Island. Following this Brother Burke, who had become ill, was sent south again and spent a year in Bowral, living and working with a group of forty young Vietnamese refugees. (Illness often meant relocation for a time, but not necessarily a break from work.) The OLSH sisters turned over the top floor of their Retreat Centre (the old Boarding school) to them for a place to live and study. The lads who were typical 'boat people' of the time were, Brother Burke remembers, 'great students and great kids'.[71] He is still in contact with them.

In 1982 Brother Burke returned to St John's College in Darwin, this time as Sports Master and Junior Discipline Master. He recalls that his approach to students who smoked on occasion was to ensure that, if they were going to smoke, they were well away from him – in the middle of the school oval where they were, if not out of sight, then at least out of earshot. In conversation with a former student who was at the time a teacher at O'Loughlin Catholic College in the northern suburb of Karama, Brother Burke mused that he thought he may have been too harsh during his time as Discipline Master at St John's. His former student assured him that such was definitely not the case.[72] Conversation with another of Brother Burke's former colleagues at St John's, the former Head of Science, Tony Harrison, elicited the information that 'the Indigenous kids loved

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[70] These were the people who went to Mass at St Paul's Catholic Church and for whom Father Paddy Dodson tried unsuccessfully to organise a social club. He was opposed by Bishop O'Loughlin in this effort. Keeffe, *Paddy's Road,* p. 238 ff.

[71] Brother Burke, interview August 2005.

[72] Conversation between Brother Gerry Burke, Katrina Owens and myself at O'Loughlin Catholic College, 1999.

Gerry. They would hang around the place till he appeared from the Boarding House in the mornings and then flock around him'.[73] Brother Burke would probably dismiss this with the explanation that they were probably waiting for what was called at the time by all and sundry their 'coon cheques'. The Commonwealth government made substantial payments towards the education and upkeep of Indigenous students whether in secondary or tertiary education. These Abstudy payments provided a living allowance as well as contributions towards tuition costs and the costs of books and materials.[74] Most of those who know him would say that he underestimates his importance in the lives of his students. Another of his St John's students who was for a time an English teacher at O'Loughlin College is fulsome in her praise of Brother Burke and his compassionate approach to his students, even though he was supposedly the 'Discipline Master'.[75]

As Boarding Master at St John's Brother Burke used to make many trips around the various Top End and Northern Territory Roman Catholic Missions, from Kalumbaru in the north of Western Australia, the Tiwi Islands to the north, Daly River, Port Keats and Santa Teresa in the south to Borroloola in the Gulf Country to the East (towards the Queensland border), in order to interview potential boarders. Brother Burke recalls that he had more than one confrontation with the then Principal of St John's, Brother Paul Brooks MSC,[76] on the subject of boarders. Once the Boarding House complex was completed Brother Brooks was keen to fill it. Brother Burke, on the other hand, maintained that simply to bring in the greatest number of Aboriginal boarders, without hand picking them, could be more of a disadvantage than an advantage. Brother Burke knew that, as with non-Indigenous students, some would both cope with and benefit more than others from a boarding school education and environment. He also knew that randomly to dump a concentration of Aboriginal boys from a mixture of different 'countries', different languages and different skin groups together would be to ask for trouble. And so, when he was overruled, it turned out. Not only did the

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[73] Conversation with Dr Tony Harrison. Darwin, August 2005.

[74] www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/abstudy.htm

[75] Conversations with Nicky Brown, née Muller. Carol Muller, a long time colleague of Brother Burke at St John's and Nicky's mother, confirms her daughter's comments.

[76] Brother Paul Brooks MSC was Principal of St John's from 1989 till 1997. www.stjohns.nt.catholic.edu.au/history.htm

students often turn to fighting each other, but their presence in large numbers often deterred significant numbers of non-Indigenous Catholic students from choosing to go to St John's. Brother Burke recalls that at one stage, in order to minimise the vandalism and destruction being caused to the school buildings (as opposed to the boarding houses) a metal fence was erected around the boarding house with spear tipped railings. The students saw these as being ideal weapons and ripped them off the fence to use them as such. It was fairly common during this period that the boarding houses themselves were routinely vandalised – and the turnover in boarding house supervisors was unsurprisingly high. Others who have worked with Indigenous students have reinforced Brother Burke's view that they should be handpicked to optimise the value of the education they receive both for their own sakes as individuals and for the sake of their home communities.[77]

It was on one of these trips out to Borroloola that Burke got more than he bargained for. The 'road' to Boroloola was little more than a cattle track with a narrow strip of bitumen wide enough for one vehicle. The bitumen fell away into deep gulleys on either side of the track, so it was imperative to stay on the pavement. Brother Burke and his companion had completed about almost all of the 1300 odd kilometres of their journey when Brother Burke, who had done all the driving to that point, handed over the four wheel drive with instructions to his co-driver to stay on the bitumen at all costs. If another vehicle approached the instructions were to stop and pull over carefully rather than to attempt to keep going and pass at speed. Soon afterwards, Brother Burke says, he must have gone to sleep. He was rudely awoken by his own crash landing on the road. He presumes another vehicle had appeared from the opposite direction and, as his driver took evasive action at speed contrary to instructions, their vehicle crashed off the road and flipped over. Since this was in the pre-seat belt era, Brother

[77] Brother Burke quotes Sisters Anne Gardiner OLSH and Elizabeth Little OLSH (long time principals of Indigenous schools on Bathurst Island and Port Keats respectively) as agreeing with him on this point. Sister Helen Little OLSH working in 2006 at the Xavier Education Centre at Nguiu agrees. Interview with Brother Burke, August 2005; conversations between myself and Helen Little on several occasions. Marrara Christian College currently runs perhaps the most successful Indigenous boarding school in Darwin. MCS boards its students in single sex, same skin/language groups in family homes across the northern suburbs. Discipline is strict and punishment for breaking the rules is swift and total. Such students are removed and returned to their communities immediately.

Burke was thrown out of the vehicle onto the road. He has no idea how long he was there – or how long he may have been unconscious, but it must have been some considerable time before a vehicle came out from Borroloola to rescue them. His wrist watch had stopped as it hit the ground – a clue for those who later tried to reconstruct the events. Brother Burke sustained a badly broken arm and damaged shoulder and has little recollection of being driven into the clinic at Borroloola for basic treatment before being flown out to Gove hospital at Nhulunbuy. After being stabilised there he was then flown on to Darwin Hospital for further treatment. He recalls now that those were the days when everyone had the motto 'When in pain, get on a plane'. As soon as he could, he did just that and was flown to Sydney to St Vincent's Hospital. By the time he arrived there gangrene had set in in his arm and he was not at all a well man. It was to be some time before he was well enough to return to the Territory and St John's.

Given his coaching record at Chevalier College, it is not surprising that when Brother Burke again turned his attention to coaching football, this time at St John's – and Australian Rules – he was again successful. His St John's Under 16 Aussie Rules side won four premierships in a row and Brother Burke admits 'I used to get a bit excited!'[78] when they won. Another of his former students, Joe Hill, recalled that Brother Burke used to order a bus to take the Indigenous boarding students (and any interested others) to football training at least once a week – 'but it had to be Aussie Rules and they had to go to St Mary's Football Club'.[79] Joe's brother, Kim Hill Junior,[80] was a weekly boarder and was also one of these footballers. Among the others whom Brother Burke coached in football were Michael Long, who played AFL football with Essendon, was Norm Smith Medallist in 1993 and Brownlow Medal runner–up in 1995; Maurice Rioli, Brownlow Medal runner-up in 1983 and winner of the Norm Smith Medal, 1982, and player with Richmond and member of several All–Australian sides; Nathan Buckley, Brownlow Medal winner, 2003, Norm Smith Medallist 2002, member of All-Australian teams 1996 – 2000 and 2003 and Captain of Collingwood

[78] Brother Burke, interview August 2005.
[79] Conversation between the author and Joe Hill at O'Loughlin Catholic College. 2003.
[80] Kim Hill Junior, in 2002-3, was the ATSIC NT Northern Zone Commissioner. He played one season with South Fremantle in the Western Australian Football League before returning to Darwin to help his father raise his younger brothers. www.indigenousforums.nt.gov.au Downloaded 29 September 2008.

Football Club from 1999 to 2003; Andrew McLeod, Norm Smith medallist in 1997 and 1998, member of the All Australian teams 1998, 2000 and 2001 and vice-Captain of the Adelaide Crows.[81] Phillip Allis from Santa Teresa, and William Palm Brooks are two more successful footballers whom Brother Burke coached. But it is not only footballers who have benefited from Brother Burke's teaching and coaching skills. He also numbers amongst his past St John's students any number of people who are now contributing to the life and well being of the Northern Territory. Maurice Rioli, for example, went on to become a member of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly representing the people of the Tiwi Islands and Northern coastal communities – the Saltwater people – in the seat of Arafura. Since his retirement from politics in 2001, Maurice Rioli has returned to Melville Island and is the Community Services Manager for the Milikapiti Council. Many of Brother Burke's other former students are currently involved in the life of Darwin and the Northern Territory. Marion Scrymgour, in 2008 Deputy Chief Minister in the Northern Territory Government and Minister for Education is a former St John's student from the time Brother Burke was there.[82] Michael Long, after his retirement from AFL football continued to live in Victoria for some time but he too demonstrates the political conscience and consciousness which so often seems to be a product of Catholic education. In November 2004, Michael Long set off on his 'Long Walk' from Melbourne to Canberra to try to highlight the plight of Aboriginal people and to confront the Prime Minister, John Howard, with his concerns. The death of a young friend had stirred in him the conviction that he had to do something to stop the ongoing deaths in his community and amongst his people. As he said when asked,

> … ever since ATSIC has gone down there's been no voice,
> there's been no representation, there's been no consultation about
> some of the issues that are happening in our backyard and some
> of the conditions [are] the third world conditions. **…**
> we want to be part of Australian society. We want to walk together
> and this is probably part of that. We need to… we want John Howard
> to recognise that and if he is a great leader, please, we ask him,

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[81] In August 2008 Andrew McLeod became the first Indigenous player from the Northern Territory to play 300 games in the Australian Football League.

[82] http://www.nt.alp.org.au/people/nt/scrymgour_marion.php Downloaded 3 June 2008.

> ask him, let us come with you … this is not just about Indigenous people, this is about Australian people ….[83]

In these comments Long summed up the desire of his people to be regarded seriously as a part of mainstream Australian society. In that he reflects the long time desire of those missionaries who worked with his people along the Daly River and at Garden Point in particular.[84]

In 1987 Brother Burke spent a year travelling, the focus of his travels being to spend some time in Jerusalem and Israel. For him however the 'adventure' began when he applied for an Australian passport. Having always assumed that he had been born in Sydney, it was not until he set about applying for his passport that he discovered that he had in fact been born in Hobart. This led him, for the first time surprisingly, to begin to ask more questions about the circumstances of his birth – and the identity of his father. Until this point in time his childhood fiction of the dead soldier father was sufficient for him. His mother had never told him anything to make him doubt it. By this time, of course, Brother Burke's mother was dead so he approached Jigsaw[85] but they were unable to help him. It was to be a while longer before he found out more of the truth about his birth. Having in some ways lost rather than gained a father, and without much hope of ever resolving the matter, Brother Burke set off for Israel, the Holy Land. For him the best thing about the Holy Land was not so much some mystical experience of walking where the Biblical figures and Jesus had walked but rather the opportunity to undertake some real study in Biblical topics. This awakened in him the desire to study further when the opportunity arose.

Following his year of travel, Brother Burke again returned to St John's for a further two years as Sports Master and House Master. Since beginning his work in the Northern Territory, Brother Burke had moved around a bit. Although he

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[83] 'Michael Long walks to give his people voice'. Interview with Tony Eastley broadcast on *AM*, ABC Radio, 23 November 2004. http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2004/s1249405.htm. The Long March has now become an annual event.

[84] Michael Long's family were Daly River people. His mother and father were both people who were removed from their parents as being of mixed race and were relocated to Garden Point. http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2004/s1249405.htm - and information gained from Narelle Long, O'Loughlin Catholic College, 2004.

[85] Jigsaw is an organisation that attempts to reunites children with their parents when separation has occurred through adoption.

has spent the greater part of his time in the Territory at St John's College, he also spent periods working in the Aboriginal communities of Bathurst Island and Port Keats, as well as having visited many of the other remote communities to follow up boarders from St John's. In both Bathurst Island and Port Keats his role was simply to be a presence with the people – which in many ways is the hardest missionary task of all. When reflecting on the various groups of Indigenous students with whom he has worked Brother Burke commented that 'It was the kids from Port Keats who were the easiest to work with … the Daly River kids were the hardest'.[86] This is a particularly interesting observation given the general perception amongst the broader community that Port Keats/Wadeye is a very troubled and troubling community whereas Daly River/Nauiyu Nambiyu seems to be a model of a well functioning community. In an article in *The Bulletin* in February 2004, for example, Territory journalist Paul Toohey described Port Keats as a 'speck on the map of the northern Territory … a town on the path of self-destruction, a town of fear and loathing, where gangs using satanic, heavy metal music as their anthems engage openly in tribal warfare'.[87] The 'tribal warfare' to which Toohey refers, however, seems to have more to do with the youth culture than to traditional tribal culture. The 'warfare' between the 'Judas Priest' gang and the 'Evil Warriors' among others has seen about 600 people flee the Wadeye community since October 2002. Many are hiding out with family in Daly River, Peppimenarti, Timber Creek, Kununurra and Darwin. Some prefer to live rough as 'long grassers'[88] in Darwin than dare to return to Wadeye. Toohey quotes one of these 'exiles' as saying it is 'better to sleep with snakes than to sleep in Port Keats'.[89]

Although Toohey describes the gang members as 'bush kids who don't speak English well enough to explain themselves',[90] they nevertheless draw their gang names from mainstream heavy metal bands and satanic bands. It is 'the music of the oppressed and disadvantaged and these kids really heavily identify [with it]',

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[86] Conversation with Brother Burke, 2005.
[87] Paul Toohey, 'Gangsters' Paradise' in *The Bulletin*, 2 February 2004.
[88] 'Long grassers' is a term used to describe itinerants in and around Darwin. Far from being a pejorative term it is one used with pride by the long grassers themselves to describe those who choose to live at 'the Starlight Motel' – that is to sleep in the open, the long grass.
[89] Toohey, 'Gangsters' Paradise'.
[90] Toohey, 'Gangsters' Paradise'.

a lawyer who knows the area is quoted as saying.[91] They may be bush kids but they have either had sufficient contact with mainstream society to latch on to the music or someone has initiated them into it and the culture it engenders. Father Leary, Brother Burke and Brother Merritt would all say that sadly this too reflects the loss of authority of the tribal elders in the Port Keats – a loss of authority which came not so much as a result of missionary activity but with the more rapid changes brought about by post 1967 self-government of Aboriginal communities.[92] The music which fuels these young 'gangsters' is the music of hatred and despair. As the same lawyer[93] says: 'It's anti-authority, angry, violent and rebellious and these are the sentiments a lot of Aboriginal people can identify with. … You better hope they don't find Islam … I think I'm joking'.[94]

1990 found Brother Burke back with the community at Wadeye, Port Keats, this time doing parish work alongside the Parish Priest Xavier Desmarchelier MSC,[95] one of the priests most beloved of the Port Keats people. In 1991 he returned to St John's for a time until he began a three part course in Clinical and Pastoral Education (CPE) in Canberra. The CPE course is designed to prepare people for work particularly as Hospital Chaplains. Many people complete one CPE unit and that enables them to become assistant pastoral workers in health care facilities. It is usual for anyone who wants to become a Chaplain or co-ordinating chaplain, however, to have completed three units as Brother Burke did. Following his CPE course Brother Burke then spent three years in Mackay, Queensland, as Co-ordinating Chaplain in the Mater Hospital before spending a year in a similar position at Calvary Hospital in Canberra during 1996 and 1997.

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[91] Toohey, 'Gangsters' Paradise'. Although he is not named by Toohey, the lawyer in question is Dominic McCormack whose father was at one time a lay missionary and Principal of the Port Keats school. Dominic McCormack has returned to Port Keats where he now works as a legal advocate and translator for the people.

[92] Port Keats was run by the Tharrumurr Community Government Council in tandem with the Kardu Numida from 1975 until June 2004. From that time the Tharrumurr Regional Council has been responsible for management of the region.

[93] Possibly also Dominic McCormack.

[94] Toohey, 'Gangsters' Paradise' In late 2005 that 'joke' sounds more sinister than it once might have.

[95] Xavier Desmarchelier left the priesthood in 1999 after a long period of uncertainty about his vocation. He had some years earlier asked the Bishop, Ted Collins, to allow him to become a worker priest after the model emerging in France at the time. The Bishop refused and, after a period of leave during which he worked in Aboriginal Affairs with the NT Government, Desmarchelier had his vows 'dispensed'. In 2005 he was again working as a community advisor at Wadeye.

In 1995 Brother Burke discovered, almost by accident, that his father was in fact an Irish priest who had come to Australia in the early 1930s. The information came from a cousin. Once he recovered from his shock, this discovery made him very angry, not least because of the way the Church had handled the situation – and for the way he was treated when he sought more answers. Having heard that his father was a priest, Brother Burke approached Father Brian Lucas, now diocesan secretary for the Archdiocese of Sydney and Secretary to the Bishops' Conference, whose immediate response to him was, 'Do you want money? How much?'[96] While Brother Burke recognises that his enquiry came in the context of a growing wave of revelations about clerical misconduct and both public and legal claims against the Roman Catholic Church for recognition and compensation by many who were in a similar position to himself, he was nevertheless appalled and highly offended by the callous and discourteous reception his enquiries received. Father Lucas was no doubt relieved that all Brother Burke wanted was the facts – an account of his father's history, which the church had known for some considerable time. He was given a three page document detailing who his father was and the parishes where he had served. That document revealed that the church was well aware of his father's predilections and had responded simply by shifting him from parish to parish as complaints or potential trouble arose. His father[97] served in parishes in central Sydney and the south western suburbs of Sydney. As Brother Burke observes wryly 'they shifted him a fair bit. God knows how many half brothers and half sisters I've got out there!'[98] His father died in 1951. There is no evidence that at any time the church offered any support to Brother Burke's mother, one of the aspects which made him extremely angry.

Following his time in Canberra, Brother Burke returned to Darwin once more and spent four years as the Roman Catholic Chaplain at the Royal Darwin Hospital. In his work at RDH Brother Burke was very much helped by his prior knowledge of many of the individuals and families who frequented the Hospital,

[96] Conversation with Brother Burke, 2005.
[97] Brother Burke knows the name of his father but prefers not to divulge it.
[98] Interview August 2005.

both from his involvement with families which had passed through St John's and from his work with the people of Garden Point and Wadeye. The Royal Darwin Hospital has a significantly high proportion of Indigenous patients – particularly those from outlying communities where there are limited health facilities. The majority of these patients are suffering from diabetes and, often, end-stage renal failure and so are in hospital on dialysis for long periods. There are many instances of glaucoma and, of course, virtually all babies in the Top End are delivered at the hospital. Whilst he was working as Chaplain at RDH, Brother Burke lived in the Presbytery at St Paul's Parish in Nightcliff, suburban Darwin from 1998 to 2000, providing some companionship for the aging parish priest, Father Bill Brady MSC. In 2001 he moved from St Paul's Presbytery to live in a house owned by Xavier Desmarchelier in Wulagi (nearer the hospital) whilst maintaining his Hospital Chaplaincy. This gave him the necessary break, in his rare time off, from constant pastoral work.

In 2002, with the departure of the previous Administrator[99] of St Mary's Cathedral in Darwin, Brother Burke was asked by Bishop Collins to take on the role of Parish Worker,[100] since both he (the Bishop) and the MSC Provincial had been unable to find a priest who would come and fill the position. In many ways Brother Burke found this to be a frustrating appointment. The prior incumbent, Father Ted McCormack MSC[101] had worked hard to develop a sense of belonging amongst the parishioners of the Cathedral. Father McCormack was keen, as he had been in Nhulunbuy, to prepare the parishioners for the time – which he saw as almost inevitable – when they would need to be self-reliant (as was the early Australian Roman Catholic church in Darwin) because of the dearth of priests. Not all the parishioners welcomed this approach. Nevertheless

[99] The role of the Administrator in a Cathedral parish is virtually that of the parish priest although the Bishop retains that title. The Administrator, however, is responsible for the day to running of the parish as would be the task of a parish priest in any other parish. It can be an invidious position if the Bishop does not see eye to eye with his Administrator and vice versa.

[100] To all intents and purposes his was the role of the Cathedral Administrator but, since he was not a priest and could not say Mass, he was not entitled to the title of Administrator.

[101] Father Ted McCormack MSC was a former Army Chaplain who had been posted initially to the Nhulunbuy Parish in Arnhem Land (Gove Peninsula) for some years after a year of Parish work at Kippax, Canberra. During his time at the Cathedral he was an energetic Administrator who sought to build up the parish and its members. He maintained his often tense relationship with the Bishop by reminding the latter from time to time that he had not signed his contract as Administrator!

the parish was lively, with an ongoing program of outreach, not least through Religious Education and Sacramental programs in St Mary's Primary School. There were also adult programs such as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) – the officially sanctioned means of introducing adult believers into the Roman Catholic faith. Nevertheless, Brother Burke found his efforts being hampered as he attempted to support the RCIA in particular. The splinter group of the Neo-Catechumenate Way[102] which operated within the Diocese with the blessing of the Bishop had made things difficult for Father McCormack[103] and things were no better for Brother Burke. As an ordained priest Father McCormack had been able to stand his ground with some confidence. Brother Burke found that the old class system – priests as being superior to brothers – was well and truly alive and well and being practised against him from a number of quarters.[104] Nevertheless he quietly developed a ministry of taking communion to those parishioners who were unable to come to the Cathedral for Mass. Many of them were people he had encountered during his time as Hospital Chaplain. Brother Burke could see great potential in this position and would have been happy to stay longer but was told that, with a new Administrator (a priest) coming in 2003, there would be nothing for him to do.

As he reflects on his time working in the Top End, Brother Burke believes that the break away from working in schools, which came first when he was managing the Gsell Centre and then during his time at Wadeye, was very important for his own development as a person and as a religious. He had become very secure in the school system, having virtually never left it. It was his security blanket and it protected him from all challenges. The experience then of working on a 'Mission Station' – which was still the flavour of Wadeye/Port

[102] The Neo-Catechumenate ('The Way' as adherents refer to it) was started by Kiko Areguella in the slums of Madrid in 1965. By the time Pope John Paul II formally recognised it in 1990, it had spread around the world. It is present in most Australian dioceses and is often divisive. Those outside the Neocatechumenate regard it as a sect. Those within it regard it as the true church. For more information see www.rickross.com/reference/general/general324.html or http://church-mouse.lanuera.com/ 'Mirabooka – Neocat Jewel'.

[103] I was present at the Bishop's House one Saturday morning when the Neo-Catechumenate representatives harangued Father McCormack MSC (then Cathedral Administrator) at length and finally told him that he was 'an agent of the devil'.

[104] This judgement is based on my own experience of this period. During his time as Parish Worker, Brother Burke lived at the Bishop's House. The Diocesan Vicar General, a fellow MSC, had the room adjoining Brother Burke's but would only communicate with him by email.

Keats despite its having become a self-managing community in 1975 – was a great eye-opening and mind-expanding experience for him. It meant not least that, after years in schools where an externally imposed timetable shaped one's days, he was left to his own devices as to how to use his time. For perhaps the first time in his experience time flowed seamlessly and enabled him simply to be present to the Aboriginal people and to be responsive to them. It was during his time there that Brother Burke began to absorb some of their spirituality and lifestyle, he says. Like Father Leary and Brother Merritt, Brother Burke feels that he learned more about the Aboriginal people by spending time with them at Bathurst Island and Port Keats than he had in all his other encounters with them in Darwin.[105] Almost all his previous encounters with Aboriginal people had been within a mainstream Australian (Western) environment – one in which the Indigenous people were a minority in an alien cultural environment. Being with the people on their own country redressed that imbalance. Like so many others, Brother Burke believes that, without the destructive influence of 'grog' – and perhaps, increasingly, other substances as well – the Aboriginal people are 'tops'. Grog however, as many studies seem to show, is their damnation.

Brother Burke shares with Father Leary and Brother Merritt the appreciation of the people as they are in their own environment, when they are not required to 'perform' for white people, European outsiders. Although some anthropologists and historians might disagree, these three men believe that an absence of paternalism in their dealings with the Aboriginal people on the Catholic Missions has led to the development of lasting and mutually respectful relationships. Much of this derived from the missionaries and the Aboriginal people working side by side to build the missions, particularly at Port Keats, Daly River and on the Tiwi Islands. It probably needs it be said though that much also depended on the personalities of the missionaries. Not all were necessarily comfortable with a role of mutual dependence and shared work. In her Boyer lectures, Inga Clendinnen makes the following observations:

> … a word on missionaries. Most European colonists in most
> places have been blind to the collateral damage their activities

[105] During Brother Burke's time at St John's the boarders were almost exclusively Aboriginal.

> inflict on indigenous populations. Missionaries are especially prone to tunnel vision. Missionaries are also reconciled to doing harm, because their intention is to overturn the old ways: to transform the complex classifications of the old society into a new and much simpler one of sheep and goats. A fully initiated Aboriginal lawman, for example, risks being reclassified by the local missionary as a pathetic unfortunate in thrall to the Prince of Darkness. And in Australia the missionaries' mere presence could be locally divisive because particular Aboriginal settlements were simply handed over to whatever brand of Christian happened to apply for them.[106]

While it may be true that missionaries have tunnel vision, particularly with regard to their own work, it seems equally true that here Clendinnen is, whether deliberately or not, over-simplifying the situation. Certainly, while it is true that some missionaries saw their task as attempting to assimilate those Aborigines who were teachable,[107] or those of mixed race who might be expected to survive in mainstream society, whilst accepting (in the early days) that as a race the Aborigines would soon die out, the majority seem to have erred rather on the side of trying to ensure that however many survived they would have the necessary life skills to survive what was undoubtedly the dominant culture – and to survive in it if that was their choice.

Certainly it is true that, within the Northern Territory, the Roman Catholic mission policy was very much dictated by Bishop John O'Loughlin who essentially ignored the Indigenous culture, particularly with regard to ceremony and language, and expected his missionaries to impose the Mass – which until the 1960s was the Latin rite – and the sacraments as in the Church's historical tradition. Neither the Mass nor the sacraments contained any elements of the people's Indigenous languages, cultures or spirituality. There was no attempt to reconcile the two. Not only were the missionaries working with Indigenous people not encouraged to learn and speak the local languages, they were expressly forbidden to do so by Bishop O'Loughlin. In at least one instance a missionary priest who had a remarkable facility with learning the Indigenous

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106 Inga Clendinnen, *True Stories*. The Boyer Lectures 1999. Sydney: ABC, 1999, pp. 60 – 61.
107 See for example, Rose, *Reports form a Wild Country,* p. 134ff.

languages was quickly moved from one location to another when the bishop became aware that he had learned the language.[108] It is ironic that, although Bishop O'Loughlin seemed to fear that any attempt to incorporate Indigenous language, culture or spirituality would debase traditional Catholicism and lead to meaningless syncretism, nevertheless in such places as Daly River and Bathurst Island in particular the people were encouraged to use their art work to decorate the new churches which were built there. The art work of course incorporated their myths, their dreaming stories and their spirituality. By and large the missionary priests also did their best to learn (surreptitiously) the local languages of the people with whom they worked. Certainly it can be said that Father Leary and Brother Merritt subverted Bishop O'Loughlin's edicts by putting the people first, rather than the administrative Catholic Church. Since most of Brother Burke's time in the Territory fell into the period of Bishop Collins this was less of a problem. Bishop Collins, as a previous Mission Superior in the Northern Territory understood the nature of mission work in a way that Bishop O'Loughlin as a missionary bureaucrat never would.

Brother Burke was still at Chevalier College when the 1967 Commonwealth referendum on Aborigines began to bring about rapid changes in the status both of Aboriginal people and the missions and therefore he did not immediately feel the impact of these changes. Nevertheless as a keen observer – and one whose Aboriginal charges at the school were being affected by the changes – he felt that in many ways the priests (including Father Leary) whose role changed from being Priests-in-Charge of the missions to that of Parish Priest were less than comfortable with the change. They had, perhaps inadvertently, become comfortable in the almost dictatorial role their previous positions had entailed and the change to Parish Priest meant a significant loss of power over the people.[109] For a while the church still maintained the health clinics in the emerging communities and, in the case of all former Catholic missions in the Top

[108] Interview with Brother Burke, August 2005. Father Leo Weardon MSC was the priest. He is currently at Port Keats/Wadeye where once again he has quickly picked up the language.

[109] One could argue that this is true in the case of Father John Leary. Father Peter Robinson MSC also remarked that 'Leary liked to be in charge'. Although he, and most other people would see Leary as, at worst, a benign dictator, it is an element of his experience that is almost totally submerged in all accounts of his work – perhaps not least because he has become the source of all wisdom regarding Catholic Aboriginal missions in the Northern Territory.

End the church, through the Catholic Education Office, still maintains the schools – with generous government assistance.[110]

As Brother Burke looks back on his time working in the Northern Territory he feels that the most important aspect for him has been the realization that Aboriginal people exist. Until he led his first school tour to the Northern Territory in 1966 Brother Burke, like many other white Australians, had virtually no knowledge or experience of Aborigines. Certainly in the rarified halls of the MSC schools in Bowral, Toowoomba or Hamilton there were few Aborigines.[111] The most distressing aspect of his time working in the north, however, has been the parlous state of so many of the boys and girls who passed through St John's. Not only were they ill-prepared for the education system that swallowed them up but the majority of them 'failed the white man's wish that they become leaders in their own society'.[112] The almost total breakdown of all tribal authority in their homelands – particularly that of the men – has done nothing to help the younger generation to bridge the gap between the two cultures in which they are expected to live. In many communities it is the women who are maintaining the culture and the authority of Aboriginal law. Without their strength and leadership, many of the communities would be in even more dire straits than they are at present. Nevertheless, Brother Burke feels that from the Aboriginal people he has learned acceptance, non-judgementalism and peace. Brother Burke believes that, as a result of working with Indigenous people and learning to appreciate them, he has developed the philosophy – which he also applies to others – of 'accept me as I am'. He has learned that 'we impatient whitefellas' have to be patient and allow the Indigenous people to run their own lives in their own traditional ways, making whatever cultural adaptation **they** want to make.[113] However, even though Brother Burke and others may desire this, they nevertheless recognise that a money economy must be part of the contemporary Aboriginal way of life. Despite the fact that, to non-Indigenous observers, many Indigenous people seem to abuse money, they nevertheless need

[110] A new agreement in which the Catholic Education Office will gradually take financial responsibility for former Catholic Mission schools was being worked on throughout 2007-8. Information from Michael Avery, Director Catholic Education. February 2008.
[111] Both Michael and Patrick Dodson were educated at Monivae, Hamilton.
[112] Brother Burke, interview, August 2005.
[113] Brother Burke, interview, August 2005.

to learn how to live competently in, and manage, a cash economy. In an interview in 2000, the Rev Wali Fejo, then Principal of Nungalinya College in Darwin made a similar observation. He observed that in his dealings with his people – the Larrakia – he often had to go back to basics in trying to teach them how to value money. When he was being deluged with requests from people for mobile phones he tried to help them understand that, until they had the basic necessities of life and had learned how to pay for basic services such as food and power when the bills arrived, there was no point in wanting to buy luxury items. Rev. Fejo admitted that, for his people, learning the value of money and its place in their lives was one of the hardest lessons for them.[114]

In spite of the fact then that many non-Indigenous people see Aborigines as chronically abusing money – either through their dependence on welfare (or Community Development Employment Projects[115]), or through their 'wasting' money on grog or luxury goods which they then cannot or will not maintain – Brother Burke is convinced that mainstream society must be patient and allow the Aboriginal people to grow and develop at their own pace rather than at a pace which is imposed upon them from outside by either Church or Government authorities.

When he reflects on the impact of the Catholic missionaries and the Catholic Church in the Northern Territory, Brother Burke believes that such Missionaries of the Sacred Heart as Fathers Gsell, Docherty and Leary have all contributed to the Aboriginal people's learning to acknowledge their own uniqueness and to be proud of their heritage. To those looking on from the outside – outside Church, mission and Aborigines – it may seem like a disaster, he admits. However, he is adamant that the Aboriginal people have great faith and in times of crisis it comes to the fore. Brother Burke points out that in our present increasingly

[114] Rev Wali Fejo interviewed by the author in 2000. Interview published in *Your Retirement Your Life.* 2001.

[115] CDEP is often seen as 'work for the dole' in communities. In communities such as Nauiyu Nambiyu there is no 'sit down money'. To earn any money people must be involved in CDEP work. However, CDEP wages for workers classified as 'remote' is $229.00 per week. *CDEP Guidelines 2005 – 2006*. Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. Canberra: Australian Government Printer, 2006. p.17. Currently the adult minimum wage is $467.00 per week.

secular age, the Christian church in general, and the Roman Catholic church in particular, are struggling for recognition but the seed of faith has been sown and, he believes it will show itself perhaps in a form other than that which has been traditional – that of the transplanted English, Irish or European Catholic church. In the case of the Aboriginal people this may well be through the development of their own Indigenous theology – a theology which draws on both their own traditions and the teaching of the Church, although it must be said that, unlike the Protestant denominations which encourage their members to participate in 'doing theology',[116] the Roman Catholic Church still conveys the idea that theology is something for specialist theologians and the Curia.

It is Brother Burke's hope that as Australia moves into the twenty-first century, the Church can still have a presence on the former missions, now the communities, through the presence of resident Parish Priests – as is the case at Daly River, Wadeye, Garden Point, Santa Teresa and other former missions in the Northern Territory. However, he hopes, as does Father Leary, that such a presence will work to support and encourage Indigenous leaders within those communities to become both independent leaders of their communities and strong Christian leaders. This means the careful selection of Parish Priests to serve in the communities – a task which still of its very nature is a missionary task in many ways. If priests are appointed simply in order to have a presence there and to 'mouth religious and pious platitudes'[117] or to reinforce a conservative, almost fundamentalist, European model of the church then the missionary work so carefully and faithfully undertaken over the past century or so in the Northern Territory – and presumably elsewhere – will have come to nothing. If the current emphasis on strict adherence to tradition and the reiteration of the centrality of Roman (Papal) rule continues, then Indigenous Catholics in particular will find themselves increasingly marginalized and ultimately excluded from the church which has for so long sought to serve and nurture them. Rather than attempting to turn Indigenous people into dark skinned

[116] See for example, Gordon Dicker, *Faith with Understanding*. Melbourne: Joint Board of Christian Education, 1988.

[117] Conversation with Brother Burke, August 2005. There is some concern, for example that the appointment of Neo-Catechumenate priest such as Father Tom English to Daly River is not honouring the needs of the Indigenous people. Comments to this effect have been made by the Indigenous women, Eileen Farrelly, Brother Merritt and others. Darwin, June 2008.

clones of white Australian Catholics, the church has a much greater role in encouraging them to rediscover the spiritual richness of their own culture and to make their lives meaningful at the intersection of at least two cultures.[118] Brother Burke fears that, as the younger generation increasingly lose touch with their traditional culture, as well as with the Church, the total breakdown of Indigenous culture and society is becoming more probable.

Like any other social or cultural institution, the church is a captive of prevailing wisdom and understandings. It may well be the case that, despite their best intentions, Christian missionaries have at times been paternalistic and have handled the people in ways that have been inappropriate or degrading. One can only hope that in most cases this has been a result of misguided zeal. Unlike some of the earlier missions which presumed that they were presiding over the death throes of a race which had no place in the modern world – a view of some missions and missionaries, especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth century – this never seems to have been part of the thinking of Catholic missionaries, especially the MSCs and the OLSH sisters in the Northern Territory. As with many others who have come to the Territory, Brother Burke has loved his time here and hopes to retire here in time.

In the meantime though, having worked for two years as Chaplain to the voluntary workers at the Matthew Talbot Hostel in Woolloomooloo, Sydney, run by the St Vincent de Paul Society, Brother Burke went on to work for a further four years with *Encompass Australasia* as a residential carer at Boronia House. *Encompass Australasia* offered 'a specialist psychological service for people in helping ministries and professions who may be struggling with psychological issues or who wish to enhance their ability to live life with vitality'.[119] *Encompass* is a Public Benevolent Institution established by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes in 1997. It was initially established as a psychosexual

[118] Many Australian Indigenous cultures have been traditionally influenced by interaction with for example, Macassans or Afghans or, more recently, other Asian people such as the Indonesians or Filipinos through intermarriage and/or trade.
[119] http://www.encomp.org.au. The *Encompass Australia* program was wound up by the Australian Bishop's Conference in June 2008. The June 2008 *Encompass* Newsletter speaks of 'Closing in order to restructure programs'.

program as part of the Australian Catholic Church's 9-Point Plan (in response to sexual boundary issues within the Church) but the service has since diversified to offer a wide range of psychological services for women and men from a variety of faiths and walks of life.[120] The Matthew Talbot Hostel, which has 200 beds and serves over 1,000 free meals each day also has an Outreach Program and a Recreation Program offering vocational and life skills programs to Matthew Talbot's clients.[121] Brother Burke's role as Chaplain and Co-ordinator of the volunteer program was to support the people who provided these services. While that was a non-residential position, as a residential carer with *Encompass*, Brother Burke has lived and worked with small groups of men who are participating in one or other of the residential programs offered by *Encompass*. These programs entail intensive – and exhausting – individual and group sessions with a range of therapists and others, including art therapists, psychologists and spiritual directors. Brother Burke was a residential carer in one of the *Encompass* houses from October 2004. Although that work too has since ended, he found it both absorbing and rewarding. The *Encompass* program effectively closed at the end of 2007. Before he tackles his next mission, whatever that might be,[122] Brother Burke is looking forward to another overseas trip some twenty years after his last such trip, this time exploring parts of Asia. Although he would now be entitled to consider retirement, one feels that no such thought has crossed Brother Burke's mind.

[120] http://www.encomp.org.au
[121] http://www.vinnies.org.au/index
[122] In May 2008 the Vicar General, Father Steven Hackett MSC asked Brother Burke to consider returning to the Northern Territory to take up a part time position either as Prison Chaplain or as a school chaplain at O'Loughlin College.

Brother Gerry Burke MSC
at The Ranch, Nightcliff, May 2008.

Photo: Wendy Beresford-Maning 2008.

10. Portrait 4. Brother Ted Merritt MSC, missionary

In his Centenary Homily, delivered at the Kensington Monastery in December 2005 as part of the Mass to celebrate the centenary of the Australian Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, the Provincial Father Timothy Brennan MSC remarked that

> We MSCs talk about being called to be on earth the heart of God. We are earthen vessels yet the call is to be the heart of God for our world. … Our missions in Australia and overseas have seen generosity, heroism, self-sacrifice, even martyrdom.[1] But it is hard to leave the baggage and prejudices of one's own world behind. How do we grow in awareness of the richness, values, values and dignity of other peoples and their cultures? We can talk of God being there before we came, but to have the insight and respect to live that belief day by day is the stuff of true sanctity.[2]

In his homily Father Brennan brought together both the vision of the MSCs – to be the heart of God in and for the world – and the reality that is part of all cross-cultural mission endeavour: the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of leaving behind one's own culture and preconceived ideas about the way the world, and the people in it, should be. This is the difficulty which faces all missionaries and, increasingly, secular workers in cross-cultural situations. That the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (and the OLSH sisters) continue to be held in high esteem by so many of those Indigenous people with whom they have worked over the past century[3] suggests that these men and women have made considerable effort both

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[1] This refers particularly to three Spanish Missionaries of the Sacred Heart who were assassinated in Guatemala in 1980 by agents of the Guatemalan Government. At that time E. J. Cuskelly MSC from the Australian Province was the Superior General of the MSCs. http://misacor.org.au. Downloaded 11April 2008.

[2] Father Timothy Brennan MSC, Centenary Homily, Kensington Monastery NSW. 10 December 2005. http://misacor.org.au. Downloaded 11April 2008.

[3] The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart celebrated 100 years of service in the Northern Territory in August 2006. The nuns of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart celebrated the centenary of their missionary service in May 2008. The Aboriginal people of the Top End of the Northern Territory in particular were an integral part of the centenary celebrations of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in Darwin and around the Top End in 2006. In May 2008 at the Centenary celebrations of the OLSH sisters work in the Territory Aboriginal people were again integral to the celebration. Malarndirri (Barbara) McCarthy MLA, for example, spoke of the benefits of her education as a boarder in the OLSH school in Alice Springs while Sister Anne

to be aware of their own prejudices and to overcome them. In the case of men such as Father Leary and Brother Merritt, for example, the Aboriginal people of Daly River and Port Keats especially exercise a kind of 'ownership' of them, based on long years of interaction. That interaction has, on the part of the missionaries, been demonstrably based on their desire to live out the commission to 'go and make disciples' on the one hand and, on the other, a passionate desire to see the living conditions of the Aboriginal people improved. In Brother Merritt's case this has also involved trying to break down the geographic isolation of the people, as well as their dependence on welfare.

Speaking some fifteen years earlier, Bishop E. J. Cuskelly MSC called to mind the martyrs mentioned by Father Tim Brennan. In a conference at Downlands MSC College, Toowoomba, Bishop Cuskelly, while speaking about the revisions to the MSC Constitutions[4] brought about as a result of Vatican II noted that the old (pre-Vatican II) MSC Constitutions contained a paragraph which read:

> Following Jesus' example, we will make an effort in taking others to God with kindness and sweetness. Trusting the grace of God, we will be willing if it is necessary, to give life for them.[5]

Cuskelly noted that, by the 1970s, some MSCs thought 'that these were romantic, beautiful but unreal sentences and that they should be suppressed'[6] or written out of any new constitutions. At a meeting of the MSCs in Rome in 1981 to complete the editing of the new constitutions, those involved called to mind the three Guatemalan martyrs and read a letter from the Church in Guatemala which said, among other things, that

> Your priests saw the hungry Indians; they were witnesses of the suffering of rural families. They brought the light and force of the Gospel to prevent the enemies of God to extend the death in our land. This was their crime: to preach to all the people their right

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Gardiner OLSH was 'sung' into the gathering by a large group of Tiwi women to whom she is still 'Grandma Anne'. Tiwi woman Rosemary Tipoloura is another who speaks highly of the influence of both the OLSH sisters and the MSC missionaries in her own life and that of her people.

[4] The Constitutions of any religious Order are essentially those rules by which the members of the Order seek to live. They spell out the charism of the Order and set out its vision and way of life.

[5] E J Cuskelly, *MSC Charism and Spirituality.* http://misacor.org. Downloaded 6 June 2008

[6] Cuskelly, *MSC Charism and Spirituality.*

to live with dignity.[7]

With that in mind the paragraph concerned was rewritten as ‘We will be willing, if necessary, to give the life for our people’.[8] While it has not ever been necessary in their missionary work in the Northern Territory for any MSC to give their life through martyrdom, it is certainly true to say that many of those MSC who have worked in this mission field have literally allowed themselves to be spent in the service of ‘their people’. As is indicated in the MSC constitution mentioned above there is a real sense for the missionaries of working for and with ‘**our** people’ rather than ‘**the** people’.

This implies not that the missionaries take ownership or see themselves as in a dominant relationship with the people they go to work with but rather that, emulating Christ himself, they go to serve, to become identified with their people and to give their lives for them. To give their lives for their people does not mean martyrdom in most cases. It does mean however that, once committed to serving their people, these missionaries become lifelong advocates for them, and trusted friends. Although Father Leary and Brother Merritt both ‘retired’ from active involvement in the missions some years ago, they remain committed to their people. In a conversation in June 2008 at The Ranch with Father Leary, Brother Merritt, Father Malcolm Fyfe MSC[9] and Eileen Farrelly[10] most of the talk was about various people from Daly River or Port Keats. Although Father Leary’s memory is failing as he becomes increasingly frail and he needed to be reminded of some names of individuals, he nevertheless knew the characters about whom the conversation circled, and the concern of both Leary and Merritt for the people and their situation was evident. It was clear from the conversation that both men – and Mrs Farrelly – remain passionately committed to the welfare of ‘their people’. It is also significant that none of the three MSCs around whom this

[7] Cuskelly, *MSC Charism and Spirituality*.
[8] Cuskelly, *MSC Charism and Spirituality*.
[9] Father Malcolm Fyfe was Mission Superior for a time while both Leary and Merritt were working in the Daly region. His own ‘hands on’ missionary work was, however, in South India. Father Fyfe has been the MSC superior in Darwin since 2006.
[10] Eileen Farrelly, a former Deputy Principal at St John XXIII College in Perth, spent two years as an adult educator at Balgo, Western Australia after retiring. After retiring again she then returned to Daly River to work with Father Leary as the Women’s Educator from 1987. While in this position she worked with Father Leary and Miriam Rose Ungunmerr Baumann to establish Merrepen Arts at Daly River. In 2008 Merrepen Arts celebrated its twenty-first anniversary.

research is based – Leary, Burke and Merritt – seems to operate in the manner Father Martin Wilson MSC described when delivering the MSC Centenary Lecture at Nungalinya College in 2006. For Father Wilson, while the traditional missionary enterprise was about ‘saving souls’ among the peoples being ‘missionised’, it was equally about the missionary, through this work, saving his own soul.[11] One gets a sense from Father Leary and Brothers Merritt and Burke that concern for their own souls is a long way from being the motivation for their work. Their passion is serving ‘their’ people.

Elsewhere, in exploring the nature of the MSC charism, Cuskelly quotes Father John Futrell SJ[12] when the latter defines a charism as ‘a particular angle of looking at Jesus in the Gospels, a special stress or emphasis upon a certain way of following him and a certain way of serving him in other people’.[13] Cuskelly goes on to try to define what it is that makes the MSCs different from other religious orders, although he also notes ‘I confess my inability to answer it in any useful way’.[14] For Cuskelly the only fruitful question is ‘what inspires the lives of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart?’.[15] In answer to that question he observes that

> spirituality is never worked out at a desk, even by the most brilliant and intuitive of founders. It results from the lived experience of a great man or woman – an experience which others can live after them.[16]

Cuskelly names such exemplars as St Augustine, Ignatius of Loyola and Francis of Assisi, before he goes on to name the MSC’s own founder, Jules Chevalier. Of Chevalier he notes that, throughout his life, he lived a deep concern for people. He was also preoccupied with the ‘modern evils’ of rationalism and secularism which he saw as preventing people from living a fervent faith and letting it inform their lives.[17] From his own world view Chevalier developed and lived a

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[11] Martin J Wilson MSC, Gsell Centenary Lecture, Nungalinya College Darwin. 14 August 2006.

[12] John Futrell SJ, in *The Way Supplement,* 14, 1971, p. 63.

[13] Cuskelly, *MSC Charism and Spirituality.*

[14] Cuskelly, *MSC Charism and Spirituality.*

[15] Cuskelly, *MSC Charism and Spirituality.*

[16] Cuskelly, *MSC Charism and Spirituality.*

[17] Cuskelly, *MSC Charism and Spirituality.*

personal vocation of extreme asceticism. For the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart working in Australia in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries one could argue that similar conditions of dominant rationalism and secularism prevail. But today's MSCs are not called upon to live the same kind of radical asceticism which Chevalier himself practised. Indeed if they were to do so, one could argue that this would set them so far apart from those they are called to serve that their mission would be pointless. Ultimately, Cuskelly argues, MSCs today have consistently professed three essential elements of their founding charism:

> a concern for all people, especially those in need;
> a profound belief in the love of God manifested in Christ;
> and a spirit shaped by charity, kindness, simplicity.[18]

This is certainly true of Father Leary, Brother Merritt and Brother Burke. For Jules Chevalier, living as he did in post-Revolutionary France, his personal theology also incorporated the expression of the three elements above through devotional practices focused on the Sacred Heart of Jesus as the representation of God's love manifest to and in the world. Today, and since Vatican II, such 'sacramentals'[19] are a far less significant part of the modern Catholic's rituals of prayer, worship and service. As Father Kelliher MSC observed,[20] it is the discrete works which now replace for most MSCs (and Roman Catholics generally) these sacramentals of the past. Father Germaan Van Muylder MSC, former Belgian Provincial, in summarising some documents written by Father Klaus Sanders of the North German Province and former Assistant General of the MSCs, noted that the 'MSC identity is based not upon WHAT [they] do but on the way (HOW) [they] do things: straight from the heart'.[21]

It may seem strange to focus to this extent on the charism or spirituality of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart at the head of a chapter which aims to explore the work of an MSC brother rather than an MSC priest. It is inarguable that priests have always held a uniquely privileged position within both the hierarchy

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[18] Cuskelly, *MSC Charism and Spirituality.*

[19] In the Roman Catholic Church a 'sacramental' is an observance analogous to but not reckoned among the seven sacraments of the Church. *Oxford English Dictionary*. Examples might be the use of holy water or the sign of the Cross.

[20] See p. 112 of this thesis.

[21] Father Jim Littleton MSC, Lay Movement within the Chevalier Family. An address delivered to the Lay MSC Confraternity, Sydney, 24 September 2007.

of the Roman Catholic Church and within religious orders.[22] The religious brothers and sisters (nuns) are regarded technically within the hierarchy as 'lay' people, although lay people do not so regard them. As J. F. McMahon MSC remarks,

> the name 'lay brother' is something of a misnomer; technically as a member of a Clerical Congregation, the brother is not a layman and is often referred to as a 'coadjutor brother'. Both priests and brothers have equal rights and obligations since the vows they take of poverty, chastity and obedience are identical.[23]

McMahon goes on to note, however, that

> This equality in status has not always been apparent, partly because the priest had a higher education and was cast in the role of leader, and partly because the brother, with less formal education, was engaged in domestic work or in a trade.[24]

McMahon does not condone this two tiered hierarchy despite noting its almost inevitable existence. In his account of the MSC Brothers of the first decades of the Australian Province he makes it quite clear though that not only were the order and the missions heavily reliant on the work and commitment of the brothers but also that their contribution and their lives were deeply spiritual. It was probably this spiritual depth that enabled them to withstand the often rigorous demands of their physical labour which could involve anything from building and maintaining mission infrastructure to flood rescue work – especially on the Daly River.

Nancy Polishuk's account of her life on the Daly River begins with just such an account of flood rescue. The Polishuks took up land on the Daly River, downstream of the Mission, in December 1954. A delayed monsoon that year meant that they went to the Daly River about six months earlier than they would have otherwise. One of their most traumatic experiences, within three years of

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[22] Unfortunately, as is increasingly evident around the world, this is not least evidenced by the numerous charges of abuse being levelled at the Church for the actions,. predominantly of its priests.

[23] J F McMahon MSC, *MSC Brothers in Australia 1884 -1929*. Kensington NSW: Chevalier Press, 1978. Introduction, p. 1.

[24] McMahon, p. 1.

their arrival, was one of the worst Daly River floods in years. The 1957 flood inundated not only the farms along the river but also caused the evacuation of the Mission itself to Five Mile.[25] Brother John Pye MSC notes laconically that 'the Missionaries were encouraged to stay on in spite of the flood', not only by their superiors at Mission Headquarters in Darwin but also by the local Malak Malak people.[26] Father Leary, who masterminded the Mission evacuation, kept a fairly basic flood watch as the waters rose – testing the depth of the water with a garden stake as it rose around his bed and keeping an eye out for snakes. In the midst of arranging to evacuate the OLSH sisters, Father Leary and Brother Welch received a radio message to say that the Polishuk family[27] were in danger from the rising water. Father Leary's immediate reaction was to keep in touch with the family while continuing the evacuation of the Mission, hoping to leave any attempted rescue until the morning. By this stage the OLSH sisters and the Mission children were 'sleeping' on the sloping roofs of the convent.[28] Brother Welch MSC and local man Ted McKenzie[29], though, decided that a quicker response might be necessary notwithstanding the dangers of trying to effect a rescue at night. In the event they took the Mission boat downstream to rescue the Polishuk family, intending to bring them back to the Mission. The downstream journey was rapid and the boat hove to at the Polishuk's kitchen door. Normally the house was fifty metres from the river bank and a metre above the highest known flood level.[30] The family – Nancy, her husband John and two children, four year old Marlene and baby Peter – and some food supplies were rapidly loaded into the boat for the upstream journey.

Brother Welch was anxious to get back to the Mission to continue his evacuation work there and, in order to counter the river's flood flow against them he had attached a second outboard motor to the Mission boat. The boat, however, made little headway before finally and unexpectedly hitting a snag, throwing all the

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[25] Pye, *The Daly River Story*, pp. 20ff. Details confirmed in conversations with Sister Therese Marie Hillis OLSH, March 2007 and Eileen Farrelly, June 2007.

[26] Pye, p.20.

[27] At this stage John and Nancy Polishuck had two small children, one of whom was a baby.

[28] Polishuk with Lockwood, *Life on the Daly River*, p. 93.

[29] Ted McKenzie was obviously a mission worker but was regarded by the locals as a local.

[30] Polishuk, p. 54. The house was also built on one metre piles to raise it off the ground. The normal landing was 20 metres underwater during this flood.

occupants into the river. It had taken five and a half hours, and a refuelling pause, to travel eight kilometres up stream against the flood current. When Nancy Polishuk, still somehow clutching her four year old daughter, surfaced she saw Brother Welch with the baby in his arms. There was no sign of her husband, John, or of Ted McKenzie. The Mission boat, although overturned, had not sunk so they clung to it and floated back down river at some considerable speed, coming eventually to Charlie Dargie's (also deep under water). As they contemplated the remaining settlers between them and the ocean they were beginning to despair when, of all things, they saw two Aborigines frantically paddling a canoe towards them. Miler and Possum, local Brinkin tribesmen, had seen their plight and heard their cries as they had shot past them. They had also managed to rescue some of the gear which had fallen out of the boat. Miler and Possum ferried their load to Charlie Dargie's place,[31] three kilometres upstream of their starting point.[32] There was still no word of the missing men. The rescued party had not been at Dargie's very long before the Aborigines began shouting that two men were 'walking' through the water towards them. John Polishuk and Ted McKenzie were safe but, once that was clear, both McKenzie and Brother Welch were anxious to return to the Mission. Father Leary needed to be consulted on a rescue effort for the boat – it was the Mission's only significant means of evacuation for the nuns and children. It too was rescued eventually[33] and in time to continue the evacuation.

In time Brother Merritt MSC, who arrived at Daly River as Town Clerk in 1984, would experience his own very similar flood adventures at the Daly River Mission. Although eight years older than Brother Burke, Brother Merritt was his contemporary in the novitiate. Both men entered in the order in 1952 and progressed to the novitiate in 1953. Ted Merritt was born in Corinda, Queensland, a south-western suburb of Brisbane, to Edward and Mary (née Hennessy) in January 1928, the second eldest child in the family which consisted of two boys and two girls. His heritage was that of a traditional Irish-Australian Catholic family. His grandparents migrated from Ireland and settled in Brisbane.

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31 Again, into the kitchen since all else was under water.
32 Polishuk, pp. 91ff.
33 Polishuk, p. 120 ff. While the Mission boat was missing, the remainder of the children and nuns were evacuated from the Mission by canoe. Pye, p. 22.

Brother Merritt's earliest memories are as a three or four year old at home with the family in Brisbane. Corinda was a mid to late nineteenth century farming area along the banks of the Brisbane River.[34] In the 1930s, during the polio epidemic in Australia, a local philanthropist, George Marchant, purchased a large property formerly known as *Ardoyne* to relocate the Montrose Home for Crippled Children to Corinda. Today Corinda is a middle class suburb with a predominantly Australian-born population, the majority of whom are professionals. The religious bias of the suburb is towards Catholicism or Anglicanism. It appears to be a fairly conservative region, inasmuch as the majority of Corinda residents are churchgoers.[35] However Corinda at the time Brother Merritt was growing up was a predominantly Protestant area of Brisbane, with a mixture of middle class and working class families. Its residents were on the whole descended from English and Scottish migrants. Despite their religious difference, the Merritt family was pretty typical of the area. Brother Merritt's father was an accountant. The young Merritt was educated at St Joseph's Christian Brothers College at Gregory Terrace in Brisbane after having spent his primary years at the St Joseph's Primary School in Corinda which was run by the OLSH sisters. Among his classmates at Corinda were three girls who were later to become OLSH sisters themselves. Sister Patricia Menhennit, who was in the same class as 'the young Teddy Merritt',[36] died in 2006. However the other two sisters, Florine Gimson and Valerie Donovan, who are now at the OLSH Convent and Nursing Home in Kensington, next door to the MSC Monastery, would remember their classmate well.

As a boy his main interests and hobbies centred on cycling and, later, motor cycling. It was when Brother Merritt was a student at Terrace that he first felt a call to religious life. However at the time the prospect held no attraction for him and so he kept deferring any such decision, 'putting it on the back burner'[37] as it

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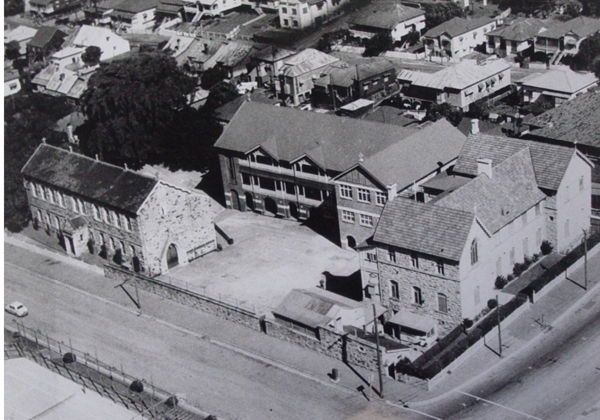
[34] Queensland Government. http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/projects/heritage/index.cgi?place=602441&back=1 Downloaded 16 June 2008.

[35] www.abs.gov.au cited in http://www.domain.com.au/Public/SuburbProfile.aspx?searchTerm=Corinda&mode=research#mapanchor. Downloaded 16 June 2008.

[36] Conversation with Sister Therese Marie Hillis OLSH. Darwin, 2007.

[37] Interview with Brother Ted Merritt MSC. Darwin, 2005.

were. His lifelong Christian values were those he was taught at home and those which were reinforced particularly during his years at primary school with the OLSH sisters at Corinda.



St Joseph's Christian Brothers College, Gregory Terrace, Brisbane.
Generally known as "Terrace".
circa 1954.

Source: www.christianbrothers.com.au

As he grew up, Brother Merritt's faith increasingly became the basis for any important life decisions to be made. When he finally came to the decision to follow a religious vocation, he says, 'It was a conscience thing rather than something I wanted to do'.[38] The conviction that he was called to religious life ultimately prevailed over his personal desire to do anything else. In joining the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart as a brother, he joined a group of men who, through the history of the MSCs in Australia, had established a formidable record of skills and achievement. Brothers Garnet Groves and John Pye are but two examples. Brother Groves had the distinction of being the MSC brother who was present at the establishment of every MSC mission in the Northern Territory after Gsell's initial mission at Nguiu on Bathurst Island. From a farming family near Goulburn in New South Wales, he noted at one time that his first job at Santa Teresa, for example, was the destruction of the 'wurlies' of the Indigenous people in order to clear the ground to build houses.[39] Bishop Gsell had mused that in rural France every family had its cow and goat and its food garden. Brother Groves thought it highly unlikely that that model was transferable to the Northern Territory Mission establishments although he himself developed fruit and vegetable gardens at every mission at which he worked. His banana grove at

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[38] Interview with Brother Ted Merritt MSC. Darwin, 2005.
[39] Father Malcom Fyfe MSC. Eulogy for Brother Garnet Groves. St Paul's Church Darwin, 2005.

Daly River still produces fruit. Brother John Pye is renowned in the Northern Territory for having introduced Australian Rules football to the Tiwi Islanders. Brother Merritt, who in time became the carer for both these MSC brothers during their retirement at The Ranch, would add his own unique exploits.

Brother Merritt joined the MSCs at the age of 25, entering the novitiate as was normal a year later. He was first professed in 1954 and finally professed in 1960. Unlike Father Leary and Brother Burke, both of whom had been heavily influenced by their exposure to the charism of their MSC teachers, Brother Merritt had little conscious knowledge of the MSCs as a congregation. Most of the congregations with which he was familiar – such as the Christian Brothers – were teaching orders and the young Merritt had no interest in teaching. It was a chance encounter with an MSC priest that prompted him 'to take a leap in the dark'[40] and join the MSCs, although perhaps unwittingly he had imbibed something of the Chevalier charism from his primary school days with the OLSH sisters.[41] Prior to entering the MSCs Brother Merritt worked in the motor industry – a job which initially he thought did little to prepare him for his life as a religious. However, throughout his religious life, it has been increasingly obvious that his peers relied on his knowledge of cars and things mechanical both for advice and practical assistance. It has been said that 'no vehicle is purchased in the Diocese of Darwin without Brother Merritt's prior advice'[42] – and sometimes with his direct assistance. Since entering the MSCs he has mastered a wide range of jobs, primarily as a mechanic but also as a pilot and as a highly respected town clerk in several of the Aboriginal communities.

Father John F. McMahon MSC, writing in 1978, points out that unlike the teaching orders such as the Christian Brothers and Marist Brothers or the nursing orders such as the Brothers of St John of God, the MSC brothers are lay brothers within a clerical religious congregation.[43] A clerical Religious Congregation is defined here as one, such as the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, which has

[40] Interview with Brother Merritt. Darwin. 2005.
[41] The OLSH sisters were founded jointly by Father Jules Chevalier, founder of the MSCs and Sister Marie Louise Hartzer.
[42] Comments by Bishop Ted Collins MSC and Sister Helen Little OLSH.
[43] McMahon, p.1.

> two types of members: priests (and those in training for the priesthood) and lay brothers. The priests are ordained ministers who, within the limits of the particular goals of their respective Congregations, act as a support force to meet the needs of the Church in a particular area. The lay brother's role is traditionally non-ministerial … they are occupied in a wide variety of works which do not require priestly ordination.[44]

The name 'lay brother', as McMahon points out, is something of misnomer in that, technically, a member of a religious order – even a Brother – is not a layman. Such men are often referred to in McMahon's text as 'coadjutor brothers'.[45] Both priests and brothers have equal rights and obligations since, as members of religious congregations, they take identical vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.[46]

Nevertheless, despite this apparent equality, as McMahon points out, inequality is fostered – although inimical to the Christian Gospel – by the practices of separating the two groups virtually from the time they entered the congregation.[47] McMahon points out that the practice of classifying the priests as First Class and the brothers as Second Class did not help the cause of equality. He refers to the 1914 Statutes for Brothers, for example, as portraying them in a subservient role.[48] On the other hand it is clear from the draft rules drawn up by Father Jules Chevalier when he established his first community in 1855 that the Brothers were to 'enjoy the same privileges and advantages as the missionary religious' even though they were to be occupied with 'the material needs of the community – kitchen, door, the sick etc'.[49] Subsequent editions of the Rules in 1857 and 1862 reiterated this although in the 1855 Rules there is a note added to the effect that 'The Brothers of the Sacred Heart shall not take their final vows

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[44] McMahon, p. 1.
[45] McMahon, p. 1.
[46] Diocesan priests on the other hand are 'incardinated' (ordained) into the service of a particular diocese and make no vows although at ordination they freely make promises of celibacy and obedience to their Bishop. http://www.ozvocations.catholic.org.au/thinking/16q.html#16 Downloaded 3 July 2007.
[47] Interview with Brother Gerry Burke MSC. Darwin, 2006.
[48] McMahon, p. 1. These rules remained basically unchanged until after Vatican II.
[49] Mc Mahon, p. 2.

until they have spent ten years in the house'[50] – a rule which did not apply to priests. The twofold implication here is that, on the one hand, the brothers' vocation needed to be tested far more rigorously than did that of the novice priests and, on the other, that their services were often indispensable to the community and therefore they needed to be kept where they were. Whereas priests were easily identifiable from their clerical garb, no particular habit was envisaged for the Brothers – a matter which was still likely to come up for discussion at meetings in Australia well into the twentieth century.[51] In both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, those brothers involved with teaching duties or supervision in the Apostolic Schools (Junior seminaries) were expected to wear the black soutane or cassock. In more recent years most priests and brothers, especially in the Northern Territory, have worn non-clerical or 'normal' dress.[52] For Brother Merritt the garb depends on the task at hand. Normal every day wear is usually either causal slacks and open-necked shirt or overalls. In mid June 2008, for example, Brother Merritt announced that he was going to spend a few days on Bathurst Island because the priest in residence wanted to extend his 'shed' to house his fishing boat. As well as that, the Presbytery which had not seen much maintenance for a very long time also needed repairs. Typically, Brother Merritt sent his tools on ahead by barge and planned to follow them in order to complete the work – and anything else he noticed while he was there.[53] (The 'anything else' included trying to make Father Huan's 'tinnie'[54] seaworthy and his boat trailer safe.) To that end, Brother Merritt cut the trailer into manageable pieces and loaded them into the tinnie for the return barge trip to Darwin. He then effectively rebuilt both the boat and the trailer before returning them, as new, to Bathurst Island.

From the early days of the MSC foundation at Kensington, the brothers were an integral part of the religious community. At first these were mostly brothers from

[50] McMahon, p. 2.
[51] MSC Archives, Kensington NSW. 0421/1938. 1946 Report, Darwin. The report includes the recommendation for 'uniformity of dress for missionary priests and brothers when collar and stock are not worn … khaki with silver plated crosses on the collar'.
[52] That is, except for those occasions on which the priest is fulfilling his sacramental role as officiating priest saying Mass.
[53] Conversation with Brother Merritt, Darwin, June 2008.
[54] While a 'tinnie' in most of Australia (including the Territory) denotes a cold can of beer, it also – as in this case – describes an aluminum runabout fishing boat.

Europe who were passing through Kensington on their way to or from the MSC Missions in the South Pacific, especially Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. The first Australian brother did not enter the order until 1898, some seven years after the Swiss MSC Father Treand arrived in Australia to establish the MSC foundation in Sydney. Both Father Treand, the founding Superior, and Father Jules Vandel,[55] the first Novice Master who arrived in 1894, realised that if Sydney were to become more than a mere staging post en route to the Missions, then brothers were going to be essential to their ongoing work. The European brothers who spent time at Kensington in the early days typified the sorts of talents that would be sought amongst the Australian Brothers to come. Their work involved such skills as the mundane cooking and house cleaning as well as blacksmithing; butchery and baking; timber cutting and sawing; carpentry; animal husbandry; building; nursing the sick missionaries who had been repatriated. Other necessary tasks which fell to the brothers were those of sacristan, door keeper, catechist or teacher.[56]

Monastery of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart at Kensington NSW. 2007.

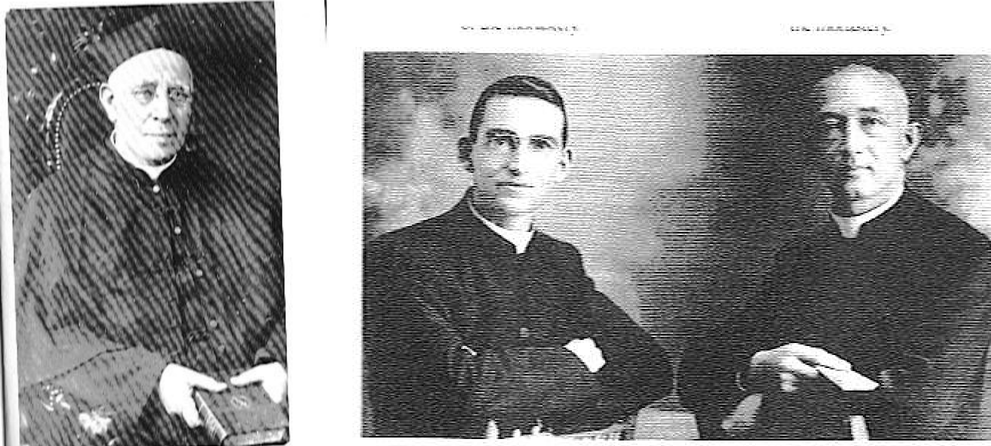
The Verjus Chapel is to the right of the photo.

The monastery dominates the skyline in this part of Sydney.

Photo: Wendy Beresford-Maning. 2007

[55] Father Jules Vandel was the same Father Vandel who had left the order at the time of the ‘crisis’ in Issoudun in 1891 for some months before being reconciled to the order and Father Chevalier. A condition of his return was that he would go to Sydney.

[56] McMahon, pp. 6-14.



Left: **Swiss MSC Father Pierre-Marie Treand MSC, first superior and provincial of the MSCs in Australia.**
Right: **Fr Chris Lynch and Fr Jules Vandel looked after the seminary at Kensington Monastery in the early years.**
Source: Anthony Caruana MSC, *The Monastery on the Hill: A History of the Sacred Heart Monastery 1887 - 1997.* Kensington: Nelen Yubu Missiological Unit. 2000.

Father Treand thought he had found his first recruit as early as 1895. This young man, Maurice O'Rourke, a parishioner of Botany whose father had suggested the name of St Bernard for the parish church at Botany, was 'fairly well off'.[57] He was a tower of strength to Father Treand, helping to finance and distribute the first copy of the *Annals* (6000 copies) in 1889. Later he contributed to the debt reduction of the Kensington Monastery and helped finance the Bishop Verjus Memorial Chapel. However, despite his frequent enquiries about joining the order as a Brother, he never took the final step and died penniless, but still a friend of the order, in 1932.[58] The first three Australian brothers entered the novitiate at Kensington in 1898. One, James Ward, left of his own volition in October 1898. Another, Joseph Kemmy, was asked to leave in 1899, before his first profession.[59] Born in Ireland, Kemmy had a colourful life before entering the order. Like many of his countrymen, he had gone to America to seek his fortune. Five years as a tram conductor in New York was followed by fifteen years in the United States Army, moving around the country. His contacts with the organised church during this time were somewhat tenuous. As a result Father

[57] McMahon. p. 13.
[58] McMahon, p. 13.
[59] McMahon, p. 13.

Treand had been chary of accepting him although Father Vandel was enthusiastic.[60] The difference in their assessments of this potential recruit no doubt pointed to the inherent difficulty in the vocation of a brother. On the one hand their temperament must necessarily be, to some degree, contemplative in order to fulfil their spiritual obligations and yet, on the other, they needed to be men of physical strength and endurance who could turn their hands to a range of menial, clerical or technical tasks, not to mention skill in the art of 'scrounging'.[61] Father Treand doubtless saw Kemmy's colourful life as unsuitable preparation for his spiritual calling while Father Vandel appreciated the experiences of real world survival that he brought with him. By the end of 1899 then there was only one of the three left. Thus Brother Robert South became the first Australian MSC brother to be professed. Born at Glen Gower (Ballarat, Victoria), Brother South was, according to Father Vandel, 'more intelligent than most and one who would make an exemplary catechist in the Missions when we can get a brother who can look after our horse and our cows'.[62] As always, the mundane needs of the Community House tempered any enthusiasm about sending brothers to the missions.

Brother South's fate was to be an ongoing issue for some time.[63] In 1900 Bishop de Boismenu MSC on visitation from the New Guinea highlands, observed that Brother South did not seem to have the necessary physical strength for service in the missions. Brother South on more than one occasion wrote directly to the Provincial, pressing his claim to serve on the Missions – if not New Guinea or the Gilbert Islands, then at least with Father Gsell in Darwin. Nevertheless he was not destined for the missions. In 1904 the MSCs purchased the property that was to become Douglas Park at Bowral in the NSW southern highlands. Brother South expressed a desire to go there as a foundation member of the new community. Despite his expressed desire to join Father Gsell in Darwin in 1922 when the latter had plans to set up a dairy on Bathurst Island, Brother South remained at Douglas Park, working as infirmarian, cook and poultry farmer as

[60] McMahon, p. 26

[61] McMahon. p. 26.

[62] McMahon, p. 14.

[63] McMahon deals at some length with Brother South's experiences. pp. 14 -15. McMahon also notes that information on the period 1903-1909 is limited owing to the absence of the Minute Book of the Provincial Council for this time from the MSC Archives.

well as musician. He became a legend to generations of schoolboys at Chevalier College, famous 'not only for his unique style of playing music and his spectacular malapropisms, but also for his care and concern for them over many years'.[64] He has been credited with naming the MSC Toowoomba College 'Downlands'.[65] In short, Brother South typifies the life and work of an MSC brother both in its diversity and its commitment to the life of the order and to the church.

Brother Merritt, on the other hand, found it difficult to adjust to life in the seminary which had moved from its original site at the Kensington Monastery to Douglas Park in 1914 after a period of five years during which there were no brothers in formation. The Brothers' Novitiate reopened in March 1915 by which time there were only four professed brothers, together with five 'postulants of the second class' at Douglas Park.[66] Brother Merritt's difficulties were no doubt in part due to the fact that, like most religious orders, little if anything changed over the years until the major reconstruction of religious life as an outcome of the Councils of Vatican II in the 1960s. Whether he entered in 1898 or 1952, life was not much different for the brother, save perhaps for the size of the community and the location of the novitiate. The rules as laid down for the brothers in 1898 were such that in many ways the brothers shared the same routines of religious life as did the priests and novice priests (students): rising daily at 4.30 a.m. as in France (although Father Vandel soon changed this to a more suitable hour); morning prayers, meditation and Mass for all the community. The brothers made a meditation of a half hour in the morning and again later in the day (presumably when their work had finished for the day). The brothers were encouraged to receive Holy Communion on Sundays and Feast Days. While the priests and students said their daily Office, the brothers said an extra Rosary. If there were more than three brothers in the community they had a separate recreation area and a separate table in the dining room. Wednesday was set aside for walks for the students but not for the brothers. Only the priests were allowed to read newspapers. For other matters one rule applied to all: weekly sacramental

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[64] McMahon, p. 15.
[65] McMahon, pp. 14- 15.
[66] McMahon, p. 22.

confession, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, spiritual reading and the Chapter of faults during which time the brothers fronted up first, followed by the students and finally the priests.[67]

The Chapter of faults involved a weekly accounting for one's behaviour and misdemeanours, if any, before the gathered community. It was always assumed that members of the community would have faults to confess and for which reparation would be made. This was in keeping with the general sense of imperfection and the need for reparation for one's misdemeanours or faults with which the Catholic church was imbued at the time. In many ways this deeply embedded attitude could be traced back to the Jansenist heresy[68] of seventeenth century France which held that man was inherently sinful and, without divine intervention, could never become good. Jansenism was a belief which drew on St Augustine's emphasis on the Fall of man, rather than the creation of humanity in God's image – inherently good at the outset. As such Jansenism emphasised the need for high levels of piety and moral rectitude. The Jansenists had much in common with, although they were less radical than, the Albigensians of twelfth century France. Both heresies are closely related to Manicheeism which influenced the early theology of St Augustine of Hippo in the fourth century.[69] Daily Benediction and spiritual reading during meals in the refectory (although the Brothers working in the kitchen were exempt from reading) completed the rules by which life was lived.

Although there is no mention of any study time for the brothers, neither were they by 1914 expressly forbidden from reading any books except those provided by their Superior. Similarly, they were no longer forbidden to learn Latin although it is actively discouraged.[70] Father Linckens MSC spelled out the reason for this on his visitation to the Australian Province in 1907, when he responded adversely to the 'mingling of the novices of the first and second class'

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[67] McMahon, p. 19.

[68] Jansenism, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08285a.htm Downloaded 6 July 2007.

[69] All these heresies find their basis in the complex Gnostic belief in the duality of the human soul. See Ronald Finucane, 'Persecution and Inquisition' in Tim Dowley (ed), *The History of Christianity*. Oxford: Lion Publishing, 1994, pp. 320-329.

[70] McMahon, p. 19. The 1914 Rules for coadjutors brothers do however expressly forbid 'the study of Latin'. See Appendix 3.

(that is, students and brothers) because he felt that 'the brothers will be exposed to the temptation of the priesthood'.[71] Father Vandel obviously agreed, having written some time earlier that 'there is nothing that spoils a lay brother more than the idea of becoming a priest'.[72] In 1911 the MSC Superior General, Father Meyer, also noted that 'Scholastics [student priests] are forbidden to do material works, especially farm work, because it distracts them from studies of great importance'.[73] Clearly then, although the rules did not set out to create within the order a two class system in which one class was subordinate to the other in a hierarchical sense, that was the result.

Notwithstanding the fact that the life of the novitiate was ruled by and steeped in the traditions established by Jules Chevalier in nineteenth century France, Brother Merritt's difficulty in adjusting to the demands of the life of the novitiate was no doubt also due in part to the fact that he had for some years been self-reliant, working in an industry which he loved and enjoying the relative freedoms of being a single young man. Unlike many of the young men who found their way into the novitiate having been influenced by the MSC charism at school, Brother Merritt had enjoyed the robust teaching of the Christian Brothers. His primary schooling at the hands of the OLSH sisters had given him, although he probably did not know it at the time, an early encounter with the spirituality of the Sacred Heart as practised by both the OLSH sisters and MSCs. Although, as mentioned, Brother Merritt felt the call to religious life while at school, he knew that he was not called to serve God through the congregation of the Christian Brothers. He had neither the aptitude nor the inclination to become a teacher which was then the sole ministry of the Christian Brothers. His interest in engines and motor vehicles led him from motor cycles to cars and, from the time he left school until he entered the MSCs, Brother Merritt worked for Dear's Motors in Brisbane as a car salesman.[74] Although it may have seemed highly

[71] McMahon, p. 21. In the history of the MSCs in Australia there is one man who entered the Order and took his vows as a brother, serving in that capacity in the Tiwi Islands and at St John's College in Darwin, before later returning to the novitiate and taking his vows as a priest. Father Frank Perry then returned to Darwin for a time as Administrator of St Mary's Cathedral before returning to Coogee in NSW.

[72] McMahon, p. 21.

[73] McMahon, p. 21.

[74] Interview with Brother Burke, August 2005.

improbable at the time, this background was to remain useful to Brother Merritt in his later work in the Northern Territory.

Despite finding it tough going, Brother Merritt believes that by the end of his training in the novitiate he had learned many skills which later came to be very useful in his life in various Northern Territory missions. Perhaps it was also the variety of tasks he was given as a young religious that was also of great use to him later. In the early years of his life as a religious Brother Merritt's work kept him mostly in and around the MSC heartland of Bowral and Kensington in New South Wales and Toowoomba in Southern Queensland. Throughout 1954 and 1955 he worked at Douglas Park as a 'gardener'. In fact Brother Merritt was at this time running the vegetable garden and orchard attached to the Novitiate at Douglas Park. In 1956 he worked in the dining room at Chevalier College, Bowral. Then, from 1957-62, Brother Merritt worked in the office of the MSC publication, *Annals*, in Kensington, a suburb of Sydney, New South Wales. Throughout this time he was learning new skills which would stand him in good stead when he would later become Town Clerk in two Top End Missions, Port Keats (Wadeye) and Daly River (Nauiyu Nambiyu). From 1963 to 1965, according to the MSC archival record,[75] Brother Merritt was again working in the Dining Room at Downlands College, then an MSC boarding school for boys in Toowoomba.[76] Not surprisingly, Brother Merritt's recollections give a richer and more varied account of his work with the MSCs than does the bare outline maintained by the MSC archives. Some of his work at Downlands involved working with other Brothers in the kitchen and the dining room of the College, but he also worked on the farm and in the dairy as well as undertaking a variety of maintenance tasks.

Somewhere around this time Brother John Pye MSC visited Downlands on 'holiday' from the Tiwi Islands. There was something about the younger brother that caught Pye's attention. He brought the younger man to the attention of the then Provincial, observing that, if he did not send Brother Merritt to the missions

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[75] Tony Caruana MSC, Account of Brother Merritt's Mission postings with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (typescript), June 2004. (Father Caruana is the MSC Archivist)

[76] Downlands was founded by the MSCs in 1931 as a boy's Day and Boarding College. Today it is a co-educational College with some 800 students.

in the North he would be wasting a great resource. Brother Pye had recognised Brother Merritt's mechanical abilities and potential versatility and challenged the then Provincial as to why he was 'wasting such a potentially talented young man in clerical, farming or kitchen work when the missions were crying out for such men'.[77] Brother Pye takes the credit for having Brother Merritt transferred from his menial existence to the Northern Territory missions.[78] The challenge was accepted and Brother Merritt was sent to Bathurst Island. As a result the year 1966 saw a significant change from the work Brother Merritt had been doing up until this point as he was sent to Nguiu, on the south-eastern tip of Bathurst Island. This was his first Top End experience. He was to be the resident mechanic to the Nguiu community for the next four years. These four years at Nguiu spun themselves eventually into ten years and marked the beginning of some fifteen years of working as a mechanic in the Northern Territory and Papua New Guinea. During his time as the Nguiu mechanic Brother Merritt spent two years in Wadeye (1970-71) followed by a year in Kensington NSW (1972) while he upgraded his auto-mechanical skills at Sydney Technical College. Brother Pye, himself, who had already been working in the Territory since 1941, having avoided being sent to New Britain as were his two companions and contemporaries, knew the task which awaited the young Brother. Pye's own work in the Territory Missions was very similar to that which Brother Merritt would take up.[79] Brother Pye was fortunate in being sent to the Northern Territory since both of the men sent North (to New Britain) at the same time as he – Brother Cliff Brennan MSC and Father Edward Harris MSC – died at the hands of the Japanese occupation forces. Father Harris disappeared during a Japanese raid on New Britain and his body was never found. Brother Brennan was one of many civilian prisoners aboard the *Montevideo Maru* when it was torpedoed by an American submarine in June 1942, leaving no survivors.[80]

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[77] Comments made by Provincial Father Tim Brennan MSC, on the occasion of Brother Pye's centenary celebrations at St John's College, Darwin, 28 December 2006.

[78] Father Tim Brennan MSC. St John's College, Darwin, 2006. Brother Pye confirmed this recollection.

[79] After a number of years at the Daly River Mission Brother Pye returned to the Tiwi Islands in 1970, remaining there long after most men would have retired. He eventually retired to The Ranch in Darwin and, in 2007, in his 101st year, lived at the Darwin Nursing Home. His constant visitors were Brother Ted Merritt and Brother Colin Milne MSC.

[80] Christine Gordon, *Punderdelime*, p. 15.

Between 1966 and 1977, Brother Merritt worked at Nguiu, Bathurst Island with the previously mentioned diversion of two years which he spent at Wadeye on the mainland. In each of these places he was working as a mechanic. Wherever he was, his task was to maintain all the mission machinery including the electrical pumps and diesel power generators as well as vehicles and boats. At the same time he was doing scores of other tasks around the mission. Sister Therese Marie Hillis OLSH tells the story of an unfortunate incident that occurred while Brother Merritt was working on the Tiwi Islands. The wires from the electricity generator which served the Mission school and community passed over a shed near the school. They should have been safe but, children being as adventurous as they are, a young girl climbed onto the shed roof and became entangled in the wires as the generator was being tested and was electrocuted. Brother Merritt, somehow seeing the danger, immediately shut off the generator and rescued the child. It seems that, whatever he was doing, Brother Merritt was alert to the events around him and when a quick response was called for, he could be depended upon. Greg Outred, who worked as the community mechanic at Daly River when Brother Merritt was there, is on record as describing Brother Merritt as the best mechanic he has ever worked with.[81]

Not all Brother Merritt's actions were necessarily directed to saving lives however. Occasionally they were directed instead to relieving what could be both the monotony and the stress of missionary work. During these days at Bathurst Island it was the routine for both the MSC men, the OLSH sisters and some lay missionaries to attend early morning Mass each day before the work of the day got underway. Mass then began in the pre-dawn dark and, because of the prevalence of mosquitoes, a spray can of mosquito repellent stood just inside the doors of the church alongside the Holy Water. It was an automatic action for everyone entering the church first to bless themselves and then to spray on the insect repellent. One morning, as Sister Elizabeth Little OLSH recalls, people stumbled into Mass half asleep as usual, performing this dual ritual. As she walked down the church to her seat she became aware of a thin brother wearing a black soutane in front of her sitting with his shoulders heaving. It was only later

[81] Conversations with Eileen Farrelly and Nellie Riley, Greg Outred's partner. Darwin, 2006.

that she realised that Brother Merritt was convulsed with laughter, having substituted a can of shaving cream for the usual insect spray. In the dark he had scored any number of victims.[82] His sense of humour was as vital to his ministry as was his sense of vocation.

In 1977 Brother Merritt, after a further four years at Bathurst Island, agreed to work for two years at Sideia in the Milne Bay Province at the south eastern tip of Papua New Guinea. When he was posted to Milne Bay primarily to work on marine engines as well as land engines Brother Merritt, typically, undertook a course of marine engineering in order to prepare himself for the task ahead. These marine engineering skills would also be useful later at both Port Keats and Daly River where boats are not only used for fishing and recreation but also as the only significant means of transport during the Wet. Although an all weather sealed road now provides access to the Daly River community, the road is still often cut at any one of the many creeks and floodways that cross it between the Daly River community and Adelaide River. (The road from Daly River to Port Keats is impassable during the Wet.) In times of local flooding at Daly River boats provide the only means of evacuation and they must be kept in reliable working order. At Milne Bay, Brother Merritt spent the bulk of his time involved in the maintenance of marine craft, mostly small ships. Here again Brother Merritt's multiple talents were put to good use. He also spent a year at the MSC Minor Seminary, Chanel College, in Rabaul in 1979 as Bursar before returning to Australia to spend three years at the Santa Teresa mission in Central Australia, once again as their resident mechanic. Sister Therese Marie Hillis OLSH recounts how she met Brother Merritt in Eastern Papua in 1978. He told her that 'he hoped he would have completed his sentence in New Guinea soon'.[83] But it was not to be – at least not for another year. Clearly Brother Merritt did not enjoy his posting to Papua New Guinea as he did his work in the Northern Territory. Nevertheless none of the skills he was required to use there was to be wasted in the future.

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[82] Conversation with Sister Elizabeth Little OLSH, Darwin, 23 March 2008
[83] Conversation with Sister Therese Marie Hillis OLSH, Darwin, 11 July 2007.

In 1984 Brother Merritt went to Daly River where he worked in administration as Town Clerk until 1987. This was despite Bishop O'Loughlin's declared opposition to Religious working in secular employment. Nonetheless O'Loughlin recognised the advantage of having one of his own congregation working in this role as the Mission became increasingly a joint venture between Church and government. Later Bishop Collins would also make an exception for Father Xavier Desmarchelier MSC. Two of Brother Merritt's more unusual exploits during this time included purchasing a (road) grader in Sydney for use at Daly River and personally driving the machine back from Sydney to Daly River.[84] On another occasion he also drove a mechanical digger from Darwin to Daly River. Brother Merritt commented of this feat that, at the time, the road was further to the west of its present course and crossed even more creeks than it currently does. At that stage, when the road was more or less a rough gravel track, there were any number of "jump-ups" – steep descents into and ascents out of the creek or river beds. Brother Merritt recounted that, in order to negotiate these jump-ups, it was necessary to use the digger to scour out a path for itself down to the river or creek bed and then to build a way out of the river bed on the far side. The machine was to be used in road works and building as well as land clearing and it proved its value on the way to its destination.[85]

It was while Brother Merritt was Town Clerk that Daly River began its 'no work no pay' regime. This meant that any member of the community entitled to payment under the terms of Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) actually had to do some work around the community in order to be paid. There was to be no 'sit down' money. It was this attitude that also led to the development of the Merrepen Arts Centre. CDEP also funded the community building and housing maintenance schedule devised by Ken Baumann which was still in operation until the Intervention in 2007. CDEP funds were also used as seeding funds to build up Brother Merritt's road gangs which successfully tendered for most of the Government road works in the Coomalie Shire.

[84] This information was provided by an unnamed friend of Brother Merritt. Brother Merritt himself claims he only drove the grader from Darwin to Daly River.
[85] Conversation with Brother Merritt at The Ranch, Darwin, 15 June 2008.

The work shed in the early days of Daly River Mission with the Austin Champ jeep and Brother Fitzgerald MSC in the background and Brother Welch standing near the shed.
Source: Pye, *The Daly River Story,* p. 13.

A typical 'jump up'. This is the approach to Mango Farm on the Daly River, with the river in flood. Mango Farm is the site of the first Jesuit Mission on the Daly River. Source: Mango Farm.

Below**: The Works depot at Daly River Communuity. 2007.**

Photo: Wendy Beresford-Maning

Merrepen Arts Gallery Daly River. 2007.

Photo: Wendy Beresford-Maning

During the 1980s the MSCs recognised the wisdom of acquiring an aeroplane to service their isolated mission stations, and especially the Homeland outstations which were then in their early stages of development. Both Daly River and Port Keats/Wadeye and the various homelands along the Daly and Moyle Rivers in particular were regularly cut off entirely during the Wet. Prior to the advent of the MSC plane, the only means of access to any of these communities was by boat from as far as the Five Mile at Daly River (where the Christian Leadership Centre was established). The boats were left there and then the trip into Darwin and back could be completed by four wheel drive vehicle. The road to Daly River was, until the late 1990s only partly sealed beyond Adelaide River, where it left the Stuart Highway. The Daly River Road largely followed the track of the original highway and even today the Daly River must be forded at the Daly River Crossing – possible only during the Dry season. The road from Daly River to Wadeye and the outstations such as Peppimenarti and Woodikulpya is still accessible even in the Dry only to four wheel drive vehicles.

According to Sister Therese Marie Hillis OLSH, Brother Merritt was a very cautious and unenthusiastic conscript to flying. Nevertheless he took himself to a flying school in Hamilton in Victoria and gained a commercial pilot's licence. It was a good choice. Not only is the MSC Monivae College in Hamilton but this Victorian Western District city has a long flying history. The first all-Australian aeroplane was designed and built in Hamilton by local man John Duigan between 1908 and 1913, and his cousin, eleven year old George Simpson, who later

trained as a doctor, met the Reverend John Flynn in 1909.The young Simpson was clearly greatly influenced by meeting the man who established the Flying Doctor Service and later offered his services to Flynn as a flying doctor.[86] In 1936 Hamilton was to be the site of Reginald Ansett's first foray into flying passenger aircraft from Hamilton to Melbourne in competition with the railways which at that time had the monopoly on such transport. In 1936, to supplement his income from the fledgling airline, Reg Ansett opened a flying school at Hamilton.[87] For Brother Merritt, though, the prospect of flying did not initially hold the same mystique as it apparently had for Duigan, Simpson and Ansett. For him, learning to fly was at first horrific.[88] However, once he had gained his licence and the MSCs obtained their plane, he continued to fly it until the Order, in its wisdom, decided it no longer needed the plane during the late 1990s,[89] by which time the communities of Daly River and Port Keats had decided that they wanted to establish their own air link with Darwin and, with the help of Brother Merritt and Brother Ken Gallagher MSC, they established their own airline, which became 'Murin Travel and Freight Services'[90] and still operates effectively in a field which has seen many of its competitors – notably those serving Aboriginal communities, such as Wimray, Air Ngukurr and Aboriginal Air Services[91] – collapse, while the Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF) which used to service the Arnhem Land communities has pulled out of the Northern Territory for financial reasons. MAF handed its business over to Aboriginal Air Services which then leased the Air Ngukurr planes but this organisation also went into receivership.[92]

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[86] http://www.ctie.monash.edu.au/hargrave/duigan_hamilton.html Downloaded 20 July 2007.

[87] www.ansett.com.au Downloaded 20 July 2007.

[88] Information from Sister Therese Marie Hillis.

[89] When Leary and Merritt first came to the Northern Territory missions the 'road' linking Darwin and Daly River was little more than a track through the bush, frequently cut by creeks and streams of varying depths. Port Keats was only accessible by sea and river. Even now it is easy to see the wisdom of the order having its own plane, if only for a time.

[90] Named for the Murinpatha people of Port Keats.

[91] Air Ngukurr began operations in 1997 (www.ouw,edu,au/arts/sealcp/ngunews) and ceased trading in 2006 (Information from Noel Bleakley, CEO Wimray and Ngukurr Air.). Aboriginal Air Services (AAS) went into voluntary administration and then liquidation in September 2006 after 20 years of operation during which it never made a profit.
(http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200609/s1732686.htm and http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,20420277-2702,00.html) AAS had taken over Arnhem Land routes previously serviced by the Missionary Aviation Fellowship in April 2006. (http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2006/04/22/1621614.htm) Downloaded 20 July 2007.

[92] The information about the demise of these air companies is based on information from Noel Bleakley, who was a commercial pilot and former part owner of Wimray. He was also the

Once he began flying Brother Merritt established a reputation for being a very sound pilot and increasingly came to love his flying. Since the MSC plane was not linked to any specific airline, it was not unusual for people who were waiting for him to deliver parcels or to pick them up at Darwin airport (at first at the Wimray base and later at Murin, both in the General Aviation section of the airport) to be told on enquiring as to his arrival or departure times that 'We'll know when the plane lands and taxis up to the door'.[93] This is not to imply that Brother Merritt had not in fact filed his flight plans with the appropriate authorities, since he was always a very safe and safety conscious pilot who prided himself on his ability to fly his passengers very smoothly and without incident despite the turbulence of Territory air, but rather that, since he was not directly linked to either Wimray or Murin, his flights were not subject to their scheduling. It left him free in fact to ferry passengers and goods when and where necessary. Not only was he called on to fly passengers to and from both Daly River and Wadeye, but the plane was also used to deliver the mail and other goods which could be easily carried. Larger items were and are still transported to Port Keats by both barge and road (in the Dry) and to Daly River by road.

Father Peter Hearn MSC, then the mission priest at Port Keats/Wadeye, recalls that on one occasion Brother Merritt was making his mail run to the mission but, as he circled, there was a gathering of people on the airstrip so he was unable to land. Since Father John Leary was a passenger in the plane, Brother Merritt decided that the easiest solution would be to 'go around' and overfly the airstrip and simply drop the mail out through the passenger window of the plane. He gave Father Leary the appropriate instructions and duly banked the plane so that Father Leary could toss out the mail. Unfortunately, Father Leary's arms were not quite long enough for the job and the mail sack caught on the wing strut of the plane. After telling Leary that he would have to get out and dislodge it, Brother Merritt decided that the simplest and safest way to dislodge the mail sack

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Managing Director of Air Ngukkurr at the time of its demise. In July 2007 he was the Director of CDEP at Ramingining in Arnhem Land.

[93] Comment to the author on enquiring while waiting to pick up one of Brother Merritt's passengers returning from Daly River in the early 1990s. This was something of a throw-away comment since Brother Merritt was meticulous about filing his flight plans.

would be to go around yet again and 'waggle the wings' in order to dislodge and drop the mail. He completed this manoeuvre very successfully and indeed dislodged Her Majesty's Mail successfully. The only miscalculation was that the mail, rather than landing at the edge of the airstrip, toppled headlong into the middle of the nearby lagoon where presumably it still is.[94]

Aerial view of Port Keats/Wadeye showing airstrip. The lagoon is to left of the airstrip – and dry during the Dry season.

Source: Picture NT.

Following his four years in administration at Daly River during which time the road gangs which he supervised won a number of government road building contracts in the Coomalie Region, Brother Merritt then spent three years in administration based at The Ranch in Nightcliff, Darwin, before returning to Daly River for a year in 1991 as the community mechanic. The years 1992-3 saw him at Port Keats/Wadeye both as the community mechanic and as Town Clerk before transferring to the Daly River community (Nauiyu Nambiyu) in 1994 to continue in the same dual role of mechanic and Town Clerk for the next seven years. Once again, despite the demands of this dual role as mechanic and Town Clerk, Brother Merritt would still always find time for the children of the community. Sister Therese Marie Hillis OLSH recalls watching him one morning working on the heavy vehicles in the CDEP compound but breaking off when a youngster approached him for help with a punctured bike tyre. Brother Merritt broke off his work, repaired the bike tyre very efficiently and then went back to his own work. Whenever he came in to Darwin he never missed an opportunity

[94] Conversation with Father Peter Hearn MSC, August 2006.

to go out to the Shoal Bay Dump Shop and collect as many bicycle frames or parts as he could find (and that could be transported as deck cargo on the barge) so that he could remake them into serviceable bikes for the youngsters of the community.

In 2001 Brother Merritt moved back to The Ranch in Nightcliff where he became bursar to the MSC community there, whilst still being on call to the diocese generally as a mechanic, auto expert and Mr Fix-it. Although the residents of The Ranch may no longer be actively involved with the former mission communities on a daily basis they nevertheless retain their interest in the people. Retirement is, for them a relative term. They visit the former missions frequently and remain in almost constant touch with those people from the former missions who now live or work in Darwin. Many, such as Father Frank Flynn, Brother Garnet Groves and, more recently, Brother Ed Bennett remain at The Ranch until the time comes to move into the OLSH Nursing Home at Kensington NSW.[95] In 2004, the year which saw the 50th anniversary of his first profession, Brother Merritt found himself in the position of Acting Superior to the MSC community at The Ranch – a far cry from his early days as dishwasher at Chevalier College. Although Brother Merritt could be fully occupied with the care of the older members of The Ranch community, and of the buildings, gardens and vehicles connected to that community, he nevertheless finds time to be fully involved with the work of St Vincent de Paul (widely known as 'Vinnies') of which he is the local parish secretary. This work has brought him into contact with the local urban Indigenous people, many of whom still have contacts back in their home communities. Many of those who come to the attention of 'Vinnies' have been made unwelcome in their home communities because of habitual drunkenness or drug use. On at least one occasion Brother Merritt has found himself being propositioned by one such lady with whom he had worked through Vinnies. The

[95] Father Frank Flynn moved south in 2000 and died not long afterwards. Brother Garnet Groves died in 2005 without leaving the Northern Territory. He held the enviable record of being at the start of every Northern Territory mission of the MSCs. Brother Ed Bennet who served at Santa Teresa and Alice Springs for most of his time in the Northern Territory is currently at The Ranch, having moved from Alice Springs in June 2007. The OLSH Nursing Home is next door to the MSC Monastery in Kensington. The 2008 Ranch community comprised: Father Malcom Fyfe, Superior and Father John Leary; Brothers Ed Bennett, Ted Merritt, Colin Milne and Emeritus Bishop Ted Collins.

woman in question, heavily inebriated, recognised Brother Merritt and after trying unsuccessfully to get him to drive her 'home', offered him her services. Fortunately Brother Merritt's sense of humour enabled him to see the funny side of the situation. It did not often happen that he was propositioned in this way.

Since 2005, and now officially 'retired', Brother Merritt spends much of his time caring for Brother John Pye, whose intervention saw him come to the Northern Territory. Brother Pye has for some years been a resident of the Darwin Nursing Home[96] and is now virtually blind. Nonetheless he turns out for such celebrations as the MSC and OLSH centenaries, not to mention his own in 2006.

Brother Rexford John Pye (seated) and Brother Ted Merritt at St John's College Darwin on the occasion of Brother Pye's 100th birthday celebrations.
26 December 2006

Photo:
Wendy Beresford-Maning

Brother Merritt sees the role of the Church today as it works with Indigenous people as being much the same it has ever been – a teaching role. He goes back to the initial motivation for missionary activity and evangelism of any sort: 'Go … teach all nations …'. However, like many others who have spent a lifetime working on and in the mission field, Brother Merritt acknowledges the difficulties which still exist – and perhaps which are becoming greater rather than lesser as time passes. From his own experience he suggests that the biggest difficulty facing both the Church and the Indigenous people is the lack of discipline which begins in the young family. With increasing secularisation and a

[96] Formerly the Salvation Army Nursing Home in Darwin.

weakening of the spiritual ties of the people either to the spirituality of the Church or to their own tribal religion, there is an increasing and collateral breakdown in the structures of society and the inherent discipline structures which traditionally existed. The young people no longer respect the old people of their communities who were traditionally the law givers and powerful figures in their communities. Like so many others who have worked with Indigenous people, Brother Merritt recognises that the Aborigines' priorities and values are in many ways quite different from those of the white community. In order to offer the Indigenous people lasting assistance, he believes that the focus of any future development must be on working with families rather than with individuals.[97] Having worked closely with the men at Daly River on his CDEP road gangs, Brother Merritt observed that the Western concept of work (carried out persistently over a relatively long period of time) is largely foreign to the Aborigine who is, on the other hand, capable of relatively short bursts of intense concentration as befits a hunting culture. Territory optometrist Helen Summers has also observed that whereas the visual acuity for close objects is limited in Aborigines when compared with non-Indigenous people, the scope and acuity of their distance vision is three times that of non-Indigenous people. Again this would appear to reflect a long hunting tradition where distance vision is far more important than close vision.[98] Such characteristics as these may go some way towards explaining why various ventures such as locally (Indigenous) run tourism and fishing tours and charters have not proved to be successful.[99] On the other hand, the Merrepen Arts Centre, with the direction until 2004, of outside Art Managers[100] has continued to prosper. Merrepen, since its inception has been managed by a board of local people who are responsible for the appointment of the Art Manager. Since 2005 the Art Manager has been local man, Aaron McTaggart, himself an artist and son of artist Patricia Marrfurra McTaggart.[101]

[97] Such a proposal would have significant implications for the way in which schooling is delivered to Aboriginal communities, for example.

[98] Conversation with Helen Summers, Darwin. 2006.

[99] A Coomalie Region Tourist Venture in the early 2000s failed before it began because the local people lost interest.

[100] Two of the long term Art Managers were Eileen Farrelly and Meng Hoelsche.

[101] In 2005 Patricia Marrfrurra McTaggart was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for both her art and language work with the people of the Nauiyu Nambiyu region.

In 2004, reflecting on fifty years of religious life, thirty-nine of them spent in mission service in the Northern Territory, Brother Merritt noted that 'insofar as one did one's best, the best possible in the circumstances, to do God's will, it had to be worth it'.[102] But he sells himself short when he adds, 'I hope 50% is a pass'. Although, in hindsight, he muses that there are probably some things at least that the church could have done differently or better regarding the Aboriginal apostolate he, like his fellow MSC missionaries, feels that they tried hard to enable the Indigenous people to be in a position to make reasoned decisions as to their relationship with mainstream Australian society.[103] In a conversation at The Ranch in June 2008, however, he – like many others – acknowledged that the task now confronting Indigenous communities such as Daly River and Port Keats has become much more difficult, particularly as a result of Government interventions of one kind or another. June 2008 marked the end of the first year of the Commonwealth Government's 'Intervention' as a result of the *Little Children are Sacred* Report.[104] From the outset the report and subsequent Commonwealth Intervention met with a mixed reaction from both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, not only in the Northern Territory.[105] There was nationally the usual division of opinion between urbanised and non-urbanised Aborigines and, within the Northern Territory communities themselves, opinion was divided. There is no doubt that the report, focussing as it did particularly on child sexual abuse within the various communities, was seen by many Aboriginal men as degrading and demeaning, branding all for the crimes of some. On the other hand many of the Aboriginal women in the same communities welcomed the report and the Intervention since it provided them with some measure of protection from domestic violence and sexual abuse in their own communities. However, at the end of the first year of the Intervention, and in the context of the Rudd Labor Government having

[102] Interview with Brother Merritt, 2005.

[103] See Appendix 6: The 2005 Report of the Nauiyu Nambiyu Community Council, which has as one of its objectives: 'To provide physical infrastructure and services equivalent to an Australian urban community of 500+ people'. Nauiyu Nambiyu Government Council Report June 2005.

[104] The report was commissioned by the Northern Territory Government and compiled by Patricia Anderson and Rex Wild QC. It was published in June 2007.

[105] It is not unusual for 'urban Aborigines' such as those who live in Redfern to take a very different view of matters from the 'traditional' or non-urbanised Aborigines of the Northern Territory.

inherited the process, assessments of the success of the Intervention are mixed. While Father Leary and Brother Merritt are now no longer actively involved in the daily life of the former mission communities, nevertheless, in 'retirement' they remain committed to 'their people' and see their role now as one of advocacy for them. They are therefore vitally concerned with the playing out of the Intervention.

In *Little Children are Sacred*, Patricia Anderson observed that the 'breakdown of families, alcoholism, drug-taking, pornography, unemployment, overcrowding, lack of discipline, children not going to school – everywhere we went, they were the running themes … Alcohol is totally destroying our communities and our families. Something needs to be done to curb this river of grog.'[106]

Nicolas Rothwell, writing in *The Australian*, comments that

> disturbing anecdotes in the main report flesh out this indictment. The worst of the exposed sex offenders are white men preying on young Aboriginal women. Sex between underage partners and inter-family sex are matters of wide concern. In some communities, young girls walking about at night do not realise that they have the right to refuse sex while elsewhere attempts by elders to curb teenage sex are undermined by health clinics eagerly distributing condoms to combat the spread of venereal disease.[107]

Over twelve months on, in late 2008, the success of the Intervention is reportedly patchy. Women and children claim to feel more secure in their communities as a result of a stronger police presence and stricter alcohol controls. However, investigations appear not to have substantiated the claims of widespread sexual abuse of children. While some children have been treated for endemic ear and eye disease, the situation appears to have been initially overstated. The quarantining of Social Service payments for Aboriginal parents in order to ensure that children are appropriately fed and clothed and sent to school may have worked in some cases but in some ways it might seem to be using a sledge

[106] *The Australian*, 16 June 2007.
[107] Nicolas Rothwell, 'Nation's Child Abuse Shame', *The Australian,* 16 June 2007.

hammer to crack a nut.[108] The quarantining of these payments seems to have been implemented almost at random in some cases taking in, for example, non-Aboriginal people living in Bagot Road in Darwin – because the street name is the same as that of the urban Aboriginal Community. Aboriginal people with no dependent children have also been caught up in the net unnecessarily. Although he would prefer to see the matter handled differently, Brother Merritt is one who, from his own experience, is well aware of the need for such quarantining. While working at Port Keats particularly he, from time to time, took responsibility for sending children to school with food in their bellies by providing breakfast for them himself – on the understanding that their mother would use her next cheque to buy food for them, before she spent the money on grog or gambling. Perhaps predictably, when her cheque arrived, the lady in question was off to buy grog and gamble before heading to the store to buy food. Brother Merritt, after a chase, intercepted her and took her back to the store to buy the essentials for her children. In such cases as this payment quarantining may improve the lot of children, particularly when it is also linked with school attendance. There is, however, an argument that such payments should be linked to school attendance not only for Aboriginal parents and families but to all Northern Territory families, given relatively poor attendance rates particularly at secondary school level.[109]

Although the Intervention may seem to have been advantageous for some communities, it is undoubtedly true that many are

> now in a disquieting limbo, at the mercy of their bureaucratic
> masters and administrators in distant Canberra. Everything
> is in transition, reform, new initiatives both economic and social.
> The revolution promised a year ago is not over, nor even well

[108] Marion Scrymgour MLA pointed out in a conversation with the author that CDEP payments have been replaced in many cases by pension payments so that the Commonwealth could in fact quarantine Indigenous people's payments (even those who were not previously pensioners). In some cases, as at Daly River, this has resulted in the removal of all incentive for artists, for example, to work since any income earned affects their pension entitlements. The Intervention in this case has created a situation of disemployment and dependence. Darwin, 26 August 20008.

[109] The funding of all schools in the Northern Territory is based on a 90% attendance rate each month. Failure to meet this benchmark results in withholding of funds. Lester Lemke, Principal, O'Loughlin Catholic College, Darwin. 2008.

advanced. Indeed it has scarcely begun.[110]

Certainly the Daly River community, with which Leary and Merritt remain passionately involved, gives every appearance of being very tense and uneasy about its future.[111] Not only is the potential loss of CDEP a concern, given that CDEP money currently funds the building and maintenance projects in the community at Daly River, but the movement which has already begun of Aboriginal people from CDEP to mainstream pensions has had a devastating effect on the work output of the community. Eileen Farrelly noted that the Merrepen Arts Festival, held annually in June for the past twenty-one years, in 2008 had fewer paintings or artworks than usual, notwithstanding a recent visit by silk fabric artist, Sister Susan Daily IBVM[112] in order to prepare for the Festival. Of the twenty-two artists on Merrepen's books only six were currently working.[113] The reason for this is that the remainder were transferred from CDEP to aged pensions. They could no longer afford to paint without being financially penalised. In this case the Intervention is actually creating the sort of malaise it sought to overcome. Brother Merritt is particularly disturbed by this turn of events, having spent many years helping the Daly River Community to develop a largely self-sustaining economy based on winning Government road building contracts as well as those of wildlife rangers (partly funded by CDEP). The community has built its own houses, school and health clinic and has developed, under the leadership of Ken Baumann, the housing manager at Daly River, a cyclic maintenance program which keeps the community, as Brother Merritt says, a model of what can be achieved.[114]

In June 2008 however, the local Aboriginal people were very uneasy about the future in a way that was not evident when the Catholic Church returned the bulk of the Mission lands to the people in 1994. At that time the people asked the

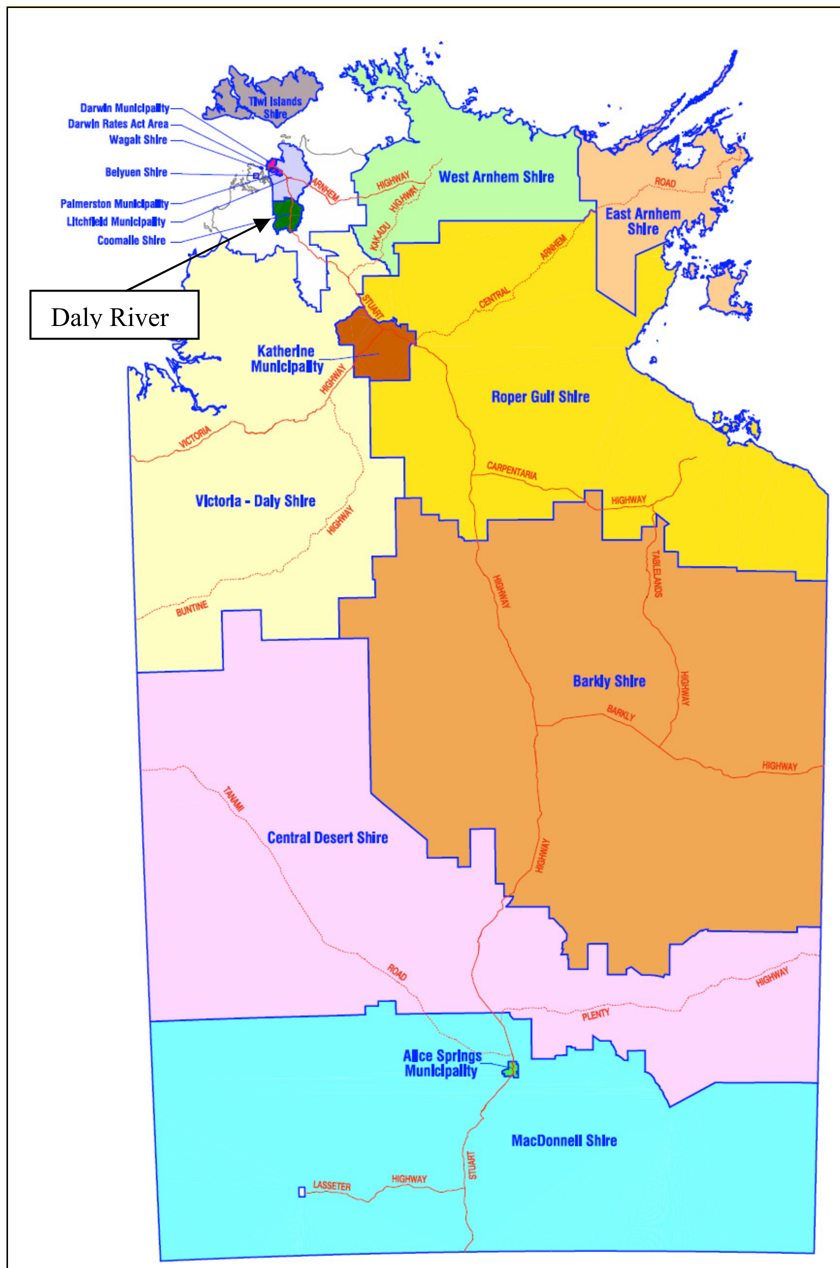
[110] Nicolas Rothwell, 'No Question of turning back', *The Weekend Australian*, 21-22 June 2008.
[111] Eileen Farrelly. June 2008.
[112] Normally a visit from Sister Susan Daily IBVM results in a surge of production. Susan Daily is a Loreto sister and artist normally based in Sydney. (IBVM is the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary).
[113] As at July 2008.
[114] Since the Intervention however, Baumann's housing maintenance program has been 'put on hold' by the Intervention manager as outside contractors come in and build housing for those personnel involved in the Intervention (usually at a lower standard and higher cost than the local people achieve). Conversation with Brother Merritt and Eileen Farrelly. Darwin, June 2008.

Church to retain ownership of the land and to give the community a twelve year lease so that they could come to agreement over time amongst themselves as to who actually owned the land. There was no trauma then, not least because as Biddy Lindsay, traditional Malak Malak owner of part of the land question, said 'The Church might own the land on top, but underneath it is always our land'.[115] Now, with the demise of CDEP and, increasingly, the assumption on the part of Intervention Managers who have been stationed in each community that 'if there are no real jobs to be had here then people will have to leave', there is a rising tide of fear in the community.[116] While such an attitude has the logic of economic rationalism underpinning it, it nevertheless totally ignores the innate desire of Aboriginal people to remain on their own country. No one has yet revived the terms 'assimilation' or 'cultural genocide' but it may well be that the current attempt to overcome the economic dependence and dysfunction of remote Aboriginal communities as a result of years of welfare will, in time, be so described. At Daly River for example, in common with most communities subject to the Intervention, although there are houses available – and skilled builders on site – to house the Intervention Manager, his house was built by contractors from outside the community. The type of glue used by the contractors in fixing various components of the house made it uninhabitable, as did the poor fitting of various items of plumbing. Ken Baumannn, on examining at the quality of workmanship, was horrified.

The other matter concerning the Daly River community in June 2008 was the planned implementation on 1 July, 2008 of the Northern Territory Government's new 'Super Shires' which, for the first time, will see remote communities becoming part of the Territory's local government system. While the Coomalie Shire (within which the Daly River community exists independently) will remain as it is until at least October 2008, there is a great deal of disquiet about what will happen to the community's assets when the new situation occurs, given that most of those assets have been developed by the community over time. Similarly there is concern about future employment. Perhaps the second last word should go to

[115] This was a position with which the Church concurred. Trish Foley, Video of Mission Land Return at Daly River, 1994.
[116] Eileen Farrelly, quoting the answer of the Intervention Manager at Daly River to the direct question 'What if there are no real jobs available here?', June 2008.

Miriam Rose Ungunmerr Baumann who is a member of the Northern Territory taskforce. ‘People see their kids are fed and they are happier and healthier … They have more energy to go to school’.[117] On the other hand she expressed her disappointment that CDEP had been taken away from communities. ‘People have been upset that some communities can prove they have been successful in using money through the CDEP program. The program makes people feel good about themselves because they were working, they were contributing to the community, took pride in their work and made the community look good’.[118]



Simple map of the new Northern Territory Super Shires to be implemented 1July 2008.

The Coomalie Shire of which Daly River/Naiuyu Nambiyu is an independent part is scheduled to be unaffected at this stage.

Source: adapted from www.localgovernment.nt.gov.au/new

117 Ewin Hannan, ‘More needed for housing, police’, *The Australian*, 20 June 2008.
118 Ewin Hannan, ‘More needed for housing, police’, *The Australian,* 20 June 2008.

For men such as Brother Merritt who have worked for years to make remote communities such as Port Keats and Daly River viable into the future for their own people, it is distressing to say the least to read front page headlines such as 'No Future for some towns'.[119] Although he may be 'retired' from active day to day work in Aboriginal communities, Brother Merritt remains as passionately committed to their well being today as he was when he was working and living with them.

Eileen Farrelly with Mercia. **Senior Man Jimmy Nambatu with Father Bernard Shah O Carm**

Photos: Wendy Beresford-Maning. Daly River Community. June 2007.

Left: **Eileen Farrelly with Miriam Rose Ungunmerr Baumann.**

Photo:
Wendy Beresford-Maning.
Daly River Community.
June 2007.

[119] Patricia Karvelas and Natasha Robinson, 'No future for some towns', *The Weekend Australian*, 21-22June 2008.

Left: **The Council Offices at Daly river where Brother Merritt worked for many years.**

Photo:
Wendy Beresford-Maning.
Daly River Community.
June 2007.

11. Landscape 6: Was it worth it?

Ultimately the question must be asked: 'Of what value was this missionary endeavour?' The answer will vary depending on who is giving it. One might expect that, on the whole, the missionaries themselves will argue that it was indeed worth all the effort – notwithstanding their occasional moments of extreme frustration. The initial purpose of this thesis was to reflect on the lives of three Missionaries of the Sacred Heart whose work is significant to the Northern Territory's development and to evaluate the enterprise from their point of view. In the process, almost inevitably, a number of other individuals have crept into this study. To attempt to canvass the entire gamut of missionary activity from all points of view, however, is beyond the scope of a single thesis. It must also be acknowledged that viewpoints change with circumstances. In the late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth century governments and churches were willing partners in the grand plan to settle and civilise Aboriginal people.[1] Following increasing agitation from Aboriginal people – particularly from the southern and east coast regions of Australia from the late 1960s[2] – the status of Aboriginal people became a national political issue which culminated in the 1967 Referendum which dealt not, as most people imagine, with the Aborigines' right to vote but with their right to be counted in the Census as citizens.[3] Both the re-establishment of their right to vote in Commonwealth elections and their being counted as citizens in the census meant that many people who had hitherto been loathe to disclose their mixed race status – such as those who had been raised on Mission stations or who had been adopted into white families (the Stolen Generation)[4] – were now willing to claim their Aboriginality.

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[1] See Martin Wilson MSC, Gsell Centenary Occasional Address, p. 4. See also Peter Hearn, *A Theology of Mission*, p. 23. Such was Bishop O'Loughlin's view of the missionary enterprise in the 1950s.

[2] Such people as Kath Walker (Oodjeroo Noonuccal), Gary Foley, Michael Mansell and others were strident spokespersons in the Aboriginal cause from the 1960s. Their protests culminated in the establishment of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in front of old Parliament House Canberra in 1972. See also Bain Attwood and Andrew Markus, *The Struggle for Aboriginal Rights* for a comprehensive account.

[3] All Aboriginal people had had the right to vote in Commonwealth elections since 1962. http://www.aa.gov.au/fsheets/FS150.html Downloaded 13 July 2007.

[4] Ronald Wilson, *Bringing Them Home*. See also, Charles Perkins, Letter to the editor, *The Australian,* 8 April 1968 in Attwood and Markus, 241-242.

This significantly changed the way in which Missions and missionaries were viewed, as did subsequent enquiries into the lives of children of the Stolen Generation as well as burgeoning numbers of charges of abuse levelled at both church and government representatives. In the Northern Territory charges of sexual abuse were brought against one Christian Brother who was, at the time of the alleged offences, the Principal of one of the Catholic schools on the Tiwi Islands. This case caused considerable angst among both the Tiwi people and the Church community since not everybody was prepared to believe that the charges could be sustained. One of the collateral issues was the people's anger with Sister Anne Gardiner OLSH, 'Grandma' as she was called, for not protecting them from this alleged predator. Sister Anne, to her own horror, was totally unaware of the matter until it was brought to light and pursued.[5] Although this man was subsequently charged and found guilty in the Darwin Supreme Court, the Christian Brothers arranged for him to be transferred to Queensland pending an appeal which was upheld six months later.

In terms of racial, ethnic or cultural characteristics Eugene Stockton notes that

> in the north and north west [of Australia] there is a distinct coloured group, identifying as neither black nor white, for the initial mixing of blood was often the result of stable liaisons between white prospectors, peanut farmers and the like, with Aboriginal women [as at Daly River], and from the outset the two cultural influences were brought to bear on the child. But in the longest settled areas, no matter what his or her features or skin colour, a person identifies as Aboriginal because that is the culture in which he or she has been totally formed from childhood.[6]

Such was certainly the case at Daly River from the earliest days of settlement there by farmers. Both Nancy Polishuk and Peter Forrest note that the Daly River community encompassed both white settlers and their 'myalls'.[7] There was, as

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[5] Conversations with Sisters Anne Gardner, Jo Kenny, Helen Little and Therese Marie Hillis OLSH. Darwin 2000. Conversation with Julie Haydon, 1995. The latter had been the Principal's secretary and friend.

[6] Eugene Stockton, *The Aboriginal Gift.* Alexandria NSW: Millenium Books, 1995. p. 31.

[7] Polishuk with Lockwood, *Life on the Daly River*, p. 29ff for example. Also Peter Forrest, *Spirit of the Daly*. 'Myalls' is a term used both by Jessie Litchfield and Bishop O'Loughlin and refers to full-blood Aborigines.

has been noted earlier, a symbiotic relationship between the Aboriginal people and the non-Indigenous settlers along the Daly River. W E H Stanner, writing the Introduction to Brother John Pye's book, *The Daly River Story*, captured the spirit of the Daly River settlement when he listed a number of escapades in which he and Charlie Dargie and a number of others had engaged.

> Chasing wallabies through the scrub at high speed in Charlie's T-model Ford; hunting 'alligators' from crazily unstable dug-out canoes; going fishing with a .303 instead of a line or a spear … Joe and Bill Parry as small boys … used to come to my camp and teach me a bit of Marathiel language.[8]

In 1975 the final report of the Aboriginal Family Education Centres[9] project which worked with Aboriginal families in Sydney and rural towns in New South Wales observed that, contrary to the often popular assumptions and assertions that there are no 'real' Aborigines in southern states and that 'full bloods do not accept part-bloods [sic]',[10]

> all over Australia, while Aborigines remain rich in their family differences, they are still today … one people absorbed in, loyal to, knowing mainly, sometimes only, what it is to be Aboriginal.[11]

As Anne Patel-Gray observes 'there are no such things as part-Aborigines, only Aborigines with, as with all people, individuals and races, a unique heritage'.[12] Similarly, Stockton notes that, despite a certain commonality shared by Aboriginal people – as indeed is the case with most, if not all, ethnic or national groups – 'modern Aboriginality … can be expected to take different forms and to vary in strength' depending on where it is found.[13] School Principal Lester Lemke, speaking at a Darwin Diocesan gathering of the difficulty in capturing the interest of young Aborigines, observed that talk of football got him nowhere but when he mentioned that his daughter had recently married a Tiwi man and

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8 John Pye MSC, *The Daly River Story*. Darwin. 1996. p.2.

9 The 'Aboriginal Family Education Centres' (AFEC) was a project funded by the Bernard van Leer Foundation and ran in New South Wales from 1969 to 1973. Stockton, p. 31.

10 Stockton, p. 32.

11 Stockton, p. 33.

12 Anne Patel-Gray, *Aboriginal Family Education Centres: A Final Report to the Bernard van Leer Foundation 1969 – 1973*. Sydney: Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney, 1975. Cited in Stockton, p. 33.

13 Stockton, p. 34.

therefore he reckoned ‘that makes us related’, he had their full attention. It seems to be essential for the Aboriginal people to be able to ‘place’ non-Indigenous people somehow within their own cultural framework. This was certainly the case for the MSC missionaries who worked with them. Even today, young non-Indigenous teachers who go to the Tiwi Islands, for example, are quickly given a skin name and relationship by the local people.

The current climate, in which the Commonwealth Government, beginning in June 2007, moved assertively if not aggressively to address the neglect of Aboriginal issues over the past forty or so years under the guise of stamping out child abuse in Aboriginal communities, is once again polarising views in both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community in Australia, and particularly in the Northern Territory.[14] The politicisation of such a sensitive issue leaves little room for quiet and careful debate. It is all too easy for significant Aboriginal personalities such as John Ah Kit to polemicise the issue by declaring that ‘this is a return to the mission mentality’. The inference is, of course, that the period of the missions was a period of wholesale, opportunistic and unthinking genocide,[15] whereas many of those involved during the mission era would argue that it was in fact the post-mission period which has seen the decline of the living standards and cultural life of many Aboriginal people, particularly in remote communities. In 2008 Galarrwuy Yunipingu joined the likes of Noel Pearson in arguing for a return to something akin to the Mission boarding schools.[16] At least then, Yunipingu argued, the children would go to school clean and fed – something which is not currently happening in many instances. ‘The missionary days were good. The missionaries looked after the kids much better than the Government does today.’ Yunipingu’s comments were strongly supported by Indigenous academic Marcia Langton, not usually known for her support of the missionary enterprise, who said dormitories or boarding schools could give children a ‘break

[14] See the previous chapter of this thesis.
[15] A link made in *The Weekend Australian* 11-12 August 2007, p.31 ‘… John Ah Kit described the legislation as “genocide”’.
16 Stuart Rintoul and Natasha Robinson, ‘Rescue our kids from Chaos’, *The Australian*, 28 March 2008.

from failure'.[17] Not all Aboriginal leaders agree with these sentiments however.[18]

Ironically though, many Aboriginal people who experienced the mission era are now asking such questions as: 'You left us supposedly to self-determination in the 1970s. But what happened? We are now worse off than before. Why did you abandon us?'[19] In like vein Richard Trudgen, Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Congress Aboriginal Resource Development Service (ARDS),[20] has observed that during the mission era something like 95% of the trade work on and around the missions was done by the Aboriginal people themselves as skilled workers. Today 95% of the same work is done by white people who are employed by the government and who come into the communities, complete the work and then leave.[21] At the same Northern Synod of the Uniting Church forum on Aboriginal Education, 'Education For – What?', three of the speakers, leading Aboriginal figures of the current older generation,[22] were all mission educated and influenced. All acknowledged that the present generation of Aboriginal children, like their white counterparts, face far more challenges from grog, drugs, unemployment and despair than they themselves did as young people. Nevertheless, they too ask, 'What happened?' to the great dream of self determination.

It seems that whereas the missionaries lived with the people, many of them for many years, and devoted themselves to the tasks of learning the languages and

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[17] 'Rescue our kids from Chaos' in *The Australian*, 28 March 2008

[18] Chris Sarra, sometime principal of Cherbourg School, is one such. He argues that while prominent southern boarding schools may offer 'a bridge to a better future … it's an absolute bloody tightrope. If the kids fall or stumble … there's no going forward and no going back for them.' Stuart Rintoul, 'Leg-up to the top', *The Weekend Australian*, 31 May - 1 June 2008. Boarding schools such as Riverview and St Joseph's Hunter's Hill in New South Wales; Scotch College, Melbourne Grammar and Carey Grammar School in Victoria all offer scholarships to 'suitable' Indigenous boys. These are often based on sporting prowess, but nonetheless introduce an Indigenous minority to the world of Australia's potential leaders.

[19] Comments made to Northern Territory Uniting Church Moderator, Rev Stephen Orme by an elder at New Mapoon, formerly a Uniting Church Mission on Cape York. July 2007.

[20] ARDS is an agency of the Northern Regional Christian Congress, itself a regional sub-group of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress of the Uniting Church of Australia.

[21] Richard Trudgen speaking at a public forum on Aboriginal education:
'Education for – What ?' Charles Darwin University, 20ctober 2007. Father Peter Hearn MSC, former Mission Superior in the Northern Territory made the same comment at the Gsell Centenary Lecture at Nungalinya College in 2006.

[22] The speakers were Rev Djiniyini Gondarra (Arnhem Land), Dr Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann (Daly River) and Dr Raiatea Marika (Yirrkala).

familiarising themselves with the culture and ceremony of the people to a greater or lesser degree, the post mission era of what might be called ‘liberal socialism’ or ‘idealistic humanism’ imposed by governments in fact became assimilation by another name. It is the contrast between action motivated by personal conviction on the one hand and impersonal policy on the other. Whereas the focus for missionaries was the people, the focus for governments is inevitably policy and economics. The Reverend Djiniyini Gondarra noted that the Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in the Howard Government, Mal Brough, is on record as commenting that ‘Aboriginal people need to be “normalised” through education’.[23] Reverend Gondarra observed that he had always thought that Aboriginal people were as normal as any other! It is comments such as these by former Minister Brough that led the Aboriginal people to believe that the current policy of intervention was merely another attempt at assimilation. It is assimilation based on the government’s view rather than the views or needs of the Aboriginal people themselves. For example, then Northern Territory Education Minister Paul Henderson commented[24] in October 2007 that Prime Minister John Howard seemed to be genuinely surprised to learn that many Indigenous children do not speak English. Speaking a propos of the Commonwealth plans for Indigenous education, Clare Martin[25] pointed out that about 85% of Indigenous children in isolated communities do not speak English. Prime Minister Howard’s astonishment is indicative of the prevailing ignorance of many of those in Canberra who make decisions affecting the lives of Aboriginal people and serves to reinforce the Aboriginal people’s scepticism. While challenging the notion of assimilation by stealth or as a result of Government ignorance, all three Indigenous speakers at the Education Forum acknowledged that mainstream education, particularly a knowledge of English and Maths and albeit preferably bi-lingual education, is essential to the advancement of Aboriginal people in isolated communities. Their vision of such education is not so that Aboriginal people will simply become clones of white society but rather so that their children will have real choices as to the future. The

[23] Rev Gondarra, Charles Darwin University, 2 October 2007.
[24] Paul Henderson, Northern Territory Minister for Education, 2 October 2007.
[25] Clare Martin was then Northern Territory Chief Minister.

modern missionary activity of the churches now focuses on advocacy for social justice and education for Indigenous people.

The Roman Catholic Church has been actively involved in working with the Northern Territory Aborigines since 1882. The first phase of mission activity was that carried out by the Jesuits initially at Rapid Creek on the outskirts of what was then known as Palmerston and then at Daly River. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) began their work with the Northern Territory Aborigines in 1906 when the administration of the then Diocese of Port Victoria and Palmerston was placed under their control. Prior to this, in 1848, the region was designated the Diocese of Port Victoria under the administration of the Spanish Benedictine Father Serra of New Norcia (Western Australia) who was consecrated as its first bishop on the Feast of the Assumption (15 August).[26] Within a year, however, Bishop Serra, who never actually reached his initial diocese, was transferred to the Diocese of Daulia '*in partibus infidelium*'.[27] At the same time Bishop Serra was appointed Coadjutor Bishop of Perth with the right of succession to Bishop Brady and with responsibility for the 'temporal administration of the Diocese'.[28]

Serra's successor, Benedictine Father Salvado, who in 1849 took two aboriginal postulants to Rome to present them to the Pope (Pius lX) who he hoped would invest them with their monastic robes,[29] was loathe to take up his appointment in the Northern Territory since he wished to remain focussed on his work at New Norcia. Salvado regarded the continuing presence of both Serra and himself at New Norcia as vital to the survival of the Mission there – and, by implication, to the furtherance of missionary work amongst the Aborigines. Don Angelo

[26] Salvado, *The Salvado Memoirs*, p. 91.

[27] In the Roman Catholic Church a 'Bishop in partibus [infidelium]' is, literally, a bishop of a see which does not actually exist; one who has the office of bishop, without especial jurisdiction. The titles of such sees were usually those of bishoprics which had existed previously in 'infidel lands' such as in the areas of Asia and Arabia.
Source: http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08025a.htm Downloaded 10 August 2007.

[28] Salvado, p. 97.

[29] Salvado, pp. 97-100. Father Salvado had brought the two boys to Rome to present them to the Pope and to pursue their religious studies in Rome. When he left he asked them if they wished to return with him to New Norcia but they refused 'Because we have not done our studies' (p. 100). See also Anouk Ride, *The Grand Experiment* – an exploration of the events which befell these two Aboriginal boys in Italy.

Confalonieri, an Italian priest[30] whom Salvado and Serra had met in Rome, although not a Benedictine, shared their call to the missions and accompanied them to Western Australia. On their arrival in 1846,[31] Bishop Brady of Perth decided to form three groups of missions, those of the North, South and Central areas. He assigned the missionaries as follows: to the Northern Mission – Father Confalonieri as Superior, together with James Fagan and Nicholas Hogan. The latter two were lost at sea in a shipwreck en route and only Confalonieri survived to work at Port Victoria/Essington for two years before his own death from fever.[32] To the Central Mission (which included the mission which would become New Norcia) Bishop Brady assigned Father Joseph Serra as Superior and Vicar General together with Father Rosendo Salvado and Brothers Denis Tootle, Léandre Fonteinne and John Gorman. To the Southern Mission he assigned Father Thébeaux as Superior with Father Tiersé, Vincent N [sic] and Théodore Odon.[33]

As with many of the missions in the North, the first location chosen did not for long remain the site of the Benedictines' mission. In this instance the first site was forever linked in the hearts and minds of the missionaries with the death of yet another of their number, catechist John Gorman. The second site was chosen, as Salvado records, less because of its suitability and more because 'it was impossible to go any further, since we had no means of transport for our goods and chattels, and also because we found water there'.[34] As was characteristic of many of these early missions to the Aborigines, the greatest threat to the missionaries was not the people to whom they came to minister but the ever present threat of starvation.[35] Within a year, however, on 8 December 1847, the College of New Norcia was opened on twenty acres of land granted by the government in the vicinity of Moore River as a place of education for Aboriginal boys, all of whom had 'left their families of their own free will and, and with

[30] There is some suggestion that Confalonieri may have been born in the South Tyrol, then part of Italy.

[31] One of their number, Father Bouchet, had become ill on the sea journey to Australia and one of their first tasks was to conduct his funeral soon after their arrival. Salvado, p. 30.

[32] Salvado, p. 32.

[33] Salvado, pp. 31 – 32.

[34] Salvado, p. 45.

[35] Salvado, p. 42.

their consent stayed with us henceforth'.[36] Prior to this great event though the missionaries had realised that 'while it is easy to preach to a native … it does not do much good'[37] because the Aborigine is focussed on his immediate physical hunger rather than the possible fate of his immortal soul. As the Jesuits had already realised in South America and as they would later do at Rapid Creek and Daly River in the Northern Territory, the Benedictines found that

> the only answer is to provide them with work and subsistence. But before this, one must teach these work-shy nomads to settle down to a community life in one spot. From this arises the necessity of an establishment directed by religious persons, in other words by missionaries who are not concerned for their own interests, *but devote themselves entirely to the moral and civil education of their neighbours and the glory of God.*[38]

This was a departure from the Benedictines' initial strategy which had been to try to conduct an itinerant ministry, following the 'nomads' as they wandered. Such a strategy was largely ineffective in evangelistic terms and was inherently dangerous to the missionaries who not only looked increasingly dishevelled and disreputable[39] but who faced the very real threat of injury, illness or death – not to mention the possibility of becoming disoriented and lost in the bush. During this early stage of itinerant mission ministry, Salvado describes himself as follows:

> I wore my usual monastic habit, but was in very sorry shape indeed. My tunic reached only to my knees, and from there on was a thing of rags and tatters; my black trousers were patched with pieces of cloth and thread all of different colours; my socks, after I had darned them, looked fairly respectable but my shoes – a good pair which I had bought in Italy – had parted company with the soles somewhere in the Australian bush, so that my toes were kissing Mother Earth. Add to that a beard which had been growing for three months, and which needed more than a touch of the comb, and a deep tan on my

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[36] Salvado, p. 69.
[37] Salvado, p. 55.
[38] Salvado, p. 55. My emphasis.
[39] Salvado, p. 43.

> face and hands, close enough for all intents and purposes, to the colour of the natives. Altogether I cut a comical and pitiful figure.[40]

Father Salvado OSB, ready to set out on his missionary journey.

Source: *The Salvado Memoirs*

The other constant challenge to any missionary endeavour, as would later be noted by both the Jesuits and the MSCs in the Northern Territory, was the encroachment of white settlement on mission areas. It was, Salvado records, 'a new and grave source of concern, worse than any before'.[41] Some men, presumably shepherds or drovers, employed by 'sheep owners attracted by the rich grass around the Mission',[42] came and settled there with their flocks. 'In a short time we noticed a striking degeneration in the moral conduct of our natives, and were aware that they were coming less often to the Mission and staying there for a shorter time'.[43] Not only did such an encroachment of European settlement have an immediate and degenerative effect on the Aborigines' moral behaviour

[40] Salvado, p. 43.
[41] Salvado, p. 70.
[42] Salvado, p. 70.
[43] Salvado, p. 70.

(many of whom would have been sexually exploited by the white settlers), but such settlers were often vehemently opposed to the influence of the Church, attempting as it did to protect the integrity and the rights of the Aboriginal people. Salvado records these shepherds as 'making fun of [the missionaries'] most sacred rites in the eyes of the natives and giving out that we were two witch doctors'.[44] Needless to say such undermining of their relationship with the Aboriginal people not only had the potential to destroy their work but it also served to confuse the Aborigines and render them even more vulnerable to the predations of unscrupulous white settlers.[45]

Salvado must take a share of the blame for the designation of the Aborigines as 'nomads', suggesting as he did that they wandered fairly aimlessly as, apparently, do typical hunter gatherers. What Salvado failed to realise was that the Aborigines were semi-nomadic and that their wanderings followed traditional paths on their own country. As later missionaries were to discover, the Aborigines' commitment to living on missions was always seasonal. They had long been used to moving about seasonally, following their food sources. To them the mission was a new seasonal food source to be exploited when bush tucker was scarce and abandoned when there was plentiful bush tucker or when ceremony called them back to their sacred sites. The Jesuit belief that their missions needed to provide Indigenous people with the fundamental skills to live with encroaching European settlement meant that their approach was essentially pragmatic. In order to survive in the new situation Indigenous people would need to be 'civilised'. To be 'civilised' – essentially Europeanised – they would need to be educated. To be educated they would need to be settled. Settlement meant that their lifestyle would necessarily have to change from hunting and gathering to farming – so they needed to be taught how to farm. Only once this had been

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[44] Salvado, p. 70.

[45] A similar view was expressed by Anglican Canon Bert Arrowsmith, a missionary of the Church Missionary Society who summed up CMS policy of the 1920s and 1930s in the following terms: '… The Church Missionary Society, in common with other branches of the Church, has changed the location of its Aboriginal work, finding that the Missions conducted in areas where there was a close contact with the whites was not successful. Efforts are being made to help the black people in spiritual and material things in places right away from the whites, where as little contact as possible is made between the white and the black population. …'. John Harris, *We Wish We'd Done More*, p. 21.

done did the Jesuits focus on 'saving souls'.[46] Their approach, as would later be the case with the MSCs who followed them, was focussed on the welfare of the Aboriginal people as people. While today critics might argue that, regardless of their motivation, such missionaries destroyed the traditional culture of the people, they were nonetheless operating with the best of intentions within the constraints of their time. Without the early missionaries intervening to try to protect and preserve the Aborigines it is arguable that the Aborigines of today may well have been worse off than they now are.[47]

Although Bishop John O'Loughlin's approach to mission in the second half of the twentieth century was one of 'Evangelise, Civilise, Integrate',[48] most of his missionaries in the field such as Leary, Merrett and Burke among others, tended to follow the Jesuit approach. Their concern was more for the well-being of the people as a group and as individuals in the first instance, rather than for the salvation of souls and the expansion of the Roman Catholic Church. The Church however provided the context for their work and evangelism was not ignored. But, as with the Jesuits, evangelism came after education, health and welfare. Effectively, they subverted Bishop O'Loughlin's agenda by putting the welfare of the people first. Like Salvado,[49] they realised that there was little point in evangelism for its own sake if the people they were trying to reach were preoccupied with hunger and illness or exploitation. Although most of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart had no great awareness of their founder Jules Chevalier during the greater part of the twentieth century – after Chevalier's death and two World Wars (especially World War 1) effectively disrupted links with the Mother House at Issoudun, France – it seems that nevertheless Chevalier's concern with what he called the 'mal moderne' almost intuitively informed their work with the Aborigines in the Northern Territory, and

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[46] Pye, *The Daly River Story*, pp. 8 – 10.

[47] Like Father Leary and Brothers Merritt and Burke, the Church Missionary Society took the view that 'Aboriginal people were not museum pieces. They were going to live in the modern world and they were going to have to deal with it. It is only right and proper that they be allowed to deal with it their own way and at their own pace'. Harris, p. 299. Similarly Harris quotes Gerry Blitner of Groote Eylandt as speaking for other mixed race people when he said' 'I was told the other day to go to the enquiry about the lost [sic] generation. But I don't want to go because I think we owe CMS more than we could ever repay them'. Harris, p. 423.

[48] Handwritten note, unsigned (Bishop O'Loughlin's writing) ca 1958. Port Keats Mission file. Darwin Cathedral Archives.[DCA] B 141. Cited in Hearn, *A Theology of Missions*, p. 25.

[49] Salvado, p. 55.

presumably elsewhere. For Chevalier, in the shadow of the post-Revolutionary and increasingly atheistic French Republic, the 'mal moderne' was the preoccupation with republicanism, materialism, atheism and anti-clericalism. In his own lifetime he saw his work virtually destroyed and his religious houses closed. While the MSCs in Australia did not face this situation, for them the equivalent came, post 1972, when they saw their work summarily taken over by the government as missions were declared to be independent 'communities'. The MSCs attempted to maintain their management of the provision of health, welfare and education but soon relinquished the former as government controls and funding made their position untenable. They have, however, remained staunch apologists for 'their' people. In the case of both the former Daly River Mission and Port Keats, while there was never any question about the continuing existence of a parish church and resident parish priest, the people requested the continuing presence of at least some of the missionaries.

At Port Keats/Wadeye the people asked that the OLSH sisters should return and run both the health clinic and the school, which they did for some time. The last OLSH Principal of Wadeye School was Sister Elizabeth Little who retired from the position in 2002. There is still a small resident community of OLSH sisters[50] at Wadeye by request of the local people. However their presence may not continue much longer as the eldest, Sister Emmanuel Chapman, is in her nineties and the youngest, Sister Yvonne Gleeson, is in her late seventies. The resident parish priest in 2008 is Father Leo Weardon MSC who previously spent many years at Nguiu on Bathurst Island. Like Father Leary and Brothers Burke and Merritt, notwithstanding any expectations of the Catholic hierarchy to the contrary, Father Weardon has a quick ear for languages and now speaks the Murinpatha language fluently. At Daly River, the situation since 2007 has been somewhat different in that the long-time resident priest, Vietnamese Father Peter Huan MSC, was transferred to Bathurst Island and replaced by a diocesan priest of the Neo-Catechumenate Way, Father Tom English. Whereas under previous incumbents including Fathers Leary and Huan, the Mass has been indigenised,

[50] The OLSH Community at Port Keats in 2008 comprised three sisters – the two mentioned above and Sister Lucy, following the departure of former superior Sister Therese Marie Hillis to Kilmore in Victoria.

(within allowable limits) to suit the people, it has now reverted to a very conservative traditional style with which the people are far less comfortable. When Eileen Farrelly visited the community at their invitation for the Art Festival in 2006, the women greeted her with a description of their new priest that bordered on the libellous – but it expressed their feelings of alienation, frustration and desertion. In 2008 neither Father Leary nor Brother Merritt made their annual pilgrimage to the community for the Merrepen Arts Festival because 'they had been made to feel very unwelcome by the incumbent priest'.[51]

Education in those remote communities that had been Catholic missions was taken over by the Northern Territory Catholic Education Office, based in Darwin and financially supported by the Northern Territory Government until the end of 2007.[52] While some Religious – notably the Christian Brothers and OLSH sisters – retained an involvement in the schools at Daly River, Wadeye and the Tiwi Islands (under the auspices of the Catholic Education Office), increasingly mission-trained Indigenous teachers were taking their places in their own communities. However, in many cases their impact was and is still offset by the placement of non-Indigenous, short-term young teachers whose commitment is more to 'an experience' of their own rather than necessarily to the well-being of the community. While the Daly River school has for a number of years been under the supervision of Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann as Principal, there have always been non-Indigenous staff members whose presence has not always been supportive. Miriam Rose herself, a former Chair of the Daly River Council, and a renowned artist, is a product of the Daly River Mission school established in the 1950s. Having completed her schooling and progressed to Bachelor College and Deakin University[53] where she gained her teaching qualification, Miriam Rose still serves not only as a leader of her people but also as an example of the importance of education to Indigenous people as a means of attaining independence and recognition. Miriam Rose is also one of the many people from

[51] Comment made by Eileen Farrelly. Darwin, June 2008.

[52] A new Remote Schools agreement was being negotiated between the Catholic Education Office and NT Department of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs during 2007.

[53] In 1999 Miriam Rose received her Master of Education degree from Deakin University. In 2002 she was presented with an honorary doctorate, Doctor of Letters, Honoris Causa, by the Northern Territory University in recognition of her work in Indigenous education. She retired in December 2007.

Daly River, Wadeye, Santa Teresa and the Tiwi Islands who are products of Father Leary's Christian Leadership Training Centre.

As mentioned above, in each of these former missions there is a Catholic parish church with a resident priest and a strong congregation. The women, particularly of Wadeye, Daly River and Santa Teresa are very supportive of the church and its role,[54] through the former missionaries, in developing their communities. It must be acknowledged however that while the resident priest was also the mission superior (and usually an MSC) there was a far greater effort to indigenise the liturgy than is now always the case. At Wadeye, where Father Leo Weardon MSC is the parish priest, this is still the case. Father Weardon, like Father Leary and Brothers Merritt and Burke is fluent in the local language, whereas the current priest at Daly River is not, nor does he believe in allowing Indigenous influences in the liturgy. In fact his own personal theology and understanding of the Church is far more significant to his practice of the liturgy than any perception that to be relevant to the people and their culture he must understand both their language and their culture. This is a trend which is increasingly evident in the Catholic Church, not only in remote and former mission communities, as the Church moves further away from the principles of Vatican II as applied to both theology and liturgy. Consequently the people are in danger of becoming alienated from what should be a source of strength to them.

Every year, at the Feast of the Assumption,[55] the Aboriginal people from Saint Martin de Porres Community[56] in Darwin, their numbers swelled by others who fly in from the Tiwi Islands, notably the former Garden Point (Pirlangimpi) Mission, flock to The Ranch to celebrate Mass with the former missionaries who are retired there The continued existence and growth of such a strong

[54] As, for example, in Eileen Farrelly, *Dadirri,* p. 31.

[55] The Feast of the Assumption, 15 August, commemorates both the original founding of the Diocese of Port Victoria and Palmerston in 1848 and the arrival of Father Gsell in Darwin in 1906.

[56] St Martin de Porres Community was set up in 1988 and provides Aboriginal Catholics living in Darwin with the opportunity to celebrate Mass with a distinctly Aboriginal liturgy. The congregation also includes a number of non-Aboriginal regular Mass-goers as well. Its establishment is a far cry from Bishop O'Loughlin's banning Father Patrick Dodson from establishing a social club in the first instance for the Tiwi Islanders who were then living and working in Darwin.

congregation as St Martin de Porres attests to the value of the missionaries and their involvement with the people in the past. When one sees such a congregation one must assume that, for these people at least, the mission effort was indeed worth it. This congregation includes the generation who elsewhere call themselves 'the Stolen Generation'. Among them are those who as children were not only removed from mixed race parents at such places as Daly River, but many who then were evacuated south during the Second World War to Adelaide and Melbourne. Many of the girls spent some years at Loreto Convent, Marryatville (Adelaide) or Loreto, Mandeville Hall in Melbourne. That many of the women today are named for Loreto Sister Lua Byrne IBVM again attests to the value of the mission enterprise. When Alf Liddle was ordained as the first married Aboriginal Deacon at St Mary's Cathedral, Darwin, the people (especially Alf's wife Geraldine who was one of the former evacuees) hoped that Sister Lua (then in her late 80s) might be able to attend and celebrate with them. Two other Loreto sisters represented Sister Lua instead.[57] Among the men the number of 'John's and 'Leary's (and 'Pye's)[58] also attests to the significance of the relationship these missionaries built with the people. It must be admitted that not all of the people from the former Mission or their descendants are necessarily so fond of or loyal to the missionaries. Sue Stanton, for example, prefers to use terms such as using terminology such as 'coercion, brainwashing, large scale murder, physical and emotional abuse – indeed genocide'[59] to describe the missionary enterprise, particularly as 'endured' by the Tiwi Islanders. Stanton goes on to say that

> Conversion, as in a Christianising context or evangelical sense, … denoted change and the sharing of religious faith with others, whether required, requested or forced upon. It simply cannot be denied that conversion and coercion go hand in hand as the re-socialisation into an alternative culture and belief system takes place…… I have heard the mission … the conversion experience, described by a number of Aboriginal people as a process of 'flattery and battery' and even though I am unable to

57 Sisters Margaret C Honner IBVM and Jan Niall IBVM.

58 The missionaries' names are given to children in recognition of their work with the people and in the hope that the children will grow to be like their namesakes.

59 Sue Stanton, Coloureds and Catholics. PhD thesis. Charles Darwin University, 2007, p. xvi.

> ascertain where this originated from, it surely describes conversion and coercion succinctly.[60]

Such a point of view relating to religious faith, conversion or evangelism is not of course restricted to its application to missionary activity amongst Indigenous peoples. There are many who view any religious faith and any attempt to evangelise or proselytise as at best illogical or irrelevant and at worst as 'about the conquest of the mind as part of subversive strategies (education and separation) of control and domination'.[61] It is too easy for those who do believe to dismiss those who do not as overly cynical or arrogant. At the same time it is too easy for those who are non-believers to dismiss believers as feeble-minded individuals who need some sort of 'crutch' on which to lean in order to get through life. It is also too easy to dismiss the efforts of missionaries as being part of some grand conspiracy of colonisation of Indigenous people and alienation from their own culture for no other reason than domination and exploitation. Such, it appears, is Stanton's view.

> Convertees [sic] became/become pawns in the suppression and destruction of their own culture and families by teaching, spying on and converting their own. As well, forced and strict discipline assisted in the conversion process.[62]

Nevertheless, Stanton admits being astonished that, notwithstanding some scorching criticisms of various individuals, her informants – although many of them were no longer Tiwi Island residents –

> all maintain strong connections and affiliations with both local Tiwi, former Garden Point inmates [sic], and with Catholic missionaries and others who may have had contact and/or were involved with the Mission at Garden Point. Every one of them displayed an unnerving loyalty to both the Catholic church overall,

[60] Stanton, p. xxvi. This view can be contrasted with that of Terence Ranger, 'Christianity and the First Peoples: some second thoughts' in Brock, *Indigenous Peoples and Religious Change,* pp. 21 and 27. Ranger asserts that he reacts 'against … assertions that interaction between Christianity and Indigenous Religions was neither necessary nor possible' and that 'a more tolerant and syncretistic approach to Aboriginal culture on the part of Christian denominations in Australia has enabled Aboriginal people to feel comfortable holding both Christian and "traditional" beliefs'. See also Loos, *White Christ Black Cross,* pp. 9 – 15.

[61] Stanton, p. xxvi.

[62] Stanton, p. xxv.

> to particular missionaries, or memories of past missionaries, and to the Garden Point Mission itself.[63]

Some might also argue that the 'failure' of the one Aboriginal Catholic young man to be ordained priest, Pat Dodson MSC,[64] to sustain his priestly vocation suggests that all the effort was not after all worth it. I see this rather as evidence that the administrative Church failed Dodson in that it failed to attempt to understand the tension which existed between the demands of his vocation on the one hand and his culture on the other. Both Patrick and Michael Dodson were educated by the MSCs at Monivae College in Hamilton, Victoria – a place about as removed from Paddy Dodson's birthplace at Broome and from Katherine where he grew up, as is possible. A cynic, such as myself, might say that the major role of the Catholic boarding school was to capture young blood for the church – either to be priests, brothers or nuns. Certainly the religious role models available to young boarders often served to inspire them to at least consider entering the church, even if not all followed their intention through to fruition. The Year Twelve (and twenty year old) student Pat Dodson, in his letter of application to the MSC Provincial of the time notes that 'Over the years the Priests and Brothers have been very good to me and have helped me in many ways … Their example has been partly responsible for my decision'.[65] The young Dodson was particularly impressed by the selfless work of the lay brothers – those such as Brothers Merrett and Burke – of whom he said 'they worked hard, always did the shit jobs but willingly and positively'.[66] However, his role models at Monivae, unlike Bishop O'Loughlin, had worked as missionaries and as teachers or, as Dodson said, as lay brothers. They were in touch with the people they served. O'Loughlin's mission service had been as the Director of Catholic Education in Papua New Guinea, chiefly an administrative position. Unlike Gsell before him, who had worked closely with both the Indigenous people of Papua New Guinea and the Northern Territory, and who had developed

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63 Stanton, p. xlvi.

64 That the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart are very reticent on the subject of Pat Dodson may be due to the fact that the present Provincial leadership team – significantly the Provincial, Father Tim Brennan, and his assistant Father Peter Hearn were in the same class at Monivae as Pat Dodson. Information from Xavier Desmarchelier. Darwin, May 2008.

65 Pye, *The Port Keats Story,* p. 6. Also cited in Keefe, *Paddy's Road*, p.206.

66 Keefe, p. 206.

a love and understanding of the people, O'Loughlin always seemed to be remote from the Indigenous people, despite his establishment of the Daly River Mission in the 1950s in response to requests from the Indigenous people there.[67] Certainly O'Loughlin's ecclesial and pastoral remoteness from Indigenous people is evident in the way he treated Father Dodson. Rather than encouraging the young man, there is evidence to suggest that he was bent on turning the young Indigenous priest into a darker version of the average non-Indigenous priests.

Pat Dodson was the first young Aboriginal man to attempt to become a Catholic priest since the two young men who accompanied Salvado to Rome in 1849. To date, he has also been the last. Within the other branches of the Christian church there have been a number of young Aboriginal men (and, in the Uniting Church, Aboriginal women) who have successfully reached ordination and become active ministers, priests and even bishops.[68] Perhaps the significant difference is that the Roman Catholic Church is the only one that requires its priests to take a vow of celibacy. While the theological background to this vow is highly debatable, the fact remains that if one desires to be a Roman Catholic priest, one must live a celibate life. However in Aboriginal culture the family is paramount and celibacy is seen as an aberration. Despite this cultural mismatch, Pat Dodson was committed to becoming a priest with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, that being the only order of priests in the Northern Territory at the time. He knew that, since this was a missionary order, he could reasonably expect to be sent to work with Aboriginal people. There was also the recognition that if he chose the Church he would be bound by obedience to his superiors, whatever their demands. He would no longer be able to visit his family and home country at will. Keefe points out that the context in which Dodson made his choice was somewhat fraught. The Catholic Church was in its post-Vatican II phase and the pre-Vatican II certainties had in large measure either faded away or were fading,

[67] A fact repeated by Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann at the Education Forum, Charles Darwin University, 2 October 2007.
[68] Within the Uniting Church there are a number of Aboriginal clergy, both men and women such as the Rev Djiniyini Gondarra and his late wife Rev Carol Gondarra; Rev Sealin Garlett and Rev Shane Blackman. The Anglican Diocese of Torres Strait is largely served by Indigenous priests and at least one Indigenous bishop, Saibo Mabo. Arthur Malcolm (now retired) and James Leftwich are Bishops of North Queensland.

leaving a degree of uncertainty in a church which had previously been able to rely on absolute certainties.[69] Vocations began to dwindle as the church began to replace Roman law with ultimate reliance on conscience and a stress on social justice rather than sacramental legalism. At the same time the voice of Indigenous Australians was making itself increasingly heard in the political arenas. The 1972 election saw the replacement of the conservative Coalition Government with the Whitlam Labor Government and a reinvigorated Aboriginal policy. The Eucharistic Congress in Melbourne in 1973 also put Aboriginal Catholics at centre stage, with Pat Dodson playing a major role.[70] It is probably not surprising then that after his ordination in Melbourne in May 1975, Father Dodson MSC would find himself at the Bishop's House in Darwin, feeling 'like the bellboy, answering the door [and] carrying the bishop's bag'.[71]

It must have been very tempting for Bishop O'Loughlin to 'display' this first Aboriginal priest as the culmination of a missionary work that had effectively begun with Father Confalonieri in 1846. For a short while Father Pat Dodson escaped this fate when Father John Leary took the young priest with him on a fact finding tour of Aboriginal communities at the behest of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Council to try to establish the extent, cause and possible solutions to the problem of alcohol abuse amongst Aborigines.[72] The extent of the problem and its concomitant demoralisation of Aboriginal people shocked Dodson in particular.

> People were drinking out of frustration and hopelessness … because they liked it … Our report was just another out of the hundred and sixty odd reports saying the same things but nothing would change,[73]

he would say later. This trip, designed to deepen his understanding of his priestly vocation, was probably seminal in the politicisation of Father Dodson, MSC. He was recalled to Darwin to take up a position as assistant priest of St Paul's Nightcliff, then the parish church of the many Tiwi Islanders who had come into

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[69] Keefe, p. 212.
[70] Keefe, p. 214.
[71] Keefe, p. 231.
[72] Keefe, p. 231.
[73] Keefe, p. 232.

Darwin in search of training and work, as well as white parishioners.[74] Whilst Father Dodson recognised the difficulties facing the Garden Point mob as they tried to settle into the Darwin scene, Bishop O'Loughlin focussed on the 'benefits' they had derived from their mission experience.[75] When Father Dodson began to organise them into their own community he was told in no uncertain terms that 'they were brought over to Darwin to be assimilated … their only chance'.[76] Given O'Loughlin's assimilationist stance, something which few of his missionaries actually shared either, the Bishop and Father Dodson were destined never to have the same understanding of his vocation and mission. Perhaps inadvertently, it was O'Loughlin who was responsible for Father Dodson's eventually leaving the priesthood and becoming a spokesman for the Aboriginal cause in Australia. While some traditional Catholics may feel that Pat Dodson's decision to leave the priesthood signalled a failure of the missionary work of the MSCs, many more would believe that his decision to leave and his subsequent career attests to the effectiveness of his MSC education – an education that fitted him for the position he now holds in the wider community. What has not changed has been his commitment to social justice, a basic tenet of Catholic theology and education.

To be an Aboriginal and a Catholic priest was never going to be an easy task for Father Dodson. In Aboriginal communities the ties of kinship and family are essential to maintaining an orderly culture. The concept of celibacy has no place and, unlike some societies in which celibacy earns its own respect, it remains an anomaly in Aboriginal society. That Pat Dodson remains the only Aborigine to have been ordained priest is not surprising. The Catholic Church seems to have finally realised this. Under the Episcopal leadership of the recently retired Catholic Bishop of Darwin, Ted Collins MSC, a number of Aboriginal married deacons have been ordained.[77] These men are accepted both within their own

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[74] The Aboriginal Community parish of St Martin de Porres, Casuarina, was not established until 1988.

[75] Bishop John Patrick O'Loughlin MSc DD. The History of the Catholic Church in the Northern Territory. An Occasional Address presented at the Northern Territory Library, 28 July 1982, p. 10.

[76] Keefe, p. 238.

[77] These married deacons include the Rev. Alf Liddle (deceased); Theodore Tipoloura (Nguiu); Peter Brogan (Melville Island); Boniface Perjert (Wadeye) and John Baptist Kelantumama (Nguiu, June, 2008).

communities and the wider Catholic community and are indicative of the impact of the missionary endeavour undertaken by the MSCs in particular. Bishop Collins had the advantage of Bishop O'Loughlin in that, prior to becoming the bishop he had been the MSC Mission Superior in the Northern Territory and had more experience of the Aboriginal people than did O'Loughlin.

In summary then, the dearth of Aboriginal ordained clergy is far from being a sign that the missionary endeavour has not been worth the effort. Rather it has taken the traditional Church a long time to find an appropriate role in which the Aboriginal people may express and work out their Christian faith. That Tiwi Islander John Baptist Kelantumama and his wife Consolata each graduated with their Diploma of Theology from Nungaliyna College in November 2006 is further evidence that the missionary enterprise has indeed been worth it. John Baptist is the grandson of Martina, the first Catholic convert from the Tiwi Islands and both he and his wife are third generation Christians.[78] Both now teach Religious Education at the Murrupurtiyanuwu Catholic school, Nguiu and Bishop Eugene Hurley ordained John Baptist Deacon in June 2008.

While some may feel that the lack of development of a strong Indigenous Catholic Christian theology indicates a failure of the missionary enterprise it needs to be remembered that the primary purpose of the Catholic Church's missionary enterprise in particular had little to do with developing such things. Motivated by Christ's command to 'Go to all nations and make disciples …',[79] the missionaries – if not the administrative Church – soon realised that in reality this command was but part of the greater commandment 'to love God and love your neighbour as yourself' or, as the MSCs have it, bring to the people 'a heart to love'. This led, not unnaturally, to a focus on the holistic well being of the people to whom the missionaries went rather than merely a focus on the salvation of souls and evangelism. Reports from Daly River Mission to the MSC Provincial Council over the years nevertheless point to a concern that often government directed and funded welfare work interfered with the religious

[78] *Nungalinya News* 109, November 2006, p.1.
[79] Matthew 28: 19. *NRSV*.

aspects of Mission life and work.[80] Garry Trompf points out that, prior to about 1988, most Indigenous theologies in Australia were being created by white theologians with

> the Catholic stress on the 'sacramental' [sic] quality of Aboriginal Spirituality by the Nelen Yubu Institute (mostly at Alice Springs), [81] the sponsoring of a 'Didgeridoo Theology' out of the Protestant Nungalinya College (Darwin), and the various church and New Age appropriations of Aboriginal insights (including 'Aboriginal healing workshops') in the big cities. Critical observers could hardly be blamed for suspecting that themes for theological reflection were being dictated by White or even 'international Indigenous' interests.[82]

Eugene Stockton points out that 'land is a cornerstone of traditional Indigenous religion, the physical link between living humans and all that is unseen and eternal in their spiritual world'.[83] On the other hand, contrary to the usual emphasis on the need for Aboriginal people to remain on their country, Galarrwuy Yunipingu, while acknowledging the importance of the land nevertheless observed that 'even when I am in a big modern city like Darwin, I find my spirituality and my beliefs are as strong as ever – it does not matter that I am not back in my homelands with my family and my people'.[84] The Reverend Djiniyini Gondarra notes that 'Aboriginal religion is linked with real human need'.[85] He makes four points about contemporary Aboriginal Christianity:

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[80] MSC archives: Daly River Reports 1957, 1964, 1983 for example.

[81] This would seem to be a misunderstanding by Trompf. The Nelen Yubu Institute was established at Daly River before transferring to Kensington New South Wales. It was the brain child of Father Martin Wilson MSC who was for a time Missionary Priest in charge at Daly River.

[82] G.W. Trompf, 'Foreword' in Anne Patel-Gray (ed), *Aboriginal Spirituality*. Blackburn Vic: Collins Dove, 1996, pp. viii - ix.

[83] Stockton, p.55. This link between spirituality and country is a the major reason that Father Leary, Brother Merritt and Mrs Farrelly are concerned about the proposition that 'if there are no real jobs Aborigines will have to leave' their country in search of work. Comments made by the Intervention Manager, Daly River, June 2008. These comments have been reiterated by John Stone, former Secretary of the Treasury in *The Australian* 20 June 2008 and Garry Johns, President of the Bennelong Society and former Special Minister of State in the Keating Government, *Northern Territory News,* 20 June 2008.

[84] Patel-Gray, p. 8.

[85] Dyinini Gondarra, 'Aboriginal Spirituality and the Gospel' in Patel-Gray, p. 41. Rev Gondarra is a retired Uniting Church minister from Elcho Island, Arnhem Land.

1. a need to sort out Christian priorities
2. being sure of our own Aboriginality ... setting our own theological agenda
3. being willing and ready to let go of bad values in Aboriginal culture which are a threat to the Christian faith
4. acknowledging that an Aboriginal church and theology cannot be established without going through pain, suffering and hardship.[86]

Needless to say not all Aboriginal Christians agree with Rev Gondarra on all these points, any more than all non-Aboriginal Christians agree on all points of theology and practice. Pat Dodson points out that 'Aboriginal religions have a beautifully worked out spirituality complete with a full and coherent sacramental theology".[87] Perhaps it is this understanding of the sacramentality of Aboriginal religious beliefs – first recognised by Stanner and Father John Leary – which ensures that ideal Catholic Christianity, with its joint emphasis on sacramentality and social justice rather than the traditional rituals of the Roman Church for their own sake, has meant that a significant number of the people missionised by the MSCs still practise their Catholic faith in the context of an increasingly material and secular society. Father Martin Wilson, founder of the MSC Nelen Yubu Missiological Unit, suggests that, in much the same way as Stanner coined the term 'everywhen' for the Dreamtime, so the notion of 'time interpenetrated by eternity' is pivotal to a Roman Catholic sacramental way of thinking.[88] Miriam Rose Ungunmerr's *Dadirri* statement further explores this notion.[89] *Dadirri* is a statement of complex sacramental theology in its own right, a statement which identifies 'the deep water sounds … the deep spring that is within us'[90] as 'contemplation'[91] and as 'the very spirit of God'.[92] Dadirri is 'the sound of Deep calling to Deep. The sound of the word – Jesus'.[93] In the Daly River/ Nauiyu

86 Patel-Gray, p. 49.
87 Stockton, p. 94.
88 Stockton, p. 95.
89 See Appendix 5.
90 Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann, "Dadirri". (Typescript) 2003, p. 1.
91 Ungunmerr-Baumann, p. 1.
92 Ungunmerr-Baumann, p. 5.
93 Ungunmerr-Baumann, p. 5.

Nambiyu Community in particular this understanding of Christianity is incorporated into and sits comfortably alongside the people's dreaming stories.

The paintings below demonstrate the ways in which the Merrepen (Daly River) artists have both developed their artistic talents and have been able to move away from traditional Christian themes and to incorporate their traditional stories as well as Christian stories in their artwork.

Genesis Woman
c. 1990
Benigna Ngulfundi
Loreto Osbaldwick Collection.
© Merrepen Arts

Photo:
Wendy Beresford-Maning 2008

This fairly early painting demonstrates the traditional colours and designs within the context of a traditional Christian image.

Christmas under the Merrepen
c 2000
Gracie Kumbi
Loreto Osbaldwick Collection.
© Merrepen Arts

Photo:
Wendy Beresford-Maning 2008

In this painting Gracie Kumbi is experimenting with new design features and colours. The typical 'manger scene' is central with the baby Jesus ensconced in a coolamon (water carrier). Note the presence of Halley's Comet in the sky.

Eagle rescues the firestick.
2008.
Loreto Osbaldwick Collection.
© Merrepen Arts

Photo:
Wendy Beresford-Maning 2008

In this story the eagle rescues the firestick from the Rainbow serpent in order to preserve life on earth which would otherwise have been destroyed. It can be read as a Resurrection narrative.

As Miriam Rose herself is a very talented artist as well as a leader of her people, she envisaged the use of art as a means of both strengthening cultural identity and as establishing a foundation for education. It was also to be a way of integrating her Christian faith and her tribal story into a genuine expression of culture.[94] Over time, although there had been no prior history of art other than ceremonial body painting, fine art – particularly but not only painting – has become a central aspect of the Nauiyu Community. Although Miriam Rose was well aware that as a tribal woman she could not have access to those stories and ceremonies which are Men's Business nevertheless gradually, after the foundation of Merrepen Arts, the community has developed a strong tradition and culture of art which seamlessly integrates both dreaming and Christian stories. The now well-established Merrepen Arts was initially an offshoot of the Women's Education Centre, run at the time by Eileen Farrelly as Adult Educator.[95] In this community art, theology and lifelong education are, for most of the community, one and the same thing.

For further evidence that the MSC mission enterprise has been worth it in terms of establishing an understanding of Aboriginal spirituality in the non-Aboriginal Catholic community one need only look at two recent events. The farewell Mass for retiring Bishop Ted Collins MSC featured, as do all significant Masses at St Mary's Cathedral, the involvement of the Aboriginal deacons as well as dancers from the Tiwi Islands. This was also true of the Induction of the new Bishop, Eugene Hurley who was escorted into the Cathedral by Tiwi dancers. Aboriginal Catholicism is today an essential ingredient of Catholic ritual as practised by the entire Catholic community, particularly in the Northern Territory but also in Australia generally as was seen at World Youth Day, Sydney 2008.

But the reality of the missions' impact goes beyond the religious rituals based at the Cathedral and parish churches. It also encompasses that other great Australian religion – Australian Rules Football. St Mary's Football Club, named for the Cathedral, was established in 1952 to enable the Tiwi Islanders who had come to Darwin for training and/or work to play the game at a time when they

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[94] John Leary in Farrelly, *Dadirri*, Foreword, p. x.
[95] Farrelly, p. x.

were not welcome in the other clubs in the competition. Its founders included Father Aubrey Collins MSC and Brother Andy Howley MSC and a young Patrol Officer, Ted Egan,[96] who became the club's first captain. As a teacher at St John's College, Brother Burke used to take the boys to football training each week – 'But only to St Mary's'.[97] From this background have come Brownlow Medallists and leading Indigenous AFL players such as Maurice Rioli, Michael Long, Raphael and Xavier Clarke. Those who have retired from football have moved into the political or social justice arena, either being elected to the Northern Territory Parliament as was Maurice Rioli or, like Michael Long, acting in a broader role of raising community awareness of the needs of Aboriginal Australians. The Clarke brothers who are current players in their twenties with St Kilda in the AFL have already established the Unity Foundation to assist young people.

Serving Northern Territory Government members Marion Scrymgour from the Tiwi Islands and Malarndirri (Barbara) McCarthy[98] from Borroloola are also among the people who have been influenced by the MSC missionaries to a greater or lesser extent. That there are now so many Aboriginal role models who owe part or all their education to the missionary activities of the MSCs is itself evidence that indeed it has been worth it, for the missionaries and many of those with whom the MSC missionaries have worked, notwithstanding the criticisms of some members of the Stolen Generation[99] or even the belief of those such as Father Leary MSC that many things could have been done better. Such is always

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[96] Ted Egan became Administrator of the Northern Territory in October 2003 and was succeeded by Tom Pauling in October 2007.

[97] Conversation with Brother Burke MSC, 2005. Confirmed by Joe Hill who noted that as a weekly boarder at St John's College, his brother Kim Hill was one of those who regularly went to training at St Mary's, encouraged by Brother Burke.

[98] Malarndirri McCarthy's mother was a tribal woman from Borroloola who was married to a non-Indigenous lay missionary, John McCarthy. John McCarthy oversaw his daughter's education, first in Sydney where he completed a degree at the University of Sydney and then, when he returned to the Territory to work with Northern Territory Education Department, at the OLSH Boarding school, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Alice Springs. After the death of her mother in 2007, Barbara McCarthy took the name of Malarndirri out of respect for her mother. Conversations with John McCarthy, Darwin, 1995 and Malarndirri McCarthy, May 2008.

[99] For example, the statement of 'Evie' to the Stolen Generations Enquiry, quoted at length in Stanton. The statement in full is found at http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/hreoc/stolen/stolen15.html. Downloaded 18 January 2008.

the benefit of hindsight. Father Leary's comment is also suggestive of the attitude of most of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart that, although their aim was to bring to the people a heart of love, the love of God, they remain modest enough not to claim that they had all the answers to the challenge of mission.

The Ranch, Nightcliff.

Above: The front of the Ranch (facing Banksia Street). Below: The back of the Ranch (facing the sea). Bishop Collins' 'hacienda' is on the extreme left, below, next to the Chapel.

Photos: Wendy Beresford-Maning. 2008.

12. Conclusion.

My motivation for undertaking this research in the first instance was an awareness that three significant members of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart who had served the Roman Catholic Church in the Northern Territory for varying periods since the 1950s, and in a variety of roles, were all becoming increasingly old and frail and that, unless their personal stories were captured, a large segment of Northern Territory history would be lost to posterity. Initially I intended to place these men – Father John Leary and Brothers Burke and Merritt – within the context of missionary endeavour in the Northern Territory's Top End. However, despite the inherent difficulties of capturing and validating their life stories, I concluded that their lives as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were the focus I wished to pursue. However, it was always going to be necessary to place their lived experience within a broader setting, hence the decision to organise my research into Landscapes and Portraits.

Since these men have lived their lives – often perhaps unintentionally – at the intersection of Church, politics and Indigenous affairs, their Portraits make little sense unless seen within the broad and complex Landscapes of Christian missionary history, Australian and Northern Territory history and religious history as it pertains to the evolution of religious orders and the missionary enterprise within the Roman Catholic Church. Any one of the aspects just mentioned – Church, politics and Indigenous Affairs – is of course on its own a complex matter. So, too, is the matter of attempting to document the lives of such men. It will be obvious from what has been written that my assessment of their lives and work is more benign than that of commentators such as Sue Stanton. I am aware too that much of what is written here is based on the recollections and statements of the men themselves. This is largely inevitable given that, in many ways, as members of a religious Order within the Roman Catholic Church they appear, as I have mentioned previously, not only to have substituted their new religious family for their families of origin, but even within that context their

lives seem in some way to have been submerged or subsumed by the community life of the Order. Certainly, each of the three contemporary Missionaries of the Sacred Heart recorded here tends to be very reticent in speaking about himself and his work – although they speak warmly and at length about the people with whom they have worked. Even Father Leary, whose ministry included the establishment both of the Daly River Mission and the Christian Leadership Centre at Daly River and who has written in detail both of his experiences and his mission philosophy, nevertheless gave away little directly of himself. The difficulty in dealing with lives such as these is that, within society generally, Christian missionaries are often regarded as an oddity. Little that is objective is written about them. As Noel Loos notes, even within the sending churches, missionaries were often regarded as oddities or 'fringe dwellers'.[1] It is inevitable therefore that much of the information which helps to unravel their lives comes from 'in house' sources. As mentioned previously, the Catholic Diocese of Darwin was unwilling to open its archives to research by a non-religious during the time when Father Tim Brennan was Vicar General.[2] On the other hand, the Archives of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in Kensington, New South Wales were made available and, the archivist, Father Tony Caruana MSC, was most helpful in locating material pertaining to Daly River in particular and the Northern Territory in general. Other current and former members of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart such as Fathers Peter Hearn, Peter Robinson, John Kelliher and Malcolm Fyfe have also been very useful sources of information, as has former MSC priest Xavier Desmarchelier.

Nevertheless, it is evident that much of what I have gleaned about the lives and experiences of these men – and, to at least some extent, about Jules Chevalier the

[1] Noel Loos, *White Christ Black Cross*, p. ix. See also Kenelm Burridge, 'Aborigines and Christianity' in Swain and Rose, *Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions*, p. 24. Burridge notes that 'The "success" or "failure" of missionary endeavours can only be measured subjectively. For missionaries being a missionary is self-justifying, and their "success" or "failure" may not be measured in numbers or rates of conversions. … Their work is to be measured by the manner in which they attempt an imitation of Christ. Secular observers, on the other hand, tend to measure missionaries precisely by those criteria by which they measure themselves. Further, no matter what a missionary does … he or she usually becomes a target for the criticism and often derision of outsiders, both Christian and secular.'

[2] Father Tim Brennan was Vicar General when I began this project. He is now the MSC Provincial Superior. The current (2006-2008) Vicar General, Father Stephen Hackett MSC has been more helpful, although he is less cognisant of where the various records are.

founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart as well – is based on their own recollections, accounts and/or the writings or those of people who are close to them and in general sympathetic to them. This is perhaps inevitable given the nature of their vocation and their work. Wherever possible I have tried to balance these accounts against information gathered from others but, again, given the nature of their enterprise, those who are able to give me information are, almost of necessity, people also involved in the work of the Catholic Church or members of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart or former lay missionaries.[3] Although the MSC archives and the writings of Father Frank Flynn MSC and Brother John Pye MSC add to the information given me by the three men, these sources too are supportive of the missionary enterprise although in each case the writers are influenced by the times in which they lived. Father Frank Flynn, for example, writes in the pre-Vatican II and assimilationist era and echoes very much the traditional line of the Church as exemplified by Bishop O'Loughlin. That assimilationist position was not shared by Father Leary or Brothers Burke and Merritt who found themselves able to work more comfortably and effectively under Bishop Ted Collins' leadership. Bishop Collins had experienced Top End missionary life whereas Bishop O'Loughlin had not. Where O'Loughlin was often seen as aloof, Bishop Collins was seen as approachable – although to many his nickname was 'Gunna'.[4] Brother John Pye, whose accounts of the various MSC missions in the Top End of the Northern Territory are perhaps the most comprehensive, relies on information from such people as Father Leary and Sisters Christopher Cleary OLSH and Anne Gardiner OLSH. A study such as mine, with its dependence on the 'in crowd' for source material surely reflects the Church's increasingly marginal position within society today. However, when one considers the times in which Jules Chevalier lived the same is true in many ways. In post-Revolutionary France, with what Chevalier saw as a rising tide of rationalism and secularism, the Catholic Church was marginalised. Today the issue is one of increasing secularism, materialism

[3] Pye, *The Daly River Story*, pp. 60 – 61. Here Brother Pye lists at least 100 lay missionaries who served at the Daly River Mission between its establishment and 1976. He also includes the Daly River Settlers as part of the total community.

[4] Whereas Bishop O'Loughlin could be quite autocratic, Bishop Collins seemed to be incapable of making any hard decisions and often promised much but delivered little, hence 'Gunna'. For the final five years or so of his episcopacy, Bishop Collins was also a sick man.

and 'the new atheism'.[5] And yet arguably, in the Northern Territory in particular, the Christian Church's role has been vital not only to the condition and integration of Aboriginal people but to the society generally. It is perhaps one of the lasting ironies of a frontier society that both the lawless elements and the conservative and philanthropic elements as represented by the Christian church are more noticeable there than elsewhere.

The process of sifting the information and recording the lives of these men has demanded an analysis and evaluation of the role and reliability of memory – both personal and historical. History based on personal evidence and experience rather than archival documentation is often regarded as inherently suspect because of its fairly inevitable subjectivity and what is seen as the inherent faultiness or possibility of fabrication.[6] However, there is often at least some degree of subjectivity in documentary evidence although the mere fact of it being documentary often lulls the readers into a false sense of security about its objectivity. As Paul Thompson points out, oral history has broadened the scope of traditional history in that it allows the voices of those who are often under-represented (women, migrants, the marginalised in society) to be heard, both literally and figuratively. According to Thompson,

> oral history is built around people. It thrusts life into history itself and widens its scope. It allows heroes not just from the leaders, but from the unknown majority of the people. It encourages teachers and students to become fellow-workers. It brings history into, and out of, the community. It helps the less privileged, and especially the old, towards dignity and self-confidence. It makes for contact – and thence understanding – between the social classes and between generations … in short, it makes for fuller human beings.[7]

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[5] Benjamin O'Donnell, 'Morality and the new atheism', 1 February 2008. http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=6950 See also 'The new atheism', 12 December 2007 .http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/20624.htm

[6] Beth M Robinson, *Oral History Handbook*. Adelaide: Oral History Association of Australia (South Australia) Inc, 1994, p. 4.

[7] Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 18.

Oral history's role, like that of the modern museum, is to foreground past experience in the individual and national consciousness, as suggested by Graeme Davison, Marilyn Lake and Iain McCalman.[8] However, in the same work, Peter Conrad cites Nabokov's belief that memory 'harmonises the detritus of the past and composes an internal narrative which is the story of our lives, the ground of our being. A story, not a history …'.[9] Conrad continues:

> I suspect that history is about regulating memory, disciplining
> it as Cicero did, whereas literature encourages memory to wander
> and to bring back souvenirs [literally, recollections] that are precious
> in proportion to their apparent insignificance.[10]

If memory is to be regulated, as Conrad assumes it is in history, then the accuracy of the end product depends in large measure on who is doing the regulating. If, as Milan Kundera suggests, 'the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting',[11] then the act of forgetting or suppressing memory is as vital to the production of history as is the act of remembering. Lyn Riddett observes that 'social memory is not stable as information; it is stable, rather at the level of shared meanings and remembered images'.[12] Riddett suggests that 'settler communities in remote areas construct a unique kind of history'[13] which depends as much on forgetting as remembering. She quotes David Ritchie, then Director of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, as saying in relation to proposed development works at Mindil Beach, Darwin,

> It's utterly incredible. You can buy postcards of the [Aboriginal]
> burial site at the casino. It should be well know. It just seems to be
> a case of collective amnesia on the part of the population here ….[14]

Riddett points out that not only is forgetting an inherent part of the creation of the history of such a settler society in a remote area, but she also points out that

> social memory in Western/literate societies is constructed

[8] Marilyn Lake (ed), *Memories, Monuments and Museums*.
[9] Peter Conrad, 'A History of Memory' in Lake, p. 29.
[10] Lake, p. 29.
[11] Lake, p. 29.
[12] Lyn Riddett, 'Think Again', p. 38.
[13] Riddett, p. 39.
[14] Riddett, p. 40.

> orally and through written text. In cases where the link through oral transmission is disrupted, i.e. in settler societies with a transient population, a community must rely on the written text which becomes paramount. Of course, if no written text exists to cover an event then the memory of the event may remain with the individuals who were involved, and thus remain at the level of individual memory only.[15]

History is not 'given'. It is constructed. Curthoys and Docker[16] have explored the ways in which at different times history has been constructed in different ways. History then is the end result of a reiterative process of remembering, forgetting, interpreting and constructing meaning from sequences of events. Although this thesis relies heavily in its biographical chapters on individual memory and presentation of events, this alone does not mean that these recollections are necessarily biased, inaccurate or particularly privileged. They are, to date, the only records available – along with archival material which is, in essence, the material recollections of these same individuals. This thesis aims to present the material in as coherent a manner as possible in order that, if there is to be a debate on the contribution these men have made to Aboriginal and Northern Territory history, it may begin here. Whereas Father Peter Hearn's work, *A Theology of Mission*[17], examines the theoretical foundation of Catholic Missions during Bishop O'Loughlin's time in the Northern Territory from the viewpoint of one who had served on the missions and also been Administrator of St Mary's Cathedral in post-O'Loughlin days, this work attempts to focus on the life and work of specific members of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart at a more practical level. It is obvious though that Father Leary gave considerable thought to his own work and set it within the context of the theoretical constructs of both Liberation Theologian Gutierrez and Paulo Freire.

Examining the nature of memory and its place both in history and developing attitudes towards particular times, places and people also led me to explore the nature of history itself and the place of biography within history, and the

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[15] Riddett, p. 41.
[16] Curthoys and Docker, *Is History Fiction?*
[17] Peter Hearn, *A Theology of Mission*.

contribution individuals' lives can make to the broader history of a particular time, place, people or enterprise. In this process perhaps one of the least expected results is my conclusion that, in his own way, each of the men whose portraits I have drawn has been to a greater or lesser degree subversive. Their subversion in each case was not necessarily dramatic but the consistent element is that all three put the interests of the Indigenous people with whom they worked ahead of the demands or expectations of the Catholic Church – something which was certainly not part of Bishop O'Loughlin's agenda nor, had he considered it, Bishop Collins'.

The founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Father Jules Chevalier himself could be seen as subversive in his stress, in post-Revolutionary France, on contending with what he called the 'mal moderne' – rationalism. Rather than relying on the rituals of the Church – itself in a state of some malaise at the time – Chevalier called people to a personal piety based on the Sacred Heart as a symbol of Divine love. In their work as modern Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Father John Leary and Brothers Gerry Burke and Ted Merritt have each in their own way subverted the expectations imposed upon them by both the Catholic Church and their own Order. Each of them in his own way has broken new ground without necessarily having that intention. All of them nevertheless epitomise the motto of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart: 'May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved! Forever!'[18] In examining their lives it was, as noted elsewhere, inevitable that other lives would intrude into this thesis. It would make little sense to talk about these three men without also providing some exploration of the beginnings and history of their order and the life of their founder, Jules Chevalier.

Although within the local Catholic community Father Leary and Brothers Burke and Merritt are fairly well known, little is generally known about their order – other than its name – or its founder. Since, in his own time, Chevalier was no more an important historical figure than are Leary, Burke and Merritt it has been necessary to rely on information from within the order itself to tease out his life.

[18] http://misacor.org.au/index. Downloaded 3 July 2008.

Although Father Charles Piperon MSC was both Chevalier's comrade and 'hopeless with dates',[19] he remains the only contemporary source of information about the early days of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.[20] Similarly, E.J. Cuskelly, who is generally regarded within the order almost as a second founder, is virtually the only source of historical information about the order although Father J.F. McMahon[21] and Father Caruana[22] have provided information about the order in Australia. F.X. Gsell has also written his autobiography.

Coming as they did to missionary work in the second part of the twentieth century, these three Missionaries of the Sacred Heart inherited a tradition which arguably began with the words of Jesus Christ at the time of the Resurrection.[23] Whereas the Portraits focus in the individuals, the Landscape sections of this thesis provide a context for their work by exploring the history of the Christian missionary movement as well as the development of Christian missionary work within Australia. In addition, the Landscapes provide an overview of the political situation of Indigenous people and the way in which that has impacted both on their existence and the work of the missionaries. Elsewhere in this thesis I have addressed the point that, although the views of an Indigenous historian like Sue Stanton are almost diametrically opposed to mine, this is largely a matter of our contexts. Stanton writes as an Indigenous person who sees the missionary enterprise as a matter of colonisation and brainwashing. As a non-Indigenous person, although I may understand and sympathise with her point of view to a degree, I am unable to share it simply because I am not Indigenous and it is not my experience. My aim has been to try to give a voice to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart whose lives I have explored here and, while that view is undoubtedly benign on the whole I believe, nonetheless, that it has been well substantiated by significant and widespread research.

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[19] E J Cuskelly MSC, *Jules Chevalier: Man with a Mission*.

[20] Charles Piperon MSC, *Writings on the Life of the Founder, Jules Chevalier.*

[21] J F McMahon MSC, *M.S.C. Brothers in Australia.*

[22] Anthony Caruana MSC, *Monastery on a Hill*.

[23] Matthew 28: 18 – 20. *NRSV*.

Painting representing the work of the Catholic Diocese of Darwin
particularly through education in both remote (former mission) and urban schools.
The symbols used in the painting indicate the integration of Indigenous and non-Indigenous symbols to represent the ways in which each school and parish represents its current mission.
Photo: Wendy Beresford-Maning. Diocesan Leadership Conference. Darwin. 2008.

Appendix 1: A world Christian mission timeline.

30 – 100 A.D.	Missionary activities of the early church as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of the New Testament, the early church fathers, Eusebius and Josephus.
70	The fall of Jerusalem to the Romans. The destruction of the Temple and the establishment of Christianity as a religion rather than a sect of Judaism.
312	Conversion of Emperor Constantine and the establishment of Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire
325	Council of Nicea called by Constantine
c381 – c451	Nestorius of Syria
389 – 461	St Patrick
428	Nestorius instituted as bishop of Constantinople
431	Nestorius condemned for heresy at Council of Ephesus and exiled
c480 – c547	St Benedict, founder of the Benedictine order. Western monasticism
563	Columba introduces Celtic Christianity to Britain at Iona
597	Augustine appointed archbishop of the church in England. The establishment of Roman Christianity in England
813 - 817	Revised Benedictine rule became the basis of Western monasticism
1045 -1085	Turkish control established over most of Asia Minor
1095	Pope Urban II initiates the First Crusade – the People's Crusade
1099	Jerusalem recaptured from the Turks by Crusaders
1147 - 49	Second Crusade
1150	Islamic leaders, Nureddin and Saladin united the Near East and Egypt under one dynasty
1182 – 1226	St Francis of Assisi, founder of the Franciscan order

1187	Saladin defeated crusaders at Hattin, recaptured Jerusalem and overran Crusaders' lands
1190 – 93	Third Crusade – led by Richard Lionheart of England – recovered some territory but not Jerusalem
1202 – 04	Fourth Crusade. Jerusalem and Constantinople regained by the Crusaders
1209 – 29	Crusade against the Albigensians
1210	Franciscan monastic rule approved by Pope Innocent III
1212	The Children's Crusade
1212	St Francis attempts a missionary journey to Syria
1213-14	St Francis attempts a missionary journey to Morocco
1216 - 17	Fifth crusade temporarily captures Damietta in Egypt
1221	First Franciscan friars land in England
1224	First Dominican friars land in England
1228 – 9	Sixth Crusade. The (excommunicate) Emperor Frederick II undertakes a 'crusade', recaptures Jerusalem, crowning himself king.
1231 - 33	The Inquisition to destroy the Albigensian heresy, the Cathars
1239 - 40	Crusades by Theobald of Champagne and Richard of Cornwall
1244	Jerusalem lost again to Islamic Ottoman Turks
1248 –54	Seventh Crusade. The Great Crusade to Egypt, led by Louis IX of France,
1270	Louis IX's second crusade against Tunis resulting in his death.
1281	The fall of Acre. Effectively the end of a significant medieval Christian presence in the Holy Land.
1289	Franciscan, John of Montecorvino, sent by Pope Nicholas IV, worked in China, founded a see in Peking and was created archbishop in 1307. En route he spent time in India and found Nestorian Christians in Madras.

1290	Edward I expelled all Jews from England
1291	The fall of the last of the Crusader states
1313	A second Christian see was established at Zaitun (Ch'uan-Chou) in China
1318	The pope created a new mission centred on Sultaniyet, capital of the Khanate of Persia both to care for Western Christians in the area and to work for the conversion of Muslims and Eastern Orthodox Christians.
1328	John of Montecorvino died in China
1329	Franciscan brother, Jordan of Severac, only survivor of three en route from Persia to India, settled at Quilon in Travancore amongst Nestorian Christians. In 1329 the Pope appointed him bishop of Quilon (Columbum)
1333	Two Dominicans, Francis of Camerino and William the Englishman converted the Alan prince of Vospro in the Crimea. The pope created a new ecclesiastical province for the Black Sea area.
1335	John of Marignolli left Avignon for China with fifty friars.
1346	John of Marignolli left China and spent a year in Quilon, South India en route to Avignon where he arrived in 1353.
1362	The last Latin bishop of Zaitun, James of Florence was martyred when the Chinese recovered the city from the Mongols
1369	Last Catholic missionaries were expelled from Peking
1404	A (Portuguese) missionary Bishopric established in the Canary Islands
1415	Martyrdom of John Hus in Bohemia Straits of Gibraltar crossed and Cetua captured from Muslims by Christians
1421	Bishopric of Cetua created
1468	Bishopric of Tangier created Cetua and Tangier were outposts of Portugal rather than missions
1488	Bartholomew Diaz rounded the Cape of Good Hope
1474 – 1566	Bartholomew de Las Casas

1490	First Portuguese mission to the Congo
c1491	Ignatius of Loyola born. (Died 1556)
1492	Christopher Columbus discovers North America
1492	Granada, the last Muslim stronghold in Iberia fell to the Christians
1493	Pope Alexander VI recognised the exclusive rights of the Spanish to trade with lands to the West of the Atlantic, with the concomitant responsibility of converting all the indigenous peoples of those lands. A line was drawn from pole to pole, west of the Azores (adjusted westwards in 1494 to include Brazil in the Portuguese zone). All that lay to the west was given to Spain, all that lay to the east was given to Portugal with equal rights to each.
1498	Vasco da Gama opens up the sea route to India
1500	The Portuguese, Cabral, landed at Crangamore, India to discover a number of Syrian or Thoman Christians – possibly a community of 100, 000 – supposedly founded by St Thomas the apostle.
1502	Bartholomew de Las Casas, who was to become a champion of the indigenous people arrived in the new world
1506 - 52	Francis Xavier SJ worked in India, Indonesia and Japan
1511	Bishopric of Santo Domingo established A Dominican missionary, Santino De Montesinos, on the island of Hispaniola denounced the sins of the white invaders against the indigenous people
1517	The beginning of the Protestant reformation in Europe with Luther nailing his 39 Theses to the door of Wittenberg Cathedral
1519	Cortés makes first contact with the Aztecs
1522	Eight bishoprics had been established in the Antilles
1525	First Mexican bishopric established in Tlaxcala
1526	Mexico City established as a bishopric The Moguls invade north India
1531	Pizarro defeats the Incas

1534	Henry VIII proclaims himself head of the Church in England (the English Reformation and establishment of the Church of England)
1534	Ignatius begins the process of founding the Jesuits
1534	Frenchman Jacques Cartier claimed possession of New France (Canada)
1540	Ignatius of Loyola founds the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), approved by Pope Paul III
1541	Three Franciscan missionaries murdered in New Mexico
1542	Lima, Peru, established as a diocese
1542	Francis Xavier SJ to India as missionary, Apostolic Nuncio and as emissary of the King of Portugal. He worked in Goa and on the Coramandel coast
1545 – 63	Emperor Charles V promulgated *The New Laws* which brought a measure of protection to the indigenous peoples who previously been exploited. This established or conceded the principle that Indians too have human rights. This was at least in part due to the efforts of Bartholomew Las Casas
1546 – 47	The Council of Trent (three different sessions) – the Roman Catholic Counter Reformation
1547	Francis Xavier SJ in the Moluccas, the Spice Islands
1548	Asuncion, the first bishopric of the La Plata region (modern Argentina and Paraguay)
1549 – 51	Mexico City became a metropolitan see
1549 – 1619	Francis Xavier and two Jesuit companions arrive at Kagoshima, Japan and begin to work there
1552	Thomas Stephens SJ – an English Jesuit who worked in India and worked with the Konkani dialect
1552 – 1610	San Salvador de Bahia, Brazil created as a diocese Matteo Ricci SJ (who worked in China)
1553 – 4	Founding of São Paulo, Brazil
1555	Council of Mexico
1557	Goa (India) became an archbishopric

1565	First missionaries to reach the Philippines seem to have been Augustinians who came via Mexico. Later other orders, including Spanish Jesuits arrived.
1572	St Bartholomew's Eve massacre of Huguenots in Paris
1575	Lima became a metropolitan see covering all of modern Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru
1576	Macao, China declared a suffragan see of Goa Pope Gregory XIII drew attention to the dearth of priests in the new world who actually knew the indigenous languages. His Bull, *Nuper et Nos*, permitted the ordination of half-castes and gave dispensation from the ban of illegitimacy in order to allow this.
1577 - 1656	Robert de Nobili SJ
1578	The Spanish King instructed the Bishop of Lima **not** to ordain mestizos (half-castes).
1578	Anglican chaplains accompanied Frobisher on his search for the North-West passage to India
1579	The first recorded Anglican communion service held near San Francisco, during Drake's voyage around the world.
1579	Alessandri Valigano SJ visited the Japanese mission. He held believed that in all possible ways, especially in external matters, missionaries and Christians must adapt themselves to local custom and attitudes. The mission superior of the day did not necessarily see eye to eye with him – especially over the apparently trivial matter of whether the missionaries should dress in cotton or silk!
1579	The Pope establishes the bishopric of Manila in the Philippines. The territory was clearly regarded as Spanish – it was a suffragan see of Mexico.
1580	Fr Rudolf Aquaviva SJ reached the court of the Mogul Emperor Akaba.
1582	Buenos Aires created a diocese in Brazil
1580 - 1680	Spanish missions in North America. Ended by revolt and expulsion of the Spaniards in the early 1680s
1583	Matteo Ricci SJ and a companion receive permission to settle in Chaoch' ing
1585	Council of Lima – less conservative than the Council of Mexico
1585	Mary Ward, foundress of the Institute of the Virgin Mary

	(IBVM) is born at Ripon, Yorkshire
1587	Japanese Emperor Hideyoshi ordered the expulsion of all foreigners. Most missionaries and others left.
1591	Although Akabar had not converted a second Jesuit mission was welcomed at his court
1591 - 1666	Adam Schall von Bell , German Jesuit
1595	Manila (Philippines) created an archbishopric
1599	Archbishop Aleixo de Menezes summoned the Synod of Diamper and enforced the recent decisions of the Council of Trent on the local church, establishing the supremacy of the Roman church of the pre-existing Syrian Church. Although Syriac was not replaced by Latin as the liturgical language, effectively the Roman liturgy prevailed
1600	Cranganmore, Goa, becomes a suffragan see
1600	Matteo Ricci SJ receives permission to enter the Imperial capital of China, His skills as both horologist and cartographer worked in his favour. By the time he died in 1610 there were an estimated 2,000 members of the church. Three of the Jesuits most significant converts had gone on to establish missions in their own home areas: Paul Hsü in Shanghai; Michael Yang in Chekiang; Leo Li in Hangchow.
1602	The Dutch East India Company established.
1602	A third Jesuit mission welcomed at the court of Akabar
1602	Benedict de Goes SJ set out from Agra to settle the matter of the identity of Cathay. Arriving in Suchow, Szechwan, in December 1605 he realised beyond doubt that Cathay and China were identical.
1603 – 51	Iemetsu, Emperor of Japan, presided over major persecution of Christians in Japan. Christianity virtually wiped out.
1605	Robert de Nobili SJ arrives in India. He worked in Madurai and pioneered new approaches to India. He adopted the Indian culture and learned classical Tamil, Telegu and Sanskrit. By 1609 he had 63 converts including some Brahmins. Later he extended his work to Trichinopoly and Salem.
1606	Mylapore becomes a suffragan see of Goa
1606 - 7	Benedict de Goes sought help from his fellow Jesuits at Peking to extract him from virtual house arrest in Suchow. They sent help immediately but it was 1607 and he was

	dying as help arrived.
1609	Mary Ward founds the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, based on the Jesuit constitutions. They were to become known as 'the galloping girls' or 'the female Jesuits'. Mary Ward's vision and mission was the re-conversion of England to 'the true faith'.
1610	Jesuits found a mission in Paraguay (then part of Argentina). It was called Loretto
1611	Dominicans founded a college in Manila which later became a university.
1612	Mozambique declared a Vicariate
1615	Under the leadership of Champlain, the French celebrated Mass at the site of modern Montreal. The significant Indian tribes were the Huron, Algonquin and Iriquois
1617	First martyrdoms of Christians in Japan – a Jesuit and a Dominican beheaded at Omura. Later a Dominican and Augustan received the same treatment on the same area. Japanese Christians were usually crucified. Some were crucified and drowned.
1617 – 88	Ferdinand Verbeist SJ
1622	Adam Schall von Bell arrives in Peking. He was a very competent astronomer, who prophesied eclipses in 1623 and 1624 which his Chinese colleagues had failed to predict
1622 - 1633	The Dutch East India Company supported a missionary training college in Leyden. From there chaplains went to South Africa, the Malay archipelago and Sri Lanka. This training was later taken over by the Classis Amsterdam, a branch of the Dutch Reformed Church
1622	Pope Gregory XV founded the 'Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith' known as '*The Propaganda*'
1623	By now there were 23 Jesuit settlements (*reductions*) in La Guayra (Paraguay) with a population of about 100 000
1623 - 45	Alexander de Rhodes, a French Jesuit worked as a missionary in the Far East, in both Vietnam and Macao. He began work in South Vietnam in 1623.
1624	Jesuits have eight stations and about 20 missionaries in the Zambesi region of Africa. Dominicans and Augustinians

	were also in this area.
1624	Dutch occupied Formosa
1625	Catholic Missionaries expelled from South Vietnam
1627	Pope Urban VIII founded the College of Urban for the training of missionaries.
1627	Rhodes began work in North Vietnam – until 1630.
1631	Mary Ward is excommunicated and the IBVM proscribed.
1632	First Jesuit missionaries arrive in Canada
1633	Seven Jesuit missionaries apostatised although most recalled their apostasy and died. One survived, living in Japan, and adhering to his faith until 1685
1633	Chinese peasant Lô Wen Tsao converted by the Franciscan missionaries and studied for the priesthood in Manila. He was given the European name of Fray Gregorio López
1633	Dutch captured Cochin
1633	French Ursuline nun, Mary of the Incarnation, in Tours, has her first vision regarding Canada.
1635	Ursuline, Mary, has her second vision regarding Canada. She feels called to go and found a convent there.
1637	Matthew de Castro, a Brahmin convert who had studied at the College of Urban was named Bishop of Chrysopolis and sent to Indalkan, an area of India free of Portuguese control. However the Portuguese clergy in Goa successfully obstructed his work there. He was then sent to Golconda.
1637	At the same time Franciscus de Santo Felice was appointed vicar apostolic and archbishop of Myra and sent to Japan although he never arrived there.
1639	Matthew de Castro created bishop of Chrysopolis, for Indalcan – the Indian interior (where there were no Portuguese missionaries).
1640	Mary and three Ursuline companions set out for Canada and establish themselves in Montreal.
1640s	Rhodes was able to return to South Vietnam where he worked in the capital, Sinoa (Hué). He was banished again in 1645. While there however he established a 'company of catechists', local people who could overcome the lack of priests. By 1658 it was claimed that there were some 300 000 Christians in North and South Vietnam together. Rhodes

	also reduced the Vietnamese language to writing using the Latin alphabet.
1641	Compagnie Française des Indes Orientales planned to found a French colony on Madagascar. Discalced Carmelites and Lazarites were sent to begin missionary work there. The work continued intermittently.
1642	Thomas Mayhew took the gospel to Martha's Vineyard off Massachusetts and began to evangelise the Pequot Indians. His work was virtually destroyed in 1675 by a war between Indians and colonists
1642	The Dutch captured Malacca, |East Indies Fr Isaac Jogues SJ captured and tortured by the Iriquois. He escaped and returned to work among them in 1646 only to be murdered by them the same year
1642 – 49	The English Civil War
1644	The fall of Peking
1645	Mary Ward IBVM dies at Osbaldwick a small village outside York and is buried by 'an Anglican parson who was honest enough to be bribed' to bury a declared (if excommunicate) Catholic
1645 – 1700	Portuguese Capuchin missionaries baptised about 600 000 people in the regions of Congo and Angola
1649	The English Parliament under Cromwell formed the 'Corporation for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England'. Workers who worked for the conversion of the American Indians included John Eliot (1604 – 90) and the Mayhew family.
1649 - 50	The Iriquois attacked and virtually exterminated the Huron, burning alive three Jesuits who has been working with them.
1655	Portuguese Capuchins working successfully in Angola, Africa. This activity seems to have died out around 1663
1650 – 1720	Jesuit missionaries gathered Indians in Paraguay into self-contained and self-sustaining settlements called *reductions*, to protect and defend them as well as to Christianise them. The experiment finally collapsed in the eighteenth century.
1658	The Dutch capture Colombo, Ceylon
1659	*The Propaganda* issued instructions that from this time missionaries should not interfere with the habits, culture and customs of the indigenous peoples with whom they worked.

	Many missionaries disagreed with these instructions.
1659	François Pallu appointed bishop of Heliopolis, for Tongking; Pierre Lambert de la Motte, bishop of Berytus, for Cochin-China.
1660	The Dutch take Macassar, East Indies
1660	Ignazio Cotolendi, appointed bishop of Metallopolis, for Nanking
1662	The end of the Ming Dynasty in China. Adam Schall von Bell SJ and five assistants were condemned to death. His five Chinese assistants were executed but Schall was reprieved and died of natural causes a year later. All other missionary priests were expelled from China but the Jesuits were allowed to remain.
1667	The new Emperor of China, Káng-Hsi began to become involved in government and befriended Schall's fellow Jesuit, Ferdinand Verbeist (a Fleming) who was also an astronomer and scientist
1673	Lô Wen Tsao (aka Fray Gregorio López) was appointede titular bishop of Basilinopolis in Bithynia and vicar apostolic for northern China. He died in 1691
1674	An attempt to restart the Madagascan mission ended with the murder of 75 colonists
1685	John de Britto SJ arrived in India and worked mostly in the district of Rāmnād and the state of Pudukottah in the Marava country
1686	de Britto's first visit to the Marava region ended in arrest and torture
1686	Father Kino SJ entered southern Arizona to Christianise the Pima Indians
1690	Franciscans led by Fr Damian Massanet founded short-lived missions in eastern Texas. Thirty years later the Franciscans developed six flourishing settlements along the San Antonio River along the lines of the Paraguayan *reductions*
1692	The Chinese Emperor issues an Edict of Toleration (of Christians)
1692	de Britto was beheaded outside the town of Uraiyur, India
1693 1693	A dispute arises between Rome (French Vicar Apostolic, Charles Maigrot) and the Jesuits in China about the used of Chinese (Confucian) terminology for God. Such terms were

	banned in 1704.
1698	The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) grew out of the efforts of Thomas Bray to attract evangelists to Maryland and to establish parish libraries.
1701	The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts (SPG) was founded for specifically missionary endeavours by Bray and others.
1703	Special legate (and titular patriarch of Antioch), Charles Maillard de Tournon arrived unannounced in Pondicherry, India and remained for eight months. he was critical of Jesuit activity in India
1703 – 1791	John Wesley
1705	de Tournon arrives in Peking and again was critical of the Jesuits. He aroused the ire of the Emperor and was sent back to Macao via Nanking, apparently making enemies everywhere. From Nanking he issued a decree forbidding everything of Jesuit custom in China. As a result, the only missionaries allowed to remain in China were those who were prepared to swear to the Emperor that they would follow Ricci's rules. All others were forced out.
1705	Danish missionaries were recruited by the King of Denmark for the colony of Tranquebar, India. Their work lasted, despite opposition for about fifteen years.
1707 – 1788	Charles Wesley
1709	The Scottish SPCK founded.
1711	All missionaries except for a few Jesuit advisors were expelled from China
1711 – 1742	Constantine Joseph Beschi SJ served in India. He also mastered the Tamil language and developed a grammar for the language.
1714	Royal authority was established in Copenhagen to guarantee Danish missionaries official sanction and support.
1714	First translation of the Tamil New Testament by Protestant missionary, Zeigenbalg.
1722	Danish missions were begun in Greenland and the West Indies

1725	Jesuit convert Fr Andrew Ly (1693-1774) ordained. He lived and worked for about 50 years in Szechwan. His diary written in Latin gives an excellent record of the events of 1746-1763.
1732	The Moravian Missionary Church founded in Silesian Saxony. In 150 years they sent some 2,170 missionaries to different parts of the world.
1737	John and Charles Wesley visit Georgia for the SPG
1738	Charles and John Wesley (the latter's 'heart was strangely warmed') have a vital Christian experience which revolutionised their ministries.
1740	Moravian missionaries in Virgin Islands, Greenland, Surinam, the Gold Coast of Africa, South Africa and North America
1741 – 42	David Brainerd and Azariah Horton sent by the Scottish SPCK to work with American Indians
1743	John Wesley draws up common rules for all 'Methodist' societies in England.
1744	First English Methodist Conference
1747	Dominican bishop, Sanz, and four other Dominicans were arrested and tortured in Fukien, China
1760 – 87	Jesuit bishop Laimbeckhoven of Nanking survived in hiding until he died near Shanghai.
1761 – 1834	William Carey, often regarded as the first English missionary of the modern era. Worked in Bengal, India.
1769	Captain James Cook's first voyage to Australia
1772	The third Council of Lima removed the effective ban on ordaining mestizos
1773	Suppression of the Jesuits (initiated by the Bourbon monarchs) by Pope Clement XIV. At this stage the Society numbered some 22, 589 members of whom 11, 293 were priests and at least 3, 000 were missionaries.
1776	The American Declaration of Independence issued. .
1784	Two bishops and sixteen European priests rounded up in China. Six died in chains.

1787 – 1807	The *Clapham Sect*, an influential group of Anglican Church Evangelicals worked to bring about the abolition of the slave trade. In 1807 they succeeded.
1784	John Wesley appointed two leaders of the American Methodist church, Asbury and Coke, who were there then confirmed as bishops by the Methodist Conference in Baltimore. (Many authorities agree that Wesley actually ordained them as bishops.) Before his death Wesley certainly personally ordained men who were to minister in Scotland and overseas as missionaries.
1788	First settlement at Sydney Cove, New South Wales
1789	The French Revolution begins
1792	William Carey founded the (English) Baptist Missionary Society.
1792	Charles Grant, a wealthy East India merchant, wrote a pamphlet calling for the toleration of Christian Missions by the East India Company
1793	Carey sailed for India/Bengal as a missionary
1794	The first three Indian priests ordained in the new world. Frances Ball, foundress of the Irish branch of the IBVM is born in Ireland.
1794	Methodists seceded from the Church of England
1795	Foundation of the London Missionary Society
1795 – 6	London Missionary Society despatched thirty missionaries to work in the South Pacific – and later in India, China, Madagascar and the West Indies
1796	The General Methodist Society was founded to work in the West Indies, South Africa, South India, China, Polynesia and elsewhere.
1796	The Church of Scotland and the Secessionist Church of Scotland also founded mission societies to work in Sierra Leone, India, Jamaica and South Africa
1799	The East India Company which had deliberately prohibited missionary activity in India for fear of disrupting their good trading relations with the locals, were forced to change their policy by British public opinion. Chaplain Claudius Buchanan went to India in 1796. Henry Martyn followed in 1805
1799	The Church Missionary Society formed in England. It

	founded missions in: India, West Africa, the Niger, Victoria Nyanza, Egypt, Palestine, Persia, China and Japan
1804	The British and Foreign Bible Society is founded
1814	Restoration of the Jesuits by Pope Pius VII
1814	Frances Ball founds the Irish branch of the IBVM
1816	American Bible Society founded in New York
1824	Emancipation of all slaves in British territory
1827	Christian Brethren founded in Dublin and soon spread to England. Splinter groups – the Plymouth Brethren and the Exclusive Brethren later developed.
1828	Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts which allowed Roman Catholics and Non-conformists (i.e non members of the Church of England) to sit in Parliament for the first time since the Recusancy Acts of Elizabethan times
1833	Jules Chevalier is born in Richlieu, France
1833	George Williams founds the Young Men's Christian Association
1844	The Evangelical Alliance and interdenominational movement) founded
1846	An interdenominational group of English teachers and medically trained women go to India to work with women in the 'Zenanas' or women's quarters. Among other work, they found the first women's hospitals in India
1852	Jules Chevalier, a priest in the Diocese of Bourges, founds the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.
1852	Frances Ball IBVM dies.
1854	Conversion of Thomas Barnardo, founder of orphanages in Britain
1861	The Salvation Army founded in England by William Booth
1862	China Inland Mission founded by Hudson Taylor
1865	Vatican I
1866	First translation (of the Gospel of Luke) into Pangasinan (a Filipino language) by Protestant missionaries

1869 – 70	Jules Chevalier founds the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (FDNSC (Fr) or OLSH (Eng)
1873	He also commissions an MSC priest to found the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart.
1895	World Student Christian Federation brought together interdenominational university Christian Unions and stimulated missionary activity
1905	The movement linking university Christian Unions became known as the Student Christian Movement (SCM). Originally evangelical in flavour, it became more conservative, stressing the social gospel rather than personal salvation
1910	First World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh
1914 – 18	World War I
1921	International Missionary Council formed to survey the mission of non-Roman churches worldwide. It met again in Jerusalem, 1928; Madras 1938; Ghana 1958.
1923	First Indian Roman Catholic bishop consecrated in India
1926	First six Chinese Roman Catholic bishops consecrated in China
1927	First Japanese Roman Catholic bishop consecrated in Japan
1928	Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Evangelical Unions (IVF) founded – a breakaway from SCM
1933	First Sri Lankan Roman Catholic bishop consecrated in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon)
1937	First Korean Roman Catholic bishop consecrated in Korea
1939	First African Roman Catholic bishop consecrated
1939 – 45	World War II
1948	World Council of Churches formed to represent most mainstream Protestant churches. Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran and Pentecostal churches were not represented
1957	The Zenana Missionary Fellowship is renamed the Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship (BMMF) and continues educational and medical work in India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh.

1961	International Missionary Council merged with the World Council of Churches at the Delhi Assembly. Orthodox and some Pentecostal churches were observers
1962 – 65	Vatican II – the *aggiornamento* “bringing up to date” the Roman Catholic Church itself. For many this seen as a time of removing much of the medieval accretion of piety and dubious theology and a return to “the first century church”
1968	WCC Assembly Uppsala. Roman Catholic Church was a ‘participating observer
1975	WCC Assembly Nairobi. Roman Catholic Church was a again a ‘participating observer’
1987	BMMF adopts the name Interserve to adapt to a changing world situation and to reflect its charter now as an international; aid provider. Some 600 Christians from 14 countries are currently working in partnerships with government agencies or in NGOs in 20 countries in Asia, North Africa and the Arab world..

By 1556 there were over a thousand Jesuits – mainly in Spain and Portugal but also in France, Germany, the Low Countries, India, Brazil and Africa

Sources:

A M, Renwick, *The Story of the Church*. IVP: London, 1966
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Appendix 2

A Timeline of some important events affecting Aborigines in the Northern Territory

Date	Events
1788 – 1802	Part of the Northern Territory regarded as New South Wales, part as New Holland.
1802-3	Flinders circumnavigation of the continent established that Australia is one continent.
1817 – 1820	Phillip Parker King established that Melville and Bathurst Islands are separated from the mainland. King also discovers the major rivers of Arnhem Land.
1824	Settlement established at Fort Dundas on Melville Island. Abandoned within eighteen months.
1827	Settlement established at Fort Wellington, Raffles Bay on the Coburg Peninsula. Soon abandoned.
1834	*South Australia Act* (UK) established the colony of South Australia.
1836	Letters Patent establishing the colony of South Australia.
1837 – 41	John Wickham entered Darwin Harbour.
1838	Settlement established at Port Essington (Victoria).
1839	A severe cyclone stuck the settlement at Port Essington.
1841 – 43	John Lort Stokes further explored Darwin Harbour.
1846	Father Angelo Confalonieri arrived at Port Essington and worked with Aborigines at the behest of the Bishop of Perth, Western Australia.
1848	Confalonieri died of fever.
1849	The colony of Port Essington abandoned in June.
1850s	Constitutions of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania drawn up. The constitutions regarded Aborigines as citizens and gave adult males the right to vote.
1863	*The Northern Territory Act* (UK) extended the area of South

	Australia to include the Northern Territory.
1864	South Australia established a settlement at Escape Cliffs at the mouth of the Adelaide River. Abandoned 1866.
1867	The settlement transferred from Escape Cliffs to Port Darwin
1877	Lutheran missionaries established Hermannsburg mission in Central Australia
1882	The Jesuits established a mission at Rapid Creek.
1886 -1899	The Jesuits developed three mission sites at Daly River
1901	*Immigration restriction Act* (Cwlth) – the foundation of the White Australia Policy
1902	*Franchise Act* (Cwlth) - Aborigines (and other coloured people) effectively excluded from voting rights. The remaining two Jesuits left Darwin.
1906	Father Francis Xavier Gsell MSC arrived in Darwin to take over responsibility for the Roman Catholic population of the Northern Territory.
1908	The Church Missionary Society (Anglican) established a mission at Roper River.
1910	*Northern Territory (Administration) Act* (Cwlth) effectively established the position of Northern Territory Administrator.
1910	*Northern Territory Aboriginals Act* (SA) established the office of Chief Protector and effectively made all Aborigines and half-castes wards of the state under the guardianship of the Protector and his assistants. This Act also established Aboriginal reserves. This Act remained in force until superseded by the 1918 Act (Cwlth).
1911	Gsell moved to Bathurst Island to begin his mission to the Aborigines. *An Ordinance relating to Aboriginals* (Cwlth) – to be read with the 1910 Act.
1914 – 1918	First World War
1915	Methodists established mission at Goulburn Island
1918	*Ordinance Relating to Aboriginals* (Cwlth). Superseded the

	1911 Ordinance and extended the definition of "Aboriginal" to include most mixed race people, excepting certain married half-caste women.
1921	Church Missionary Society established mission at Emerald River, (later Angurugu) Groote Eylandt.
1922	Methodists established mission at Elcho Island.
1924	Legal challenge to the Commonwealth interpretation of *The Franchise Act*, as a result of which legislation – *The Commonwealth Electoral Act* (Cwlth) – allowed Indians to vote and specifically excluded Aborigines.
1924	CMS mission established at Oenpelli
1925	Methodists established mission at Milingimbi
1935	Fr Docherty MSC established Roman Catholic mission at Port Keats
1935	Methodists established mission at Yirrkala
1936	Charles Duguid established Ernabella Mission under the auspices of the Presbyterian church.
1936	Catholic Mission established at Charles Creek.
1937	First Commonwealth-State conference on 'Native Welfare' adopts 'assimilation' as the national policy
1940	Catholic Mission established at Garden Point, Melville Island.
1940	Methodist Mission for mixed race children established at Croker Island
1943	Charles Creek Mission relocated to Arltunga.
1947	*Northern Territory (Administration) Act* (Cwlth) provided for the establishment of a Legislative Council in the Territory.
1949	The Chifley Labor Government passed an Act giving the right to vote in Commonwealth elections to all who had the right to vote in their States. Nothing was done to publicise this change so Aborigines were largely unaware of their rights.
	Third Commonwealth-State conference on 'Native Welfare' affirms 'assimilation' as the national policy
1951	CMS mission established at Numbulwar

1952	Arltunga Mission relocated to Santa Teresa.
1953	Daly River Mission established.
1955	CMS mission established at Umbakumba, Groote Eylandt
1958	Menzies Government gave all Aborigines the right to vote in Commonwealth elections.
1967	National Referendum amending the Constitution to enable the Commonwealth to make laws for Aboriginal people. (Previously this had been a matter for the States.) Aboriginal people to be included in the census. (This is often referred to as 'conferring full citizenship on Aborigines'.)
1967	NT Legislative Council replaced by a fully elected Legislative Assembly with members representing each of the 19 electoral divisions.
1974	*Racial Discrimination Act* (Cwlth) passed.
1975	*The Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act* (Cwlth)
1978	Northern Territory attained self-government (July 1)
1992	Mabo Case land rights ruling of the High Court of Australia. *Aboriginal Land Rights Act (Northern Territory)*(Cwlth)

Appendix 3:

Rules for Coadjutor Brothers of the Sacred Heart. 1914.[1]

1. All the coadjutor brothers, whoever they are, should understand fully that in order to serve God in our little Society, they must devote themselves, not only to the usual spiritual exercises at stated times but also to domestic work however humble and lowly and of whatever kind; they will apply themselves to their respective offices and be ready to stay in them for life if that is the will of their Superior; their sacrifice will be pleasing to the Lord and will draw blessings on them and the Society. …

2. Above all they will have a great delicacy of conscience and a strong desire to make progress in the virtues proper to their holy state; they will be pious, gentle, peace-loving, docile to grace and desirous of perfection; they will work hard to edify, not only people of the house but those outside, by their fervour and behaviour; happy in their holy vocation they will have a particular love for the Society that they would serve in a useful way and all this for the glory of God.

3. If there is a number of them they will recreate on their own, under the direction of one whom the Superior judges fit to designate.

4. When they have fulfilled the duties of their respective offices, if there is any time over, they will spend it entirely in matters prescribed by obedience.

5. When they accompany one of ours as a companion, they must never leave him; if the situation changes they will let the Superior know about it.

6. They will remember that the Rule requires of them the duty to surround with respect and esteem, with veneration and honour, not only their Superiors but also all of ours who are no coadjutors and principally the Priests to whom they will always speak with modesty, submission, deference and humility.

7. Since everything is in common and because of the situations in which they can often be, they must be careful to take nothing for themselves, not to give, loan or send to others whoever they might be, without the permission of the Superior. They must understand that in all such matters they can sin seriously against the vow of poverty

8. All must assist at a spiritual conference[2] to be given once a week; the Priest who is in charge can question them on the matter of the conference.

[1] McMahon, *MSC Brothers in Australia,* Appendix 1, pp. 37-38.
[2] The spiritual 'conference' could be a lecture or a group discussion based on spiritual reading.

9. Although they are meant to edify their neighbour and to inspire in him good feelings according to circumstances, they must be careful all the same not to go beyond the rules of prudence and propriety.

10. They must not keep or read any book without the permission of the Superior; it is up to the Superior, or to the Spiritual Father appointed by him, to make available to them those books from which they can derive the greatest profit. The study of Latin is expressly forbidden to the brothers.

11. The coadjutor brothers are to bear in mind that, following the example of the Priests of the Sacred Heart who by their apostolic work and their other functions serve the Society with profit, they too are of great use in fulfilling the lower occupations which are confided to them. We all work together to put up a building and the cooperation of the humblest is as useful as that of the highest in dignity; before God the glory is the same and the reward will be great. In any machine the principal motor has no more merit than the smallest wheel; and the least of the wheels is as necessary as the biggest so that everything works together and in harmony. And so it is in a well-organised religious society. It is a body of which Jesus Christ is the soul and in which each member has his fixed place, his 'raison d'être' and his special usefulness; and if each one keeps to the sphere assigned to him the result is the most perfect order.[3]

12. The coadjutor brothers will be careful to do their jobs with the greatest perfection possible.

13. They will be subject to the Common Rules just as are other Religious of the Sacred Heart, apart from the exceptions anticipated in the particular rules or those occasioned by circumstances.

14. Brothers not employed in the kitchen will take their turn serving and reading in the refectory. They will take their meals at the same time as the fathers, in the same refectory but at a separate table.

15. Each day they will say the little office of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; those who can't read will recite a Rosary in place of the Office.

A.M.S.C.J.G.
May the peace of the lord rest on those who keep these rules.

[3] This notion of the 'perfect order of things' is reminiscent of the medieval Great Chain of Being in which everything in creation had its fixed place and good order was maintained by maintaining the stability of the great chain of being. Without that stability, chaos would ensue.

Appendix 4:

Commonwealth responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs.

Date	Minister	Within department[1]
1956 – 69	Paul Hasluck	Territories
1963 - 69	C.E. Barnes	Territories/External Territories
1969 - 71	W.C. Wentworth	Dept of Prime Minister
19 71 - 72	Peter Howson	Environment, Aborigines, Arts
1972 - 73	Gordon Bryant	Aboriginal Affairs
1973 - 75	Sen. J.L. Cavanagh	Aboriginal Affairs
1975	Sen T.C. Drake Brockman	Aboriginal Affairs
1975 – 78	R. Ian Viner	Aboriginal Affairs
1978 - 80	Fred M Chaney	Aboriginal Affairs
1980 – 82	Sen Peter Baume	Aboriginal Affairs
1982 – 83	I.B.C. Wilson	Aboriginal Affairs
1983 – 87	A.C. (Clive) Holding	Aboriginal Affairs
1987 - 90	G.L. (Gerry) Hand	Aboriginal Affairs
1990 – 91	R.E. (Robert) Tickner	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
1991 -93	Robert Tickner	Reconciliation /DEET
1993 - 96	Robert Tickner	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island Affairs
1996 – 2001	Sen J.J. (John) Herron	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island Affairs
2001 - 2003	P.M. (Phillip) Ruddock	Reconciliation and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island Affairs
2003 - 2004	A.E. (Amanda) Vanstone	Reconciliation / Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
2004 – 2005	Amanda Vanstone	Indigenous Affairs / Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
2006 – 2008	Mal Brough	Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Source: *Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia.* Parliamentary Library Parliament of Australia.
http://www.aph.gov.au/Library/handbook/historical/ministries/index.htm Downloaded 25 June 2007.

[1] Much of the time these were sub departments within the Department of the Prime Minister.

Appendix 5:

'Dadirri' Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann[1]

Ngangikurungkurr means 'Deep Water Sounds'.
Ngangikurungkurr is the name of my tribe. The word can be broken up into three parts: Ngangi means word or sound, kuri means water, and Kurr means deep. So the name of my people means the 'Deep Water Sounds' or 'Sounds of the Deep'. This book is about taping into the deep spring within us.

Many Australians understand that Aboriginal people have a special respect for Nature. The identity we have with the land is sacred and unique. Many people are beginning to understand this more. Also there are many Australians who appreciate that Aboriginal people have a very strong sense of community. All persons matter. All of us belong. And there are many more Australians now who understand that we are people who celebrate together.

What I want you to know about is another special quality of my people. I believe it is the most important. It is our most unique gift. It is perhaps the greatest gift we can give to our fellow Australians. In our language it is the quality called dadirri.

It is inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness.

Dadirri recognises the deep spring that is inside us. We call on it and it calls to us. This is the gift that Australia is thirsting for. It is something like what you call 'contemplation'.

When I experience Dadirri I am made whole again. I can sit on the river bank or walk through the trees; even if someone close to me has passed away, I can find my peace in this silent awareness. There is no need for words. A big part of

[1] This statement is taken directly from the typescript of *Dadirri* given to Eileen Farrelly by Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann for inclusion in Farrelly's book of the same name published in 2003.

dadirri is listening. Throughout the years, we have listened to our stories. They are told and sung, over and over, as the seasons go by. Today we still gather around the campfires and together we hear the sacred stories.

As we grow older, we ourselves become the storytellers. We pass on to the young ones all they must know. The stories and songs sink quietly into our minds and we hold them deep inside. In the ceremonies we celebrate the awareness of our lives as sacred.

The contemplative way of dadirri spreads over our whole life. It renews us and brings us peace. It makes us feel whole again. One of our ceremonies that brings about this wholeness is the Smoking Ceremony.

We take part in ceremonies. I love to see the painted bodies and to watch the dancers. I like the sound of the didgeridoos and the clapsticks. I never feel alone in the ceremonies. Sometimes at a corroboree, before the dancing has begun, we sit and listen as the song-men or song-women begin the story. Everyone is relaxed. We feel secure and happy. We are together and it is good.

We watch the bush foods and wait for them to ripen before we gather them. We wait for our young people as they grow, stage by stage, through their initiation ceremonies. When a relation dies, we wait a long time with sorrow. We own our grief and allow it to heal slowly.

We wait for the right time for our ceremonies and our meetings. The right time must be present. Everything must be done in the proper way. Careful preparations must be made. We don't mind waiting because we want things to be done with care. Sometimes many hours will be spent preparing the body before an important ceremony.

We don't like to hurry. There is nothing more urgent than what we are attending to. There is nothing more urgent that we must hurry for. We wait on God, too. His time is the right time. We wait for him to make His Word clear to us. We

don’t worry. We know that in time and in the spirit of dadirri (that deep listening and quiet stillness) His way will be clear.

We are the river people. We cannot hurry the river. We need to move with the current and understand its ways.

We hope that the people of Australia will wait. Not so much waiting for us – but waiting with us as we find our way in the world.

My people are used to the struggle and the long waiting. We still wait for the white people to understand us better. We ourselves had to spend many years learning about the white man’s ways. Some of the learning was forced, but in many cases people tried hard over a long time to learn new ways.

We have learned to speak the white man’s language. We have listened to what he has to say. This learning and listening should go both ways. We would like people in Australia to take time to listen to us. We are hoping people will come closer. We keep on longing for the things we have always hoped for – respect and understanding .

I never get tired of going back to the bush. Mt relations have told me about the origins of these places. This history of my ancestors has real meaning for me. I learnt about a trading trail, a track that neighbouring tribes used to follow, the place of our ceremonial grounds. All these places mean a lot to me. They are part of me. All the bush is part of my life.

I was born under a tree. My mother showed me the place. She showed me where I used to play and where I would hunt for the wild honey. The feeling I have for this place is very special. The place where I was born – it’s me.

To be still brings peace – and it brings understanding. When we are really still in the bush, we concentrate. We are aware of the anthills and the turtles and the waterlilies. Our culture is different. We are asking our fellow Australians to take time to know us.

I believe it is not just twice as hard, but four times as hard, for an Aboriginal person to achieve anything in our country.

Life is hard for many of my people. Good and bad things came with the years of contact – and with the years following. People often absorbed the bad things and not the good. It was easier to do the bad things than to try a bit harder to achieve what we really hoped for.

I think it is something like a whirlwind. We might get caught in it, but after, we come out – all ‘fluffed up’. We think: ‘I got through! I made it’.

But some people get caught and stuck. They might feel trapped; or they might drop out. They might suicide. In a way, my people are going through this whirlwind all the time. So we are asking that our fellow countrymen will come and learn and listen and wait with us. This will encourage us and lighten our burdens.

And we know that our white brothers and sisters in this land themselves carry their own particular burdens. We believe that if they let us come to them – if they open their minds and hearts to us – we may lighten their burdens. There is a struggle for us; but I believe we have not lost our spirit of dadirri. It is the way that we strengthen and renew our inner selves.

I would like conclude by saying that there are deep springs within each of us. Within this deep spring, which is the very Spirit of God, is a sound. The sound of Deep calling to Deep. The sound of the word – Jesus.

And I believe that the spirit of dadirri that we have to offer will blossom and grow, not just within ourselves, but in our whole nation.

Miriam Rose Ungunmerr: The tree of life

This painting was presented to St Mary's Cathedral by Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann as a representation of the spirituality of the Daly River people. (The painting has since been stolen and remains unrecovered.)

Photo: Wendy Beresford-Maning

NAUIYU NAMBIYU COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 2005

COUNCIL'S VISION

OUR AIM IS:

- To improving the overall living conditions of our Community members and to promote a greater capacity within-them for self-management and self-sufficiency.

TO ACHIEVE THIS AIM OUR OBJECTIVES ARE:

- To ensure adequate, appropriate and affordable housing for residents of the community.
- Through establishment of employment, training and residency policies, ensure that all members who can work, will work.
- To increase the opportunity for employment from existing activities and facilitating the creation of new business enterprises.
- **To improve the health, well being and welfare of the community by providing and by encouraging active participation in sporting, recreational, cultural events and through the provision of personal living skills.**
- **To provide physical infrastructure and services equivalent to an Australian urban community of 500+ people.**[1]
- To maintain an effective, responsive and accountable Council which coordinates and fosters all aspects of community participation and development.
- To maintain a safe and secure living environment for all Community members.
- To develop individual skills and enhance opportunities and maximize local self-sufficiency.

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[1] My emphasis.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

This Report provides details of financial affairs of the Council during the year ended 30th June, 2005, and an overview of the Council's activities during this period.

It has been a difficult year for Council, with the departure of its long-term Chief Executive Officer (David Shoobridge), with three others, some acting or temporary, throughout the year. Recruitment action was commenced by 30 June.

Council has been involved at completion of various projects commenced the previous year all with a view to benefiting the community and making it a safer place to live and work. During the year, using funds from NT DPIE, Council sealed the airstrip so that it is now an all-weather strip. This has been to great advantage to this Community now that the Aerial medical Service can now visit for emergencies every day of the year barring major times of flood. There also was a $130,000 upgrade of the Daly River crossing which has facilitated greater and safer ease of movement within the region.

Council resolved to write-off loans to the value of $70,932 to the Nauiyu Club, Daly Riverside Inn and to Nauiyu Incorporated. These write-offs have significantly affected Council's level of surplus for the year.

The Council has continued with 4 or 5 visits from NT Police Recruits, whereby they spend 3 days in the Community learning a multitude of things will assist them in their future careers. I thank those members of Council staff who gave their time freely to assist in these visits.

During the year Council took over the Crèche (Child Care Centre) from Catholic Education and staff it with a fulltime Council employee ably assisted by CDEP workers.

A new Housing Shed was constructed during the year using surplus Housing funds.

An innovation during the year was implementation of the School Bus Run, picking-up and returning children, from Nauiyu to Woolianna School and return. This has given residents another education option for their children.

Council supported substantial research in preparation for a new Power Station, on the Woolianna Road, which will service the broader Daly River region.

During the year funds were provided from NT Department of Health and Community Services to transfer operations of the Health Clinic from Council to NT Health.

The 2005 Merrepen Arts Festival was again a major community event. Thousands of people visited the Community during this Festival, wherein the younger members participated in football, basketball and softball competitions. Norforce also participated with many exciting displays.

The issue of regionalisation (amalgamation of Council areas) continued to affect most aspects of Council/staff operations. As far as my Council is concerned this matter needs a lot more attention and effort by Council before resolution. A major sticking-point for Council is the matter relating to future operations of the Stores, Club, Pub, Housing and Civil Works under a new regionalized structure.

I and Council continue to be 'bombarded' with Government and Agency visitors over the year, many still unannounced, and would have hoped that, on the demise of ATSIS, more efficient arrangements would have eventuated as promised.

Finally, I wish to thank outgoing member of Council Greg Warloo who did not stand for Council at the April 2005 election, and welcome new Councillor Betty Sullivan, who was elected to join Andy McTaggart, Jimmy Numbatu, Brigit Kikitin, Sharon Daly and myself. They have attended many long Council meetings and been willing to make the hard decisions.

Mark Casey

President

HIGHLIGHTS

EMPLOYMENT/TRAINING

Apart from CDEP, new training was carried out within St Francis Xavier School and Apprentices continued in Civil and at the Workshop. One Apprentice finished his apprenticeship in Civil.

Council has continued to tender for civil works to source further employment and income opportunities for the community. Period contracts for grading and other work throughout the Daly River district have been established. Additional work has been carried out under contract on the airstrip and roads within the Daly River Port Keats Reserve.

Council employed a Sports and Recreation Officer late in the year.

CDEP

CDEP continued successfully, with an extremely low number of participants refusing work on CDEP, opting instead for New Start benefits. An average of 145 (equal to its Target Employment level) participants was employed under the scheme throughout the year and Council continues to press its policy of having CDEP participation made mandatory.

HOUSING

The Nauiyu Housing team continues to upgrade all community assets with carports, fencing and general ongoing maintenance. IHANT support for the Housing Officer and maintenance subsidies continued, and $181,818 was provided for a new duplex.

POWER STATION

PowerWater have commenced construction of a new power station on the Woolianna Road. It plans to extend the electricity grid to all residents including Council's Woolianna outpost.

AWARDS

Patricia McTaggart was awarded the Medal of Australia for her work for Indigenous people. This is a great achievement for Patricia and the Nauiyu Community.

FUTURE OBJECTIVES

Funding for the new Mechanical Centre has been approved and work will commence in July 2005. This complex will house two mechanics and provide a formal apprentice training centre.

Development of upgraded tourist facilities at the Daly Riverside Inn is planned, with an application for funding being developed with the NT Tourism Commission.

Council has commenced discussions with Gunyah Tourism with an intention to develop a Pilot program in 1005/06.

COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE AGAINST PRINCIPAL FUNCTIONS

(a) *The establishment, development, operation and maintenance of communication facilities for the community government area and in so doing the council may enter into a contract with the Australian Telecommunications Commission to act, for reward, as the agent of the Commission.*

During the year Council continued to rebroadcast commercial television and radio programmes throughout the area including SBS television and extension of the transmittal service throughout the Daly River district. TEABBA is supporting upgrade of the BRACS system.

(b) *The establishment and maintenance of parks, gardens and recreational areas and carrying out landscaping and other associated works.*

Throughout the year, the Council CDEP Parks & Gardens Section has continued to maintain existing parks and garden areas, including the oval. New lawns have been established in the new housing subdivision.

(c) *The establishment and maintenance of sports facilities, libraries, a cinema, a swimming pool, community halls and public toilet and ablution blocks.*

Community sports facilities, including the community hall and swimming pool, have been maintained throughout the year by Council's Sport & Recreation section with support of CDEP.

Public ablution facilities continued to be maintained by CDEP participants.

(d) *The provision of a service for the collection and disposal of garbage, the maintenance of a particular place where garbage is to be dumped and the control of litter generally.*

Council continued its twice-weekly garbage collection service and maintenance of the community garbage dump area. The community has been equipped with wheelie bins and a replacement, larger garbage truck. DEWR funded $117,000 (for 2005/06) a brand new garbage compactor truck. Council contributed a further $20,000 for its purchase.

(e) *The provision and maintenance of sanitation facilities and the removal of health hazards.*

Council continued to provide this service.

(f) *The provision and maintenance of sewerage, drainage and water supply facilities.*

Sewerage and water supply remain a responsibility of the Northern Territory Government which is overseen by Council under contract to PowerWater Corporation. Drainage is continually being upgraded.

(g) The supply of electricity by contracting with a government department or statutory authority responsible for providing electricity, and acting, for reward as an agent in respect of the collection of electricity charges.

Council continues to act as an agent for the PowerWater Corporation and has renegotiated new contracts benefiting the community. Most residential credit meters have been replaced with ticket meters. Council's Essential Services Officer will also act for Woolianna residents.

(h) *The provision of adult education and vocational and other training.*

Substantial training for employment opportunities stopped when Catholic Education ceased funding for its Adult Educator. Batchelor College agreed to fill the void, however, nothing eventuated.

Council, through CDEP, will actively liaise with ITEC, a DEWR-funded Employment Provider, to develop training for employment programs.

(i) *(no function)*

(j) *The provision and maintenance of housing for residents and their families on such terms and conditions as the council thinks fit.*

Council continued its housing programme with support from IHANT.

(k) *The provision of relief work for unemployed persons.*

Council operates a CDEP service with DEWR support and funding, although a few residents prefer unemployment benefits to CDEP participation.

(l) *(no function)*

(m) *The promotion and provision of community welfare, health and care facilities for all age groups within the community government area and the provision of appropriately trained staff to provide counselling or temporary assistance.*

Council has continued to provide these services with financial assistance from Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments. Council is an approved Emergency Fund provider on behalf of the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services.

(n) *The maintenance of a cemetery.*

Council continued to provide this service for two sites.

(o) *(no function)*

(p) *The control of animals within the community government area.*

Council continued to provide this service. A Veterinary Doctor visited the community and treated sick animals, and de-sexed others.

(q) *The development and maintenance of roads within the community government area (including the provision of street lighting and traffic control devices) and, for reward, the development and maintenance of roads outside the community government area.*

Council continued to provide this service and maintains a Traffic Management Scheme to improve road safety within the community.

(r) *The maintenance of the Daly River airstrip and other facilities related thereto.*

Council continued to provide this service.

(s) *The hiring out, for reward, of any plant, appliance or equipment belonging to the council and the repair and maintenance, for reward, of any plant, appliance or equipment not owned by the council.*

Council continued to provide this service.

(t) *The contracting of works projects, within or without the community government area.*

Council has continued this function.

(u) *The establishment and operation of pastoral and commercial enterprises.*

Council has continued this function and will seek assistance from Indigenous Business Australia and IBIS to seek professional assistance with development of a Business plan for Council's Civil Works Section.

(v) *(no function)*

(w) *The selling of petroleum products.*

Council does not carry out this function, which is done through Nauiyu Nambiyu Incorporated.

(x) *(no function)*

(y) *The establishment and maintenance of a fire-fighting service, including the acquisition of property and equipment and training of personnel for the service, and the protection of the community government area from fire.*

Council continued to operate the community fire service and fire vehicle through the Daly River Volunteer Group. Normal fire precautions including regular servicing of equipment was continued. All Council and store staff has undergone training in fire safety.

(z) *The promotion and development of tourist attractions, and provision and maintenance of tourist facilities, within the community government area.*

Council continued this activity through Nauiyu Nambiyu Inc. Council remains a member of the Katherine Regional Tourist Association.

(za) *The production and selling of artifacts and souvenirs.*

Council continues to support this activity through the Merrepen Arts Aboriginal Corporation.

(zb) *The management and control of sites of historic interest.*

Council continues to support this function as required.

(zc) *The support and encouragement of artistic, cultural and sporting activities.*

Through function such as the Merrepen Arts Festival, Council continued this support.

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Father John Leary MSC, Darwin, March 2004, June 2004, June 2005, June 2006, May 2007, May 2008, June 2008.

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[1] Interviews includes notes of interviews and some tape recordings. Conversations include both intentional and casual conversation which canvassed issues relevant to the thesis.

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Father Peter Robinson MSC , Darwin, December 2007.

Sister Ann Byrne IBVM, Darwin, February 2006, December 2006, February 2007, February, 2008, April-May 2008.

Sister Margaret Callaghan IBVM, Melbourne, March 1991.

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Sister Therese-Marie Hillis OLSH, Darwin, Conversations in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007.

Sister Margaret C Honner IBVM, Darwin, February 2006.

Sister Anne Kelly IBVM, Darwin, February 2006, June 2008

Sister Elisabeth Little OLSH, Darwin. February/March 2008

Sr Helen Little OLSH, Darwin, February 2008, May 2008

Sister Odete Moreira FdCC , Darwin, February 2007.

Sister Jan Niall IBVM, Darwin, May 2008

Sister Helen Parer IBVM, Alice Springs and Darwin, April 2004, May 2008

Sister Angela Sambusida FdCC, Darwin, February 2007.

Sister Diaan Stuart IBVM, Darwin, December 2006.

Sister Ruth Winship IBVM, Melbourne, January 2007.

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