

The Character of Evangelism in Colonial Melbourne: Activism, Initiative, and Leadership



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Cover sheet photograph

Executive Committee of the Evangelization Society of Australasia (formerly ESV)

Standing: W H Calder, Jas Lewis, C M Holmes, Theo Kitchen, Hon Jas Balfour (President)

Seated: R Gillespie, G P Barber, J C Camm, Chas Carter (Secretary)

The committee members exemplify the earnest middle-class mien of the evangelical leadership of colonial Melbourne.

Candidate's Certificate

I certify that the thesis entitled

*The Character of Evangelism in Colonial Melbourne:
Activism, Initiative, and Leadership*

and submitted for the degree Doctor of Philosophy is the result of my own research, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this thesis (or any part of the same) has not been submitted for a higher degree at any other university or institution.

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Summary

Chapter 1 sets the context by pointing out two contradictory contentions about the Christian history of colonial Melbourne: the contention that Christianity has been of minimal or no significance; the tradition that Christianity is of fundamental importance to the history, and the civilisation of Melbourne. This thesis highlights a significant part of the tradition: evangelism.

The second chapter, states the thesis: the Character of Evangelism in Colonial Melbourne was distinguished by (1) activism; the evangelicals were energetic and intentional. (2) It lacked nothing in initiative. (3) Both of these characteristics were due to outstanding leadership among the evangelical men of Melbourne who earnestly longed for, worked for, and saw, revival. The chapters that follow argue this by focusing on key individuals and events that were the evangelistic responses to the perceived challenges of the age.

The Port Phillip Era (1835-1850) saw the Religious Foundations of Colonial Melbourne laid. The faith of the early men of Melbourne - orthodox, creedal and theist - was foundational to the nascent civilisation. Evangelism, mainly by the Methodists, was present from the beginning.

The 1850s, the gold rush years, saw much evangelism, mainly by the Methodists. The Melbourne City Mission, which combined evangelistic fervour and social care, was founded. The world-wide 1858-60 revival was felt in Melbourne. The independent evangelist Henry Varley is introduced.

The 1860s was a decade of continued enthusiasm. The other churches pulled their weight, but the Methodists continued in the van.

The 1870s was a decade of initiative. The Anglican Hussey Burgh Macartney engaged in and facilitated evangelism and overseas missions, introduced the deeper-life movement to mainland Australia, and began *The Missionary at Home and Abroad*. The Methodist W H Fitchett began the *Southern Cross*. Henry Varley returned, and the Melbourne United Evangelistic Association was formed.

Evangelism flourished in the 'Marvellous Melbourne' Decade (the 1880s), highlighted by the Evangelisation Society of Victoria, the 1888 Centennial Mission, and Varley's third visit.

The crowning moments of 1890-1903 were the Rev John MacNeil and the (prayer) Band, the visit of Hudson Taylor, the Rev George Grubb and the Geelong Convention, the 1902 Torrey-Alexander Mission, and the 1903 visit of John R Mott.

The concluding chapter summarizes the argument under the heads: the religious culture of Melbourne, the evangelical men of Melbourne, the evangelists, their methods, and their motivation.

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Abstract

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ACW</i>	<i>Australian Christian World</i>
<i>ADB Online</i>	<i>Australian Dictionary of Biography Online</i>
<i>ADEB</i>	<i>Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography</i>
<i>ESA</i>	<i>Evangelisation Society of Australasia</i>
<i>ESV</i>	<i>Evangelisation Society of Victoria</i>
<i>HRV</i>	<i>Historical Records of Victoria (8 Volumes)</i>
<i>JRH</i>	<i>Journal of Religious History</i>
<i>KQ</i>	<i>Keswick Quarterly</i>
<i>MAHA</i>	<i>Missionary at Home and Abroad</i>
<i>Messenger</i>	<i>Church of England Messenger</i>
<i>SC</i>	<i>Southern Cross</i>
<i>VB</i>	<i>Victorian Baptist</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Victorian Churchman</i>
<i>VF</i>	<i>Victorian Freeman</i>
<i>VHJ</i>	<i>Victorian Historical Journal</i>
<i>VHM</i>	<i>Victorian Historical Magazine</i>
<i>WW</i>	<i>Willing Work</i>

Chapter 1

Introduction: Towards the Repudiation of a Great Australian Myth

Before the white man came to the Port Phillip District, change was imperceptible during geographical time. It was measured by the cycles of the seasons, and social time for the Aborigines was little faster. But social time for the white settlers was pell-mell. Melbourne grew quickly during the pioneer pre-Separation years, then at a frantic pace during the 1850s. The pace of growth slowed during the rest of the colonial age, but it was still fast, and by Federation Melbourne boasted a population of approximately half a million. In a lifetime it had become a world city. Indeed it was one of the boom cities of the world, to be compared with Chicago (founded 1833, two years before Melbourne). It was always bustling, always breathless, growing by leaps and bounds.

And Christianity? Some years ago W Phillips commented: 'Australia has never experienced a religious revival like the Evangelical Revival in eighteenth century Britain or the Great Awakening in North America, ... Australian Christianity lived largely in the afterglow of the eighteenth century revivals.'¹ But evangelism (and revival²), the classic form of evangelical activism, was alive and well in colonial Melbourne. Evangelicalism in colonial Melbourne was a powerful, pervasive, visible and formative part of the Protestant churches. Evangelicals, for all their voluntarism, and whether immigrants or native-born, were not another sect. Evangelical theology and spirituality broadly accommodated the beliefs and values of the first settlers and their descendents. Their history provides a kind of window into the Protestantism of colonial Melbourne. And Christianity was fundamental to the civilisation of the burgeoning

¹ W Phillips, *Defending 'A Christian Country' Churchmen and Society in New South Wales in the 1880s and after* (St Lucia, Qld: Univ of Queensland Press, 1981), 59.

² The relationship between evangelism and revival is close but separable. It is close in that revival sometimes accompanies evangelism. It is separable because revival does not always accompany evangelism. Many evangelistic meetings, few revivals is a common pattern. Revival can also occur without any evangelism, for example, in times of worship or prayer: cf the 'Prayer' or 'Laymen's' Revival of 1858. 'Revival' understood as a transformative apprehension of the power and love of God involves the renewal of half-hearted believers and the reduction of sinful practices in the wider (host) community. Revival on a very large or national scale is sometimes termed an 'awakening'. Some theologians argue that a 'true' revival comes 'from above', ie with no obvious human input. Others happily use whatever 'means' are deemed appropriate. The latter is sometimes term (especially in American contexts) 'revivalism', implying something contrived or, at least, well organised. Revivalism, in some church circles, is another name for evangelism. See S Piggin, *Firestorm of the Lord: The History and Prospects for Revival in the Church in the Church and the World* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000) ch 1, 'Revival Defined'.

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city. A good deal of work has been done on the movement in colonial Sydney,³ but not much on Melbourne. This thesis partly addresses that lack. It focuses on evangelism during this time, which it argues was a potent expression of evangelical activism, a notable local tradition that profoundly affected Protestant church life, and which is inexplicable without it.

Recognising a Myth

It is commonly, and uncritically, thought that religion has been of peripheral if not baleful significance and influence in Australia's history and culture. This notion has achieved something of a mythic, almost axiomatic, status. Myths are important as they express something of the essence (soul) of the country or people.⁴ Australia's (most fundamental) religious myth is one that discounts or ignores the presence and significance of Christianity in Australia's history and culture. Its main assertions include the contention that Australia's first white settlers were overwhelmingly non- if not anti-religious.⁵ Thus, it is asserted, there has been and is little or no place for religion in Australia's history or culture, especially when compared with the more overt religiosity of Americans. To borrow Richard John Neuhaus' felicitous expression, in Australia (apparently) the public square was naked.⁶ By this is meant the exclusion of popular values from the public forum. In the case of Australia these popular values are essentially those of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

If a myth is misleading or skewed in some way then, instead of expressing something essential, it can misinform, and countenance interpretations of a people's culture or history that are unbalanced if not wrong. Ideology shapes the myth in the interests of (a particular) interpretation. Thus national and popular myths need exploring: how true are they? do they need revision? A brief reference to historians who have written on Australian history on a

³ S Judd & K Cable, *Sydney Anglicans. A History of the Diocese* (Sydney: AIO, 2000), G P Shaw, *Patriarch and Patriot. William Grant Broughton 1788-1853. Colonial Statesman and Ecclesiastic* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1978), A T Yarwood, *Samuel Marsden. The Great Survivor* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1977).

⁴ See R Nile ed, *The Australian Legend and Its Discontents* (St Lucia: Univ of Queensland Press, 2000), Introduction and chapter 1.

⁵ Russel Ward's classic *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne: Oxford Univ press, 1966) emphasised the low value or antagonism of convicts to official religion. His student A M Grocott, *Convicts, Clergymen and Churches. Attitudes of convicts and ex-convicts towards the churches and clergy in New South Wales from 1788 to 1851* (Sydney: Sydney Univ Press, 1980) argued a more complex and nuanced case. R Ely also raised criticisms in 'Pains and Penalties: The Religio-Moral Economy of Penal Transportation to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land', M Hutchinson & E Campion eds, *Re-Visioning Australian Colonial Christianity* (Sydney: CSAC, 1994), 91f. A Curthoys, 'Mythologies' in Nile, *The Australian Legend and Its Discontents*, explores 'the meaning of the Exodus story in Australian historical mythology and how notions of exile and exodus permeate some key figures in Australian history, the convicts and pioneers'. Curthoys uses a major biblical theme, but does not follow it through.

⁶ R J Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square. Religion and Democracy in America* (Grand Raids: Eerdmans, 1984).

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broad scale is instructive. Marxist historian Russel Ward's *Concise History of Australia*⁷ has only three pages devoted to the church (on the churches' influence on education). In their respective volumes in the Oxford History of Australia, S Macintyre and G Bolton have a number of references to religion,⁸ though they do not deal with it in a comprehensive way as B Kingston does in her volume.⁹ In contrast, J Kociumbas' first volume of the series is aggressively secular.¹⁰

Manning Clark's idiosyncratic six-volume history¹¹ recognises the significant place of religion in Australia's history, portraying three ideologies striving for Australia's soul: the Enlightenment, Catholic Christendom, and Protestant Christianity, and makes frequent reference to Christianity and individual Christians. One looks in vain though for a considered, dispassionate treatment. He chose instead to denigrate simplistically those he termed the 'narrowers and straighteners', especially 'the walnut hearted men of Sydney', who seemingly denied the grace he quested after. Clark, a son of the vicarage, was an uncritical purveyor of his own reading of the myth of the presence and influence of religion in Australia's history.¹²

1984 saw the publication of two important histories to mark the sesquicentenary of the white settlement of Victoria the following year. D Garden's *Victoria. A History* gives an excellent narrative overview of Victoria's history with a number of passing references to religion,

⁷ R Ward, *Concise History of Australia* (St Lucia, Qld: Univ of Queensland Press, 1992).

⁸ S Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia vol 4. The Succeeding Age 1901-1942* (Melbourne: Oxford Univ Press, 1993), and G Bolton, *The Oxford History of Australia vol 5. The Middle Way 1942-1988* (Melbourne: Oxford Univ Press, 1993).

⁹ B Kingston, *The Oxford History of Australia. vol 3 Glad, Confident Morning 1860-1900* (Melbourne: Oxford Univ Press, 1993).

¹⁰ J Kociumbas, *The Oxford History of Australia, vol 2: 1770-1860 Possessions* (Melbourne: Oxford Univ Press, 1992).

¹¹ C M H Clark, *A History of Australia 6 vols* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1962-1987).

¹² Among the poets, the most religious was probably (Clark's favourite) Henry Lawson, though not in a churchly way. For him the notion of mateship was all-important.

No church-bell rings them from the Track,
No pulpit lights their blindness -
'Tis hardship, drought and homelessness
That teaches those Bushmen kindness:
The mateship born, in barren lands,
Of toil and thirst and danger,
The camp-fare for the wanderer set,
The first place to the stranger

The presence of this kind of popular, lowest kind of denominator 'religious' belief should not be discounted, nor the common Christianity on which it is based. Cf M Zaunbrecher, 'Henry Lawson's Religion', *JRH* 11 (1980), 308-19. John Shaw Neilson, Australia's finest lyric poet, had a great sensitivity for the country, but, apparently, no corresponding sense of religion. The politically radical Bernard O'Dowd abandoned the Catholicism of his parents, preferring the speculations of theosophy, the simplicity of Unitarianism, the unorthodoxy of Rev Charles Strong's Australian Church, and a mystical appreciation of the bush. In contrast, Australia's current leading poet, Les Murray, is a devout Catholic.

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though without dealing with it as a topic in its own right.¹³ The official three-volume sesquicentenary history - *The Victorians. Arriving; Settling; Making Their Mark*, has only a relatively few references to religion.¹⁴ Justification for this was that the history was essentially a social history, 'the history of ordinary men and women', and topics such as religion were deliberately excluded.¹⁵ One understands that parameters have to be set, but Christianity was of much more than marginal significance. Indeed it was fundamentally important and deserves extensive treatment in any social history.

But Melbourne historians of religion have also been busy. Geoffrey Blainey, whose father was a Methodist minister, gives generous space to the presence, activity and influence of Christianity and the churches in his *A History of Victoria*.¹⁶ And M Cannon, *Old Melbourne Town Before the Gold Rush* has a long and informative chapter on the 'Importance of Religion in Colonial Life'. His subsequent volume, *Melbourne After the Gold Rush*, also includes many references to religion.¹⁷ Geoffrey Serle's *The Golden Age* and *The Rush To Be Rich* acknowledge the presence and role of Christianity.¹⁸ More specifically, religious histories are now multiplying. I Breward's *A History of the Australian Churches* is the first large-scale general history of Christianity in Australia. Significant denominational histories have been written, as have histories of individual churches. Substantial biographies on notable Christians are essential contributions to wider history. And special topics, usually in the form of theses and less accessible to the public, focus on particular issues or organisations, and uncover much important church life. This thesis is one of such.¹⁹ Mention

¹³ D Garden, *Victoria. A History* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1984).

¹⁴ R Broome et al, *The Victorians. Arriving; Settling; Making Their Mark* (McMahon's Point, NSW: Fairfax, Syme & Welden, 1984).

¹⁵ Page vi of the *Arriving* volume. The editors argued that topics such as 'politics, the law, exploration, education and religion can be read about elsewhere'.

¹⁶ G Blainey, *A History of Victoria* (Melbourne: Cambridge Univ Press, 2006).

¹⁷ M Cannon, *Old Melbourne Town Before the Gold Rush* (Main Ridge, Vic: Loch Haven Books, 1991) and *Melbourne After the Gold Rush* (Main Ridge, Vic: Loch Haven Books, 1993).

¹⁸ G Serle, *The Golden Age. A History of the Colony of Victoria 1851-1861* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1977); *The Rush To Be Rich. A History of the Colony of Victoria 1883-1889* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1971).

¹⁹ I Breward, *A History of the Australian Churches* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1993); B Kaye et al ed, *Anglicans in Australia: a history* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 2002); J Grant, *Episcopally Led and Synodically Governed. Anglicans in Victoria 1803-1997* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2010); Ken Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to Eternity* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2006); Rowland Ward, *The Bush Still Burns* (Wantirna: R Ward, 1989), C Holden ed, *People of the past?: the culture of Melbourne Anglicanism and Anglicanism in Melbourne's culture : papers to mark the 150th anniversary of the Anglican diocese of Melbourne 1847-1997* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 2000); C Holden, *From Tories at Prayer to Socialists at Mass: a History of St Peter's Eastern Hill, Melbourne, 1846-1990* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1996); M Askew and C Wood, *St Michael's Church: formerly the Collins Street Independent Church* (South Yarra: Hyland House, 1992); A de Q Robin, *Charles Perry. Bishop of Melbourne. The Challenges of a Colonial Episcopate 1847-76* (Nedlands: Univ of Western Australia Press, 1967); D Reilly Drury, *La Trobe. The Making of a Governor* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 2006); M Sturrock, *Bishop of Magnetic Power. James Moorhouse in Melbourne, 1876-1886* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 2005); R

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should also be made of important work being done by denominational historical societies such as the Victorian Baptist Historical Society and its journal, *Our Yesterdays*.

Discovering a Tradition

Fundamental to this thesis is the argument that the above-mentioned myth of Christianity in Australia/Melbourne being of peripheral interest and significance is quite wrong. This is not to dismiss the myth out of hand, substituting one assertion for another.²⁰ Rather it is to invite those convinced of the dominance of secularism, or secular humanism, to a kind of 'conversation' that J Thornhill looks for.²¹ The historian for whom the myth is a basic paradigm finds himself confronted in dialogue by one who finds his point of reference in a tradition, not an ideology. Moreover, that his ideology is in fact a minority view; most Australians, consciously or unconsciously, hold fast to a Christian tradition. Tradition (παράδοσις) is something that is handed down, and usually refers to a set of beliefs and behaviour which otherwise characterise and define the group that 'owns' them. It might be in written or oral form, and constitutes what E Durkheim referred to as the *conscience collective*. In the Christian tradition this includes the Bible, creedal formulae, heroes of the faith who exemplify the tradition, worship practices, church polity and ecclesiology, and moral and ethical *mōrēs*. As with the apostle Paul, tradition is that precious patrimony which subsequent generations of believers are responsible to maintain and to pass on. While there is a certain overlap, tradition is more substantial than myth. *A myth, however potent, is an idea; a tradition, in this case, is something more tangible and lived.* As the late Yale theologian Jaroslav Pelikan perceptively observed: 'tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living'.²² Tradition, the lived memory, may be seen as a lens through which we understand the past and interpret the present.

Different cultural organisations – sporting and social clubs, political parties, schools, universities, and the like, have their traditions, as do individual churches and denominations. In the case in question, tradition refers to the general Christian tradition.²³ This Christianity

Otzen, *Charity and Evangelisation. The History of the Melbourne City Mission 1854-1914* (Univ of Melbourne PhD, 1986)

²⁰ Much attention is being devoted to the role of Christianity in Australian history: cf the Australian Christian History Research web site – www.chr.org.au. However, much is uncritical, populist, romantic and misleading; eg Col Stringer, *Discovering Australia's Christian Heritage: Australia, South Land of the Holy Spirit* (Robina Town Centre, Qld: Col Stringer, 1999). Of scholarly substance and importance are the seminars and papers of the Australian National Christian Heritage Foundation.

²¹ J Thornhill, *Making Australia. Exploring our National Conversation* (Newtown, NSW: Millennium, 1992).

²² Pelikan made this observation in an interview in *US News and World Report* (July 26, 1989).

²³ The parameters of this thesis are set by its focus on evangelical Protestantism. It is recognised that, from the earliest days, as well as establishing their own expression of Christianity, Catholics played a major role in making sure that Christianity assumed its 'natural' place in Melbourne's social,

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might generally be defined as 'common Christianity'. Not that it was vulgar or of inferior quality, but that it was 'of the people', of normal understanding, and as used in the expression 'common sense'. This was something the settlers and migrants brought with them, and which the native-born Australians grew up with.²⁴ Given the vitality of church life and growth in Melbourne, they overcame temptations to forget that tradition, or to lose sight of it in their lust for land and profit. As well as the purely 'religious' (salvific) dimension, Christianity was the source and point of reference for social stability and legitimacy.

A major factor in the biblical tradition is memory. The refrain 'you shall remember ...', whether expressed or implied, is fundamental to the biblical narrative. In one way or another the prophets, the psalmists, and the narrators of biblical history urged a sometimes recalcitrant Israel to recall to mind those formative events in which they perceived the call of God that gave them their identity, and which was to be passed on to subsequent generations. The same may be said of the people of the new covenant; they too were to remember ('do this in memory of me') and hold fast the gospel tradition, and pass it on. As the apostolic age passed into the age of the church, believers instinctively enshrined their formative memories in the church tradition that embraced the liturgies, unwritten traditions, dogmas, creeds, and sermons. Week by week, through the centuries, the memories were collectively recited, and shaped the worldview, culture and society of believers.²⁵

Many centuries later, in 1835, when the first pioneers crossed Bass Strait to settle by the Yarra, they consciously brought with them their Protestant traditions, for the memories were still alive. They (especially the evangelicals) did not have to strain to hear the still small voice of the God of Christendom. For them, Christianity was of the soul and life and personality of Melbourne, not a sub-culture. In this they echoed the attitude of their co-religionists in the northern hemisphere, who believed that if a society/culture should lose its spiritual roots, it would be a dying culture. Thus the evangelicals interpreted cultural issues in moral and collectivist ways. Evangelicals and churchmen were determined that Melbourne would be and remain a Christian city. Christendom was not dead yet.

As the gospel message was undimmed in the minds of Melbourne's founding fathers, so was their loyalty to their church traditions. Tents gave way to buildings, rude and of wood at first,

political, intellectual and cultural life. And there were many Protestants who, while remaining true to their Reformation heritage, would not have classed themselves as evangelicals.

²⁴ Cf J Molony, *The Native-Born. The First White Australians* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 2000).

²⁵ Not all memories are comfortable. Yale theologian M Volf, *The End of Memory. Remembering Rightly in a Violent World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006) sensitively explores the ugly and violent memories that are also part of Christian tradition.

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but soon of substantial brick and stone, as the first Melbournians built churches. 'Construction of no fewer than fifty-six churches and chapels began in Melbourne and suburbs up to 1851'.²⁶ This amounts to 3.5 churches per year; a not insignificant number, especially given the myth of the lack of religiosity of Australians. The fervour did not diminish: 'In the 1860s and 1870s there was almost a craze for building churches, and soon spires and steeples occupied most of the highest points on the skyline of Melbourne'.²⁷ These edifices are memories set in stone.

This tradition, this memory, is part of the corporate memory of Melbourne evangelicals.²⁸ It is a prism through which the past is made present; as such it is a form of cultural and social knowledge, as much as history. In the postmodern era, the notion of tradition, with its corporate dimension and its status as an authoritative point of reference, is at a discount. More amenable to this way of thinking are the Pentecostal and charismatic movements, which have experienced growth at the expense of a certain atomisation of the evangelical movement. Thus the evangelical tradition-memory has been forgotten by many, and is unknown by more. This thesis is by way of reminder to historians of a tradition that was formative of colonial Melbourne's history and culture; and to evangelicals of a heritage to be remembered, owned, adapted, and passed on to the next generation.

The passing on of this tradition was not, in church-growth parlance, just a matter of biological or transfer growth. It typically involved evangelism: the filling of the great commission, both at home and abroad. Evangelism was and is fundamental to the evangelical *raison d'être*. Much, much needs to be written about evangelicalism, and evangelicals in Melbourne/Australia. This thesis is a beginning: it argues that evangelism was especially prevalent in nineteenth-century Melbourne; it was characteristic of (most of) the Protestant churches as they were of the culture; and it had its own distinctives. Thus this thesis is in part a repudiation of the great Australian myth.

* * * *

As its title indicates, the next chapter spells out the thesis. It does this by briefly defining the evangelical movement, its principles and worldview, and the topic, evangelism, the characteristic form of evangelical activism. These sections introduce the thesis: that

²⁶ Cannon, *Old Melbourne Town Before the Gold Rush*, 268.

²⁷ Blainey, *A History of Victoria*, 111.

²⁸ In his *Religion as a Chain of Memory* (ET Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), French sociologist of religion D Hervieu-Leger's argues that a collective chain of memory and tradition is important in helping individuals become part of a religious community.

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evangelism in colonial Melbourne was no small thing; it was a major aspect of Protestant church life which is inexplicable without it. It had its own character, identity and energy. This local tradition was distinguished by outstanding evangelists. Some were overseas 'names'; most were locals who gave nothing away in initiative and vigour. Their activism was motivated, encouraged, and inspired by the local (very able) evangelical leadership, both lay and clerical. And God blessed their endeavours. For, *pace* much popular historical opinion, evangelism in colonial Melbourne was intentional and potent, resulting in conversions, revival and growth. The argument is in the story of the individual case studies, the organisations, and the contexts. This unfolds in the following chapters which cover roughly each decade of the colonial era.

Chapter 2

The Thesis: The Character of Evangelism in Colonial Melbourne: Activism, Initiative and Leadership

This thesis is a history of the nature and significance of evangelism in colonial Melbourne. It is not an ecclesiastical or institutional history, though it is a counterpart to and complements such histories. It is a religious history as the French *Annales* historian Lucien Febvre defined such;¹ in contrast to what Febvre termed ecclesiastical, ie institutional, history, it focuses on an aspect of non-institutional, grass-roots history of Christianity. It is a history 'from below', paying attention to the lives and leadership of the evangelical men (and women) of Melbourne, and their contributions to the evangelical agenda. Broadly speaking, the thesis covers the Melbourne expression of most of what J Edwin Orr referred to as the Second Worldwide Awakening.² This evangelical and evangelistic resurgence was notable for its length and breadth. It lasted, according to Orr, the half-century following 1858, in which time he found three phases: the 1858-60 revival which began in America and spread to Britain, where it deeply influenced Handley Moule, and to Europe; the age of Spurgeon and Moody, when nineteenth-century revivalism reached its peak; the third phase ran from shortly after the turn of the century to World War I and included the 1904 Welsh revival and the world-wide campaigns of Torrey and Alexander.³

¹ See B E Mansfield, 'Lucien Febvre and the Study of Religious History', *Journal of Religious History* vol 1, 1960-1, 102-11; and P Burke, 'Lucien Febvre, Ecclesiastical Historian?', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol 50 no 4, 1999. The (still to be told) story of the evangelical men of Melbourne is part of and impacted the social history of colonial Melbourne.

² J Edwin Orr, *The Second Evangelical Awakening. An Account of the Second Worldwide Evangelical Revival beginning in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1955), 154ff. Orr was an Irish-American historian of revivals. He wrote numerous books and visited 150 countries (including Australia), speaking on church renewal and revival. He wrote annalistic rather than critical history but, with an Oxford DPhil and doctorates from two American seminaries, he wrote informatively, encouragingly, and with authority on his special area of interest. Orr's work is important in unearthing and describing the number of revivals world-wide. The Melbourne experience should be seen in this context.

³ Thus the sub- title of Orr's book, *An Account of the Second Worldwide Evangelical Awakening*, 136-7. He adds: 'The relating of these three movements as a period of fifty years of expansion, a Second Evangelical Awakening or Nineteenth Century Revival, is a new thesis, so far as one can gather'. See too his *The Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1949). This seems also to have been the case in Australia. Orr notes: 'The Chapman-Alexander Campaigns seemed to conclude a quarter century of extended evangelism in Australasia, beginning with the intensification of prayer for revival by the Ministers' Prayer Band in 1889.' J Edwin Orr, *Evangelical Awakenings in the South Seas* (Minneapolis: Bethany Press, 1976), 114. The Band was important: see chapter 8 below.

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It was significantly global in extent and influence. It re-vivified the church on both sides of the Atlantic, in Europe, in foreign mission fields, and in the Antipodes. In Melbourne, news of such raised hopes and expectations in evangelical breasts: the fame of revival is the flame of revival. Thus with news from migrants, the increase in the speed and reliability of sea travel (the Suez Canal was opened in 1869), and the telegraph, Melbourne evangelicals were aware of what was happening back 'home'. Church newspapers carried reports of ecclesiastical events and persons in Britain, and America, as a matter of course. Melbourne's evangelicals knew about the great pulpiteers back home, and Spurgeon's sermons enjoyed wide readership in the colonies. They read with interest the successes of the great evangelists, Finney and Moody, *et al*, and they welcomed the itinerant evangelists who came to the colonies. Their words and accents met with a ready response. The hearts of the Melbourne evangelicals were also warmed by 'intelligence' about the great missionaries, such as Hudson Taylor, and their organisations. They nodded approvingly at reports of the social justice endeavours of evangelicals as diverse as the Clapham Sect, George Müller, and William Booth. The Melbourne part of this jigsaw was of a piece with this phenomenon. But it was not a mere copy; it had its own integrity, initiative and drive, and character. Evangelists, both local and from overseas, had a profound impact on Melbourne Christianity. The Melbourne evangelicals were just as urgent, just as intentional, just as forceful as their overseas colleagues, and just as effective.

In this chapter I first briefly define the evangelical movement, its fundamental principles and the main aspects of its worldview. These underlay and promoted the activism of the Melbourne evangelicals. Then follows a section in which I define evangelism and evangelists, their message and method, and (hoped for) outcome. My thesis is that (the evangelical movement and) evangelism was both a significant and essential part of the Protestant religious life and culture then. More particularly, the character of evangelism in colonial Melbourne emphasised activism, initiative and leadership. The leading evangelicals and evangelists who proclaimed the gospel saw the fruit of their labours, often in revival. Finally, in preparation for the narrative, I summarise the features of the chapters that follow.

Evangelicalism: Principles and Worldview

Principles

In 1989 David Bebbington argued that evangelicalism might best be understood in terms of four fundamental principles.⁴ Conversionism: being a believer involves more than a nodding acknowledgement of the existence of God – one's life needs to be changed. Biblicism: the Bible is the central point of reference in matters of faith and belief. Activism: believers are

⁴ D Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1790s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 1-17.

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compelled to fulfil the great commission of spreading the good news of Jesus Christ by all means available. And crucicentrism: the centrality of the cross; that is, the conviction that Christ's death on the cross was the means of atonement and reconciliation of mankind to God. In a sense, the quadrilateral has always been 'there'; but throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the movement became more consciously a recognisably delimited tradition. Nineteenth-century evangelicals, including the Melbourne ones, were defined and motivated by these principles.

The principles met the psychological, spiritual, emotional, and social needs of many Melbourne Protestants. It gave them assurance of salvation, a sense of identity and purpose, leaders who were heroes and exemplars, and, through the deeper-life movement, it fostered a spirituality that formed, encouraged and inspired their spiritual life. Evangelicalism was an agent of growth and renewal in the church/es as evangelicals typically invested much of their energies in various evangelistic and social-welfare activities, and in their churches. Their denominational loyalty and activism strengthened both institutional and parachurch bodies, and made nineteenth-century evangelicalism a powerful force.

Evangelicalism was an agent of renewal in society. Its encounter with the culture was not always harmonious – there was a tendency to criticise what was perceived as aberrant and incompatible with conservative biblical or social values. But there was a positive, practical dimension to this. Evangelicals, and their fellow churchmen, invested considerable time and energy in a raft of charitable and social activities and organisations for the general benefit of the less-well-off. This was the corporate, non-privatised, expression of their faith. It echoed the social justice emphasis of John Wesley and the benevolent activism of, for example, the Clapham Sect.⁵ This too was part of living righteously.

Evangelicalism provided evangelical Christians with a framework of thought. The intention was to encourage people to think righteously. Alas, this was frequently in terms of a narrow biblicism that defined 'orthodoxy' in terms of fidelity to a few key doctrines that confused respect for the authority of the Bible with particular interpretations of certain passages, and eschewed a life of the mind. But there were also those such as the Revs James Martin (Baptist) and L Bevan (Congregationalist) who combined first class scholarship with a deep evangelical faith, and gave the lie that, generally, evangelicals were intellectual troglodytes.

Worldview

⁵ See E M Howse, *Saints in Politics: the Clapham Sect and the Growth of Freedom* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971).

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Underlying Bebbington's quadrilateral, was a further cluster of ideas that also shaped the worldview of the nineteenth-century evangelical men of Melbourne, and their ecclesiastical compeers:⁶ namely, civilisation (and culture), benevolence (and charity and philanthropy), (progress and) improvement (and character), and empire. These words, and the values they represented, were common currency then. Unlike the quadrilateral, they were not narrowly religious, but they were a working-out in the public sphere of those concepts; they help us understand the Melbourne evangelicals and what motivated them. It is fundamental to this thesis that the evangelicals consciously and conscientiously held to this interlocking cluster of ideas that both shaped and were shaped by their worldview. As much as conversionism, biblicism and crucicentrism, they too were an expression of evangelical identity. Further, these ideas also motivated and shaped evangelical activism, not least evangelism.

a) *A Christian civilisation (culture)*. In spite of the Great Awakening the previous century, Christianity did not sweep all before it. Preachers commonly lamented the lack of Sabbath observance, the dissolution of belief and, later in our era, the threat of other beliefs, unbelief, quasi-beliefs, and the rise of secularism. The end of Christendom seemed nigh. Nevertheless, Melbourne was still a Christian city, and a Protestant city at that. Few doubted that its (British) civilisation was a Christian one. For example,

During 1838, press, pulpit and schoolroom took up the task of teaching both the European and aboriginal inhabitants of Port Phillip how to be 'English for thousands of years'. In the first hand-written and hand-sewn issue of the *Melbourne Advertiser* on 1 January 1838 Fawkner urged 'adventurous Port Phillipians' to make their mark on the 'Chart of advancing *Civilization*' as 'Sons of Britain'. ..

On 27 October the first issue of [eighteen-year-old George Arden's] *Port Phillip Gazette* appeared in Melbourne. .. The paper took pride in the planting of *British civilization* on the southern coasts of New Holland. .. He wanted the *civilization of Port Phillip* to be quite different from that 'broken, cold and unnatural form of society' which had sprung up on the sheep-walks of New South Wales. See following [emphasis added]⁷

It is noteworthy that J P Fawkner and his rival Arden were both intemperate, volatile, and had suffered at the hands of authority. But both intuitively held to the notion of a civilisation expressed in law and order, and shared values and norms.

⁶ 'Worldview' refers to the framework of ideas and beliefs through which an individual understands the world and interacts with it. In Melbourne, evangelical cultural and ethical *mōrēs* were pretty much the same as those held by most (conservative) citizens, whether believers or not.

⁷ C M H Clark, *A History of Australia vol III. The Beginnings of Australian Civilization 1824-1851* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1978), 103.

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In the case in hand, the (transplanted) British civilisation growing by the Yarra also embodied the idea of a civil society. Much attention was paid to the way people ought to behave, and the motivation for that behavior:⁸ boisterous colonial Melbourne gave more than nodding acknowledgement to *civilitas*, to the humane values and order which were understood as foundational to a civil society. Apart from the few moral and ethical Philistines, it was a generally held belief that a civil society was a necessary and good thing, though people differed over what this would look like, and what the outcomes would be. Those of a more conservative bent (most evangelicals), aimed to preserve their cherished (British, and therefore Christian) heritage. Those of a more liberal persuasion were more amenable to the increasingly secular and progressive civic humanism that seemed to be developing in Melbourne.⁹ Thus *civilitas* embodied a value judgment: the idea of a Christian civil society, with social and moral and ethical *mōrēs* shaped by biblical precepts and the Christian tradition.¹⁰ In Melbourne, apart from a few (hardly any really), neither the individual Christian nor the churches inhabited a kind of cultural ghetto, hermetically sealed from the rest of society. They lived in the tail end of the Christendom era, but the notion of *corpus Christianum* was alive and well. Somewhat like the aboriginal dreaming, this included the notion of belonging, of comfort; and embraced the concepts enunciated in social exchange theory. There was no question that the custom, the tradition, of Christianity was the adequate corrector of morals. This gave a deep moral purpose to the convictions of Melbourne (evangelical) churchmen. The needs of society were not met with reforming the structures of society, but with the notions of charity and benevolence, of philanthropy and kindness to others less fortunate, and motivated by a disposition to do good. This group of synonyms in large part characterised the fledgling civilisation by the Yarra: it was a benevolent age.

b) A benevolent (and charitable) society. The idea of benevolence was a common conviction during the nineteenth century. It denoted a general frame or habit of mind, a disposition to do good to and for the disadvantaged. Just as common were the synonyms of charity and philanthropy. Charity was an expression of God's love to man (ἀγάπη), and of man's love of God and his fellow neighbour as fulfilling of the law (Luke 10:27). Most Christians then would

⁸ See P Russell, *A Wish of Distinction. Colonial Gentility and Femininity* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1994); *Savage or Civilised? Manners in Colonial Australia* (Sydney: Univ of NSW Press, 2010).

⁹ See S Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism. The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1991). M Roe, *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1965), identified 'moral enlightenment' as the body of ideas that sustained the transformation of penal colonies into civil societies. While much of this was deist, its foundations were essentially Christian. Melbourne was not a penal colony, but Roe's observations are not irrelevant.

¹⁰ In his *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912: 2nd edition London: Allen and Unwin, 1912), Emil Durkheim argued that religion (Christianity) regulated society's behaviour, expressing its values, providing its unity, and shaping its personality. This is explored, with reference mainly to English evangelicals, in D M Rosman, *Evangelicals and Culture* (Canberra: Croom Helm, 1984) and Ian Bradley, *The Call to Seriousness: the Evangelical Impact on the Victorians* (London: Cape, 1976); *Abide With Me: The World of Victorian Hymns* (London: SCM, 1997). For Australia see A Patrick, *Christianity and Culture in Colonial Australia* (Univ of Newcastle PhD, 1991).

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have been familiar with the Authorised Version of 1 Corinthians 13 which translates ἀγάπη as charity; fewer would have noted the 1881 Revised Version which translates ἀγάπη) as 'love'. Philanthropy may be defined as practical benevolence towards mankind in general. S Swain points out that there was a good deal of this in Melbourne: 'Philanthropy has always been more prominent in Melbourne than in any Australian city, although the way in which it has been understood has changed significantly over time. In the 19th century the term was used interchangeably with 'charity'.¹¹

These ideas were a response to the poverty and disadvantage – physical, economic, social - that was a consequence of Victorian capitalism, industrialisation and urbanisation.¹² More than a 'do-goodism' and broad church 'muscular Christianity' were needed. The pursuit of social righteousness and concern for the disadvantaged often went hand in hand with concern for individual righteousness. Benevolence/charity also defined a social and political vision, which the evangelicals, with others of like mind, pursued. Expressions of these ideas may be seen in the activities and names of organisations devoted to the relief of disadvantage. The outstanding organisational example of this was the Melbourne City Mission. Along with this vision went a sense of *noblesse oblige*: the evangelicals operated with a sense of obligation as well as commitment to their cause.¹³ 'And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.' (Luke 12:48b)¹⁴ The fervent Melbourne evangelicals were just as intense about the material and social needs of the disadvantaged; they did not polarise evangelism and benevolence. Social welfare was left to private initiative and generosity, to the 'benevolence' and 'charity' of individuals, and fitted in well with nineteenth-century voluntarism.

c) Improvement (and character). Not unrelated to the aforementioned, was the notion of improvement. The nineteenth century was markedly an era of optimism and progress, which included the idea of social progress. This challenged the pessimistic worldview of

¹¹ A Brown-May & S Swain eds, *The Encyclopedia of Melbourne* (Melbourne: Cambridge Univ Press, 2005), 541.

¹² In this context, mention might also be made of the temperance movement that was so prominent in the nineteenth century, and a major consequence, the coffee palace movement. Many evangelists preached temperance as well as salvation. This is a large topic in itself and so will be mentioned only in passing.

¹³ The work and good intentions of Melbourne evangelicals attracted special opprobrium when some of their prominent members were caught up in the land boom crash and economic depression in the 1890s. Their benevolence and charity suddenly seemed pharisaic. See M Cannon, *The Land Boomers* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1995), and A Lemon, *The Young Man from Home: James Balfour, 1830-1913* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1992), 15, 17-8, for criticism of the 'pharisaism' and 'pharisaic theology' of the prominent evangelical Presbyterian businessman and MP James Balfour.

¹⁴ Benevolence, and its synonyms, was also a feeling, an emotion, affected by the Romanticism-influenced spirituality of the evangelicals.

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conservative Christianity with its doctrine of original sin. Instead of fall and decline, there was progress and development. Change was happening very quickly in just about every field of human thought and endeavour. Undergirding it all, Darwinism and the theory of evolution seemed to give a compelling framework of the way things were and would be. It also fitted the experience and theories of economic growth that underlay Melbourne's enthusiasm, boosterism and confidence. Melbourne was then seen as a 'Yankee city'. But the idea of progress and growth was also part of British thinking, for this was the heyday of the British Empire and civilisation. Beverly Kingston quotes the devout Presbyterian businessman William Westgarth:

who described the colonies as 'a sort of apotheosis of progress', ..[adding] Optimism, faith in the future, enthusiasm for economic and personal achievement were also characteristic of most of the literature written for potential immigrants. ... When a critical account did appear ... nowhere was the outrage greater than in the colonial press.¹⁵

This did not just happen of course; it had to be worked at. And, parallel to Weber's Protestant work ethic, it was not uncommon for churches to have 'improvement societies', usually for young men and young women. James Balfour, the leading Presbyterian layman of his day, led such a class in which the youth and young men of John Knox Presbyterian Church in Swanston Street were thoroughly grounded in evangelical Calvinism.¹⁶ Also, in an age of limited educational opportunities, the intention generally was to provide the elements of a (Christian based) liberal education that would fit the young men and women of the church to play their role in society. In his centenary history of Victorian Methodism, C Irving Benson noted:

The Mutual Improvement Association, attended by old and young, trained its members in the love and appreciation of literature and in the knowledge of public questions. It also developed debating power. In a time when most people had to be content with primary education, and secondary education had not yet felt that one of its duties consisted in developing the love of literature and skill in debate, the Church again met the need.¹⁷

¹⁵ B Kingston, *The Oxford History of Australia vol 3. 1860-1900 Glad, Confident Morning* (Melbourne: Oxford Univ Press, 1989), 57, 58.

¹⁶ Lemon, *The Young Man From Home*, 19. The church was founded in 1848, and in 1852 a Young Men's Association begun.

¹⁷ C I Benson, *A Century of Victorian Methodism* (Melbourne: Spectator Publishing Co, 1935), 251. See too Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism*, 120.

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There was an ecumenical spirit then. Australia's most famous Jew, General Sir John Monash, was a member (1881-3, and secretary in 1883) of the Mutual Improvement Society of Wesley Church in Lonsdale Street, even though the Methodists were generally evangelical at this stage.¹⁸

Improvement had to do with individual 'character', a word commonly used then (today it has been replaced by 'personality'). It embraced moral and spiritual growth, honesty and intellectual integrity, or, in evangelical-speak, Christ-likeness. It was not something that one inherently possessed; rather, it was something that one worked at. It was an achievement, an outcome of spirituality, and was often used instead of holiness. Such improvement was also fostered by family and household prayers, Sunday School, regular church-attendance and, for those who could afford it, church schools. Most of all, it was echoed in the evangelicals' concern for living a holy life, and their enthusiasm for deeper-life spirituality and its conferences.

d) *Empire*. The fourth word – 'empire' – also attracted a bundle of defining connotations. For most nineteenth-century Melbournians, Britain was 'home', and they, 'Austral Britons'. When he heard 'empire', the Melbournian thought of the British Empire, of which the colony of Victoria was a jewel in the crown of its portly, dowdy queen. He also thought of himself as a member of that colony. For it was an imperial age, and colony/colonisation did not carry the obloquy it did later. The (latter part of the) nineteenth century was the imperial age, and a glance at any map of the world revealed great splotches of red indicating the colonies of that made up the British Empire. This was a matter of some pride and confidence.

More to the point, the Empire was associated with civilisation. 'By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the university [of Melbourne] establishment was promoting a form of "enlightened humanitarianism", for which the criterion of success was the reproduction in Victoria of British and European civilization.'¹⁹ Furthermore, the Empire was a Christian empire, and God's means of Christianising the globe. As if to endorse this, the nineteenth century was also the great century of missions, many of which closely followed the colonial

¹⁸ Benson, *Century of Victorian Methodism*, 128. Another distinguished Jew, Isaac Isaacs, was a student at Wesley College (founded 1866) in the 1870s. 'Focusing on religious morality and academic achievement to combat perceived moral degeneration in the colony, it provided the children of wealthier Methodist families with an education suitable for their social status.' *Encyclopedia of Melbourne*, 768. It is not without interest that this breadth of vision was at a time when Melbourne Methodism experienced revival. See R Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals in Australia. A Study of Surviving Published Materials about Evangelical Revivals in Australia up to 1880* (Hazelbrook, NSW: R Evans, 2000), 159ff, and G R Treloar & R D Linder eds, *Making History for God. Essays on Evangelicalism, Revival and Mission* (Sydney: Robert Menzies College, 2004), 224.

¹⁹ J Reeve, 'Masters of History. Three Students of Trinity College', *VHJ* vol 80 no 1 (June 2009), 85.

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expansion of the empire. Bible and the flag went unconsciously together. This was no coincidence; it was believed to be the workings of providence.²⁰

The Empire meant responsibility, not just wars and conquests and commerce. It was of fundamental importance to the Christian tradition that shaped the minds, beliefs, and behaviour of the evangelical men of Melbourne. Thus the Rev H B Macartney, the main facilitator of missions in the era, specifically titled his monthly newsletter *The Missionary at Home and Abroad*: for evangelism and missions went together.

Evangelism

The message. Evangelical sermons typically emphasized the need for personal conversion which, following Paul, was interpreted in juridical terms and, echoing Augustine and Luther, was commonly understood, and proclaimed, in terms of introspection, drama, and intensity. Many evangelical testimonies and sermons existentialised the gospel in terms of Luther's *anfechtung*, and proclaimed conversion in terms of an event. Evangelicals, and their fellow churchmen who remained faithful to their Reformation heritage, have often been guilty of understanding righteousness in a wooden, one-dimensional way as involving only the individual's juridical status before God in terms of the forgiveness of sins. Thus righteousness was the motivating factor for evangelism: people needed to be told of their need for justification, and how it might be attained.

The evangelists, whatever their denomination, proclaimed a shared message, as well as the values and customs of their (Christian) civilisation. Such, Durkheim believed, held society together; more particularly, religious values and customs were the basis of social cohesion. In his *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893) he propounded his classic theory of *conscience collective*. By this he meant that moral attitudes are not just the prerogative of the individual. Rather, there is a social dimension in which common beliefs and a common moral consensus regulate belief and behaviour or a group (or society). The notion of *conscience collective* is a useful paradigm with which to explain the nature and status of Christianity in Melbourne. For religion (Christianity) was part of the social fabric.

²⁰ B Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag. Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester: Apollos, 1990), 68, comments:

A double responsibility lay heavily on the nation's shoulders. Since the Protestant Reformation, Britain had enjoyed to a unique degree the blessing of true evangelical religion and the civil liberties which it was believed to bestow. Now she had been given the further privilege of world power. The two together constituted 'a high trust to be turned to God's glory'. Formulated in this way, Christian belief in divine providence led by logical steps to the concept of Britain's imperial role as a sacred trust to be used in the interests of the gospel.

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Their method. Preaching appealed especially to evangelicals. The Bible, or the preacher's interpretation, was exalted as the supreme source of authority. Thus the perceived implications of biblical criticism, the science verses religion (the Bible) debate, and Darwinism caused a flurry of worry. Evangelicals had no infallible church to fall back onto, only an infallible book. Those who revered their Reformed and Puritan heritage tried to keep alive the tradition of a learned ministry, of the minister who did his sermonic homework in the original languages of the text. Scriptural justification was sometimes found in the familiar mistranslation of 1 Corinthians 1:21 δὴ τῆς μωρίας τοῦ κήρυγματος - 'the foolishness of preaching'. It should read, 'the foolishness of the preaching', ie the message of the gospel, and understood in the fundamental evangelical paradigm – the centrality of the crucified Jesus and justification by faith. It set forth the model of the minister as preacher (rather than priest).

Preachers were utterly convinced of the truth of the message, and both preacher and listener believed there was power in the preached word. As in Britain and America, the leading churches of Melbourne attracted preachers who drew crowds and whose sermons were reported on in the daily newspapers as well as discussed over Sunday dinners. For this was the age of the pulpiteer, of the preacher as hero.²¹ Towering above them all was C H Spurgeon. From his Metropolitan Tabernacle pulpit in London he influenced the thousands who came to taste his lengthy, inflated, Romantic, Reformed sermons each Sunday. He influenced still more thousands who read those sermons as they were printed and transmitted around the world, even to Britain's farthest colonies. Many graduates of Spurgeon's Pastors' College found their way to Australia where they continued their master's influence. This was not without impact on the Melbourne evangelicals. Like their confrères back home and across the Pacific, they were enamoured of the centrality of preaching.

The language used was, of course, religious, usually echoing biblical terminology and concepts or using phraseology associated with evangelical spirituality.²² Even though it was 'in-house' language, it was also understood by the public at large; for the forces of secularism had not persuaded colonial Melbourne to shed its links with its inherited Christian civilisation. The language of the evangelicals was not simply an instrument of communication; it constituted a distinctive universe of discourse. This discourse was an

²¹ Not all of the great preachers were evangelical of course. See especially H Davies, *Worship and Theology in England vol IV: From Newman to Martineau 1850-1900* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), chapter 10: 'The power of the Victorian Pulpit', 282-348. It was in the nineteenth century that the modern 'cult of personality' emerged. And too often, personal charisma was more important than office, fluency of speech triumphed over scholarship, pathos mistaken for profundity, and wordiness valued more than conciseness.

²² Hymns were very important. As with the hymns of the Wesleys and their eighteenth-century peers, they were expressions of evangelical spirituality and theology. See Bradley, *Abide With Me*.

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expression of social psychology as much as a theology. It defined, and certified, social solidarity among evangelicals. The use of key words and phrases in ordinary and public speech, in letters and publications, was a kind of shorthand. It was also a kind of freemasonry; one knew whether or not another 'belonged' by the words he used, and the way he used them. Often it was more than a question of identity. There was a shibboleth-like quality to much evangelical speech; it set boundaries as well as defined. The main boundary was fidelity to evangelical orthodoxy (and spirituality). Thus there was an element of manipulation and control (language as gatekeeper). This sometimes resulted in a certain devaluation of language – emotion, intensity and hyperbole were more important than accuracy and conciseness, and of exclusion of the other who declined to play the same language game. Evangelicals did not shine in public dialogue or apologetics.

The most obvious practitioners were the most public: the evangelist and the preacher. Motivated by the conviction that they *possessed* the truth, and that the truth was best (only?) expressed in their terminology, that it was essential for the rescue and rehabilitation of society, they proclaimed rather than argued or persuaded. Their demeanour was assertive rather than interrogative. This was a weakness. It drew the ire of secularists and the radical and liberal cultural fringes of Melbourne, and the reserve of their more liberal and benign fellow churchmen. It did not equip many evangelicals (especially those we might deem as proto-fundamentalist) to face the intellectual challenges of their age.

The (hoped-for) outcome: revival. The nineteenth century seemed to be a most unpromising time for the churches. As well as the perceived threats from science and scholarship, it was a time of revolution in politics, economics and socially. Politically it saw the rise of communism and red republicanism in Europe, and much social and political unrest in Britain (including seven attempts on the life of Queen Victoria). Chartist demonstrations expressed widespread and angry dissatisfaction with the social, political, and economic lot of most of the people. Urbanisation and industrialisation uprooted people from their village and country roots, resulting in profound alienation, exacerbated by the dark satanic mills and appalling slums of the rapidly growing cities. Intellectually, the notion of progress, that hubristic child of the Enlightenment, distracted many evangelicals from the social realities.

But the nineteenth century saw continued activism by the evangelical movement. The message remained the same of course, but media and method were refined, and more professional, especially, as the century progressed, with improved communication and travel. More than ever, evangelicalism became a world movement, and a successful one at that.

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... Bible, cross, conversion and activism were the characteristic themes of the evangelical movement. By the second half of the nineteenth century its adherents had carried this message across the globe. It was found wherever Anglo-Saxon settlers had penetrated. But evangelicalism was not just a widespread phenomenon. It had permeated deep into society, meshing with the assumptions of the age and formulating the behaviour of successive generations. Between 1850 and 1900 the evangelical movement was a dominant force in the English-speaking world.²³

The aim, and sometimes the outcome, was revival; and the nineteenth century was an age of revivals. There had always been plenty of these, but the new age also saw new methods (revivalism). Classically, the former lawyer C G Finney planned his 'revivals' and expected results based on his use of 'scientific' methods. D L Moody also planned his city-wide campaigns, emphasised cooperation with the churches, and preached a gospel focusing more on the love of God than condemnation of the sinner. With a glance backward at the use of publicity by George Whitefield the previous century, advertising and promotion played a critical role. As with the leading preachers of the era, a cult of personality gathered around the leading evangelists: it was the evangelist as hero, celebrity evangelism. Was this Melbourne's experience? Neither Finney nor Moody made it to Melbourne, but their methods and message were used by other evangelists, both overseas and local. Some were known for their denominational identity; others, consciously or not, ignored or eschewed denominational allegiance. Both were used by evangelical organisations.

Extensions of evangelism. However, there was more to evangelical activism than simply preaching the word at home. An extension of evangelism, and fed by consequent revivals, was the remarkable growth in evangelical missionary endeavour, at home and abroad. Indeed the nineteenth century was the great age of missions. Particularly noticeable was the rise of the 'faith missions', classically J Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission, the influence and significance of George Müller, the Cambridge Seven, and the role of the Bible and Missionary Training Institutes.²⁴

From the earliest days of the colony, the evangelicals were driven by the needs of social as well as individual righteousness. Those poor in material things were the objects of their benevolence as much as the poor in spirit. An outstanding example of this was the founding of the Melbourne City Mission in 1854. The list is an impressive one. It included a raft of

²³ Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism*, 249. It was a disputed dominance of course, and H Davies. *Worship and Theology in England.vol III From Watts and Wesley to Martineau, 1690-1900* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), x, identifies the years 1740-1830 as 'The Dominance of Evangelicalism'!

²⁴ See K Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions. From Hudson Taylor to Present Day Africa* (Oxford: Regnum, 1994).

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welfare and charity organisations: hospitals, overnight shelters, orphanages and children's homes, female rescue homes, homes for the aged, homeless and destitute, the mentally ill, the physically disabled, free medical dispensaries, and city missions. This area of evangelical activism is a large study in itself. I mention it briefly here to indicate the multi-dimensional aspect of evangelical charity and activism; and that it was part of the Melbourne church scene long before the Salvation Army arrived in 1882. Evangelical charity was not an addendum to their agenda but a fundamental part of their activism.

The Thesis: the Character of Melbourne Evangelism: activism, initiative and leadership

In colonial Melbourne, the evangelical movement was a major part of Protestant church history. But how significant a part? Was it a noisy subculture asserting its platitudes to a moderately interested church which was a bit annoyed at its perceived sectarianism, suspicious of its triumphalism, and annoyed by its enthusiasms? Was it a protest movement, vigorously resisting the inexorable march of secularism and modernity, and increasingly out of date? Or was it of the soul of Melbourne? The full story has yet to be told.

The foundation of my argument is twofold: first, there was a vigorous and robust church life in Melbourne before Federation. In spite of the confidence and assertions of gainsayers and the diffidence of many churchgoers, the churches were generally recognised as being part of the social fabric and heritage of Melbourne. Indeed, this was the heyday of the churches in Victoria. G Blainey remarked:

Christianity flavoured every facet of society between 1860 and 1890. The wonderful prose of the Authorised Version of the Bible was imitated in countless speeches in parliament, and in editorials, tombstones and illuminated addresses. .. Bush children making short walks into unknown scrub imagined they were entering a land of Canaan in an Australian wilderness. Our imagination, wrote one Gippsland girl, 'always took a scriptural colour in those days of family Bible reading'. Many businessmen thought similarly, and the name of the famous Sunshine harvester, and eventually the Melbourne suburb where that harvester was built, came from the title of a sermon preached in a Presbyterian church in Ballarat in the days when sermons were advertised in advance.²⁵

²⁵ G Blainey, *The Heyday of the Churches in Victoria* (Melbourne: Uniting Church Historical Society. Victoria, 1985), 5.

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Second, the evangelical movement was a crucial aspect of the Protestantism of that era. It was the most potent force both within and without the mainline Protestant churches: it gave impetus to and flavoured the Protestant churches of Melbourne; and it provides a window into the nature, the dynamism, and the significance of Protestantism in Melbourne. The edges were not always neat but, generally, the evangelical movement in Melbourne was inter-denominational rather than non-denominational, cooperative rather than independent. The evangelicals significantly impacted Melbourne culture and society, whether indirectly through shaping their churches' attitudes, or more directly through the agitation of individual evangelicals or evangelical groups. It would not have happened if their independence spilled over into separatism, such as with Henry Varley. This was characteristic of the Melbourne evangelicals then. It was less so more than a century later when, in the Vietnam and postmodern eras, the movement has experienced a certain atomising, and denominational loyalty is increasingly at a discount.²⁶

This thesis has a narrower focus. It is a critical analysis of, and argues that, evangelism (and the evangelical movement) in Melbourne before Federation was defined in particular by three characteristics: activism (and its concomitant, conversionism), initiative, and leadership.

Activism. The overseas evangelists – William 'California' Taylor, Dr John McNeill, Henry Varley, and George Clarke, made memorable impacts. More important was the activity of the local evangelists whose busy-ness and impact were self-evident. Their preaching of the gospel was fervent, in-season and out-of-season. It was facilitated by organisations such as the Evangelisation Society of Victoria, undergirded by prayer and deeper-life (and other) conventions, and resulted in revivals big and small. Each decade of the colonial era was energetic and eventful.

Initiative. Melbourne evangelical leadership was not perfunctory or *ad hoc*; it was expressed by initiative, and drive. Some of the overseas evangelists came on their own volition, and made their mark. But most of the initiative to invite, promote and support evangelism was local. Evangelists preached the gospel far and wide, in Melbourne, city and suburbs, and in regional and country centres, and with enthusiasm and effect. They began and published newspapers to inform and inspire. They began prayer meetings and organisations to

²⁶ There were some groups and individuals who did not belong to mainstream evangelicalism; but they were few and marginal. So G Serle, *The Rush to be Rich. A History of Victoria 1883-1889* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1971), 151:

Support for the existing denominations remained very solid, In contrast to the United States. Revivalists had moderate success from time to time in the gold towns, but even there the purer evangelical sects did not grow very much and no new groups of saints held together for long. The 'Nunawading Messiah', James Fisher, with his tiny zealous following, was a rare phenomenon; so were J.A.Dowie and G.M.Stephen, the faith-healers. Despite the number of volatile evangelicals, there were few branching from well-trodden paths.

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stimulate and undergird their endeavours. They began conventions – deeper-life, ‘prophetic’, and ‘Christian’ to awaken and galvanise their common life and agenda. In short, Melbourne evangelicalism lacked nothing in resourcefulness and get-up-and-go.

Leadership. Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of Melbourne evangelicalism was the role played by its leadership. Many were clergy; but the leadership of capable laymen, men who were part of the mercantile (and political) leadership of Melbourne, was notable.²⁷ As such they (‘they’: the use of the plural in this paragraph is important; there was no single pivotal figure.) played a significant role in their growing city, contributing to its social and political as well as church history. Their status as citizens was part of their Christian heritage. For their sense of identity, like that of the founding fathers of Melbourne, included a consciousness of their British heritage, a culture and civilisation that was essentially Christian. These men were predominantly middle-class, and their activism was driven by a robust entrepreneur-ism as well as by their evangelical experience.

Movements in history are commonly understood as motivated by great ideas (ideologies, eg Marxism) or great men (eg Marx, Jesus) In this thesis, the great idea that gave force to the movement in Melbourne was the gospel, and the great commission; the ‘great’ men were the evangelists and leaders among the evangelical men of Melbourne. For evangelicalism is not just a set of disembodied ideas or events, however much those ideas and events might define it. Both usually depend on outstanding individuals who epitomise the nature and purpose of evangelicalism. Thus the evangelical movement is best understood as a number of disparate individuals bound together by a common experience, a common spirituality, and a common agenda. Its history is in large part the biographies of its members. It is the evangelical men (and women) of Melbourne that constitute and explain the (story of the) movement and its aspects.

In his *Economy and Society*, Max Weber, referring to the prophet and the priest, discussed the nature of authority and how it is expressed.²⁸ He defined the prophet as a charismatic leader, who was also an agent of change (for example, the prophets of ancient Israel: they were true Israelites, but inhabited the boundaries of society. Thus they could speak a word of prophetic critique to the nation.). The priest represented institutional religion and the status quo, an agent

²⁷ This is not to ignore, overlook, or discount the contribution of women. However the Victorian age was more patriarchal and, apart from some notable exceptions, women did not play prominent public or leadership roles. Also, the role and status of the laity in the evangelical movement might be seen as part of the context of the developing democratization of the age. This is not to say that the leaders were all democrats; most were politically and socially, as well as theologically, conservative. Democracy, especially in the light of Eureka, was, to many, akin to communism.

²⁸ M Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, G Roth and C Wittich eds (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1978).

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of stability who aimed at conserving the tradition. At its best, there was something of the prophetic in Melbourne evangelicalism. There was a driven-ness about their language, agenda and activism, which were aimed at legitimating their worldview, and transforming a culture they perceived as going wrong. Its spokesmen consciously addressed themselves publicly to the great social issues of their day. But, in so far as they were culturally as well as theologically conservative, they were more priest-like in their espousal of conservative values. For Melbourne evangelicalism was both a protest and renewal movement that shaped, and was shaped by, Melbourne society and the churches to which they owed allegiance.

The evangelical leaders had different abilities, and each made his own contribution, though each shared his motivation with his compeers. No one person dominated. This does not indicate mediocrity, but a consensual, group leadership. The leaders were defined by factors other than the religious ideas they held. As in any group of individuals, each was not simply a psychologically monochrome 'religious' person. They had different personalities, as well as different abilities and professions. They belonged to and were loyal to their different churches and denominations. These biographical references are also a form of social biography. Networks, formal and informal, were characteristic of Melbourne evangelicalism. They were based on the evangelical heritage they shared with evangelicals in the 'home' country and across the Pacific, and partnership in a mutual cause. They were an outcome of personal and professional friendships, reinforced by common sentiments of loyalty, friendship, altruism and group commitment, which in turn reinforced common cultural and religious norms. These were, intuitively, part of the Melbourne evangelicals' *modus operandi*, and not irrelevant to common Christianity. The social factor in this inhibited 'lone wolves', those who were instinctively separatist, and made the movement more coherent. They were also an expression of the voluntarism that was characteristic of the age as well as evangelicalism.

* * * *

Outline of the Thesis that Follows

Chapter 3. *The Religious Foundations of Colonial Melbourne (The Port Phillip Era: 1835-1850)*. This chapter describes the beginning of Protestant Christianity in Melbourne during the Port Phillip Era by drawing cameos of some of the founding fathers and their religious beliefs and denominational affiliation. As well as being driven by yearning for land and profit, they shared a common Christianity that was theist, orthodox and genuine. This formed the foundation, and the ongoing context, of evangelical activism. The second part of the chapter focuses on the first evangelists and their efforts during this time, which became a defining characteristic and tradition throughout the following decades.

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Chapter 4, *Evangelism and Revival in the Gold Rush Years (the 1850s)*. The 1850s was probably Melbourne's most tumultuous time; it was a manic place to be. Nevertheless, believers busily engaged in evangelism. In particular, the decade saw an interdenominational organisation (the Melbourne City Mission) devoted to both evangelism and social work formed. Leading members of the churches led in fulfilling the great commission: eg Bishop Charles Perry encouraged his flock to be more than merely nominal. The Methodists, led by Daniel Draper, the Yorkshire-born Matthew Burnett, and the Australian-born John Watsford and A R Edgar continued their church founder's evangelistic focus. Among the smaller churches, the Baptists began to prosper; a number of Brethren evangelists, outcomes of the 1858-60 revival, made their way to Melbourne and Tasmania; and the Churches of Christ began work in the colony. Also, the young Henry Varley, later to make an international reputation as an independent evangelist, is introduced.

Chapter 5, *Continued Evangelism (the 1860s)*. Evangelists in all the churches continued to be busy, and saw much fruit for their labours. But the Methodists dominated. They welcomed two outstanding evangelists, one from England, the other from California, who dominated evangelism in the 1860s. The larger than life personality and evangelistic impact of William 'California' Taylor inspired, enthused and warmed the hearts of, especially, the Methodists. His converts were many. The memory of Taylor, and his methods, remained in people's minds to the end of the century. Matthew Burnett came from Yorkshire and preached with just as much fervor. But he stayed longer, and his impact was greater.

Chapter 6, *A Decade of Initiative (the 1870s)*. In this chapter the narrative accents the contribution of the Anglican missions facilitator and deeper-life initiator, Rev Hussey Burgh Macartney, Matthew Burnett, and Henry Varley. As well as pastoring his church and doing the work of an evangelist, the tireless Macartney was involved in establishing prayer meetings; he began the first Melbourne deeper-life meeting (before Keswick) in his Caulfield church; he began a monthly magazine the *Missionary at Home and Abroad*; and led in the formation of the United Evangelistic Association. Varley was an independent evangelist who made his home in Melbourne for a number of years but is best thought of as an itinerant. The influential interdenominational weekly the *Southern Cross* also began publication.

Chapter 7. *Evangelism in the Marvellous Melbourne Decade (the 1880s)*. This was a famously dynamic decade for Melbourne, and another busy decade for the Melbourne evangelicals who did not cease their activism. The Salvation Army began work in 1882; the Melbourne United Evangelistic Association reformed itself as the Evangelisation Society of Victoria; and two overseas evangelists – the Anglican George Clarke and, again, Henry Varley – came to ply their trade. The highlight was the state-wide Centennial Mission, held in

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counterpart to the 1888 Exhibition (to mark the centenary of white settlement of Australia), one of the most successful evangelistic missions in Melbourne's history.

Chapter 8, *The Culmination of Colonial Melbourne's Evangelistic Tradition (1890-1903)*. Culturally, politically, and economically, the 1890s was a spirited time for Melbourne. Many preachers, as preachers are wont to do, lamented the decline of Christendom, and were embarrassed at the number of prominent evangelicals numbered among those responsible for much of the failure of banks and businesses in the economic depression. But evangelical activism robustly continued. At the end of the 1880s, in preparation for the 1890s, the Presbyterian evangelist Rev John MacNeil formed the Band. Visitors from overseas included, at the invitation of Macartney, the towering figure of J Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, the ardent Irish Keswick missionary, Rev George Grubb, and Henry Varley. The Band's prayers were answered when the Geelong (deeper-life) Convention was held. The end of the century saw Macartney leave for England, the Methodists found the Methodist Central Mission, and the ESV send a petition to D L Moody inviting him to come to Australia. The chapter concludes with sections on evangelism to youth, young people and students (concluding with the visit of John R Mott), and the 1902 Torrey-Alexander Mission in Melbourne. The latter was spoken of all around the world as the 'Great Australian Revival', and may be seen as the culmination of this and the previous decades.

Chapter 9. *Conclusion*.

This chapter draws together the main characteristics of evangelism in colonial Melbourne. Fundamental was the Christian tone of colonial Melbourne which was due in no small part to the evangelical men of Melbourne. The Melbourne evangelistic tradition was a dynamic part of a world-wide phenomenon. The evangelicals were vital and confident in their identity, confident of their message, and founded their organisations with deliberation. They were fortunate in the quality of their leadership. This included both clergy and lay, was determined, capable, and often impressive, and was comfortable in its grass-roots ecumenism. Whoever was the visiting evangelist, evangelistic initiative and drive were distinguishably local. The evangelicals 'owned' the need to evangelise with studied deliberation and enthusiasm. They did not lack for capable evangelists, lay and ordained (and female), local and overseas, who came from all the churches, and did outstanding work. Their methods were varied. They preached in-season and out-of-season, and in different venues. Their work was undergirded with prayer, facilitated by their organisations, informed and encouraged by their newspapers, and motivated by the gospel and their diverse personalities.

Chapter 3

The religious foundations of colonial Melbourne (The Port Phillip Era: 1835-1850)

Sydney's first settlers were the dregs of the British jails, not a naturally religious group, as the first chaplains knew to their frustration.¹ A common argument suggests that this convict stain had a deleterious effect on Australian religiosity, and personality. Whatever truth there might be in this popular observation with regard to the mother colony, Sydney is not Australia, and this was not Melbourne's experience. It was founded almost half a century later; it was founded by private initiative, not as a penal settlement; and, without being romantic, there was a marked Christian presence in the rough settlement by the Yarra. For the first settlers brought their faith and religious traditions with them.² There was a symbolic dimension to these men: they represented certain attitudes and beliefs, a *Weltanschauung* that both motivated them and flavoured the civilisation rising among the tents and hovels on the banks of the Yarra. Their story is of a piece with the story of the founding of their denominations; each man was a loyal churchman, and consciously thought of himself as such. Also, it is worth noting, there was not the degree of anti-clericalism that characterised early Sydney.

This chapter has two main sections. The first, *The Faith of the Early Men of Melbourne*, explores the Protestant beginnings of Melbourne by paying attention to the faith of some of pre-Separation Melbourne's leading citizens who may be reckoned (among) its founding fathers. Melbourne's founding years, the Port Phillip era, were from 1835 to the watershed event of Separation from New South Wales, which also ushered in the gold rush 1850s. Beyond these years, as the city developed during the colonial era, this foundation evolved as

¹ This is not to suggest that early Sydney was devoid of religion or religious motivation. It is not generally known, but Sydney's Christian beginnings may be traced back to the vision of leading English evangelicals, including William Wilberforce and John Newton, who lobbied Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger to send a chaplain with the first fleet. The Rev Richard Johnston's task was to minister to the convicts and their jailors, evangelise the aborigines, and to establish a missionary sending centre for the Pacific area, a formidable brief. See chapter 1 of S Piggin, *Evangelical Christianity in Australia. Spirit, Word, World* (Melbourne: Oxford Univ Press, 1996). The aim of those determined English evangelicals was to found a Christian nation in the Antipodes. More contemporaneously, J Bonwick, *Discovery and Settlement of Port Phillip* ([Melbourne: George Robertson, 1856] North Melbourne: Red Rooster Press, 1999), 118ff, discussed the religious foundations and temper of Melbourne, comparing them with Sydney.

² See chapter 4, 'Importance of Religion in Colonial Life' in M Cannon, *Old Melbourne Town before the Gold Rush* (Main Ridge, Vic: Loch Haven Books, 1991), 267ff; and M Cannon ed, *Historical Records of Victoria vol 3 The Early Development of Melbourne* (Melbourne: Victorian Government Printing Office, 1984), 477ff.

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the religious dimension of the city's personality. This forms the milieu for the second section, *Evangelism in the Port Phillip Era*, and underlines a significant part of this religious dimension, the evangelistic endeavours of the Port Phillip churchmen, and prepares for the thesis: the nature of evangelism in colonial Melbourne.

The Faith of the Early Men of Melbourne

It was another century, another era, and another country, but some points of comparison and contrast may be drawn with the Puritan founding fathers of Boston. In both cases the settlers were organised migrants who sought freedom. The Puritans sought freedom to worship and organise the church as they saw fit. The Van Demonians were content with their churches and were more focused on economic freedom. Political freedom was an issue for both: the Puritans fled from Episcopal and monarchical absolutism; the Van Demonians from Lt-Gov George Arthur, and later won their freedom from the constraints of Sydney.

For both groups their destined place was a land of liberty and economic opportunity. For the Puritans, America was for them, as it was to become for others, a place of opportunity and liberty. The land was theirs for the taking, and they did not bother overly about any kind of indigenous ownership. They understood their settlement as part of God's plan of redemption and they aimed to restore the primitive church as God intended. The new land would be a dedicated country, with a true and pure church. God had entered into a covenant with them. In 1630, while crossing the Atlantic on the *Arbella*, John Winthrop, first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, said in a sermon: '*Wee must Consider that wee shall be as a Citty upon a Hill, the eies of all people are upon us.*' .. *theirs was not to build, as it were, a city on a hill*'. Indeed, as Abraham was called out of his home land and given another, so too the Puritans.

The members of the Port Phillip Association (PPA) did not bother consoling themselves with this kind of biblical justification; they had no interest in any notion of restorationism, primitivism or covenant. While they chafed under the righteous rod of the evangelical Lt-Gov Arthur, and were unhappy with Sydney taking their taxes and giving little in return, they were generally content to be loyal to the crown and their churches as they were. They were genuine in their faith; their values were based on their Judeo-Christian tradition; and they understood that their civilisation was a Christian one. They were not interested in setting up any kind of godly commonwealth, and, apart from some robust differences of opinion and sectarian squabbles, were averse to strident religiosity. It was not that they were not religious, but that they instead directed John Batman to 'sign' a treaty with the traditional owners of the land, which, however inadequate and illegal it might have been, at least implicitly discounted the notion of *terra nullius*, and recognised a form of ownership. Also, the

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British government's appointing of aboriginal protectors acknowledged a sense of responsibility.

The early men of Melbourne included John Pascoe Fawkner, John Batman, Dr Alexander Thomson, Captain William Lonsdale, Superintendent Charles Joseph La Trobe, and Robert Hoddle.³

John Pascoe Fawkner: the irascible Congregationalist founder and visionary

John Batman was the first white man to set foot on the site of what became Melbourne, and was followed a few weeks later by J P Fawkner. Later they feuded over who was the founder of Melbourne. As Fawkner came to stay, building a house and later a hotel, and planting crops, he may fairly be regarded as the founder.⁴ For, from the beginning, he had a vision for his chosen home, and pursued it with entrepreneurial spirit, indomitable energy, and a sense of civic and social responsibility. He was also aggressive, irascible, and fought (physically – even though he was a scrawny 5'2¼", in court, in the pages of his newspaper, and in parliament) with just about everyone. He was also a religious man, (not inappropriately) an Independent.

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John Pascoe Fawkner

Unfortunately we do not know of Fawkner's early spiritual formation or influences. As a young teenager at the short-lived settlement at Sorrento in 1803-4 he would have heard the chaplain, the Rev Robert Knopwood, preach and take services. Billot comments that a sermon in 1803 showed

an appreciation of his congregation as intelligent and educated ... (and that) 'Hannah Fawkner [Fawkner's mother] would doubtless have drawn strength from the parson's address. .. but for most of the prisoners, the thin, high voice striving against the wind and the thunder of the surf would have been of little interest.'⁵

³ Fuller details may be found in their biographies: C P Billot, *The Life and Times of John Pascoe Fawkner* (South Yarra: Hyland House, 1985); C P Billot, *John Batman and the Founding of Melbourne* (South Yarra: Hyland House, 1979); J M Wilkins, *The Life and Times of Captain William Lonsdale (Nieuwe Dieper 1799-1864) The Biographical Diary of Port Phillip's Accredited Spy* (Doncaster East: J M Wilkins, 1991); D Reilly Drury, *La Trobe. The Making of a Governor* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 2006).

⁴ Though Governor Richard Bourke regarded Batman as the founder. See Billot, *Fawkner*, 175.

⁵ Billot, *Fawkner*, 18.

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And it is unlikely that the establishment figure Knopwood would have had much of a positive influence on the undersized ragamuffin. Furthermore, in growing up in primitive Van Diemen's Land, and experiencing life as a convict in Sydney, there seems to have been no softening influence of a warm-hearted religion.⁶

Thus it is of more than passing interest that a (Wesleyan) service was held just before Fawkner's *Enterprize* sailed from Launceston for Melbourne in 1835.⁷ And on Sunday 18 October 1835, the day after he arrived to settle in Melbourne, the 42-year-old 'Fawkner praised his Maker for bringing him, his wife, and his party safely to the new country. According to the notes he made at the time, only "our own people and Mr Buckley [William Buckley! – what memories did this simple service stir in his mind?] attended".⁸ This was not a one-off occurrence. 'Laymen like Fawkner and the land-buying sheep-owner James Smith had conducted services in Melbourne since November 1835, usually according to the Anglican Prayer Book.'⁹ Three things stand out here. Orthodox Christianity was naturally part of the psychological-emotional baggage and religious culture of Melbourne's first settler. Given Fawkner's tough upbringing and tempestuous career in Van Diemen's Land and Melbourne, one would not immediately have expected this of him. His religious belief included Sabbath observance. Again, this was part of the culture he brought with him. What is of note is that this Sabbath observance was by a man that one would not immediately expect it from. Also, this was a matter of conviction: there were plenty of other things that needed doing to make a home, but a church service was held first. Fawkner's Christianity was not a nominal thing. He later wrote: 'Society without Religion would soon degenerate into a frightful den of Savages.'¹⁰

This was shared by the other members of early Melbourne. By mid-1836, on part of Batman's sheep run on the western side of what is now William Street, they raised a building to function as a church and school. It was a simple rectangular-shaped weatherboard structure, according to a contemporary account, 'a mere wooden shell, shingled and incapable of keeping out the cold'. It was known as the 'Pioneer Church' and was, at first, an ecumenical church. In his journal Fawkner commented:

⁶ It should be noted though that Methodism at this time had made positive inroads among the soldiers. Did one/some of the guards influence Fawkner?

⁷ C I Benson, *A Century of Victorian Methodism* (Melbourne: Spectator Publishing Co, 1935), 54.

⁸ Billot, *Fawkner*, 112. Billot, *Batman*, 173, adds that a week after arriving Fawkner 'read prayers from the *Book of Common Prayer* and recited a sermon to his family and some of the blacks'.

⁹ A G L Shaw, *A History of the Port Phillip District. Victoria Before Separation* (Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 1996), 80.

¹⁰ A Atkinson, *The Europeans in Australia vol 2* (Melbourne: Oxford Univ Press, 1997), 192. See State Library of Victoria La Trobe MS 13273.

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Messrs Simpson and Wedge refused to become partners to building the church, that is to say, at the expense of The Co.; [ie the Port Phillip Association; which is of passing interest given the company's appointment of a catechist, Dr Alexander Thomson, to be part of the enterprise.] so then it was agreed to build it by subscription. Mr Gellibrand commenced it by a donation of £10, Mr Jas Simpson £2, J P Fawkner £5, Wm Diprose £2, Dr Thomson £5. M J H Wedge [Fawkner waspishly added] meanly refused to contribute, although it is well known that he is a wealthy man.¹¹

The church was designed by the Presbyterian Dr Alexander Thomson; the Anglican James Smith, who later acted as Postmaster and Clerk of the Bench, was elected secretary of the church trustees; and it was used by the first generation members of Melbourne without regard to their denominational affiliation.¹² (How different to the first church in Sydney which the Rev Richard Johnson had to pay for himself, and which was soon burnt down by – presumably – his convict parishioners.) This grass roots inclusiveness was prompted by practical rather than theoretical reasons: their numbers were so few they had to work together. Yet the building's rude appearance belied its significance. There was something 'natural' about its existence, for there was a harmony of fundamental common beliefs among the pioneers and they were content to allow pragmatics to displace ecclesiastical differences.¹³ The building was also part of their British heritage, a heritage which recognised the importance of religion and education in life, and as naturally part of the public square.

Even though he was a Congregationalist, Fawkner, like many other nonconformist pioneers, unselfconsciously used the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* when he led Sunday services and in family devotions. Some of this was because he was a layman and leading extemporary worship might not have come easily to him; some because in matters of religion he was proper and conservative and it was natural to use words that had been hallowed by centuries of use. Also, although the prayer book helped define the established church of the realm, it belonged to the nation, even Independents. It was the *Book of Common Prayer*. Its language

¹¹ T Flannery, *The Birth of Melbourne* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2002), 67f.

¹² J M Freeland, *Melbourne Churches 1836-1851. An Architectural Record* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1963), facing 92 and 45. 'Dr Alexander Thomson, ... claimed in a letter of 20 March 1854 to have been responsible for the actual erection, and by inference, the design ...'. On page 47, Freeland records that the pioneer church was sometimes called St James' Church. 'It has been stated that this was a pun on that of James Smith, the early and burly lay preacher, one of whose four daughters married Robert Russell.' See too J Grant, *Episcopally Led and Synodically Governed. Anglicans in Victoria 1803-1997* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2010), 5-6.

¹³ Not that things were always rosy. Thomas Napier, a crusty Scottish Baptist from Van Diemen's Land, annoyed by a young woman talking during the service on the first Sunday in January 1837, 'struck her with a book on the shoulder, saying "Shame, Shame!" She took him to court and he was fined £1. K Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to Eternity: A History of Australian Baptists vol 1* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 40. For a time, until the Baptists began worshipping by themselves, Napier was a trustee of the Rev R Clow's Presbyterian church.

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shaped and hallowed a people's religious tradition, and for centuries had carried the burden of a people's prayers.

Later, Fawkner was a faithful worshipper in the Congregational Church in Oxford Street, Collingwood, from its opening in 1853. It was from there that he was buried when he died in 1869. In a remarkable statement of respect and acknowledgement of his importance, all the public offices were closed from noon, both houses of parliament suspended business for the day, and the city council for a week. A crowd estimated at 12 000 accompanied the coffin from his home to the church where the service was conducted by ministers of several denominations, and the graveside service by the popular Presbyterian, the Rev Dr Adam Cairns.¹⁴ It was a moving expression of ecumenical unity for what was in effect a state funeral, and no one present could have missed the significance. Thus passed Melbourne's founding father.

Fawkner's funeral was a time of reflection. Not unnaturally, most people remembered his difficult personality; he was a good hater. Some of this was due to his tough upbringing and experience; some perhaps a sensitivity to a society that still echoed the class-ridden society of England;¹⁵ some was perhaps the reaction of a small man compensating for his lack of physical stature. The more thoughtful noted that he had brought a vision to Melbourne, and all his life tried hard to fulfil it. His achievements were not insignificant: as a businessman he prospered, in spite of bankruptcy; as a politician he fought for the oppressed, he was a 'tribune of the people'; he was a faithful husband, and he and his wife Eliza gave a loving home and a start in life to foster children who would otherwise not have had them.

The source of these achievements is found in the tradition he consciously and deliberately held to all his life. Eliza and those who attended the funeral in Oxford Street, and were at the graveside as his coffin was lowered into the earth, heard Cairns and the other clergy who took part unequivocally affirm the evangelical beliefs in the cross and resurrection that Fawkner heard and affirmed each Sunday. He heard the words with respect for the tradition he identified with, and which provided his Christian beliefs with content and structure. This was not merely a matter of form; it was the common Christianity that characterised the civilisation and culture that Fawkner and his fellow settlers brought with them across Bass

¹⁴ In June 1836 Fawkner was one of those who set aside land to serve as the cemetery of the settlement. In July he commented: 'Well I hate the grave, let my mortal remains be placed on a pile of timber and reduced to ashes, this will prevent the loathsome worms from preying on me.' The first person buried was a child. 'Dr Thomson read the service, and I acted as clerk'. Flannery, *The Birth of Melbourne*, 68. Fawkner described the service in his journal. He who could not have any children of his own was especially moved by the poignancy of the occasion.

¹⁵ Lady Jane Franklin, wife of the governor of Van Diemen's Land, stayed at Fawkner's hotel when she visited Melbourne in April 1839. She commented: 'They are not people of the first respectability but are doing well in this money-making place.' Flannery, *Birth of Melbourne*, 96.

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Strait and aimed to establish in Australia Felix's green and pleasant land.¹⁶ The hearers were reminded that their days too were numbered, and they were comforted with the thought that this common inheritance was the source of social stability and legitimacy.

John Batman: the Methodist currency lad, bushman and pioneer

John Batman was born in Parramatta on 21 January 1801, the third child of William Bateman (later simplified to Batman), a convict father, and his faithful wife who followed him to the ends of the earth.¹⁷ A true currency lad, the young Batman was tall, muscular, handsome, and an excellent bushman. Growing up in Parramatta meant that the young Batman belonged to the bailiwick of Sydney's second chaplain, the blunt Yorkshire evangelical, the Rev Samuel Marsden. Whether it was Marsden's personality or preaching, William Batman was converted, and his whole family shared in the outcome when in 1820 (when John was 9) the family was presented for baptism at St John's, Parramatta. Each

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John Batman

Sunday they sat under Marsden's ministry, and Batman senior looked to his pastor as spiritual adviser.¹⁸ A few years later the Rev Samuel Leigh, the first Methodist minister in New South Wales, arrived on the scene. He and Marsden established a cordial relationship, and Leigh was careful to hold his meetings in the evening. It was to these services that the Batmans went as well as to St John's in the morning. Thus, during his impressionable teenage years, John was regularly exposed to the evangelical ministries of the Church of England Marsden and the Methodist Leigh, and their influence lasted.

Batman also, from his Sydney days, had a sympathetic relationship with aborigines, and with the protector G A Robinson. This might have been a class thing, the underdog currency lad understanding the marginalised aborigines. No doubt the Methodist influence was significant,

¹⁶ For an account of Congregationalist beginnings in Melbourne see Cannon, *Old Melbourne Town*, 296-302; HRV vol 3, 530-64; C Wood & M Askew, *St Michael's Church. Formerly the Collins Street Independent Church, Melbourne* (South Yarra, Vic: Hyland House, 1992); and H Jackson, 'Moving House and Changing Churches: the case of Melbourne Congregationalism', *Historical Studies* 19, April 1980, 74-85. Congregationalism did not prosper in Melbourne as much as the other denominations, but it provided a spiritual home and nurtured Fawcner's faith until his death.

¹⁷ Bonwick, *Discovery and Settlement*, 32, notes that John was an affectionate son to an excellent mother, and looked after her in her widowhood.

¹⁸ Billot, *Batman*, 2f. Bonwick, *Discovery and Settlement*, 32, says that Batman's father resided in the colony for 37 years, having left England to engage as a Christian Missionary in the South Seas. This is at odds with Billot's statement that he was transported. Perhaps the elder Batman considered mission work after his conversion. Certainly Marsden was conscious of the mission needs of the Pacific, and no doubt mentioned it in sermons.

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especially as the anti-slavery movement was still very active in England. Marsden tried at first to conciliate the Aborigines, and bring them civilisation as well as the gospel. But he saw no lasting success and his attitude to them grew more negative. Nevertheless, true to the evangelical (and Methodist) heritage, both Marsden and Leigh were missions oriented, which might well have influenced Batman's attitude to Aborigines.

In 1821 Batman moved to Van Diemen's Land, possibly as the result of a failed romance. There he was eventually granted 2000 acres by Lt-Gov George Arthur under the shadow of Ben Lomond in the north-east of the colony, and married Eliza Callaghan, an escaped convict. As he and Eliza established their home, they '... reared in Christian principles an interesting and numerous family. There are those who now speak with pleasure of the propriety, intelligence, and hospitality of their Tasmanian home. They were constant attendants upon the Wesleyan Ministry'.¹⁹ Like his rival Fawkner, Batman read services to his family and servants; like him he hosted the first clergyman of his church to visit Melbourne (the Rev Joseph Orton); and like him he may be regarded as facilitating the beginnings of his church in Melbourne.

Under the auspices of the PPA, Batman crossed Bass Strait to explore and claim the promising land there. He is remembered as the man who declared that land next to the Yarra River would be 'the place for a village', and who signed a 'treaty' with the local Aborigines ceding ownership to his principals. In his journal Batman wrote:

... Here I cannot refrain expressing my thankfulness to that *good Providence* which threw [William] 'Buckley' in our way, for certainly he has been the medium of successfully establishing between us and the natives an understanding, which, without his assistance, could never have been affected to the extent it has been ...²⁰

But Batman's time in Melbourne was short. Estranged from Eliza, on 6 May 1839, the 38 year-old Batman died from syphilis – slowly, horribly, tragically. Two days later Melbourne's first Anglican minister, the Rev James Couch Grylls, took the service at the graveside in the Old Cemetery in William Street. The mourners, about 60-70 settlers, including the Congregationalist Rev William Waterfield and the recently appointed magistrate, Captain

¹⁹ Bonwick, *Discovery and Settlement*, 33. Billot, *Batman*, 7, comments that the family was brought up 'in strictly religious principles, of the evangelical order, family worship always being observed'. On page 172 he notes the impact of their churchgoing: the Batman children 'of various heights and ages all marched orderly, all graceful figures, with open, healthfully blooming countenances [to the Pioneer Church] ... a most beautiful sight.'

²⁰ Flannery, *Birth of Melbourne*, 57. See especially R Kenny, *The Lamb Enters the Dreaming. Nathanael Pepper and the Ruptured World* (Carlton North: Scribe Publications, 2007), 66ff. For a detailed analysis of the treaty see B Attwood, *Possession: Batmans' Treaty and the Matter of History* (Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 2009).

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William Lonsdale, were appropriately dressed in hat-bands or gloves. A group of local and Sydney Aborigines also silently watched. His great rival J P Fawkner contained his vitriol and wrote: 'He was the first Colonist and one of the founding fathers of Australia Felix.'

Batman was renowned as an excellent bushman, and his robust physique suggested an equally excellent athlete. He was the kind of active man that energetic Methodism would appeal to. In his personality he was straightforward and generous; Hamilton Hume referred to him as 'Honest John Batman'.²¹ He was usually friendly to the Aborigines, though, when in his cups, could be as derogatory as others toward them.²² He was a loyal churchman, to his denomination and the wider Christian tradition. R Harcourt notes that the Batman family was regular in church attendance, but in later years were probably lukewarm in their attitudes.²³ The dominant influence at the time might well have been his daughters' governess Caroline Newcomb, a devout Methodist and later pioneer settler on the Bellarine Peninsula and close friend of the Alexander Thomsons. It should also be noted that most of the PPA members were sincere Christians, and Batman's faith might have been as much a factor as his skill as a bushman in their choosing him to acquire land at Port Phillip. His hosting of the Rev Joseph Orton and Henry Reed (see below), saw him play a small though significant part in the establishment of Methodism, a tradition that would see vigorous and considerable growth during the Port Phillip era and the following decades. However, though devout, Batman was a flawed believer, not a religious leader.²⁴

Dr Alexander Thomson: the Presbyterian surgeon, catechist and pioneer

Thomson is usually remembered as one of the founders, and first elected mayor, of Geelong. But before that he was one of the significant first settlers of Melbourne. Born in Aberdeen in 1798, Thomson studied at Marischal College (later part of the University of Aberdeen), the Royal Infirmary, and the Royal College of Surgeons in London. After marrying Barbara Dalrymple he went to sea as a ship's surgeon, circumnavigating the world five times. On these voyages he visited New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, and in 1831 brought Barbara with him to make his fortune in the latter. He tried his hand at operating a steam boat, the *Governor Arthur*, in Hobart Town before moving to the north of the colony to try his

²¹ Billot, *Fawkner*, 320 n 16.

²² See Cannon, *Old Melbourne Town*, 76ff on Batman. C M H Clark, *A History of Australia. vol III The Beginning of an Australian Civilization* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1973), 87ff, (typically) focuses on this side of his personality and aims, pointing out that Lt-Gov Arthur was not taken in by Batman's stated aim of bringing civilization to the aborigines.

²³ R Harcourt, *Southern Invasion. Northern Conquest. Story of the Founding of Melbourne* (Blackburn South, Vic: Golden Point Press, 2001), 236 n 68, refers to a 'Letter from Mrs Adelaide Collyer (1855), John and Eliza's daughter, stated that her mother was the daughter of an Anglican minister. (copy held privately).

²⁴ The Rev James Dredge, Assistant to the Protector of the Aborigines, was disparaging of Batman's influence on the Aborigines. Billot, *Batman*, 274. J Moloney, *The Native-Born. The First White Australians* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 2000), 111f, is more charitable.

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hand at grazing. There he met Batman and Fawcner, and managed to maintain a friendship with both. (A great grandson of Thomson, Sam Wood of Perth, Tasmania, told me that he thinks that he might have been Batman's doctor.)

The *Old Parish Records* state that at St Nicholas, Aberdeen on 28 March 1798 'Mr Alexander Thomson, Shipmaster, and Mrs Margaret Smith, his wife, had a son born named Alexander, baptized by the Rev. Mr. Sanderson, in the presence of William Stephen, Carpenter, and David Smith, Glazier here'. This was a customary thing to do, a familiar rite of passage. For the pious parents though it was more than a matter of course. For them it involved a heartfelt profession of faith on behalf of their infant son, and expressed their understanding that he was indeed a child of the covenant. They were not to live long enough to see that he would never repudiate his baptism, and that he would always be a loyal son of the *kirk*. The rock-ribbed Presbyterianism of Aberdeen gave him a framework of belief, a comfort when his parents died during his teenage years, an ethics that undergirded his later business and political interests, and an assurance that he was indeed a son of his heavenly father.²⁵ It was this, as well as his medical qualifications and experience that led the PPA to appoint him surgeon and catechist to the nascent community by the Yarra.

One can understand Thomson being sent as a doctor to the projected settlement, but why would a group of venture capitalists specifically appoint a catechist? One reason was to give their venture an aura of religious respectability. Batman's 'treaty' with the Aborigines was not legal, nor was the influx of settlers. But perhaps the presence of Christianity might persuade the evangelical Governor Arthur that the motives of the PPA members were not entirely unethical or selfish. The treaty was not a subterfuge but an attempt to give their land acquisition a semblance of legality. Was it also partly out of

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Dr Alexander Thomson

respect for the Aborigines? The PPA was 'buying' the land, not just taking it. Thomson, as a lay Presbyterian catechist or missionary, would give credence to this; the settlement of Melbourne brought 'civilisation' (Christianity) to the inhabitants. Another reason was for Thomson to provide a pastoral ministry to the settlers.²⁶

²⁵ For details of Thomson's parents and early life until his decision to migrate to Van Diemen's Land see my 'Dr Alexander Thomson: Beginnings', *Investigator* (Geelong Historical Society) June 2002, 47-60.

²⁶ See Billot, *John Batman*, 121, for the humanitarianism of the PPA members. On pages 131-2 he lists their names and occupations. Most of the members were genuinely religious men, but, Clark

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Thus in March 1836 Thomson, with Barbara and their six year-old daughter Jane, arrived on Batman's vessel the *Caledonia*.²⁷ They did not stay long. Thomson apparently was not enamoured with the Melbourne settlement. Perhaps he was tired of the feuding between Batman and Fawcner and so decided to try his luck in the promising land surrounding Corio Bay. In May he had landed sheep at Point Henry and had been impressed by what was later to be known as Corio Bay, and decided to squat there. He resigned his position as doctor, and on 1 January 1837, said farewell to Batman and his family, and to other friends, and set out for Geelong. Mounted on his small grey pony, the bespectacled Thomson, stove-pipe hat on his head, with the limited, grudging aid of William Buckley, the only white man to have travelled overland from Melbourne to Geelong before him, drove the 50 Herefords he had previously landed to Geelong.

During the nine months that Thomson was in Melbourne he established himself as one of its leading citizens.²⁸ This included, as was expected of him, taking a leading role in establishing order and conducting services. These were held in his tent pitched under a gum tree next to where St Paul's cathedral now stands. In a letter to Superintendent La Trobe, Thomson said:

There being no constituted authority, I was requested to act as a general arbiter. I did so by common consent, my tent being the police office. Many felt a pride in showing an example in showing order, which was done without much trouble. The people were very quiet and attended every Sunday morning at my tent for public worship, where I read the Church of England service.²⁹

He also read the funeral service of the first burial in Melbourne.³⁰

asserts, 'little George' was not fooled, 'While Batman was preparing for his expedition to Port Phillip, he was telling Bourke that he had not been "gulled" by all this talk of civilizing the natives.' Clark, *History of Australia vol III*, 88. Clark points out that the PPA members were 'deeply divided in their attitude to the aborigines. Swanston and Gellibrand favoured "sitting on the blacks to eat them out or drive them out" ... Simpson and Wedge [wanted to buy] their property and [endeavour] to teach them such industrious habits as would equip them to become active members of white civilization.'"

²⁷ Barbara was the first white woman in the Melbourne settlement, and acted as a kind of mother figure to the young men. Also on board were a number other 'overstraiters' who sought land and profit in the new district.

²⁸ In his first report to the Colonial Secretary dated 30 September 1836, the Police Magistrate Captain William Lonsdale wrote that 'The only persons of any respectability at present there are Mr Batman and Mr Thomson ...', P Jones ed, *Historical Records of Victoria vol 1. Beginnings of Permanent Government* (Melbourne: Victorian Government Printing Office, 1981), 82. Lonsdale was later to express annoyance with Thomson.

²⁹ T F Bride ed, *Letters from Victorian Pioneers* (Melbourne 1898), 130. The establishing of both law and order and Christianity should be noted. La Trobe returned the original manuscripts of the letters to him to Victoria in 1872 and they were preserved in the Melbourne Public Library (now State Library of Victoria).

³⁰ See Billot, *Fawcner*, 156-7, and *HRV* 3, 586-8, for details.

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The Presbyterian Thomson was a good friend and generous supporter of the Methodists. As well as hosting Orton (see pages 47-9), when he moved to Geelong he supported their mission society, the missionaries the Revs B Hurst and Francis Tuckfield and the mission station, Buntingdale, they founded (near Birregurra, about 37 miles from Geelong).³¹ He was also on the committees of the Auxiliary Bible Society of Australia Felix (1840) and the Port Phillip Theological Education Society (1841). The early dates of founding indicate something of the intentional faith of Thomson and his fellow believers. A few years later, in 1841, it was Thomson who the Methodists invited to lay the foundation stone of the Yarra Street Methodist Church in Geelong

Even though Thomson did not stay long in Melbourne - his life and contribution were mainly in Geelong - he nevertheless made his mark on the Settlement. There was an edge to his personality: he clashed with, among others, his fellow Scot James Harrison, owner and editor of the *Geelong Advertiser*, with Lonsdale and La Trobe, and had a strong dislike of the Irish (Catholics). In many ways he was a difficult Scot. But he was also a man of drive and ambition, and a pioneer. He was a man of integrity: while not a good businessman (he was not a canny Scot), he was honest in his dealings. He was a man of good character: this was recognised by the first settlers when they recognised him as arbitrator and religious leader, and by the early Geelong settlers when they voted him Geelong's first mayor and MLA. He was a man of compassion: as was shown by his care and support of the lady pioneer squatters Anne Drysdale and Caroline Newcomb, and his encouraging and assisting German settlers to come to Port Phillip. Most of all he was a believer, a loyal son of the *kirk*, a friend of other Protestants, especially Methodists, and played his part in establishing the Christian foundations of Melbourne and Geelong.

Captain William Lonsdale: the able, conscientious, and loyal Anglican magistrate ³²

On Saturday 3 March 1837 Lt-General Sir Richard Bourke, Governor of New South Wales, disembarked from the *Rattlesnake* and was rowed up the Salt Water (Maribynong) and Yarra Rivers to investigate and legitimize the Settlement (as it was then called) of Melbourne, and to establish law and order.³³ There was more to Bourke than his being a military man and

³¹ Thomson hosted the first Presbyterian, Methodist and Anglican services at his home, 'Kardinia', on the southern bank of the Barwon River: the Rev James Clow took the Presbyterian; the Rev Francis Tuckfield (Methodist) took the other two.

³² E Scott, 'The Administration of Captain Lonsdale and the Foundation of Melbourne', *Victorian Historical Magazine* vol IV no 3 (March 1915), 97ff, and Wilkins, *The Life and Times of Captain William Lonsdale*.

³³ Bourke's superior was Charles Grant, first Baron Glenelg, Secretary of State for the Colonies and eldest son of Charles Grant Senior, chairman of directors of the British East India Company and member of the Clapham Sect.

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governor, properly concerned with order.³⁴ He was also a devout man (a liberal Anglican), and the day after he arrived, he recorded in his journal:

Went to the building intended for a Church [the pioneer church] where were assembled from 50 to 60 persons of all ages. In the afternoon went to the spot proposed as the site of a Missionary Establishment [an example of the easy relationship then between church and state] for the civilization of the aboriginal natives. [ie the 'civilising', or Christianising, of the Aborigines] It is well situated on the left bank of the Yarra Yarra River about 3 miles from the township. A house is in progress for the Missionary. [George Langhorne, who replaced Alexander Thomson as missionary to the aborigines] I have not yet had an opportunity of speaking to him or ascertaining whether he has made any progress in obtaining the confidence of the natives resorting to the township.³⁵

Bourke also unselfconsciously noted in his journal that he 'Read Prayers' during his visit as he explored by horseback the hinterland of Melbourne. Significantly, his sense of responsibility, personality, and faith may be noted in his choice of the man to represent him in Port Phillip.

In 1836 Bourke had appointed as first permanent magistrate of the Port Phillip District (PPD), the 36 year-old Captain William Lonsdale (1799-1864) to enforce the laws of England and the Acts of the Governor of NSW.³⁶ Lonsdale was a soldier and administrator. He arrived in Sydney in 1831 as a lieutenant of the 4th Regiment guarding transportees.

After five years in Van Diemen's Land, in response to a request from Batman and others, Bourke sent him to Port Phillip to be the resident police magistrate. He arrived in the *Rattlesnake* 29 September 1836 to be greeted by a rag-tailed settlement of 224 (white) souls. His duties were to establish and maintain law and order, and to administrate the developing town. He did an excellent job and his superiors, the Governors Bourke, Gipps and Superintendent La Trobe (who invited him to stay) warmly commended his ability, loyalty

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Captain William Lonsdale

³⁴ M Waugh, *Forgotten Hero. Richard Bourke. Irish-born Governor of New South Wales 1831-1837* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2005).

³⁵ Jones, *HRV Vol 1*, 102.

³⁶ Lonsdale was briefly preceded by George Stewart, magistrate at Goulburn, whom Bourke had sent to inspect the situation at Melbourne, especially reports of white outrages against the Aborigines.

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and zeal. He was an excellent public servant who served Melbourne conscientiously and efficiently.

The Anglican Lonsdale was pious and proper in all he did, and fostered the growth of his church. This was probably a factor in Bourke's appointment of him, and La Trobe's invitation to stay. Both were devout Christians who would have wanted a man of Christian sensibilities in such an important post, especially with regard to the Aborigines. In Melbourne, Lonsdale wrote to Bishop William Broughton lamenting the lack of clergy, and tried to fill the gap by reading services to his soldiers and the convicts.³⁷ However he managed to offend others (especially Fawkner) by insisting that the Pioneer Church, which was built by common subscription, was built on land reserved for the Church of England and thus rightfully belonged to that church.³⁸ This was at the direction of the resolute and provocative high-church Bishop W G Broughton to whom Lonsdale naturally deferred.³⁹ His action fitted with his own sense of propriety and correctness. But it was high-handed and a serious error of judgement; members of other churches had subscribed and it was regarded a kind of union church belonging to the community, not to one denomination. In religious matters, pioneering people tended to help each other, and expressions of Anglican or any kind of exclusiveness did not sit well.

Nevertheless, as part of his duties as administrator, Lonsdale oversaw the establishment of official Christianity in Melbourne.⁴⁰ This was immeasurably aided by Bourke's Church Act of July 1836, passed only weeks before the legitimisation of the settlement at Port Phillip and Bourke's appointment of Lonsdale. The act gave a £1 for £1 subsidy for church buildings costing £300 to £1000, subsidised clergy stipends, and allowed land grants for church purposes. It was a great boon to those churches who accepted it eagerly, and Melbourne was shaping up to be a very religious city. The French writer and photographer Antoine Faughey remarked: '.. In a few minutes I counted fourteen buildings dominating the town, all fourteen of them churches, ..'.⁴¹

³⁷ He also noted in his journal that different settlers held devotions in their own houses.

³⁸ However, it should be noted that on 6 June Lonsdale called on Waterfield and contributed £5 to the Congregationalist cause and promised to do all he could to ask Sydney for a land grant 'every such establishment must add to the welfare of the community'. Lonsdale was a loyal Church of England man, but was not narrow.

³⁹ Broughton fought fiercely for establishment privileges to be accorded his church in the colonies. Clark, *A History of Australia vol III*, 103, refers to Broughton's sermon in the small wooden Union Church in which he made reference to the Church of England 'as the spiritual leader of the English civilization'.

⁴⁰ In 1837 Lonsdale suggested to Bourke that the settlement be named Glenelg after Lord Glenelg (Charles Grant). A natural suggestion; Glenelg was Minister for the Colonies and War (His father, of the same name, was a prominent Clapham Sect member.). However Bourke preferred Melbourne, after Lord Melbourne, the evangelical prime minister.

⁴¹ Quoted in Flannery, *Birth of Melbourne*, 179. See too page 6 above; Freeland, *Melbourne Churches 1836-185*; and Waugh, *Forgotten Hero*, 76-85.

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In keeping with government concern over the plight of Aborigines, in December 1836, only a few months after Lonsdale's arrival, Bourke sent the first 'official' Anglican, the protector George Langhorne, to look after the aborigines on the south bank of the Yarra. The first resident clergyman was the Rev J C Grylls who arrived 12 October 1838 from Sydney to look after 800 parishioners. However, it would be a decade before Melbourne's first Anglican bishop, Charles Perry, arrived in 1848 to properly establish Anglicanism in the PPD.

With faithfulness and integrity, Lonsdale applied the fair and equitable policies of Bourke, earning the approbation of La Trobe who found him a 'truly excellent, worthy, intelligent man and one to whose opinion I am bound to listen with respect and deference'.⁴² He was chosen by Bourke 'for his reputation of following orders "to the letter" and for his unblemished character, and calm temperament'.⁴³ He epitomised the concurrence of religion and law and order. And he was a part of the network of Christian officials – Bourke, Glenelg, Melbourne, La Trobe, Arthur, Simpson, each of whom played an important role in the founding of Melbourne, facilitating the notable interdependence of church, state and culture. Like them, excepting the Moravian La Trobe, Lonsdale was a devout Anglican and should not be overlooked when thinking of more obvious Anglican religious figures such as Perry and Macartney.

Charles Joseph La Trobe, the cultured and sensitive Moravian Superintendent

Five months after Batman's death, the PPD's first and only Superintendent arrived in Melbourne to begin his 15 year tenure.⁴⁴ Usually, colonial governors were naval or military men; La Trobe was neither. Moreover he had

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Charles Joseph La Trobe

little administrative experience and, with his talents and interests, high principles and serious mind, he was a cultured gentleman rather than an intellectual or an executive. According to Washington Irving, 'He was a man of a thousand occupations; a botanist, a geologist, a hunter of beetles and butterflies, a musical amateur, a

⁴² A G L Shaw ed, *Gipps-La Trobe Correspondence 1839-1846* (Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 1989), 5 (letter 2).

⁴³ Waugh, *Forgotten Hero*. 111f.

⁴⁴ H G Turner, 'A Day in 1839. Mr La Trobe's Arrival in Victoria', *Victorian Historical Magazine* vol 46 no 4 (Nov-Dec 1975 – originally published in *VHM* December 1911), 519-29.

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sketcher of no mean pretensions; in short, a complete virtuoso; added to which he was a very indefatigable, if not always a very successful, sportsman'. For such a man the district of Port Phillip provided great pleasure; 'I had from the first a passion for the plains and for my solitary hard rides across them, and retained it to the last'.⁴⁵

Rather, he owed his appointment in large part to his evangelical Moravian faith and evangelical influence in the colonial office at Whitehall, not just because he was a cultured gentleman. He brought with him 100 Bibles and 300 New Testaments from the British and Foreign Bible Society, and £500 collected for the building fund of what would become St James' Old Cathedral, not what one would expect in the luggage of a senior public servant.⁴⁶

La Trobe's first speech on arriving in Melbourne was instructive of the man and his agenda. He said:

I pray to God to Whom I look for strength and power

La Trobe was a serious and deeply sensitive believer: a member of St James' Old Cathedral and St Peter's Eastern Hill, a friend of Bishop Perry, and supporter of the Aborigines.

that I may be enabled through His Grace to know my duty and to do my duty diligently, temperately and fearlessly. ...

Thus spoke the devout Moravian who depended on God for guidance and prayed that he might not be shaken in his duties.

It is not by individual aggrandizement, by the possession of numerous flocks and herds, or by costly acres, that the people shall secure for the country enduring prosperity and happiness, but by the acquisition and maintenance of sound religious and moral institutions without which no country can become great.

The word 'not' is seemingly offensive to the first settlers' entrepreneurial drive. But it is balanced by the second half of the sentence. Such sentiments were not idiosyncratic of La Trobe. The notion of a Christian civilisation was common currency among believers, and a deeply held conviction by evangelicals in imperial Britain. For example, MP and Clapham Sect member James Stephen reminded Lt Gov George Arthur 'of the importance of his mission to establish a Christian, virtuous and enlightened state in the centre of

⁴⁵ *Australian Dictionary of Biography Online*. La Trobe's 'ramblings' appealed to the Romantic influence on evangelicals; and his setting out the parks of Melbourne were in keeping with the Romantic love of 'nature'.

⁴⁶ See Drury, *La Trobe*, 159ff, and S Piggin, 'William Wilberforce, the Clapham Cabinet, and "Liberating the Captives" in Australia', public lecture 26 March 2007 Parliament House, Canberra (to celebrate the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade).

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the eastern hemisphere ...'.⁴⁷ Throughout the century, churches invariably had 'improvement societies' to instruct and encourage their young people to strive to live Christianly. In 1865 Bishop Perry founded the Society for the Promotion of Morality, with Dr John Singleton as secretary. It became inactive when Perry retired back to England, but was resurrected in 1882 with Perry's successor Bishop James Moorhouse as president and Singleton secretary again.

Nevertheless, was this a *mélange* of 'motherhood' statements? Would this speech have mystified his listeners? According to his recent biographer:

La Trobe approached his new duties and responsibilities with great earnestness and fervour. He had the willingness and determination to do a good job. However, when composing his inaugural address to 'his' people, he made his first miscalculation ... He missed the mark by offering the gathered populace a sermon, an evangelical oration on how to live as good citizens. Those many colonists, who had braved the elements of a Melbourne spring day in their enthusiasm to see, hear and welcome their new administrator, would surely have been surprised by what they heard. They had no way of understanding the message of the Superintendent. It was as if he had come from another world, speaking an alien language, so irrelevant to their situation did his words sound. ...⁴⁸

And the historian of the Port Phillip Era, A G L Shaw, comments:

Did the [Port Phillip] Associates think they were really founding what one of them, George Mercer, described as a colony founded on 'principles of conciliation and civilisation, of philanthropy, morality and temperance ... calculated to ensure the well-being and comfort of the natives' and proceeding on a system of 'instructing and protecting, not exterminating them', or were they only trying to gain support from the humanitarian lobby in Britain by covering their commercial plans with a philanthropic cloak?⁴⁹

⁴⁷ See C M H Clark, *A History of Australia vol II. New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land 1822-1838* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1968), 110; and P Fox, 'Cultivating Civilisation at Port Phillip. La Trobe's Colonial Experience', *The La Trobe Journal* no 71, Autumn 2003, 115-129.

⁴⁸ Drury, *La Trobe*, 165. H Le Griffon, *Campfires at the Cross. An Account of the Bunting Dale Aboriginal Mission 1839-1851 at Birregurra, near Colac, Victoria* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2006), 99, similarly comments: 'The unabashed, acquisitive citizens of Port Phillip must have pitied their new leader for his naivety. For this was the new world, and they had come to make their fortunes.' G Serle, 'Noble Vision and Harsh Realities: C J La Trobe and Early Victoria', *Victorian Historical Journal* vol 47, 1976, 265-76, gives a more balanced view.

⁴⁹ Shaw, *Port Phillip District*, 49.

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These comments, especially the former, are wide of the mark. However much La Trobe's hearers were driven by covetousness, they understood the Christian moral and ethical principles that motivated their Superintendent. They would not have expected otherwise. Many would not have shared La Trobe's evangelical shape and expression of the faith, but they would have recognised the common Christianity they shared and which was fundamental to their civilisation.⁵⁰

On 28 November 1853 La Trobe's beloved wife Sophie sailed for England. He hoped that a sea voyage would be good for her always-delicate constitution. It was not. She died on 30 January 1854 in her home town of Neuchâtel in Switzerland, just before her 44th birthday. La Trobe learned of her death five days before he sailed for home. In his last diary entry as he left, he wrote: 'what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits toward me'. Today La Trobe's name is borne by a street, a university, a town in Tasmania, the section on Australiana in the State Library of Victoria, a statue outside that library, and a society devoted to making him and his achievements better known. A twentieth-century successor wrote of him:

It is for his fulfillment of the third function of his office, that of social obligation, that La Trobe is most kindly remembered. The institutions of civil, and of a civilized, society, certainly include those of the law and government but they are not exhausted by these. It was one of the great merits of La Trobe that he saw the many-sided character of civilized life: vineyards and agriculture, hospitals and libraries, *religion* [emphasis added], science and learning all must play their part and be given institutional form if they are to flourish.⁵¹

This notion of a (Christian) civilisation was also expressed in the 'shape' of nascent Melbourne. In 1836, Governor Bourke sent Robert Russell, F R D'Arcy and W D Darke to survey what was to become Melbourne. However Bourke was dissatisfied with Russell's progress and so in 1837 replaced him with Robert Hoddle, the Assistant Surveyor General of New South Wales.

⁵⁰ Cf Christopher Dawson, *Progress and Religion. An Historical Inquiry* (Washington: Catholic Univ of America Press, 1929). Dawson's thesis is that religion shapes the soul of a culture, which cannot survive if cut off from its religious roots; and that western civilisation was formed by Christian culture(s). Writing between two world wars and in the middle of the great depression, he said that western civilisation was confronted with two critical options: reappropriate a vital Christian culture or drift towards more dangerous and alienated expressions of consumerism and totalitarianism. La Trobe and the early men of Melbourne would have nodded in agreement.

⁵¹ D McCaughey *et al*, *Victoria's Colonial Governors 1839-1900* (Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 1993), 35f. See too Fox, 'Cultivating Civilisation at Port Phillip, 115-129.

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Robert Hoddle: surveyor and public servant

There is controversy over whether Hoddle or Robert Russell is responsible for the shape of Melbourne, though Hoddle is generally recognised as being more responsible.⁵² Manning Clark slightly refers to Hoddle:

His supporters eulogised him as a man with such a sense of design and order that he used attendances at religious services as an occasion for expressing his gratitude to the 'Mighty Planner'. A man with geometry in his soul began to design a city like a rectangular grid with the streets so straight that there was nothing to stop the north wind converting the town into a fiery furnace in the summer, or the south wind making it shivery and sodden in winter. ..⁵³

But there was more to Hoddle and his plan than mere geometry. Foreseeing the importance of Melbourne, he did not want it to grow in a haphazard way like Sydney. Thus Hoddle's plan reflected somewhat the large cities of the American mid-west with their grid patterns. There was nothing new about the grid; it went back over two millennia, and it suited nineteenth-century Melbourne. It fitted the undulating country both sides of the Yarra, its utilitarian nature suggesting a sense of order, rationality, and control, owing nothing to the haphazard, *ad hoc*, or chaotic. And it symbolised a view of civilisation appropriate to the Enlightenment and the industrial age. Hoddle's plan reflected a particular town-planning tradition, a deliberate policy of urbanisation, something planned and orderly, a context appropriate and amenable to evangelical notions of rectitude.⁵⁴

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Early Melbourne takes shape

In London, Granville Sharp, in his role as philanthropist and anti-slavery legislator [suggested] that this egalitarian plan could be useful in the settlement of land colonised by Britain came at a crucial time for Australian settlement.

In the plan of Melbourne, surveyed as a potential city by Robert Hoddle in 1837, the principles of symmetry, balance, regularity, standard-sized allotments, and squares

⁵² B H Colville, *Robert Hoddle: pioneer surveyor 1794-1991* (Vermont: Research Publications, 2004).

⁵³ Clark, *History of Australia vol III*, 95.

⁵⁴ A Brown-May, *Melbourne Street Life. The Itinerary of Our Days* (Kew, Vic: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1998), xviii, sees Hoddle's grid as an artefact, a 'symbol and map of the city', the most influential determinant of the city's character. See too pages 5-13 for comments on the streetscape of Melbourne, the colonial grid, and the authority of the grid.

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for internal open space or for administrative buildings were used to good effect, along with surrounding open space parklands in the Township Reserve. ... The emphasis on identical sized allotments might be considered, in a political context, as a 'democratic' rather than a merely 'regular' arrangement.⁵⁵

Hoddle was also an Anglican believer, not simply a man of the Enlightenment. A few years later, in 1840, he noted that in that year Melbourne had a population of about 4000 and (perhaps optimistically) that

At present, religious feuds are unknown. The Government affords assistance to all who worship God according to their own creeds, and we find the Church of England, of Scotland, and the followers of Wesley, and the Roman Catholic Church, receiving aid from government.

The Episcopalian Church has been commenced on too expensive a scale, and at present makes but little progress. Other sects have been more moderate in their views and have erected buildings, which afford good accommodation.

The Independents, who receive no aid from Government, have erected a neat building. *May true Christianity abound and the demon of discord never visit this land.*⁵⁶ [emphasis added]

Evangelism During the Port Phillip Era

The notion of a healthy common Christianity characteristic of the Port Phillip Era and colonial Melbourne should not be idealised of course; not everyone attended church regularly. Shaw remarked:

In January 1837 Dr Cotter, the Assistant Surgeon, was prosecuted (and fined £5) for employing three of Batman's servants to wash sheep on a Sunday. On his visit that March, Bourke, noticing a rather poor congregation at church, commented regretfully that 'the Sabbath is not well observed anywhere in New South Wales, except by a few persons of sober habits'. In November the visiting Quaker, Backhouse, was depressed by the lack of interest in religion, ...⁵⁷

⁵⁵ H Proudfoot, 'Founding Cities in 19th century Australia' in S Hennett & R Freestone eds, *The Australian Metropolis. A Planning History* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2000), 13.

⁵⁶ R Hoddle, *A Chapter on Port Phillip 1840* (Melbourne: Garavembi Press, 1991), 20. See too 'Religion' and 'Religious Allegiances' in A Brown-May & S Swain eds, *Encyclopedia of Melbourne* (Melbourne: Cambridge Univ Press, 2005), 593-8

⁵⁷ Shaw, *History of the Port Phillip District*, 79

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And shortly after he arrived in Melbourne, the Rev James Forbes, the first Presbyterian minister lamented:

‘One half of the people care nothing for any church, or any religion’, [adding] ‘Unless our friends at home arouse themselves on our behalf, we shall be verily as weak as water. .. Our population have just enough spiritual animation to make them receive the food gladly when offered to them.’⁵⁸

Forbes was only 26 when he made this comment, and doubtless feeling overwhelmed with the task confronting him. He died young (1813-51), and so did not see the increase of secularism and experience the sense of disenfranchisement his churchly colleagues did, nor the desperation over issues such as temperance, Sabbatarianism, and social purity. But had Forbes indeed come to ‘a kingdom of nothingness’, a post-Christian society? The case studies mentioned above certainly do not suggest so. Nor do the statistics and streetscape of Melbourne. With encouragement from La Trobe, and state aid from Governor Bourke’s 1836 Church Act, as mentioned in the Introduction chapter, approximately 3.5 churches and chapels were built each year before Separation. For, regardless of the busy-ness, primitiveness, and privations of the pioneering years, evangelism was high on the agenda of the Melbourne evangelicals, especially the Methodists.⁵⁹

The Methodists

Batman was shortly followed by a layman, Henry Reed, and a clergyman, Joseph Orton, who represented the Methodism of the day. The layman, a man of enthusiasms, exemplified the charisma, energy, and evangelistic drive of primitive Methodism, but lacked the *gravitas* of the ordained man. The clergyman represented a movement that had become a denomination, but had maintained the evangelistic and missionary drive of his church’s founder.

Henry Reed. Brought up in straitened circumstances in England, Henry Reed (1806-80) migrated to Van Diemen’s Land in 1827 where he prospered in business. Converted in 1831, he became an enthusiastic Methodist, labouring mightily for souls. He returned to England in 1847 where his business interests continued to prosper and he continued to immerse himself in missions, philanthropic (he gave William Booth £5000 for his work), and evangelical causes. During this time he relinquished his Methodist ties, becoming more non-

⁵⁸ Cannon, *Old Melbourne Town*, 267. On Forbes, see M Harman, *James Forbes of Melbourne. Pioneer Clergyman and Educator* (Darlinghurst, NSW: Crossing Press, 2001).

⁵⁹ The Methodist story is told by W L Blamires and J B Smith, *The Early Story of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Victoria* (Melbourne: Wesleyan Book Depot, 1886), Benson, *A Century of Victorian Methodism*, and J Head, *The Wesleyan Methodists in Port Phillip, 1836-50*, La Trobe Univ MA, 1990).

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denominational. He returned to Tasmania in 1873 and died in 1880 in his home 'Mount Pleasant' near Launceston. He was headstrong, generous, devout, activist, and more evangelical than Methodist.

Reed was a key figure in establishing Methodism in Van Diemen's Land.⁶⁰ When news of the PPD filtered south to Van Diemen's Land in the early 1830s, the hyperactive Reed offered himself for mission work among the Aborigines. In March 1835, with Dr Alexander Thomson and others, he boarded the *Caledonia* and crossed Bass Strait to the tiny settlement at the head of Port Phillip Bay. In a letter dated October 1877, Reed recalled:

.. There were then but two or three huts in the place – Batman's, Fawcner's, and I believe another's. I had a letter from Batman to his brother [Henry] (who with Buckley and three Sydney natives occupied his hut) to afford me every assistance in his power in carrying out my project. I had prayers in the hut with these five men every day, read the Scriptures and preached Christ to them. No doubt this was the first time the Gospel was proclaimed in Victoria.⁶¹

But not much later Reed again boarded the *Caledonia* for the return trip. He had intended to stay a month, and after preaching his sermon had gone bush for ten days to preach to the Aborigines. But the venture only lasted four days; energy and enthusiasm were not enough. Reed lacked patience, and was not cut out for missionary work.⁶² A Tyrrell remarked: 'Once again the Wesleyans seemed to have failed in their responsibility to the heathens of the Australian colonies.'⁶³ However this muddled start was not the whole story of Methodist beginnings in the PPD.⁶⁴

The Rev Joseph Orton. Converted to Wesleyan Methodism in 1813 in London, Orton offered himself for missionary service with the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, and in 1826-9 was in charge of mission stations in Jamaica. Returning to London he followed the example of John Wesley and supported the anti-slavery campaign. In 1831, the WMMS sent

⁶⁰ See H Fysh, *Henry Reed: Van Diemen's Land Pioneer* (Hobart: Cat and Fiddle Press, 1973); R Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals in Australia* (Hazelbrook, NSW: Robert Evans, 2000), 436-62.

⁶¹ Quoted by Benson, *A Century of Victorian Methodism*, 27f. This is not strictly correct. In 1803 the Rev Robert Knopwood took services and preached at the short-lived Sorrento settlement, though Reed would probably not consider that the genial Bobby Knopwood 'preached the gospel'. Reed preached the first 'live' sermon in Melbourne; Fawcner merely read one (presumably one of the homilies or a published sermon). Reed had been a witness when Batman married Eliza Callaghan 29 March 1828 at St John's Church, Launceston.

⁶² Billot, *Fawcner*, 134, adds: 'Henry Batman, who had lost no time in broaching one of the casks of rum, heard of the missionary's return and kept to his bed, pleading a bad headache, until Reed's departure. [Henry was frequently in his cups, and Reed was an uncompromising temperance man.] As Johnny [Fawcner] noted, "he is a complete deceiver".'

⁶³ A Tyrrell, *A Sphere of Benevolence. The Life of Joseph Orton, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary (1795-1842)* (Melbourne: State Library of Victoria, 1993), 132f.

⁶⁴ See Benson, *Century of Victorian Methodism*, 29f, and 289ff, and Head, *The Wesleyan Methodists*.

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him to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land to bring order to a badly run church. He spent 1832-6 in Sydney, where his brief also included oversight of the Methodist cause in New Zealand and the Pacific. Then he went to Van Diemen's Land with the intention of starting an inland mission there. Instead, with the opening up of the PPD early in 1836, and following discussions with the PPA and Governor Arthur, the idea of a mission to the Aborigines in PPD took shape. Thus in April 1836, he joined John Batman on the *Caledonia* for a difficult six-day crossing of Bass Strait.

Arriving in Melbourne, Orton immediately sought out Dr Alexander Thomson who was camped by the Yarra next to where St Paul's Cathedral now stands. They had met previously in 1831 when they came to Australia with their wives and children on the 250-ton barque *Auriga*. Thomson had arrived in Melbourne as catechist as well as surgeon for the settlement. He welcomed Orton, who on 24 April took a service and preached. (Thomson played the organ, and the Anglican magistrate James Simpson acted as respondent.) However much the handful of white settlers and the uncomprehending Aborigines looking on realised, this was an event of symbolic importance for the history of Melbourne which was about to unfold. In Orton's words: 'At 11 o'clock the people of the settlement were assembled together for public worship on the premises of Mr John Batman.'⁶⁵

Seats had been placed on the eastern slope of Batman's Hill for an open-air service. .. The service was commenced by the reading of the Liturgy of the Church of England, after which I addressed the audience from the young ruler's question 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' [Lk 10:25] At the conclusion of my discourse I took occasion to dwell on the propriety of a consistent deportment on the part of the settlers in this new settlement, particularly enjoining them to acknowledge God in all their ways, that they might ensure the Divine blessing with their undertaking [cf La Trobe's first speech above]; otherwise they might expect His curse with all they undertook.⁶⁶

The text and sermon were typically evangelical and evangelistic in assuming there were among the hearers some who had not responded to the claims of Christ on their lives, and calling for them to make a decision. And it would not be Methodist if it did not include a call

⁶⁵ Billot, *Batman*, 196.

⁶⁶ Tyrrell, *Sphere of Benevolence*, 136, quoting from Orton's *Journal*, 24 April 1836. Notably absent on this historic occasion was Fawcner who had gone fishing and shooting with friends. On returning to the settlement he was told by Thomson that 'Mr Orton's sermons had been most eloquent and that he "had lost a treat in not hearing them". Billot, *Fawcner*, 141. Fawcner and Batman had quarrelled by this stage and neither man was interested in reconciliation. Thomson seems to have got on well with both of them, no mean feat, but his move to Geelong might have been in part to get away from the squabbling pioneers.

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for sanctification. This was not an optional extra; nor was it trite. It was foundational to Wesley's spirituality and social conscience, and the people understood. Shaw comments:

... To devout Christians, religion showed the way to eternal life and offered meaning to their temporal existence. They needed biblical and clerical teaching, advice and comfort, during a life on earth so full of suffering and unhappiness. Though they might differ about what precisely God's commandments were, they wanted to hear and obey them. Nor should we forget that in a religious age, state aid to the churches was not merely part of a conspiracy to keep the lower classes in their place as many cynics would wish to assert. A belief in Christianity was part of the 'intellectual baggage' which so many – including the 'lower orders' brought from 'home', and the teachings of the various churches helped to satisfy the heartfelt needs of many in the community; in this sense state aid to religion provided an important social service at a time when the more materialist government services with which we are familiar today were for practical reasons unavailable.⁶⁷

This, the first service by an ordained clergyman in Melbourne, highlighted the centrality of mainstream Christianity in the minds and lives of both Batman and Thomson. It indicates too their respect of Orton for his person and his status as an ordained man. In the mother colony, the attitude of convicts to religion was frequently less than appreciative. In Port Phillip, the currency lad who had made good and the middle-class Thomson 'naturally' accepted the official of an institutional church. Cranmer's plangent phrases sounded strange among the gum trees and fauna of the Australian bush but, as with other settlers, the use of the *Book of Common Prayer* was not unexpected. It was, after all, part of the Church of England roots of the Methodists, and part of the common English religious heritage.

Orton spent eight days in the settlement renewing his friendship with Thomson, taking services, talking with people, and gathering information about the Aborigines with the intention of starting a mission among them. He sought out and used Buckley as an interpreter. He returned to Van Diemen's Land, and in 1839 again crossed Bass Strait where by this time he found 'a town occupying an area of a square mile, in which are several hundreds of houses, many of which are spacious, well-built edifices; with a population of two thousand inhabitants, enjoying most of the comforts of life. ...'⁶⁸ Orton lived in Melbourne 1840-2 as the first resident Wesleyan preacher – by then there were clergy of the Church of England (Rev J C Grylls), Presbyterian (Rev J Forbes), and Congregationalist (Rev W Waterfield) churches. Orton laid a good foundation, and Methodism grew apace. In the

⁶⁷ Shaw, *Port Phillip District*, 80. This was not a simple utilitarian argument. It was part of a broadly based devout Christianity rather than a clearly delimited evangelicalism.

⁶⁸ Quoted by Benson, *Methodism in Victoria*, 33

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following decades the Methodists displayed the activism and energy and driven-ness of their founder in evangelism and mission, in organising their members, and in building churches.

The first Society (a community of believers later called the church) was formed in 1840. It exhibited the strengths of Methodism: it was a child of revival, and its fervour had not been routinised. There was a sense of unity, and catholicity. On occasion, non-Methodists such as Thomson, Waterfield, and Forbes spoke at meetings; La Trobe was a friend of the Wesleyan Mission; Governor Gipps supported Orton; and relationships with the other churches (not so much the Anglicans) were cordial.⁶⁹ Activities were based around chapel, which fostered a sense of belonging and community, piety and moral discipline, and 'mental improvement'. The ultimate aim of which was 'Christian perfection'.⁷⁰

In 1841 Orton was joined by the 22 year-old Rev Samuel Wilkinson (1819-99). Wilkinson was a 'lovable, steady, plodder', and earnestly went about his pastoral and evangelistic work. This included visiting arriving Methodist migrants before they disembarked, and accompanying condemned prisoners to their place of execution, some of whom 'gave good evidence of their repentance and conversion'. The following year Wilkinson was replaced by the 49 year-old Rev William Scholfield (1793-1878). It was a time of economic depression, but revival broke out, due in no small part to a soldier named Rudkin. 'A flame of fire himself, he kindled the holy fire of religious love and enthusiasm in others .. he was of eminent use in leading sinners to Christ, and in increasing the interest in experimental godliness in soldiers and civilians.'⁷¹ In 1845 the calm, self assured and capable Rev Edward Sweetman (1793-1856) arrived to share the load, and the church continued to grow in suburbs and country areas.⁷² By 1847, membership was 436, with 36 on trial.

The Anglicans

The Church of England had the benefit of its establishment status. If not *de jure*, this was 'natural' or 'accepted' in the eyes of most. It was also blessed in having devout laymen such as Lonsdale and La Trobe (the Moravian La Trobe, following Moravian tradition, identified with a local church rather than forming a Moravian fellowship) and, from a distance, Governors Bourke and Gipps. However, it did not yet have the lay activist tradition of the Methodists. Much would depend on the clergy, especially the bishop. But the resolutely evangelical Charles Perry did not arrive until the end of the Port Phillip era. Before then, the first clergyman, the Rev James Couch Grylls, arrived in 1838 and was given a government

⁶⁹ Head, *The Wesleyan Methodists*, 97ff.

⁷⁰ Orton encouraged such in the Classes. See Head, *The Wesleyan Methodists*, 110ff; on page 119, Head emphasises the importance of the laymen.

⁷¹ Benson, *Methodism in Victoria*, 85-6.

⁷² Blamires and Smith, *The Wesleyan Methodist Church in Victoria*, 40ff.

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stipend of £150 per year. Known as 'Stammerer Grylls', he was evangelical,⁷³ and gained enough support from his flock to begin what became St James Old Cathedral. But he was not an outstanding minister. A Sutherland described him as '.. [a] worthy little clergyman, .. a man of no ability, but a kind hearted friend to his little flock, who listened with due respect to his prosy discourses ..'.⁷⁴ Nor was he an evangelist. He returned to England in 1840, and was followed by the Rev James Yelverton Wilson, 'a fierce and often intemperate controversialist, prone to acrimonious preaching'.⁷⁵ Wilson was sent to Portland in 1841 and replaced by the Rev Adam Compton Thomson who had been a missionary in India. 'He was more tolerant but a poor preacher with a regrettable habit of getting into debt.'⁷⁶ Then, to his dismay, Grylls returned early 1842 and demanded his church back! The squabble ended with Bishop W G Broughton finding a parish for Grylls in Sydney. But it was all very unedifying, and the Anglicans did not distinguish themselves with evangelistic endeavour during these years. Long before he arrived, Perry had his work cut out.

The Presbyterians

Many Scots found their way to the PPD, bringing with them resourcefulness and drive, and their Presbyterian faith. Many of them became prominent in business and politics, and they built impressive Gothic-Revival style churches. They were very fortunate in their first minister. A graduate of the University of Aberdeen, the Rev James Forbes brought with him the traditional Scottish and Presbyterian respect for education, the Calvinism of the Reformed faith, and the Puritan respect for culture and learning. In 1838, in response to the appeals of the Rev Dr J D Lang for Protestants to migrate, the 25-year-old Forbes arrived on the 541 ton barque *Portland*, to become the first Presbyterian minister in Port Phillip. Intelligent, amiable, capable and energetic, and visionary, Forbes gave able leadership, founded churches, and was a respected member of the wider town and church community. As well as his pastoral and preaching duties, Forbes is remembered for building John Knox Free Presbyterian Church in Swanston Street,⁷⁷ his involvement in education (Scotch College), encouragement of women, efforts to better the lot of Aborigines (he knew the Protector G A Robinson and supported the Baptist Yarra Mission and the Methodist Buntingdale settlement), and his warm ecumenism (he got on with the Anglican and Catholic bishops, Charles Perry and Patrick Geoghegan. He worked hard raising money for churches, manses, and schools. His early death in 1851 was a loss to Melbourne as well as his church.

⁷³ Bishop J Grant, *Correspondence*, 4 May 2007: 'I think you would be safe in saying he [Grylls] was an evangelical given the date of his appointment – 1836. Also he had some connection with CMS which would confirm his general tenor'.

⁷⁴ A Sutherland, *Victoria and Its Metropolis* 2 vols (Melbourne: McCarron Bird and Co, 1888), 577.

⁷⁵ 'Garryowen' (Catholic journalist Edmund Finn) quoted by Cannon, *Old Melbourne Town*, 274.

⁷⁶ Shaw, *Port Phillip District*, 224.

⁷⁷ The present Gothic-Early English structure was built in 1863. It is now the Intercultural Christian Church (Church of Christ), and has long had a vibrant evangelistic ministry to, especially, Asian students.

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But Presbyterian outreach was limited. Church loyalty was deep-seated, but was tribal and ethnically based. Like the Anglicans, Presbyterians tended to operate with an establishment mindset and a national church ideal. Conversion was understood as a process rather than an event, and teaching mattered more than evangelism. As in Scotland, in the mid-1840s the church was sundered over the issue of government involvement in church affairs. This resulted in three Presbyterian sects: the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, the Free Presbyterian Church, and the United Presbyterian Church. (The Methodists were also split, but that did not limit their evangelism.)

The Congregationalists

The Rev William Waterfield. The Congregationalists were early in Van Diemen's Land and Melbourne.⁷⁸ The first minister was the Rev William Waterfield. He had been sent by the Colonial Missionary Society, his fare paid and first year's stipend guaranteed by the wealthy Hobart merchant Henry Hopkins, father of Congregationalism in the island colony. After a few years Hopkins sent Waterfield to the young Melbourne settlement to establish the Congregationalist cause there. Arriving on the *Adelaide* 21 May 1838, Waterfield held his first service in the Pioneers Church on the same day, but thereafter held his services in private houses, notably the squatter John Gardiner's house and Fawkner's multipurpose hotel building.⁷⁹

Like many nineteenth-century evangelicals, Waterfield was an ardent temperance man. Only a month after he arrived he attended a meeting of the Port Phillip Temperance Society and soon found himself on the committee.⁸⁰ He endorsed the idea of a temperance hotel, and that its benefits be made available to the Aborigines. He evidently sunk some of his convictions when he used Fawkner's hotel for meetings. Fawkner was also a teetotaler, with strong convictions about the demon drink. He was enough of a businessman though to run a hotel ('The Shakespeare' in Collins Street), though it was more than a watering hole. It is intriguing that the difficult Fawkner apparently took a liking to Waterfield from when the latter

⁷⁸ Sometimes referred to as Independents, the term mostly used in the colonies, Congregationalists were present in Van Diemen's Land from early days, with the Congregationalist Union of Van Diemen's Land being formed in 1836.

⁷⁹ Note the beginning of the Royal Melbourne Hospital in 1846:

'When the makeshift hospital in turn became severely crowded, the committee abandoned it and borrowed [!] a two-storied house in Bourke Street from John Pascoe Fawkner, the publican who was proprietor and editor of the *Port Phillip Patriot*. Fawkner's house remained the only public hospital in Melbourne for six years. It was a true forerunner of Victorian public hospitals ...

K Inglis, *Hospital and Community. A History of the Royal Melbourne Hospital* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1958), 8.

⁸⁰ The first president was the pastoralist John Gardiner, whose home was used for a meeting which formed a committee to build Melbourne's first Independent Church

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first stepped ashore, inviting him to stay in his hotel, and refused to accept payment for lodging. It might have been that Fawkner recognised and felt sympathy for another angular man, and wanted to smooth his way. Also, it might have been that he respected the ordained minister of his own tradition. For when Waterfield began collecting funds for a Congregationalist church, the little man donated £50.⁸¹ He also remained a friend until Waterfield's death in Tasmania in 1860.

Waterfield stayed five years in Melbourne before returning to Van Diemen's Land in 1843. During that time he doggedly took services and preached, baptised, married, and buried people, held prayer meetings, canvassed for money, and visited. He also read religious literature, attended prayer meetings, was on committees for schools, the Temperance Society, and founded, with Forbes, the British and Foreign Bible Society. All laudable activities, but which saw limited success for his ministry. He was too narrow in his personality and his efforts: he did not bother visiting ships that brought new migrants, nor visit people who were not members of his flock; he was censorious of such innocent pastimes as walking on the Sabbath, parties and regattas on the bay;⁸² and his ecclesiastical polity meant that he would not accept financial assistance from the government. He recorded sadly in his journal (14 May 1839: he had been in Melbourne one year): '... the purely voluntary principle is, I believe, the best, but it is uncertain'.⁸³ This put a strain on the congregation and arguments broke out. And so he wrote to Henry Hopkins asking him to find a church in Van Diemen's Land for him. He left Melbourne in 1843, ending an only partially successful beginning for the Congregationalist cause.⁸⁴ Being evangelical and a keen temperance man was not enough; Waterfield had neither the personality nor disposition to be an evangelist. Some of his flock felt this, and made their way to the Baptists who formed their

⁸¹ Fawkner also (cheekily) took Waterfield to visit Batman in the hope of gaining a donation from him, surely knowing that Batman was a Methodist. Was he trying to embarrass the dying Batman? Probably, in the light of his later comment when the bushman died. Certainly Fawkner's well-known antipathy to Batman indicated a lack of Christian charity. Billot, *Fawkner*, 99. The church, built September 1839-January 1841 in Collins Street on land granted in 1838 by the Anglican Governor G Gipps, was the first permanent place of worship in Melbourne. For fuller details on Waterfield and the history of Congregationalism in Melbourne see C Wood & M Askew, *St Michael's Church formerly the Collins Street Independent Church, Melbourne* (Melbourne: Hyland House, 1992). The current Collins Street church has long abandoned its evangelical roots.

⁸² In his journal (29 August 1838), Waterfield recorded: 'Captain A wished me to come to the regatta tomorrow, but I told him I could not sanction gambling and did not wish to do anything which by my example should contradict my preaching. [He added] At night I preached from Luke 17.10. Not many present.' M Cannon ed, *Historical Records of Victoria. Vol 3. The Early Development of Melbourne* (Melbourne: Victorian Government Printing Office, 1984), 542. See pp 534-64 for Independent Church statistics and extracts from Waterfield's journal.

⁸³ Cannon, *HRV* vol 3, 556.

⁸⁴ H Jackson, *Aspects of Congregationalism in South-Eastern Australia Circa 1880 to 1930* (Australian National Univ PhD, 1978), 6, 110. Jackson records that in the second half of the nineteenth century the number of Congregationalists in Victoria declined by 44%. 'Taking Melbourne as a whole, Congregationalism lost one in five of its adherents in the 1890s. In no other city in Australia, perhaps in the world, did the denomination lose so much ground so quickly.'

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first fellowship in 1842. The Baptists were few in number, but were enjoying the capable preaching and ministry of their first minister, the Rev John Ham.⁸⁵

Waterfield was followed briefly by the Rev F Miller (1843), a stronger personality, but he only stayed a few months. Miller was followed by the Rev Alexander Morison who stayed much longer (1843-64) and was more successful. But more of him in the next chapter.

* * * *

As with most settler societies, life during the pioneering Port Phillip Era was pretty crude. Just about everyone was driven by a desire for financial security. But the rude settlement of Melbourne was underpinned by a substantial foundation: the idea of a Christian civilisation which the settlers brought with them. The premise of this civilisation was the orthodox theism of (*de facto*) established Christianity.⁸⁶ Not all of the Christian citizens of Melbourne then were card-carrying evangelicals, but they would have generally agreed with the basic principles of Bebbington's quadrilateral, and would have understood the (evangelical expression of the) gospel and the need for it to be preached. In the next era, the gold rush years, evangelism continued, lacking neither initiative nor able leaders. Over the following decades, in preparation for Federation, this foundation became a tradition.

⁸⁵ Ham's son Thomas, prominent in both church and the early Melbourne community, designed the seal for new corporation of Melbourne.

⁸⁶ In spite of the efforts of Bishop Broughton, no one denomination was legally able to lord it over the others. Whatever pluralism there was, was a Christian one.

Chapter 4

Evangelism in the Gold Rush Years (the 1850s)

From as early as 1840 there had been calls for the Port Phillip District to be separated from New South Wales and become a colony in its own right. Eventually, after much discussion and dispute, a Separation Bill was passed in the Commons on 1 August 1850 and received Royal Assent four days later. The news unofficially reached Melbourne on 11 November in the form of a London newspaper report carried on the *Lysander*. The genial, chatty, Catholic journalist Edmund Finn ('Garryowen') hastily prepared a poster of the news and Melbourne erupted in a fortnight's celebrations. The formal despatches from the Colonial Office did not reach Sydney until 13 January 1851. As if to endorse the decision, gold, lots of it, was discovered, and frantic growth characterised the 1850s. The richness of the Australian goldfields drew adventurers from all over the world desperately seeking the yellow metal that would give security in an uncertain world. There was a certain madness and chaos in Melbourne as well as on the gold fields, a raw edge, a primitive frontier character. Many hundreds of newcomers who arrived in those days had to live at first under canvas. They cursed the heat and flies and appalling sanitary conditions, and wondered if they had made the right decision. The Eureka rebellion rattled the government with the threat of democracy. The diggers, most of them, left behind contexts of Chartism and working class grievances, Irish rebelliousness, American republicanism, and a Europe struggling with revolution and conservative reaction. Only a few years before, in 1848, revolutions had broken out in Paris, Vienna, Naples, Rome, Venice, Florence, Lucca, Parma, Modena, Berlin, Milan, Cracow, Warsaw and Budapest. And much British and Russian blood was stupidly being spilt in the Crimean War.

Nevertheless, businesses of all sorts sprang up to cater for the influx of newcomers and diggers who struck it rich. Already, churches and public buildings were being constructed out of brick and stone; in 1853 the Melbourne Philharmonic Orchestra, the Melbourne Public Library (later the State Library of Victoria), and the University of Melbourne were founded; Parliament House was begun in 1855; in 1857 the streets were lit by gas; and in 1858 work was begun on the Treasury Building. All were visible signs of the city's wealth and growing sophistication. An enormous £1 million loan from the Rothschild group, arranged by Italian financier Antonio Gabrielli in 1853, fed a huge number of civic works. Businesses were founded to provide for the new consumer market. Social infrastructure grew to keep pace. Clubs and places of entertainment provided for times of leisure. A Westminster system of government including a Legislative Council, a Legislative Assembly and a constitution, was

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established. And, invented in the late 1850s, in 1859 Australian Rules Football was codified, the oldest code of football in the world. These were indeed 'the roaring days' for Melbourne.

But the rapid increase in population created a city of disorder, with facilities stretched to breaking point. The population of Melbourne was 237 000 in 1854, up from 77 000 in 1851; by 1857 it had risen to 410 000. 'During the decade up to 1860, no fewer than 386,000 males and 160,000 females ventured onto crazy little ships which fought their way through ocean perils and tipped them out on Melbourne's strange shores.'¹ Even though many of the migrants were comparatively well educated, and of good social standing, only a few became rich through gold. Those who only had their labour with which to trade were especially vulnerable, as were women and children. As well as decorating the walls of the Parliament House library with gold leaf, Melbourne also had to provide benevolent organisations and orphan asylums to care for the disadvantaged and unlucky, signs of its poverty amid the wealth.

In this bustling city, still a frontier town in many respects, the churches continued to build their places of worship and establish themselves as part of the public square. They gave pastoral care for the emotionally and psychologically damaged, listened to the sighs of the homesick, and evangelised and guided the lost and wandering. This was fundamental to their agenda, definitive of the Protestant churches, and an abiding quality in the following decades

This chapter evaluates the roles of, especially, the Anglican Bishop Charles Perry and the Methodist Greatheart and builder of churches, the Rev Daniel Draper. These two evangelicals dominated gold rush Melbourne giving example and leadership to their churches and the evangelical movement. The other main churches were not as evangelistically active, and did not grow as much. Then follow two sections on examples of evangelical activism and initiative: the print media and an organisation (the Melbourne City Mission) that embodied evangelical mission to (mainly) the working classes, a mission that intentionally combined evangelism and social welfare. The end of the decade saw the Melbourne expression of the world-wide 1858-60 revival, which was embraced by the evangelicals. Finally, Henry Varley is introduced. He would later play a significant role in evangelism in Melbourne.

The Methodists and the Anglicans

¹ M Cannon, *Melbourne After the Gold Rush* (Main Ridge, Vic: Loch Haven Books, 1993), 23.

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The Methodists and the Anglicans were the two largest denominations in Melbourne: the Methodists because they were the most evangelistic; the Anglicans because of their inherited establishment status and size.

The Methodists

By the 1850s the middle-class character and status of Methodism was becoming more obvious. They were a significant part of early Melbourne and in 1857-8, in addition to their other churches, and at Draper's insistence, they built their 'cathedral', Wesley Church, in Lonsdale Street. Built in bluestone (very Melbourne), Wesley Church was the

first thorough-going essay in Gothic by the Wesleyans, making the style an acceptable one not only for them but to some extent for other nonconformists. It is claimed that at the time of its reception, it was the finest Methodist church in the world, and was not surpassed in Melbourne until the 1980s.²

The architecture was a visual comment on the status of the Methodists, who had outgrown their sectarian-marginal beginnings and had achieved quasi-establishment status in less than a biblical lifespan after the death of their founder.³ Gothic however was still unusual for a Methodist church (at the laying of the foundation stone, Draper vigorously defended the style of the church), and indicated an institutionalising of an evangelical denomination then better known for its evangelistic activism. This was underlined when the Anglican Governor Henry Barkly laid the foundation stone on 2 December 1857, a fitting statement of the close relationship between church and state.⁴

The opening, on Friday 26 August 1858, was an ecumenical occasion. As well as leading Methodists, the preachers also included the Rev Dr A Cairns of Chalmers Free Presbyterian Church and the Baptist Rev Isaac New (though not Perry). The church was of great importance in the history of Victorian Methodism: it was the denomination's leading church; it attracted leading ministers, beginning with Draper; and in 1893 it became the home and focus of the Wesley Central Mission.⁵ Wesley and the other suburban Methodist churches were opened primarily as an outcome of Methodist evangelism and, as it were, in readiness for the 1858-60 revival and the revivals of the next decade.

² M Lewis, *Victorian Churches. Their Origins, Their Story, and Their Architecture* (Melbourne: National Trust, 1991), 47.

³ There was a Romantic flavour in the Gothic style. Medieval man understood spirituality as an aesthetic quality, as did Catholics, both Roman and Anglican. For example, the Oxford Movement focused on the Romantic notion of the middle ages as an age of faith. Most evangelicals though thought of spirituality more in logocentric and emotive (also Romantic in its way) terms.

⁴ It was also proper for Draper to be present at the funeral of Lt Gov Charles Hotham on 4 January 1856 at St James Cathedral.

⁵ See pages 181-2.

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The Methodists lacked the establishment status of Bishop Perry and the Anglican Church but made up for it with continuing evangelical zeal and energy, and with equally capable leadership. Outstanding was Daniel Draper. Born 28 August 1810 in the parish of Wickham, Hampshire, Draper joined the Methodists in 1830, and in 1834 was appointed a lay preacher. He was ordained the following year and sailed for Australia, arriving in Hobart Town in February 1836. In 1840 he was sent to Bathurst, in 1842 to Sydney, and in 1846 to South Australia where he built the Pirie Street Church and a number of chapels and manses in suburbs and country. 'During Draper's chairmanship of the South Australian District, thirty new chapels were built, church membership rose by 1300, Sunday school scholars increased by 2000, and attendants at public worship by 7000.'⁶ It was small wonder that the Conference then sent the competent, intelligent, businesslike and visionary Draper to gold-rush Melbourne as chairman of the church in the new colony of Victoria. There he continued his impressive ministry, exercising leadership in Melbourne and the colony, especially on the Ballarat and Bendigo goldfields. He added confidence to the Methodist cause, and the denomination saw considerable growth.

In continuation with the Port Phillip Era, Methodist evangelism continued unabated with local preachers proving their worth. Among them was the stalwart Rev James Bickford, who had spent 14 years as a missionary in the West Indies. He arrived in gold-rush Melbourne in 1854 and, apart from two years in Sydney, spent the rest of his ministry (until 1872) in Victoria. Bickford typified the Methodist view of the ministry, describing himself as '...a preacher, plain, expository, evangelical, earnest and soul-saving'. .. He upheld a high view of the Wesleyan minister as evangelist, pastor and circuit administrator.'⁷

Then, toward the end of the decade, the *Wesleyan Chronicle* raised expectations further by publishing accounts of revival in America. The result was not slow in coming. C I Benson, following Blamires and Smith, records that a revival was sparked at a love-feast on 22 May 1859 in Brighton. From there the 'contagion of grace' spread to other circuits, 'tears of penitence began to fall, and many 'seekers effectively found Christ'.⁸ It should be noted that some of the circuits experienced revival before the overseas revival. The movement quickly spread to country circuits, Castlemaine, Drysdale, Warrnambool, and Geelong. The effect on

⁶ 'Draper, Daniel James', *Australian Dictionary of Biography Online*. See too B Dickey ed, *The Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography* (Sydney: Evangelical History Association, 1994), 98-9; and R Howe, *The Wesleyan Church in Victoria, 1855-1901: Its Ministry and Membership* (MA thesis, University of Melbourne, 1965).

⁷ Dickey, *ADEB*, 41.

⁸ C I Benson, *A Century of Victorian Methodism* (Melbourne: Spectator Publishing Co, 1936), 129. For further details see W L Blamires & J B Smith, *The Early Story of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Victoria* (Melbourne: Wesleyan Book Depot, 1886), 177-84; and R Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals in Australia. A Study of Surviving Published Materials about Evangelical Revivals in Australia up to 1880* (Hazelbrook, NSW: R Evans, 2000), 159-65.

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the Cornish diggers on the Bendigo and Ballarat gold-fields, already culturally predisposed to revivalistic Christianity, was especially marked.

The Anglicans.

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Bishop Charles Perry

On 4 February 1837, with William Lonsdale as its president, Anglican settlers of Melbourne formed a District Committee of what was then the Diocese of Australia, with the high-church W G Broughton the first (and only) bishop of the diocese.⁹ A decade later, on 25 June 1847, Queen Victoria signed the Royal Letters Patent, establishing Melbourne as a diocese of the Church of England. Four days after this the Cambridge-educated, sternly evangelical Rev Charles Perry was consecrated the first bishop of her Britannic Majesty's third southern-most diocese (the Dioceses of New Zealand and Tasmania were formed in 1841 and 1842). Melbourne Anglicans

were fortunate with their first bishop. Born in London in 1807, educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge, Perry became a convinced evangelical before being ordained in 1836. He served two parishes in Cambridge before being consecrated bishop of Melbourne on 29 June 1847.¹⁰ Perry owed his appointment to CMS secretary Henry Venn who advised the Colonial Secretary, Earl Grey (1846-52) that Perry was the man to establish the newly created diocese. The evangelical network, particularly the Clapham Sect, operated in high places, and was determined that evangelical influence should shape the new antipodean diocese.

Perry spent three months gathering finances to found new parishes before sailing in the *Stag*, which dropped anchor in Hobson's Bay on 23 January 1848. With the Letters Patent, Perry was installed in St James' Old Cathedral on 28 June.¹¹ His party included his wife Frances and a small group of clergy he had persuaded to join him.¹²

⁹ See G P Shaw, *Patriarch and Patriot. William Grant Broughton 1788-1853. Colonial Statesman and Ecclesiastic* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1978).

¹⁰ For fuller details see A de Q Robin, *Charles Perry. Bishop of Melbourne. The Challenges of a Colonial Episcopate, 1847-76* (Nedlands, WA: Univ of Western Australian Press, 1967). M Wood, *Presbyterians in Colonial Victoria* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2008), 201, points out something of Perry's evangelical heritage: 'William Wilberforce, English evangelical leader, had inspired Thomas Chalmers, father of the Free Church of Scotland, who in turn had mentored Charles Perry, ...'.

¹¹ The Letters disappeared until they were found in an old London second-hand shop in 1930. They are now part of the Collection of St Paul's Cathedral (Melbourne).

¹² See Robin, *Charles Perry*, 37-39.

EVANGELISM IN THE GOLD RUSH YEARS

Frances Perry was born 16 June 1814, the youngest of ten children of merchant Samuel Cooper and his wife Dorothy, and was baptized five days later at the Fish Street Independent Chapel, Kingston-upon-Hull, Yorkshire.¹³ This suggests that her parents were of Puritan descent and that she was brought up in that tradition. Furthermore, that her spirituality was a congenial match to that of her brother John's evangelical Cambridge friend, Charles Perry. (John introduced them). They married on 14 October 1841 in Kirk Ella Parish, Yorkshire. They had no children but Frances ably and lovingly supported her husband, and, like many other evangelical women of the time, poured her energy into good works: eg the Governesses' Home, the Carlton Refuge and the Melbourne Orphan Asylum, and especially, the Melbourne Ly-ing (Royal Women's) Hospital. The opening of Frances Perry House (1979) in the Royal Women's Hospital is a worthy memorial to her leadership and good works.

Perry's brief was formidable.¹⁴ He had to establish the institution of the church, its infrastructure and organisation. In doing this he was a pioneer in inaugurating synodical government which gave a prominent place to laymen.¹⁵ He encouraged and facilitated the building of churches.¹⁶ Government grants helped, but money was always a problem. Nevertheless the fledgling diocese experienced exceptional growth, especially in 'respectable' suburbs. By 1860 it had 56 churches, 99 schoolhouses, and 33 vicarages; and by 1869 there were 113 clergy and churches and 75 vicarages.¹⁷ In 1873 the Diocese of Ballarat was created, and in 1902 the dioceses of Bendigo and Gippsland. Like other pioneer bishops, Perry had to attract and ordain adequate and competent clergy. This was not easy; he was bedevilled by lack of numbers and quality. To help overcome this he began a system of lay readers authorised to fill the gaps. Their enthusiasm often outran their ability, but many did good work. Also, some of the clergy were of a higher churchmanship than their bishop, creating frustration in his attempts to establish the diocese as evangelical.¹⁸ Moreover, the

¹³ The connection with Hull is interesting given the importance of St Mary's, Hull, Isaac and Joseph Milner, and William Wilberforce to the evangelical network. Robin's biography of Perry does not mention this connection.

¹⁴ See Robin, *Charles Perry*, 165-7, for the difficulties facing Perry.

¹⁵ His reading law at the University of Cambridge equipped him well for this. See J Grant, *Episcopally Led and Synodically Governed. Anglicans in Victoria* (Kew, Vic: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2010). It did not compensate for the lack of money, and generosity, of many of his nominal flock. See G R Quaiffe, 'Men and money: aspects of the Anglican crisis in Victoria in 1850-65', *Journal of Religious History* vol 5 1968, 45-61.

¹⁶ Grant, *Episcopally Led and Synodically Governed*, 22 comments: for Perry and his brother Australian bishops, 'a role of "church planter" was envisaged. This emerged, in part, from the Tractarian view of the bishop as responsible for the church's mission, .. ' But Perry was evangelical, and not indebted to Tractarian views.

¹⁷ However, see Cannon, *Old Melbourne Town*, 278, with reference to the lack of support for St James Old Cathedral.

¹⁸ See Wei-Han Kuan, *A History of Evangelicalism in the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, 1847-1937* (ACT ThD, 2011).

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bishops of the other Australian dioceses in 1847 were not evangelical. (The evangelical Frederic Barker was bishop of Sydney from 1854.)

As Bishop of Melbourne Perry had an important status in the city and colony as well as the church and was (automatically) elected or appointed to many of the city's institutions, eg he was a founding councillor of the University of Melbourne.¹⁹ But most of all he had to pastor and evangelise his flock. The distance from 'home' caused many to slacken in the habit of church-going; most were not used to being a member of what today might be termed a missionary diocese; many had always been nominal or content with a 'folk religion' religiosity; and many were distracted by the hope of earthly riches. Perry's response to this last challenge was twofold. First, he was not intimidated by the disorder that the discovery of gold had created. He said, echoing La Trobe and Orton:

... Let us never, forget however, that the gold is the Lord's, and if he has brought it forth in such abundance out of the bowels of the earth, in this country and at this particular period, He has done so for some wise and good purpose. He is carrying on His own designs, and will accomplish them all in His own way and in His own time. In the meanwhile, let us, in our several stations, employ all our influence for restraining disorder and iniquity, and for promoting the maintenance of good government, the preservation of a sound social system, and above all, the advancement of pure spiritual religion and piety throughout the land.²⁰

This quotation set forth the theology and vision that underlay his evangelism, which were broad and all-encompassing, not shallow and one dimensional. The key words and concepts - *peace, plenty, justice, Christianity, prosperous, just and Christian nation, providence, benefaction* - all bespeak the notion of a Christian civilisation with which Perry and his evangelical colleagues instinctively operated.

Second, Perry led from the front in unabashedly preaching an evangelical gospel in churches in Melbourne and country Victoria. People responded, and he gained the support of able leading laymen. Sir William Stawell, chief justice and politician was converted from agnosticism to evangelical belief on hearing one of Perry's sermons. He became a leading Anglican, helping form the constitution of the Anglican Church in Victoria and playing an active role in the deliberations of synod, over which he exercised considerable influence. He

¹⁹ Even though the Church of England was not legally established, Christianity still provided the social cement of the city, and the Church of England carried much of its status from home, even though the Methodists had more churches than the Anglicans and outmatched them in enthusiasm.

²⁰ G Goodman, *The Church in Victoria During the Episcopate of the Right Reverend Charles Perry* (Melbourne: Melville, Mullen and Slade, 1892), 174.

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was a good example of the connection between church and state in colonial Melbourne.²¹ Perry was also supported by the chief justice Sir William a Beckett. A'Beckett was reputedly Unitarian in sympathy. Nevertheless he was friendly with Perry and regularly attended church. There he would have heard his friend declaim on the cross and conversion in terms unmistakable and, to a Unitarian, uncongenial. He was also a temperance (total abstinence) supporter in Melbourne and later in England, a favourite evangelical cause. And not least, was the Moravian La Trobe who, true to Moravian practice, and his vice-regal status, saw him identify with the Church of England. Perry's evangelicalism made this congenial to him.

Life on the goldfields was pretty rough and not all that law-abiding. But, 'Printed on every digger's gold licence was this regulation: "It is enjoined that all Persons on the Gold Fields maintain and assist in maintaining a due and proper observance of Sundays".'²² And Perry, regardless of his middle-class and Cambridge background, and establishment status, was not shy about preaching in the open air on the gold fields. Frances recorded in her diary not only his preaching but also the response of the miners:

... The congregation consisted of about two hundred persons, morning and evening, and about four hundred in the afternoon. They behaved with perfect propriety during the service, and showed at least as much attention as an ordinary congregation in one of our churches at home. As I have observed already, C. Was compelled to perform the afternoon service in his riding-dress, and his pulpit being the stump of a tree, which afforded a rather precarious footing, you can imagine that he did not present a very clerical appearance: but in the morning and evening he wore his usual robes.²³

Perry did not lack evangelical colleagues. Among the clergy who accompanied him was the 48-year-old Church of Ireland evangelical, the Rev Hussey Burgh Macartney Senior (1799-

²¹ Goodman, *The Church in Victoria*, 230ff; and C Parkinson, *Sir William Stawell and the Victorian Constitution* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2004). Stawell was Chief Justice and Lieutenant Governor of Victoria, a trustee of the Public Library, president of the Victorian Deaf and Dumb Institution, a president of the Melbourne Hospital and the Benevolent Asylum and was connected with many charitable objectives, a foundation member of the Council of the University of Melbourne, a member of the royal commissions on penal and prison discipline (1870) and the Aborigines (1877). His wife also played a leading role in church activities.

²² K R Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to 'Eternity': a History of Australian Baptists. Vol 1: Growing and Australian Church* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 61.

²³ Goodman, *Charles Perry*, 165. See 162ff for the effect of the gold rush on Melbourne. Perry also established a Gold-field Mission fund to facilitate pastoral and evangelistic work on the gold fields. See Robin, *Charles Perry*, 167ff. In 1851 he ordained J H Gregory as the first missionary to the goldfields. Gregory thereafter spent the rest of his life as a 'bush missionary'. See Robin, *Charles Perry*, 151, and Grant, *Synodically Governed and Episcopally Led*, 41, 47.

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1894).²⁴ He was soon made dean of the diocese, was Perry's right hand man, and a powerful figure in the diocese for some 40 years. He was mooted to succeed Perry when the latter retired in 1876 but ruled himself out of contention because of age. A committed evangelical, he was always loyal to the Church of England, and was a trustworthy lieutenant to Perry's successors, Bishops Moorhouse and Goe. He died in 1894, full of years and reputation. Other significant clergy included the Rev George Goodman, another Cambridge graduate, who spent 50 evangelical years as Vicar of Christ Church, Geelong, and was the first historian of the diocese. The Rev Septimus Lloyd Chase, another Cambridge evangelical, served under Perry for many years, did outstanding work in missions to the Aborigines and the Chinese, and deserves to be better known.

However not all of Perry's clergy or laymen agreed with his evangelical theology and evangelistic activism: for example, the broad church Rev Dr J E Bromby, first principal of Melbourne Grammar, the Chief Justice Redmond Barry, and Canon H H P Handfield, who was a convinced Tractarian as well as being one of the most able clergy in the diocese. This limited the bishop's hand somewhat.²⁵

The other churches

The other Protestant churches generally and consciously shared the same activist agenda, and produced able leaders.

The Presbyterians

A lot of Scottish Presbyterians came to Victoria in the Port Phillip Era and the 1850s. They made their mark on the business, intellectual, and cultural world of Melbourne. But they did not make a corresponding impact on revival. This was due to two factors: the clergy and the culture of the church. Being a traditional establishment-type church, the Presbyterian clergy played a major leadership role. Also, they were predominantly preachers of the word. With

²⁴ Macartney was a wise choice. There were a lot of Irish in the Port Phillip District, and a number of his relatives were leading citizens. See the *ADB* entries on C J Griffith (Griffith was a cousin of Macartney Senior and wrote to him in 1848 to persuade him to migrate to Victoria), J L F V Foster, W F Stawell, and Redmond Barry. Also on the *Stag* was Macartney's son of the same name (born 30 September 1840, the third and youngest son of his parents). In 1889 Macartney Jr fondly recalled being taught in Sunday School by Stawell, who was related to both his parents. *Missionary at Home and Abroad* vol XVII no 4, April 1889. I will refer to Macartney Jr simply as 'Macartney', and when referring to his father will indicate so. The son is less well known than his father but, I believe, made a more significant contribution to evangelical causes, especially missions. But more of him later.

²⁵ Perry must have been aware of Handfield's proclivities, but S L Chase, who served under Perry for many years, 'described the bishop as a man made up of many paradoxes, in whom an intensely affectionate nature hid itself under a crust of repelling severity and a confiding spirit under a veil of sternness and suspicion'. *ADB Online*. The affair of Rev Dr G M Brough and the Free Church of England, Geelong set limits for Perry. He was an evangelical, but as bishop he was bound to enforce episcopal law. See my 'Trinity Free Church of England, Geelong', *Investigator* vol 22 no 2, June 2009, 55-67.

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this went a respect for education and scholarship: doctrine mattered more than enthusiasm.²⁶ This was all very well if the preacher was competent at his craft; but, it was remarked in Assembly and other meetings, they were often not. 'Ironically, preachers in the conservative, Free Church tradition, which was evangelical, were more prone to preach anachronistically, in dogmatic, laboured mode, than liberal, young, members of the Church of Scotland tradition.'²⁷ A comparison was sometimes made with the freer, enthusiastic Methodist sermons and preachers. The members of the 1859 General Assembly noted the 1859 revival, some with approval (the revival was 'from above', not worked up 'from below'). Others lamented its transience and 'enthusiasm'. The denomination as a whole did not endorse evangelism; this was left to individuals such as the accomplished Adam Cairns who, in 1853, began a long and distinguished ministry in the pulpit of Chalmers Memorial Church, East Melbourne. He was a preacher rather than an evangelist; but he was a very effective preacher, and, with his evangelical convictions, may be deemed an evangelist.²⁸

The Baptists

Baptist beginnings in Port Phillip Era Melbourne were modest, and their growth limited by their size. Being much fewer in number and resources than the other denominations, they lacked a critical mass to grow significantly. They were also hampered by their inherent independence and propensity to division: they readily argued and divided over issues such as millennialism, Calvinist or Arminian theology, closed or open communion, and state aid. Such issues were usually driven by a number of strong-minded individuals. After describing Baptist beginnings, their historian concludes: 'This was indeed a 'make-shift era' with the various Baptist sects struggling to form a coherent witness.'²⁹ More significantly, they generally lacked the evangelistic vitality of the first Methodists. Nevertheless, evangelism was part of the Baptist evangelical DNA, and the intention was not lacking. Things picked up in the 1850s as the denomination grew and established itself. Much of this was due to the gold rush which saw all the churches experience 'transfer growth' from 'home'.³⁰

²⁶ This manifested itself in a certain disputatiousness, as when the church was handicapped by the 1843 schism in which the Free Church broke with the Church of Scotland.

²⁷ Wood, *Presbyterians in Colonial Victoria*, 166ff. On 170-1 Wood refers to a Gaelic sermon that had a profound impact on the non-Gaelic speaking Rev Peter McPherson, commenting on the influence of Gaelic culture. So too, their culture (of revival) had a big impact among the Cornish Methodists on the Bendigo gold fields.

²⁸ See Wood, *Presbyterians in Colonial Victoria*, 215.

²⁹ Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to 'Eternity'*, 44.

³⁰ As with the other denominations, this brought its own problems as all the churches struggled to build churches, the infrastructure of their denominations, and to pastor their people.

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From the first, the Collins Street Baptist Church was the flagship of the Baptists.³¹ As is typical in Baptist churches, the pulpit is centrally situated at the liturgical east end (with the organ forming the backdrop), emphasising the centrality of the Bible and the preached word, fundamental characteristics of evangelism. Most of all, the Collins Street church was fortunate to have three outstanding pastors during its first half-century, each of who was evangelical, committed to evangelism, and a focal point of unity and leadership: James Taylor, James Martin, and Samuel Chapman. Born in Whitburn, Scotland, James Taylor (1814-96) was ordained a Congregationalist, but in 1842 became Baptist, pastoring churches in Glasgow and Birmingham. He was sent to Melbourne as an agent of the Baptist Mission Society, arriving in April 1857. He immediately made his presence felt, fulfilling the hopes of the congregation by presiding over a crowded church each Sunday.

Before he arrived, in 1852 the church funded a mission tent in the Tent City (which provided temporary accommodation for new arrivals) across the Yarra where John Gray, formerly of the London City Mission, combined evangelism and social concern for the distressed and disadvantaged. Churches were built in the suburbs: 1853 Prahran, 1854 South Yarra and South Melbourne, 1856 Kew; and in country centres: 1853 White Hills, 1855 Bendigo and Ballarat. After Taylor arrived, the denomination was even more characterized by missions and aggressive evangelism; and in response to his request, the Baptist Missionary Society sent out more pastors. When, in 1858, the Baptist Association of Victoria was founded, Taylor was elected the first president. Its purpose was to 'advance the cause of Jesus by preaching the Gospel, promoting the formation of Christian churches, the sustenance of Evangelists and the temporary assistance of Pastors ..'³²

The exuberant Taylor encouraged his Birmingham friend the Rev Isaac New to migrate (he arrived in February 1858.) and become minister of the Albert Street, East Melbourne, Church. New was a quieter personality, but gave substantial and scholarly leadership to his church and the Baptist cause generally in Melbourne.

Over 1,000 were reported as attending a series of ten 'lectures to young men' given by New on Sunday evenings. A delighted New reported, 'I have had the elite of the city. Judges, barristers, lawyers, doctors, parsons, men of all classes, infidels and Christians, Protestants and Catholics, Jews and Gentiles, literally'.³³

³¹ It was first built in 1845 and then, under the influence of Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle, rebuilt in 1861-2 in a Classical-Prostyle style. It stands in contrast to the Gothic-revival styles of Scots Church and Wesley Church, and the Romanesque Independent Church.

³² Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to 'Eternity'*, 65.

³³ Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to 'Eternity'*, 66. For details of Taylor's ministry, and fall from grace, see 63ff and 71f.

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The arrival of Taylor and New presaged the Melbourne experience of the 1858-60 overseas revival and the shared growth with the other denominations in the 1860s.³⁴ Other capable ministers followed, including George Slade and William Sutton (1858), David Rees (1859), and W R Wade, all of who made significant contributions to the spread of the gospel and the growth of their church.

The Congregationalists (Independents)

The first Independent Church was built on the north-eastern corner of Collins and Russell Streets, the first permanent place of worship in Melbourne. The denomination established itself in the 1850s by forming a Congregational Union of Victoria. Evangelism and missions were facilitated by a Home Mission department and a local branch of the London Mission Society (nominally interdenominational but in practice virtually a Congregationalist mission).³⁵ As with the Baptists, the Collins Street church, the denomination's 'cathedral', was well served by three outstanding evangelical pastors: the Revs A Morison, A Henderson, and L Bevan. As with the other denominations of the era, there were a number of leading laymen, such as Thomas Fulton.³⁶

After W Waterfield's pioneering ministry, Henry Hopkins' generous benefactions, and a brief interregnum by F Miller, the Rev Alexander Morison began his long tenure (1843-64). Morison was born of Scottish parents in Kilkenny, Ireland, in 1813, and in 1834 he entered Highbury College, London, to study for the Congregational ministry. In 1834 he responded to a call from the Colonial Missionary Society to be a missionary to Van Diemen's Land where he itinerated throughout the colony preaching and founding churches. In 1843 he crossed Bass Strait to succeed Waterfield in the Melbourne church. Here he ministered for 21 active and eventful years. His ministry included travelling by horseback to the gold fields and preaching to the diggers until the Congregational Home Mission sent the Rev J L Poore to establish the Congregational presence there. The Melbourne church was fortunate in gaining Morison as its pastor. He was a capable preacher, an evangelist and missionary, with

³⁴ In the following decades, the church grew, though not proportionally; Baptists were never more than 1-2% of the population. Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals*, 186, quotes J Edwin Orr: '... in only ten years, the congregations increased from 7 to 27, while a couple of hundred new members were welcomed annually. Baptists were not main ones to promote the revival, the denomination was certainly strengthened by it.' By 1860 the Baptists had 3 churches and 32 chapels, able to hold 8500. See Cannon, *Melbourne After the Gold Rush*, 355.

³⁵ C Wood & M Askew, *St Michael's Church formerly the Collins Street Independent Church, Melbourne* (Melbourne: Hyland House, 1992), 24f, 28, 43.

³⁶ Fulton was a foundry owner and manufacturer, temperance advocate, and the first deacon of the Congregational Church in Victoria. 'He paid much of the cost of setting up the Lonsdale Street and St Kilda churches and donated £1000 to a £5000 fund to bring ministers from Scotland to cope with the gold rush.' *ADB Online*.

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leadership qualities.³⁷ During the decade the denomination experienced growth: in 1852 churches were built in Prahran, Collingwood, Richmond, and Brighton; and in 1854 in St Kilda, Kew, Ashby (West Geelong), and Kyneton. By 1860, there were 42 churches throughout Victoria, and 11 000 adherents. But the trend did not continue. Controversy over church polity and state aid led to factionalism and disloyalty to the pastor. Morison's liberality, pragmatism dictated to by the gold-rush instability, and decentralisation caused by suburban sprawl, saw him in 1851-2 apply to La Trobe for a land grant.³⁸ This violation of the voluntary principle predictably raised the ire of some of his flock,³⁹ who were already debating about Congregational distinctives. Other nonconformist churches also agonised over such issues, but managed to maintain evangelistic zeal.

The print media

The eighteenth century saw a communications revolution akin to the impact of the printing press in the sixteenth century. Pamphlets and printed sheets circulated widely, forerunners of the daily newspapers. In the following century, technology and cheap paper saw the development of secular 'dailies', at first in America, then across the Atlantic. Their influence was mighty: they informed, they advertised, they entertained. Largely popular rather than 'serious', they were read by large numbers – the first modern form of mass media. They were also exercises in ideology: the role of journalists, editor, and editorial policy was paramount.

From the beginning of settlement, Melbourne was host to a number of competing newspapers, the first being J P Fawcner's handwritten *Melbourne Advertiser*. Others followed until the *Argus* (1846) and the *Age* (1854) established themselves as Melbourne's pre-eminent dailies. The role of newspapers, and other forms of the printed word, were both an expression of and a cause of Melbourne's literate and reading middle class. Moreover, the 'secular' *Age* and *Argus* customarily reported on happenings in the churches, and on the sermons and pronouncements of the leading churchmen.

The hectic 1850s also saw the founding of a number of religious newspapers. They were illustrative of Christian (and evangelical) activism and initiative, and were not marginal to the cause of evangelism. Churchmen of all stripes were not slow to notice and make use of the mass media. Church and Christian newspapers began, and fostered in their readers a sense

³⁷ Morison had a good and liberal mind, and his abilities were recognised beyond his church. He was appointed to the founding council of the University of Melbourne (he advocated that women be allowed entry to the university), as well as lecturing in his church's college.

³⁸ Wood & Askew, *St Michael's Church*, 23.

³⁹ 'Although the Home Mission met in the Collins Street chapel from the time of its formation to its dissolution in 1857, Morison rarely attended its meetings, .. which is unusual given his primary commitment to missionary work.' Wood & Askew, *St Michael's Church*, 26. Such fractured relationships are destructive of any meaningful evangelism.

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of identity and belonging – to their church, denomination, and the broader Christian movement, both in Melbourne and beyond. Editorial policy was important, especially when the editor acted as gatekeeper, as when he limited, or shaped, or denounced the (interpretation of) an issue. Often they were in conscious opposition to a threat from without such as that posed by the ex-Wesleyan minister Joseph Symes who arrived in Marvellous Melbourne in 1884 (see pages 131-2).

Christian newspapers may be conveniently thought of in three categories: denominational, non-denominational, and individual publications. The latter two categories will be referred to in chapters 6 and 8. The former included the *Church of England Messenger*. In January 1850, only a year after he arrived in Hobson's Bay, Perry published the first edition of the *Messenger*. In his editorial he bluntly set forth the principles of the paper: its aim was 'to promote true religion and piety among the inhabitants of this province. It was unequivocally a Church of England paper, but its attitude to other churches was 'those of Christian charity, but not of (infidel) latitudinarian indifference. The Church of Rome though was different; it was 'an apostate and idolatrous church' based on 'a Satanic delusion'.⁴⁰ Perry concluded with a prayer which sounded evangelical themes:

May the Lord, who alone can make the seed sown, to take root and grow, and bring forth fruit, cause this humble effort of His servants to be conducive to the progress of his pure Gospel, and to the increase of godliness, righteousness, temperance, and true happiness, throughout the length and breadth of this land! C. M.

By the end of the century, and after Perry's reign, there had been a gradual change in the editorial policy of the *Messenger*. As did the diocese, so it over time broadened its base. In protest, a group of young evangelicals began publication of the *Victorian Churchman* in 1890. The *Churchman* was avowedly evangelical, sounding an evangelical voice throughout the diocese and the colony. Of more than passing interest was the subtitle (in Greek) of Ephesians 4:15a – ἀλήθειούντες δε εν αγάπη αύξήσώμεν είς άυτον τά πάντα : 'speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up in him'. This was not affectatious piety. It indicated the primacy of the Bible, an expectation that clergy would be able to understand or would take the trouble to find out the meaning of the text, and a tempered militancy. The *Churchman* ceased publication in 1913, unable to compete against the hostilely anti-evangelical Bishop W Lowther Clarke.

⁴⁰ See Goodman, *The Church in Victoria*, 117f and 243.

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The Methodist newspaper began life in July 1857 as *The Victorian Miscellany and Methodist Chronicle*. Three months later this was shortened to *The Methodist Chronicle*. In 1875 it became *The Spectator*, and for a few months in 1953, *The Spectator and Methodist Chronicle*. Its quality and adherence to the Methodist heritage was ensured by the number of leading Methodist clergy, including the likes of the Revs J Watsford and Joseph Dare, who were its editors, and for whom evangelism was of paramount importance. C I Benson points out that 'Its declared design was "to record and widely disseminate among our people accounts of revival of religion,[!]..."', and entitles his chapter on the newspaper: 'The Gospel in Ink'.⁴¹

As might be expected from a church with a heritage of emphasis on high educational standards and literacy, the Presbyterians were not slow in publishing their church newspapers.⁴² James Forbes published his monthly *Port Phillip Christian Herald* (January 1846-April 1851). His Free Presbyterian Church of Victoria followed with *The Free Presbyterian Messenger* (monthly) (1847-49), *The Standard* (1859-61) (monthly), *The Presbyter* (1878-81, 1884-86), and *The Free Church Quarterly* (1889-1913). The Presbyterian Church of Victoria published *The Christian Review and Messenger* (monthly) 1864-78, *The Presbyterian Review* (monthly) 1878-80, *The Monthly Messenger and Missionary Record* 1880-85, and *The Presbyterian Monthly and Messenger of the Churches of Victoria and Tasmania* 1886-99. *The Record* (an Australia-wide Sabbath School and Missionary Magazine) was published 1890-1940.

Baptist newspapers included the *Australasian Baptist Magazine* (1858-9), the *Australian Evangelist* (1860-6), the *Victorian Baptist Magazine* (1868-76), the *Victorian Freeman* (Dec 1876 - Dec 1889), the *Victorian Baptist* (1890-94), and the *Southern Baptist* (1895-1912).⁴³ James Taylor edited the *Christian Times and Australasian Weekly News* (1858-9) before beginning his own *Australian Evangelist* (1860-66).

The Congregationalists published the *Victorian Christian witness and Congregational Magazine* (1868-70), *The Victorian Independent* (1870-), and *The Victorian Independent and Journal of the Congregational Churches* (1878-1943).

⁴¹ Benson, *A Century of Victorian Methodism*, 387, and following.

⁴² For information regarding the Presbyterian publications I am indebted to the Rev Dr Rowland Ward.

⁴³ See K Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to 'Eternity': a History of Australian Baptists. Vol 2: a National Church in a Global Community* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 777, for a list of Victorian Baptist periodicals.

Charity, Benevolence and Evangelism: the Melbourne City Mission

Evangelism (preaching the gospel to the unsaved) was never a simplistic (salvific) message for the Melbourne evangelicals. Like their colleagues overseas they characteristically understood that the recipients of God's love included the socially disadvantaged sinner. Words (ideas) such as benevolence⁴⁴ and its synonyms: charity, philanthropy,⁴⁵ kindness, goodwill, and grace, belonged to the common vocabulary of evangelicals. It is not without interest that efforts such as those mentioned below were part of greedy gold-rush Melbourne. For there was a dark side to Melbourne then. It was founded and grew up in the time of the industrial revolution, of urbanisation, of the 'dark satanic mills', of Charles Darwin, Charles Dickens and Karl Marx. Melbourne did not have the (extent of the) problems of the great industrial cities of Britain, but there was much poverty: poverty of material goods, poverty of hope, and poverty of spirit. The prospects of the disadvantaged and destitute, were grim. It seemed that the burghers of marvellous Melbourne had forgotten La Trobe's first speech on arriving in settlement Melbourne.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ A Brown-May & S Wain eds, *The Encyclopedia of Melbourne* (Melbourne: Cambridge Univ Press, 2005), 541.

⁴⁵ **Table 1** **Types of philanthropic organisations in Melbourne (per cent)**

	1860	1880	1900
Missions	14.6	13.1	7.0
Campaign and Organisation	7.3	6.5	8.4
Outdoor assistance	29.3	29.5	26.8
Indoor assistance	19.5	16.3	16.9
Hospitals	12.2	13.1	16.9
Reformatories, asylums	17.1	21.3	23.9
Number of organisations	41	61	71

Source: *Sands and McDougall Melbourne Directories*. This table shows only a simple count of the number of organizations and takes no account of the level of activity in each. Examples of the first category, 'Missions', were the Chinese Mission, Ladies Bible Women's Mission and the Melbourne City Mission; the second, 'Campaign and Organisation', includes the Early Closing Association and the Society for the Promotion of Morality; 'Outdoor assistance' includes all organisations that promoted help in cash or kind, such as the Clergy Widows and orphans Fund, the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society and the various Benevolent societies; while the 'Indoor assistance' category includes such organisations as the Immigrant Home, the Sailors' Home and the Wesleyan Home 'Hospitals' are confined solely to organisations giving medical attention and exclude 'mental asylums' which are classified, together with orphanages, inebriates' retreats and the like under 'Reformatories and asylums'. G Davison, D Dunstan and C McConville eds, *The Outcasts of Melbourne. Essays in Social History* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1985), 26.

⁴⁶ Henry Lawson's 1888 lament (about Sydney), 'Faces in the Street', could have been written about 1850s Melbourne.

*They lie, the men who tell us in a loud decisive tone
That want is here a stranger, and that misery's unknown;
From where the nearest suburb and the city proper meet
My window-sill is level with the faces in the street –
Drifting past, drifting past,
To the beat of weary feet –
While I sorrow for the owners of those faces in the street*

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Nevertheless, there was a powerful disposition to do good, not least among believers. A host of agencies sprang up to meet the increasing needs of the disadvantaged and those at risk. They may be listed under the general headings of homes for women (the Ladies Benevolent Society for the Aged had been founded in 1850.), children, the aged and destitute (including migrants), the mentally ill, the physically disabled (deaf and blind) free medical dispensaries, the YMCA and YWCA, and hospitals. Motivated by the gospel, churchwomen were able to devote themselves to these and many other such organisations because they did not work outside the home. With some it was also a class thing; born to or possessing wealth and privilege, they operated with a sense of *noblesse oblige*. Their names included the Anglican Janet Clarke, wife of grazier, MLC and philanthropist Sir W J Clarke, and a philanthropist in her own right. Janet Macartney, wife of Dean H B Macartney Sr, tirelessly used her social contacts for good.⁴⁷ Mrs Eleanor Nicholson, wife of the wealthy Anglican grocer and benefactor, Germain Nicholson, invested her time and substance into, especially, the Melbourne Protestant Orphan Asylum. Like many others, the husbands of such women supported their wives and gave generously. Also, perhaps most of all, women, instinctively, played a significant role because of their feminine caring qualities. It was an expression of their spirituality, more relational than propositional, and which met their emotional needs as well as the material needs of the needy, and because they were impelled by the gospel imperative.

Mention should also be made of Selina Sutherland (1839-1909). Born in Scotland, the forceful Presbyterian Sutherland migrated to New Zealand in 1864 where she became a nurse, an advocate for child welfare, and matron of the Wellington Hospital. In 1881 she settled in Melbourne where she continued her social welfare work among destitute women and children, taught Sunday School at Scots Church, and was appointed Lady Missionary of the church's District Association. However

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Selina Sutherland

she and Scots Church parted company; her work was not thought to be sufficiently Presbyterian. Then in 1894 she established the non-denominational Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society.⁴⁸ This led to the formation of Royal Victorian Society for the

⁴⁷ See M Hancock, *Colonial Consorts. The Wives of Victoria's Governors 1839-1900* (Melbourne: Miegunyah, 2001), 38f; P Russell, *A Wish of Distinction. Colonial Gentility and Femininity* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1994); R Otzen, *Charity and Evangelisation. The History of the Melbourne City Mission 1854-1914* (Univ of Melbourne PhD 1986), 6f. A Ladies Benevolent Society was founded as early as 1845.

⁴⁸ The *Argus* in May 1894 reported extensively on the dispute between the Church and Miss Sutherland. But she had her supporters, such as Lady Sybil Brassey, wife of the governor and philanthropist. See Hancock, *Colonial Consorts*, 224-5.

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Prevention of Cruelty to Children (now Kidsafe) in 1896. As S Swain points out: 'An outgrowth of the evangelical revival in England, the child rescue movement captured the imagination of many Melbourne philanthropists during the last quarter of the 19th century, leaving a particular mark on the city's child welfare services.'⁴⁹ The nineteenth-century evangelical activist response to the needs of the disadvantaged was an outstanding Melbourne tradition, one that deserves a larger study. Swain comments:

Philanthropy has always been more prominent in Melbourne than in any other Australian city, though the way in which it has been understood has changed significantly over time. In the 19th century the term was used interchangeably with 'charity' to describe activities that were simultaneously central to the relief of poverty, the performance of class and the affirmation of respectability in the new colony.⁵⁰

Contrary to much caricature, and echoing its biblical heritage, the evangelical movement has a proud record of involvement in issues of social justice and social welfare, an involvement motivated by a sense of responsibility stemming from its sense of social righteousness. The notion that 'we must first preach the gospel' – and that is all, betrays a tunnel vision and a defective spirituality. It ignores the pietistic and Wesleyan strands in evangelicalism. Abolitionism was only the best-known of a raft of evangelical endeavours on both sides of the Atlantic that had as their aim the betterment of society and the preservation of a Christian culture. Evangelical activism was not one-dimensional, that is, only focused on evangelism. And in nineteenth-century Melbourne, evangelicals deliberately invested much energy and initiative into social welfare. Such activism was concomitant with their purposeful evangelism, and is a large topic in itself. The rest of this section describes an outstanding individual and an outstanding organisation, both of which exemplify this two-fold activism: Dr John Singleton and the Melbourne City Mission.

Dr John Singleton

John Singleton was born 2 January 1808 in Dublin. In the 1830s he began practising medicine, and in 1838 gained an MD from the University of Glasgow. When he was 16 he became a total abstainer, and at 19 experienced an evangelical conversion.

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Dr John Singleton

⁴⁹ *Encyclopedia of Melbourne*, 128.

⁵⁰ *Encyclopedia of Melbourne*, 541.

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He never looked back from these life-changing experiences. Not robust in health, Singleton and his wife sailed in the *Harply* to begin a new life in the new colony of Victoria, arriving in Melbourne in January 1851. He practised medicine in Melbourne, then Warrnambool, Mount Gambier in South Australia, and Maryborough (Vic), before returning to Melbourne.

For the rest of his life, as well as practising medicine (He reputedly saw 140 000 free of charge.), he immersed himself in evangelism and evangelical social welfare activities, which included: the Bible Society, tract distribution, aboriginal welfare, the Collingwood Free Medical Dispensary (now the Singleton Medical Welfare Centre), temperance, social purity movement, prayer meetings, Bible classes, Sunday School, the Society for the Promotion of Morality (founded by his fellow Anglicans Bishop Perry, Judge R W Pohlman and Sir W F Stawell, and supported by prominent colonists), the Collingwood Free Breakfast Mission, support for the disadvantaged and at risk children, shelters for men and women (the Retreat for Friendless and Fallen Women - now Singleton Lodge – attendance at a religious service was compulsory),⁵¹ a mission hall in Little Bourke Street, (in the 1870s he began) the ‘Singleton Bread Fund’ for the unemployed, a mission to the blind, the mentally ill, and jail visiting. He also promoted the employment of women in medical practice.⁵² His was a remarkable life and contribution. He died 30 September 1891.⁵³

Mrs Hester Hornbrook

In 1854 the 46-year-old Anglican Singleton joined forces with 70-year-old Mrs Hester Hornbrook⁵⁴ in advocating an ‘interdenominational institute ... operating among the poor outside the churches’,⁵⁵ governed by a committee of church, business and professional people (it was to be an example of Christian ecumenism, harmony and cooperation), and whose motto would be ‘need not creed’. Mrs Hornbrook was already prominent in Melbourne for her social welfare work, especially among women and children. She was responsible for the Hornbrook Ragged School Association, the Ladies City Mission, and the Refuge for Fallen Women. She was one of a number of evangelical women who, as well as supporting their husbands, invested much time and energy in good works.⁵⁶ Bishop Perry added his

⁵¹ Singleton’s wife Isabella, with the help of Mesdames La Trobe and Perry, founded the Governor’s Fund. This provided temporary homes and night shelters for women, coffee houses and mission halls.

⁵² Dr Emma Constance Stone, the first woman doctor to register with the Medical Board in Victoria, worked for one day a week in the dispensary attached to Singleton’s Collingwood mission.

⁵³ See M Kent Hughes, *Pioneer Doctor* (Melbourne: Oxford Univ Press, 1950). Singleton published his memoirs in *A Narrative of Events in the Eventual Life of a Physician* (Melbourne: M L Hutchinson, 1891). See too *Southern Cross*, 14 December 1888, 983, and S Swain, *The Victorian Charity Network in the 1890s* (Univ of Melbourne PhD, 1976), 15, 53, 108, 277.

⁵⁴ See E J MacMicking, *Gleanings of the Early Pioneers of Victoria* (unbound 54 page ms, Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Location: Box 131-7; Item Number: MS 3681). Hornbrook died in 1862.

⁵⁵ See *The Banner*, 15 August 1854, and the *Weekly Times* 6 August 1904.

⁵⁶ See Grant, *Episcopally Led and Synodically Governed*, 12, for early, pre-Separation Anglican expressions of community care.

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weight and chaired a meeting of 600 on 11 August 1854 to bring the 'institute' into being. The need was recognised, the proposal and vision were endorsed, and a committee formed. It included Perry, Henry Langlands (prominent Baptist businessman, MLC and philanthropist), the Rev John Allen (entrepreneurial Baptist secretary of the Melbourne Hospital, and then of the Melbourne Gas and Coke Company), and businessman Henry Cooke (Congregationalist merchant who, with his brother John, founded *The Age*⁵⁷) who was treasurer.

The Melbourne City Mission.

Thus, with the backing of the city churches, began what became a Melbourne institution: the Melbourne City Mission.⁵⁸ Initially the MCM employed six missionaries to work alongside people living in poverty and struggling to survive in the tent cities that sprang up along the Yarra River during the gold rush. The need was patent: as well as many forms of individual and social distress and disadvantage, relaxed building standards, the problems of fires, epidemic disease, public health, and social dislocation threatened anarchy and revolution. Official responses, the provision of cultural amenities, and inadequate suppression of disorder lived side by side with growth. Missions such as the MCM were evangelical responses to the needs of the day. The MCM was not unique, but had its own identity, as expressed by the following features: door to door visitation, class-consciousness, leadership, size and diversity, and ecumenicity.

One of the first missionaries, the befittingly named Joseph Greatheart, went door to door among the tents and cottages of inner-suburban Collingwood, carefully noting the economic and moral conditions of the inhabitants. This practice of home visitation combined two aspects: evangelism was personalised, with converts generally finding their way to mission halls or chapels. Welfare was also personalised, with visitors manifesting a deep concern for giving charity to the poor individually.⁵⁹ Long before liberation theology's nostrum that God had 'a preferential option for the poor', evangelicals, generally, understood the social (and economic) dimensions of the gospel. They did not see salvation simply in spiritual terms;

⁵⁷ The first edition was on 17 October 1854; it was intended as 'a journal of politics, commerce and philanthropy'. Note the combination of descriptors. The Cookes envisaged it as a platform for the nonconformist conscience and would be 'liberal, aiming at a wide extension of the rights of free citizenship' and the removal of all restrictions upon freedom of commerce and freedom of religion.' S Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism. The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries* (Melbourne: Oxford Univ Press, 1991) 76f. Henry married Amelia Ham, daughter of John Ham, forerunner of the well-known Baptist family.

⁵⁸ See Otzen, *Charity and Evangelisation*. The MCM's main predecessor, of which the Melbourne evangelicals were most aware, was the London City Mission. See D M Lewis, *Lighten Their Darkness. The Evangelical Mission to Working-Class London, 1828-1860* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1988).

⁵⁹ See G Davison, 'Gold-Rush Melbourne' in I McCalmann *et al* eds, *Gold. Forgotten Histories and Lost Objects of Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ Press), 61-2; P Kennedy ed, *Australian Welfare History: Critical Essays* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1982), 14, 27. R Kennedy, 'Poor Relief in Melbourne: The Benevolent Society's Contribution 1845-1893', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* vol 40 pt 4 (December 1974).

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salvation embodied the body (and mind/emotions) as well as the soul. Social welfare was part of, not something added to, the gospel. The evangelical leadership was middle class, and driven by a sense of responsibility, of respectability, and self discipline. A number of the leadership were leading clerics but the presence, and initiative, of laymen (and laywomen) is striking.⁶⁰ James Balfour, the prominent Presbyterian MP was for many years the president.⁶¹ Many of the missionaries were lay, and all the more effective because they were of a similar social class and manners to the people among who they worked.

Also, the MCM was not alone. As well as Singleton's ventures, other evangelical missions abounded: eg, the City Female Factory Mission, the Flower Missionaries, the Melbourne Gospel Tent, the Bouverie Street, Carlton Mission, the Seamen's Mission, and the Rev Cherbury's Collingwood Mission, all examples of nineteenth-century activism. The MCM was evangelical, but not narrowly so. The Melbourne evangelicals, and the Protestant churches generally, operated with a sense of unity and collegiality. The MCM was interdenominational, not nondenominational.⁶²

The need for evangelistic-flavoured charitable work never went away. In 1882 the Salvation Army arrived; and in 1893, in response to the economic depression, the Methodists established the Wesley Central Mission based in Daniel Draper's Lonsdale Street church. By the turn of the century though, the MCM, and similar missions that survived, had broadened their bases, usually for financial reasons, evolving into social welfare agencies.⁶³ The

⁶⁰ See Lewis, *Lighten Their Darkness*, especially 220-3, 229, on the Ranyard Bible Mission, a mission formed to evangelize working-class women by women.

⁶¹ Balfour was very important. See *Australian Dictionary of Biography Online*. A Lemon, *The Young Man from Home: James Balfour, 1830-1913* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1992), 163 n 29, says that Balfour in his 'Diary Notes' refers to his meeting with Sankey, 13 December 1878; and adds that Balfour's approach to Moody is mentioned in an interview, *Daily Telegraph*, 11 January 1892. On p 151 Lemon wrote:

Balfour, with his belief in Providence, was sure that God was working his purpose out, yet the state of the world as Balfour saw it did not encourage ... If the world was to deride and persecute, if Sunday golf, secularism and the smack of socialism betokened decay in the social and moral order, then the only hope was evangelicalism. So his other chief religious activities in his declining years also revolved around the quest for conversions.

He twice invited Moody & Sankey to visit Australia but Moody declined each time. The Evangelisation Society of Australia tried again in 1899, sending Moody a petition containing 15 831 signatures. But Moody died 22 December of that year.

⁶² In 1846, in England, the Evangelical Alliance was founded to give institutional expression to evangelical unity. In Melbourne an EA similar to the British body was founded in 1857. The first Melbourne EA service was held in June 1860 in the Theatre Royal with the Rev James Taylor of Collins Street Baptist Church preaching. The Melbourne EA did not last. It became too narrow and even Perry withdrew from it.

⁶³ Otzen, *Charity and Evangelisation*, 40,

The MCM had successfully evolved from an age in which the missionary was an obedient servant of a patriarchal committee, and engaged in keen evangelism, to the age of enterprising partnership between a more professionally organised administration and a widely-supported semi-autonomous Mission with staff working from district halls. Evangelism had given way to evangelical community service.

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evangelical commitment was still there; eg, the support from prominent Anglican evangelical James Griffith and his wife, who also equally supported the Upwey deeper-life convention. Today, one hundred and fifty years after its establishment, the MCM provides over 60 different programs to thousands of Victorians of many faiths and cultures, providing a 'hand up not a hand out'.⁶⁴

The 1858-60 Revival

In the late 1850s waves of revival broke out on both sides of the Atlantic. News of spiritual awakening back home raised expectations in the antipodes; could it happen here too? Indeed it could, and did: the fame of revival is the flame of revival, and the impact was felt in Melbourne (and Australia).⁶⁵ But the Melbourne (and Victorian) expression of the 1858-60 revival, and the following decades, was no new thing. From its earliest days, the city had experienced local revivals and was highly susceptible to more. News of the revival back home stimulated an attitude and expectation that had begun with Henry Reed and Joseph Orton. Better to say that the 1858-60 revival influenced the Melbourne evangelicals by encouraging them that local evangelism was part of a world-wide movement, and reminding them of their religious foundations. But the revival impacted the churches differently, according to their energy and involvement. Without critically analysing the underlying causes, the main characteristics of the revival were: the role and importance of laymen, the evangelists, prayer, the impact on missions, the length and breadth of the revival's influence, and the later influence on church services and spirituality. And so it was in Melbourne.

In America the revival was sometimes called the 'Laymen's Revival', sometimes the 'Businessmen's Revival', sometimes the 'Prayer Revival'. David Bebbington remarks:

The pattern, at least in places like New York, was altogether more organized, more sober, and more irenic than backwoods revivals had traditionally been. Business men, deeply troubled by an economic recession that had caused a spate of bankruptcies, crowded to midday prayer meetings, timed to last exactly one hour and compatible with a full diary. ...⁶⁶

⁶⁴ 'In the 1880s there were 61 organizations devoted to charitable relief, medical assistance and moral reform in Melbourne.' Wood & Askew, *St Michael's Church Melbourne*, 87.

⁶⁵ See J Edwin Orr, *The Fervent Prayer. The Worldwide Impact of the Great Awakening of 1858* (Chicago: Moody, 1974), chapter 14 and notes; and *The Event of the Century. The 1857-58 Awakening* (Wheaton, Ill: International Awakening Press, 1989). See too R Evans, 'Collecting for Revival: Library Resources Relating to the Story of Revival', *Reviving Australia* (eds M Hutchinson et al (Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1994), 58-74.

⁶⁶ D Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism. The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Leicester: IVP, 2005), 100.

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This was also characteristic of colonial Melbourne. Noonday prayer meetings sprang up at different times, usually centred round a 'name' evangelist - Henry Varley, A N Somerville, George Clarke - with the focus on (the need for) revival. Prayer meetings, as they traditionally have, also focused on individual needs. Typically, the format would be: a hymn, a short devotional, a hymn, prayer topics called for and people invited to pray (often the prayerer would stand), concluding with another hymn. In the decades following the gold rush era, as the city developed as a metropolis, the presence of able laymen in evangelical enterprises was notable. R Evans points out that during the Port Phillip Era:

The earliest revivals in Victoria sprang from the work of laymen, more than through the ordained ministers. Twenty years later, the 1859 revival seemed to have its most notable effect in Victoria, so far as the Australian colonies were concerned, though its impact in South Australia is not so well documented.⁶⁷

This was not an indication of the de-clericalisation of the churches; the evangelical laity were loyal to their churches and respectful of their ministers, many of who played a leading role in various evangelical organisations and activities.

In America and Britain the revival was sometimes called the 'prayer revival'. Eugene Stock, the secretary of CMS, commented: '.. the period under review was marked by a Revival of a kind unlike any other experienced in Britain since .. [adding that] the most striking feature of the 1860s was the phenomena of the prayer-meetings.'⁶⁸ Such had always been part of evangelicals' *modus operandi* and spirituality,⁶⁹ and had always been inseparably linked to spiritual awakenings. It was no less the case in young Melbourne. Individual believers were encouraged to make prayer the bedrock of their spirituality, and prayer bands-societies-unions were fundamental to Melbourne evangelical activism.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals*, 310. On the role of evangelical laity more generally see Deryck Lovegrove ed, *The Rise of the Laity in Evangelical Protestantism* (London: Routledge, 2002).

⁶⁸ J Edwin Orr, *The Second Evangelical Awakening. An Account of the Second Worldwide Evangelical Revival beginning in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1955), 67. See too his *The Fervent Prayer*. Midday prayer meetings were an integral part of D L Moody's strategy, and others such as Varley followed suit. The meetings often experienced revival with the advent of subsequent evangelists. They included requests for prayer, testimonies to answered prayer, and a short Bible reading or devotional. They were positive and uplifting; they relied upon and fed enthusiasm; and they were essential to evangelical spirituality and activism.

⁶⁹ See Orr, *The Fervent Prayer*, 142:

The Keswick Convention for the Deepening of the Spiritual Life, an evangelical movement with a truly worldwide influence, budded at gatherings in London, Oxford and Brighton in 1873, '74 and '75, and blossomed into early maturity at a Lakes District resort in 1875; but the seed was sown in the great Revival of 1858-59 in the English speaking world.

⁷⁰ A variation of the tradition continued into the next century with the City Men's Bible Class which was begun by evangelical businessman Len Buck and the English evangelist George Hall and centred on the Rev C H Nash. Meetings were held on Tuesday evenings in Griffith Brothers Tea Rooms in Elizabeth Street. A simple meal could be had for 1/-. After the meal there was some hymn singing,

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A major outcome of revival is a resurgence of foreign missions. The American historian of missions, K S Latourette, memorably described the nineteenth century the greatest century for Christian expansion since the first. It began in the last part of the eighteenth century with the founding of, mainly, the Baptist Missionary Society (Baptist, 1792), the London Missionary Society (interdenominational, but which became essentially Congregational, 1796) and the Church Missionary Society (Anglican, 1799). The use of the word 'society' in their titles is significant. Each was evangelical, and a *voluntary* society, not an official denominational organisation. Also, as Stuart Piggin has drawn attention to, these were preceded by the selection of the evangelical Richard Johnson as chaplain to the first fleet, which was not an *ad hoc* appointment.⁷¹ Moreover, part of his brief included evangelising the Aborigines and laying a foundation for missionary work in the Pacific area. Then, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, as an outcome of the 1858-60 revival, there was a further resurgence of missionary expansion, especially of the 'faith missions', of which Hudson Taylor's China Inland Mission (1865) was the outstanding exemplar.⁷² It is of signal importance that, from the beginning, the main denominations - Methodist, Anglican Presbyterian and Baptists – and individual evangelicals engaged in missions to the Aborigines and Chinese at home, as well as foreign missions. The outstanding individual was the Rev H B Macartney Jr, on whom see the following chapters.

As mentioned in chapter 2, Orr referred to the 1858-60 revival as the Second Worldwide [*sic*] *Awakening*,⁷³ implicitly comparing it with the Wesleyan and evangelical revivals of the previous century. Alas, some missed the opportunity. For example, C H Spurgeon

was at the height of his power as a preacher in London while the Revival meetings were in full swing. Spurgeon was an unqualified friend of the Awakening... So much did he value the Revival that he professed himself alarmed because it appeared to him that many ministers and church members throughout England had slighted its golden opportunities.⁷⁴

sometimes a solo, and then announcements were given. These announcements were important as the means of sharing and disseminating information about inter-church and Christian matters, and so were also means of encouraging vitality in the different churches. Then there was a prayer, after which Nash, with his Greek New Testament open before him, would speak for about 40 minutes. See my *Failure is Not Final. A Life of C H Nash* (Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1997), 122f.

⁷¹ S Piggin, *Evangelical Christianity in Australia. Spirit, Word, World*. (Melbourne: Oxford Univ Press, 1996), 3-6. The evangelicals William Wilberforce and John Newton had lobbied William Pitt the Younger.

⁷² See K Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions* (Oxford: Regnum/Lynx, 1994).

⁷³ Orr, *Second Evangelical Awakening*, 154ff.

⁷⁴ Orr, *The Fervent Prayer*, 80.

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After initial reserve, Handley C G Moule, founding principal of Ridley Hall and later Bishop of Durham, played a leading role in encouraging the revival among Anglicans. And, not least, the awakening fostered continued cooperation among evangelicals generally. But, as church historian L Elliott Binns commented on the church in England later in the decade:

‘When the revival movement began in 1859, the [Anglican] evangelicals stood apart, and for this reason largely failed to reap any fruit from it.’ The Baptist Spurgeon’s comment was echoed by Dr Eugene Stock, long-time secretary of CMS: ‘I have always felt that if our clergy had more heartily welcomed the (1859) revival, its effects within the Church of England would have been much greater’.⁷⁵

So it was in Melbourne, Perry and his Anglicans could not match the evangelistic energy and success of the Methodists. Their growth was more by extension than evangelism. The revival also influenced many churches that lacked a liturgical heritage. Church services became more like evangelistic rallies as enthusiasm displaced reverence, devotional quality was measured by earnest loquacity, and conversionism became more important than worship.

Evangelists such as the Americans C G Finney and D L Moody brought a professionalism to their craft, and attained celebrity status. Neither of the Americans came Down Under, though William ‘California Taylor’ and some well known English and Scottish evangelists did. Before Taylor though, the local evangelists were just as earnest as their overseas compatriots, and established the Melbourne tradition of evangelism. The 1860s were to see continued Methodist evangelism; indeed, a spirit of revival lit in 1859-60, and which continued through the 1860s.⁷⁶ But before we turn to that, I briefly introduce Henry Varley, a product of the 1858-60 revival, and one of the best-known evangelists in the second half of the nineteenth century. Indeed he may be thought of as a forerunner of Moody, both in England and in America.⁷⁷ He was also a major figure in the history of evangelism in Australia, especially Melbourne.⁷⁸

Introducing Henry Varley

⁷⁵ Orr, *The Fervent Prayer*, 80.

⁷⁶ See Blamires & Smith, *Wesleyan Methodist Church*, 89ff.

⁷⁷ W G McLoughlin Jr, *Modern Revivalism. Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York: Ronald Press Co, 1959), 153 and 160, refers to Varley as ‘Among the more prominent of Moody’s immediate predecessors ... He was pointed to as “the John the Baptist” who had prepared the way for the coming of Moody and Sankey’.

⁷⁸ Fuller details of Varley’s efforts in Australia may be seen in my ‘Henry Varley Down Under’ (*Lucas. An Evangelical History Review* no 30, December 2001; nos 33-34, June and December 2003). There, as well as the narrative of his endeavours in Australia and the content of his preaching and writing, the main themes and contexts of his contribution are spelt out: his itinerancy, his theology and preaching, his lay status, his independence, his relationship to the Melbourne evangelical movement, and the connection between Australia and Britain. See too *Willing Work* 16 Jan 1880, 284.

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Born in Tattershall, Lincolnshire in 1835, Varley moved to London as a young boy and eventually found work as an apprentice butcher. As a result of the prayers of his mother, not long after he arrived in London he was converted (in 1851) under the preaching of the Rev Baptist Noel in his Chapel in John Street, Bedford Row. He joined the church, and was baptised by Noel the following year.⁷⁹ In 1854 he sailed for the gold-rush colony of Victoria to seek his fortune. He was not successful on the goldfields but, just before his twentieth birthday, he opened a butcher's shop in Geelong and prospered there.

Varley wasted no time in throwing himself into church work. The Methodists had been there since 1841, and they appealed to him. Varley appealed to the Methodists too. They noted his energy, personality, and preaching ability and invited him to apply for ordination. Varley demurred on the grounds he could not agree with infant baptism. There were other reasons though. His business increasingly claimed more of his time and energy; he found the Australian summers sapped his spiritual resolve and mental discipline; and he was frustrated by what he called the 'Laodicean temper' of the Australians. Also, he missed his Christian friends back 'home', and his girl-friend Sarah Pickworth. His impatience got the better of him; he sailed for home on the *Great Britain* via Cape Horn, arriving in London in August. Sarah was waiting for him and they wasted no time in getting married, Henry set up business as a butcher. This too prospered and he won a reputation for integrity. However it was not long before he responded to a persistent call to invest himself in full time ministry. He tentatively began a mission to pig feeders at Notting Hill. At the first service he led, there were only 13 adults and a few children. It was a small beginning in a not very encouraging environment; but the work flourished such that a church, the Free Tabernacle, was founded, and Varley became its minister.

Varley took his ministry very seriously, though in an autonomous way. As his reputation grew he was at different times invited to seek Baptist and Anglican ordination. The latter invitation included the carrot: 'there are few positions in the church to which you might not ultimately attain.' [Varley replied dismissively] '... I am greatly obliged to you for your kind words ... but as the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ I would not change places with the Archbishop of Canterbury.'⁸⁰ From 1870 he was increasingly engaged in evangelism in Britain and then overseas, initially in Canada and America. The Notting Hill church was still a kind of home base but the world was more and more his parish, and it was as an itinerant evangelist that Varley made his greatest contribution; F B Meyer named him as one of the great evangelists

⁷⁹ Noel was an Anglican for 20 years before becoming a Baptist. He was loyal to his chosen denomination, was president of the Baptist Union in 1867, and strongly disagreed with Spurgeon's negative attitude to biblical criticism in the down-grade controversy. See D Bebbington, 'The Life of Baptist Noel: Its Setting and Significance', *Baptist Quarterly* 24 (1972), 389-418.

⁸⁰ Varley, *Henry Varley's Life Story*, 75f.

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of the Victorian era.⁸¹ He died in Brighton, England in 1912. His international career included two lengthy stays in Australia, 1877-79 and 1888-96, and a shorter visit near the end of his career.

* * * *

At the end of the 1850s, the Melbourne evangelicals could look back on their city's first quarter-century with some satisfaction. They had built churches and had experienced growth: the Methodists most of all. The revival that culminated the period was not a catalyst; still less was it a watershed. It did not bring anything new – there was plenty of evangelism before, but probably more after. It was a continuation and an intensification of what had been building, and it set the scene for the following decades. It was an encouragement to those believers and churches that were willing to ride its wave. This depended on their predisposition to evangelism, a church culture and spirituality marked by enthusiasm and voluntarism, and that fostered evangelism, and welfare. The following decades up to Federation saw plenty of activity by local evangelists and the arrival of an American Methodist evangelist, William 'California' Taylor.

⁸¹ Varley, *Henry Varley's Life Story*, 260.

Chapter 5

Continued Enthusiasm (the 1860s)

anning Clark commented on the post gold-rush era:

But in the middle of this great confusion of classes, the bourgeoisie were slowly imposing the great calm-down on the way of life of the people. The cities of bedizened Jezebels were about to give place to cities of merchants, bankers, shopkeepers, and a tame, calmed-down working class which had adopted the petty-bourgeois values of frugality, industry, private property and the family.¹

A 'great calm-down'? Hardly. Certainly Melbourne lost a lot of its frontier and gold-rush turbulence, but it was still growing and developing and maturing. During the Port Phillip days, whatever manufacturing there was centred on primary products. The gold rush brought a rapid increase in population, with accompanying consumer demands and the inevitable increase in manufacturing and commerce. Immigration continued. The character of Melbourne changed from a frontier settlement to a city, and became Australia's largest manufacturing centre as merchants replaced squatters and diggers. The following decades saw the development of industrialisation and concomitant urbanisation as working-class suburbs such as Collingwood and Fitzroy began the great suburban sprawl. The wealthy built their mansions in Kew and Toorak. And believers built their churches. G Blainey comments:

In the 1860s and 1870s there was almost a craze for building churches, and soon spires and steeples occupied most of the highest points on the skyline of Melbourne ... Christianity also flavoured the views of those who rarely attended church ... In the 1870s in many homes, a grace was said before each meal. The baptism of children was a widespread custom. When couples married, they were married in a church ... There was a deep belief in a busy, all-seeing God who determined what happened in each life and each town. ... It is likely that at least half and perhaps as many as nine-tenths of the people of Victoria believed, when they were afraid, that God would physically rescue them. ...²

¹ C M H Clark, *A History of Australia vol IV. The Earth Abideth Forever* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1978), 220.

² G Blainey, *Our Side of the Country. The Story of Victoria* (Hawthorn, Vic: Methuen Haynes, 1984), 114-115. Blainey's comment may be read as a reference to the impact of the ongoing effects of the 1858-60 revival.

CONTINUED ENTHUSIASM

By the end of 1860, Victorian congregations had erected no fewer than 874 churches, chapels, schoolhouses and ministers' houses. If all church buildings were fully occupied at one time, they would hold 150 000 of Victoria's 540 000 population.³ In fuller detail M Cannon quotes from the *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council*:⁴

Churches, chapels, schoolhouses and private dwellings used for public worship as at
31 December 1860

	No of buildings	No of persons they could contain
Wesleyan Church	217	34,763
Church of England	190	30,619
Roman Catholic Church	119	27,486
Presbyterian Church of Victoria	113	11,300
Primitive Methodist Church	71	7,214
Congregational Church	42	11,205
Baptist Church	36	8,450
United Methodist Free Church	16	3,090
Bible Christian Church	16	1,723
Free Presbyterian Church	13	4,200
Disciples of Christ	11	670
Lutheran Church	10	2,200
United Presbyterian Church	5	2,050
Jewish Synagogues	5	2,150
Israelites' Church	3	500
Unitarian Church	2	320
Free Church of England	1	400
Society of Friends	1	250
Welsh Calvinistic Methodist	1	140
Reformed Presbyterian Church	1	500
Moravian Church	1	150

At the eastern side of the city, just behind Parliament House, (as visible reminders to the colony's elected representatives) were St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral, St Peter's Anglican, Trinity Lutheran, the Unitarian Church, Albert Street Baptist, Albert Street

³ M Cannon, *Melbourne After the Gold Rush* (Main Ridge, Vic: Loch Haven Books, 1993), 342. These and the following statistics are for the whole colony, but most, of course, were in Melbourne.

⁴ Cannon, *Melbourne After the Gold Rush*, 448: Source: V&P, LA, 1861-2, vol 3. See too A Sutherland, *Victoria and Its Metropolis* 2 vols (Melbourne: McCarron Bird and Co, 1888), 582, 585.

CONTINUED ENTHUSIASM

Synagogue (*Mickva Israel*),⁵ Chalmer's Presbyterian, and the Swedenborgian New Church were all within sight of each other. And two blocks away to the west, in the city centre near the Town Hall, the Independents, Presbyterians, and Baptists had their main city churches within yards of each other, and each could see St Paul's Anglican cathedral another block away. The streetscape of nineteenth-century Melbourne is unimaginable without its churches.

These statistics, note, were for the year that concluded the world-wide revival. The churches were the visible reminders of the Christendom-flavoured culture that defined Melbourne after the gold rush. Less tangible, but still potent, was the activism of the evangelical men of Melbourne. This expressed itself in social welfare, education and the like, but, just as characteristically, in enthusiasm for evangelism. There was no catalytic or defining event. The revival was encouraging, but it did not spark evangelistic endeavour. That had been a constant from the Port Phillip Era. Indeed, this continuation of evangelism had become a tradition over the preceding quarter-century. For the evangelicals never lacked initiative; they needed no prodding to display energy and drive. Nor did they lack leadership. The 1860s saw the first significant overseas evangelist make his mark on Melbourne. But, most of all, the local evangelists diligently and fruitfully preached the gospel.

The account of Melbourne's evangelistic tradition in this decade will be divided into two sections: the mainline churches (Methodist, Anglican and Presbyterian), and the sectarian churches (Baptist, Congregational, Brethren, and Churches of Christ). The churches were not alike of course: they differed in size, polity, (in Weberian terminology) their church or sect type status, and natural inclination to evangelism. But each was home to loyal evangelical members.

Continued Enthusiasm: the Mainline Churches (Methodist, Anglican, and Presbyterian)

The Methodists

The growth of the churches was impressive; it underlined the notion that Melbourne's culture was, 'naturally', a Christian culture. But the gospel had not swept all before it. There were still plenty of sinners to be saved, and evangelism was still a priority. Certainly the Methodists thought so. In spite of the dire mutterings of some, the architecture of Wesley Church in Lonsdale Street did not indicate a routinisation of charisma; and there was no diminution of

⁵ Jewish influence was out of all proportion to their numbers. B Kingston, *The Oxford History of Australia. Vol 3 1860-1900. Glad, Confident Morning* (Melbourne: Oxford Univ Press, 1988), 95, notes: the 'St Kilda Jewish bourgeoisie which produced among others, Isaac Isaacs, John Monash, and the Phillips, Fox, Ellis, and Goldstein families'.

CONTINUED ENTHUSIASM

their efforts. Methodism's founder was an evangelist; the church was born in revival; it fed on revival; it grew by revival, and by extension. Thus the Methodists made the greatest mark. By far the busiest, the Wesleyan Methodists still retained the passion for evangelism of their founder. Their singing was lusty; their spirituality was fervent; and their simple, robust evangelicalism appealed to many. Thus, they continued to grow. Cannon adds:

Wesleyan Methodists became the most populous group in Melbourne, largely because of the number of nonconformist tradesmen and shopkeepers who came to the city during the gold rush. Wesleyan beliefs appealed to those who desired a less hierarchical method of church control, with less pomp and ceremony, while retaining basic Protestant ideals.⁶

Methodism found its natural home in America where it spread rapidly. But the Methodists of Melbourne were just as enthusiastic and determined as their fellow-denominationalists across the Pacific.

All of the minsters, and many of the lay people, wanted to see revival break out. They knew that the Methodist Church had been born in a time of revival, and that it had grown to its present strength through revivals, or outpourings of the Holy Spirit through their work for God. Right through the second half of the nineteenth century, both in England and Australia, it is remarkable how many times an incoming President of a Methodist Conference would announce his theme and hope for the coming year. It would be that he wanted there to be 'revival in every circuit'.⁷

And sometimes it seemed so. For in the aftermath of the 1858-60 revival there were outbreaks of revival in Melbourne, regional cities, goldfields, and country areas. Among them: Drysdale, Daylesford, Newtown in Geelong, Tarnugulla and Dunnolly, Brighton, and the United Free Methodist Church in George Street, Fitzroy. The evangelists were unnamed locals, and Methodist clergy such as John Harcourt; Samuel Knight, Joseph Dare, Joseph Albiston and Francis Neale.⁸ Also, in March 1861, in keeping with Methodist interest in overseas missions, the Rev Frederick J Jobson of the British Conference came to assess the

⁶ Cannon, *Melbourne After the Gold Rush*, 342. This overstates the case a little by disregarding the fact that Methodist ecclesiology was very hierarchical and disciplined. Moreover, while Methodist singing and services were appealing, they still retained much of their Anglican liturgical heritage.

⁷ R Evans, *Matthew Burnett. The Yorkshire Evangelist. Australia's Greatest Evangelist and Social Reformer* (Hazelbrook, NSW: Research in Evangelical Revivals, 2010), 84.

⁸ They preached 'with fire' at Newtown, Geelong. Hundreds were converted. Dare is worthy of special note. Born in Dorset in 1831 and converted in his teens, he sailed to Adelaide in 1849 where his ability was recognised by Daniel Draper who endorsed him for the ministry. Dare's good nature, sincerity, humility, and faith, and outstanding gifts as a preacher commended him to all. He spent 27 outstanding years in South Australian and Victorian circuits labouring in the cause of the gospel. An ornament to his church and his Lord, he died 28 March 1880.

CONTINUED ENTHUSIASM

relation of the South Sea Missions to the Australasian Conference. These men, and the local revivals, prepared the way for the three outstanding Methodists of the decade: Daniel Draper, William 'California' Taylor, and Matthew Burnett.

The Rev Daniel Draper. In 1865, as President of the Wesleyan Australasian Conference, Draper travelled to Britain where he spent the year speaking about the work in Australia, and encouraged ministers to come and join the work. In January 1866 it was time for him and his wife to return to Melbourne. But a few days out, their ship was caught in a violent storm in the Bay of Biscay and sank. His praying with and leading people to Christ while their ship was sinking is the stuff of legend. Only 17 of the 263 souls on board survived. They famously reported of Draper tirelessly

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Daniel Draper

urging people to prayer and exhorting them to accept Christ in the final hours before the vessel was submerged. A verse from Charles Wesley which friends recalled as being from one of his favourite hymns became for Draper a tragic reality in the heaving waters off the coast of France

Happy if with my latest breath
I may but gasp his name
Preach Him to all and cry in death
Behold, behold the Lamb.⁹

Thus perished one of Australian Methodism's greatest sons; but his legacy lived on.

Draper was more a statesman and church planter than evangelist, but evangelism was close to his heart and he encouraged evangelism and evangelists. His example and leadership inspired growth in other churches, notably his involvement with the Rev Edmund King in the 1859 revival in the Brighton church. He continued the vitality of the early years of settlement and the 1859 revival; he endorsed and facilitated the impact of California Taylor; and he oversaw the continued growth of the denomination. His death left a great gap in Methodist ranks, but not for long. The Methodist revivalist heritage continued, 'fed and strengthened by two remarkable evangelists – Matthew Burnett and William Taylor',¹⁰

⁹ B Dickey ed, *Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography* (Sydney: Evangelical History Association, 1994), 99.

¹⁰ C I Benson, *A Century of Victorian Methodism* (Melbourne: Spectator, 1935), 129.

CONTINUED ENTHUSIASM

William 'California' Taylor

In the 1860s Victoria went through a religious awakening. This wild, rush-about, brawling society of the 1850s almost knelt in the aisles in the 1860s. The most effective evangelist ever to preach in Australia, a man who made Billy Graham seem like a mere usher in the temple, won converts for the Wesleyans by the hundreds. His name was 'California' Taylor. ...¹¹

William 'California' Taylor was born in Virginia in 1821 and died in Palo Alto, California in 1902. In 1847 he was ordained in the Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore, and two years later was sent to minister in gold-rush San Francisco. There he began a ministry supported by his street preaching – he was a tall man with a charismatic personality and a powerful voice – and books he wrote, which many professed conversion on reading. A natural itinerant, and later riding the wave of the 1858-60 revival, Taylor also began preaching tours wider afield in the eastern United States and Canada. Then, in 1863-65 and 1869-70, he came to Australia. Here he preached in the main cities and country towns, mostly in Victoria and New South Wales. He was the first outstanding

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William 'California' Taylor

overseas evangelist to include Melbourne in his itinerary. After his Australian visits he increasingly became a world evangelist, preaching in Africa, South America, and America, echoing John Wesley's statement: 'the world is my parish'. Apart from having itchy feet, Taylor's reasons for coming down under were twofold: (1) to preach the gospel; the 1858-60 revival was global in its impact, which was still being felt. Also, the Melbourne (and New South Wales) Methodists were enthusiastic and vigorous. (2) To raise money to rebuild his San Francisco church, which had burnt down. News of the Australian gold rushes only a few years before had attracted a number of Americans.

In June 1863, Taylor arrived in Melbourne and was introduced to Draper at Wesley Church, Lonsdale Street, where he began a three week preaching mission.¹² The prayers and

¹¹ Blainey, *Our Side of the Country*, 112. Taylor was very important for Methodism, and for the history of revival in Australia. See E G Clancy, 'William ("California") Taylor. First Overseas Evangelist to Australia', *Church Heritage* 6, 3 (1990), 41-62.

¹² There is some confusion over dates. In his autobiography Taylor recorded that he arrived in early May. W L Blamires & J B Smith, *The Early Story of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Victoria* (Melbourne: 1886), 97, and Benson, *A Century of Victorian Methodism*, 131, say that he began his Victorian work on 16 June.

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preparation of Draper and his congregation were answered as revival broke out. The *Wesleyan Chronicle* reported:

During the past three weeks this church has been favoured with a gracious visitation from on high.

Revival came from above, not below. The Melbourne Methodists saw this as revival, not simply revivalism.

For some time past,

How long? Since news of the 1858-60 revival reached the colony? More. Methodists had been busy building their churches and engaging in evangelism since Melbourne's earliest days. Now, it seemed, was time for a greater harvest.

the establishment of special services

From the days of C G Finney, such had become part of evangelical religion.

for the promotion of the work of God had been contemplated,

The Methodists did not see this as a fortuitous event. They had been preparing for it for some time.

*and the timely arrival, by the last mail steamer, of the Rev Wm Taylor, from San Francisco was hailed as a most favourable circumstance for the accomplishment of their purpose. Special services were commenced on Sabbath, June 21, and have been continued without intermission since that time. The Rev Mr Taylor has preached twice each Sabbath and every evening of the week, and has been assisted in the after services by the ministers and office bearers of the circuit. .. Numbers of persons of all ages, from the child to the grey-headed sinner, have presented themselves at the altar, night after night, as seekers of Divine mercy ..*¹³

Taylor's initiative in coming to Melbourne seemed to match the prayers and activism of the local Methodists under Draper's leadership. No further information was given; presumably Taylor's exploits were known.

Then followed missions in suburban churches: St Kilda, Brighton, Fitzroy, Brunswick, North Melbourne and Sandridge. Taylor would preach at the Sunday morning service to the regular congregation, in the afternoons to children, in the evening at a 'gospel' service directed at 'sinners'. A similar pattern was followed Monday to Wednesday. A true Methodist, on Thursday evenings he preached to the church congregation on the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification, and included an 'altar call' for consecration. This service also saw conversions as well as the saved being sanctified. A large rally concluded the week, and on

¹³ *Wesleyan Chronicle*, 14 June 1863, 92.

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Saturday Taylor rested or travelled to his next place of labour.¹⁴ Each church experienced heightened expectations, prayer, and conversions. Even churches Taylor did not personally visit, such as Prahran and Williamstown, recorded outbreaks of revival. Beyond Melbourne, he visited Geelong and other country circuits which also experienced the same, before moving to Sydney.¹⁵

Taylor's message was standard evangelistic fare: a declaration of salvation as the free gift of God offered in Christ. As a good Methodist he included a call to holiness of life and the prospect of Christian (not sinless) perfection. Like other evangelists of his day, his method included preparatory prayer, singing, special services, and open air work. His preaching style and message were clear. As befitted his larger than life presence and personality, he was a born story teller, captivating and entertaining, and his anecdotes helped his hearers grasp his message. He asked for no fees but relied on the sale of books, and took up a collection for local projects or to help raise the debt on his San Francisco church. The Methodists loved him, and large crowds attended his meetings. He sparked revival fire among them; he encouraged them in their evangelism; and he provided a model for local evangelists. Emboldened, the ministers in North Melbourne, St Kilda, Prahran, and Williamstown held their own evangelistic meetings, and Wesley Church held crowded meetings for a week after Taylor left. Blamires and Smith buoyantly noted:

The Revival work proceeded in many places around Melbourne not visited by Mr Taylor. Such was the spirit of religious enquiry and awakening that was abroad, that it made but little difference who was the preacher who conducted the service. Almost everyone was blessed in his ministry of the word, to the conversion of sinners, and saw immediate fruit of his labours.¹⁶

Also in June 1863, the Melbourne Methodists welcomed another of their own. The Rev Ebenezer Jenkins, General Superintendent of Missions in India, visited on the way back to England and proclaimed the missionary mandate God had given Australia.¹⁷ He stayed until January, preaching far and wide, and making the most of the enthusiasm that Taylor roused. Of particular note was a lecture he gave in Wesley Church on 19 November 1863 with Lt-Gov Sir Charles Darling presiding (Vice-regal patronage! the Methodists had come a long

¹⁴ Included in the itinerary were 'tea meetings', aimed at raising funds, when Taylor spoke on tithing.

¹⁵ For a fuller summary of Taylor's Victorian work see R Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals in Australia. A Study of Surviving Published Materials about Evangelical Revivals in Australia up to 1800* (Hazelbrook, NSW: Robert Evans, 2000), 194-201; and Blamires and Smith, *Wesleyan Methodist Church*, 105.

¹⁶ Blamires & Smith, *Wesleyan Methodist Church*, 99.

¹⁷ The Methodists were just as intent on evangelism (mission) abroad as at home. They had long been involved in missions to the 'South Seas', and their record was a distinguished one.

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way from their sectarian beginnings.) Jenkins was a captivating preacher, and the lecture was, Benson avers, 'acclaimed as a masterpiece'.

He [Jenkins] conceived the idea that God had led Englishmen to colonize Australia for the purpose of planting a Christian people in the neighbourhood of India, China, and Japan, so that, as the Australian colonies grew and prospered, they might undertake the greatest share of the evangelizing the East.¹⁸

This was not an original idea; the Anglicans Wilberforce and Newton had long before expressed such a vision.¹⁹ But it underlines the Methodists' concern for sinners abroad as well as at home, and their wider strategic vision.

In 1869 Taylor returned to Australia, again preaching in cities, suburbs and country. The message and style were the same, as were the pattern of meetings and the crowds. In Melbourne he was again the star attraction at a mission held in Wesley Church 19 September to 1 October, each day preaching to crowded congregations. R Evans comments that this 'second tour seems to have been almost as successful as the first, so far as the number of conversions were concerned. .. However, it is evident that the second tour did not make the impact on Australia generally as was made the first time'.²⁰ And there were fewer references to Taylor in the *Wesleyan Chronicle*. Why was this so? It is not that this visit was a failure: his mission at Wesley Church was evidently successful, and included him speaking at an open air meeting in Rathdowne Street, not far from Wesley Church, to more than 3000. Some of it might have been that charisma is often not long-lasting, and the ministry of itinerant evangelists by nature is short lived. Some of it might have been that the torch had passed to another ebullient, and just as able, local evangelist (see following pages).²¹

In assessing the significance of Taylor,²² note should be taken of his style of evangelism. This had a shaping influence on evangelists who worked in Australian churches until the end of the century. Evans appositely quotes Benson:

Taylor's great contribution to the religious life of Methodism in Australia consisted not only in the thousands of converts, but *the spirit of evangelism that was created*.

¹⁸ Benson, *A Century of Victorian Methodism*, 136-8.

¹⁹ See footnote 1, chapter 3 above.

²⁰ Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals*, 201.

²¹ The denomination's newspapers, the *Wesleyan Chronicle* (1857-1875) and its successor, *Wesleyan Spectator and Chronicle* (1875-1893), regularly carried reports of evangelistic endeavour and church growth. See too R Howe, *The Wesleyan Church in Victoria, 1855-1901: Its Ministry and Membership* (MA thesis, Univ of Melbourne, 1965).

²² On the outcomes and significance of Taylor's visits see Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals*, 202ff.

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[emphasis added] The labours of David O'Donnell, Matthew Burnett, John MacNeil and other Australian workers, and the hearty, sympathetic co-operation given to Messrs Inskip, Torrey, Chapman and Henry, of America, were all traceable to the evangelistic seed implanted by that prince of evangelists – California Taylor.²³

But it was not only Taylor. Two contexts were also at play: the recent 1858-60 revival, and the nature of Methodism in Victoria. As noted in the preceding chapter, the former provided a wave of expectation and hope, which Taylor rode. Concerning the latter, from the beginning of settlement and right through the 1840s and 1850s the Methodists had not shirked from their evangelistic tradition and responsibilities. I suspect that Taylor, while recognising that he did gather a harvest during his two visits, also rode this wave of Methodist activism that went back to the early days of the settlement and colony. Evans comments:

Sporadic revivals occurred through his (Taylor's) ministry here. It must be noted, however, that both here [Victoria] and in New South Wales, revivals broke out often enough in other places where Taylor never visited, and sometimes before he arrived nearby. So the revivals had a character and life which was not entirely governed by the human instruments who were involved in them.²⁴

Some of these were ignited by the other great itinerant, whose impact was greater. He too arrived in Melbourne in 1863, but stayed for 17 years.

*Matthew Burnett.*²⁵ Born in Yorkshire in 1839, Matthew Burnett, as a result of the prayers of his wife-to-be, Sarah Gibson, was converted when a young man from infidelity and drunkenness. She was to be a tower of strength to him until her death in 1870. Burnett began preaching under Methodist auspices in and around Scarborough before migrating to Melbourne, arriving in August 1863 (Taylor had arrived in June.). He and Sarah settled in Prahran and he began preaching, initially in nearby Methodist churches, and then, as his reputation grew, in other circuits, suburban and country, in which the churches taking part experienced much blessing.

Burnett's message was pretty much the same as Taylor's: man, ruined by the Fall, needed to repent and accept the atoning work of Jesus on the Cross. The Methodist holiness influence also found expression in his preaching. This was not an extra to his message; converts were

²³ I Benson, 'Methodist Crusades that swept Australia', *Journal and Proceedings of the Australasian Methodist Historical Society*, vol 1 no 1, June 1949. See too Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals*, 205. However, the 'spirit of evangelism' had been with the Melbourne Methodists from the beginning. Better to say that Taylor encouraged rather than created it.

²⁴ Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals*, 310.

²⁵ For full details of Burnett's life and influence see Evans, *Matthew Burnett*.

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encouraged and expected to pursue holy lives. To this he added another aspect from his personal background and Wesleyan heritage: the social dimension of the gospel as expressed in the temperance movement (and the work of organisations such as the Melbourne City Mission). In common with other evangelists, Burnett frequently preached a temperance gospel, urging men to accept the Blue Ribbon as a sign of their commitment. This focus stemmed from his personal experience; and he saw clearly the devastation that drink wrought, especially among the working classes. In this he was a pioneer and leading advocate. Evans claims: 'He also saw over 175,000 sign the total abstinence pledge in his meetings.'²⁶ This was not simply wowserism. It had to do with transforming society, a fundamental evangelical aim. And it was successful. The temperance movement was on the rise by the 1870s across all denominations. In 1878 Burnett visited Singleton's packed (600 plus attendees) Collingwood mission hall. The Irish Anglican Singleton had also been rescued from a drink problem in his younger days, and responded positively to the Yorkshire Methodist Burnett's message and style.²⁷ And, like Singleton, Burnett, with the help of his wife, also established women's refuges.

Burnett's method was variegated, and shaped by his personality and perception of call to be an *itinerant* evangelist. He was, said Blamires and Smith: 'a thin spare man of bilious temperament'.²⁸ He was also an exuberant man, somewhat erratic, with boundless energy and enthusiasm. He preached in churches and halls, and in the open air, both in Yorkshire and Australia. In this he was influenced by John Wesley the previous century, American evangelists in the nineteenth, and was a forerunner of the Salvation Army.²⁹ The historian of Victorian Methodism, C I Benson, quoted E I Watkin's comment on his method: 'He loved sensational methods; he delighted in torchlight processions; he gloried in excitement. But the novel character of his services attracted crowds wherever he preached, and wherever he went the hand of the Lord was with him.'³⁰ Initially, many of Burnett's conservative fellow-churchmen looked upon his person and methods with unease. But reports of many sinners converted and many drunks transformed allayed hesitation. For all his flamboyance, Burnett enjoyed support from church leaders and, significantly, civic leaders who saw the positive outcome of his message and methods.

²⁶ Evans, *Matthew Burnett*, back cover. He adds ..'which contributed strongly to the temperance cause in these lands [Australia and New Zealand]. He was our greatest evangelist-social reformer.'

²⁷ *Southern Cross*, 5 October 1878, 3.

²⁸ Quoted in Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals*, 208.

²⁹ Evans, *Early Christian Revivals*, 209:

Burnett was a welding of egotism and enthusiasm, and as a self-constituted dervish in the cause of religion. He was a forerunner of the Salvation Army, and introduced some of their tactics and strategy: flaming placards, monster meetings, torchlight processions, sensational methods, stirring, noisy exercises, having often more of sound than of sense, more of shouting than of grace.

³⁰ Benson, *Century of Victorian Methodism*, 130.

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But he was not (completely) a loose cannon. Prayer was foundational. In this he was influenced by his wife, whose prayers led to his conversion, and evangelical and Methodist spirituality. His evangelistic missions were preceded by systematic visiting of the area. His missions were organised, not *ad hoc*. Some of this was due to simple pragmatics, some to the method and example of C G Finney, for whom revivals were simply the employment of 'scientific means'. That is, a series of special meetings, preceded by prayer, were a natural way of attaining God's blessing. As much as he could, Burnett preached in every church in every circuit. True to his Wesleyan (Arminian) theology, he believed everyone needed to hear the gospel, whether of salvation, temperance or holiness.

Lesser known Methodist preachers and evangelists also worked diligently in this decade, and revivals were reported in country circuits and churches: Sandhurst, Beechworth, Clunes, Ballarat, Heathcote, Castlemaine, Avoca, and Geelong. Revivals were also reported on the outskirts of Melbourne - Berwick, Keysborough, and Hastings. And among the suburbs, the United Free Methodist Church, Fitzroy, and in Brighton – this was probably the most extensive revival, with Edmund King and Draper assisting.³¹ Along with accounts of crowded meetings in churches and halls, accounts of individuals repenting and being converted, expressions such as 'the power of the Holy Spirit', 'a generous outpouring of the Holy Spirit', were common, sometimes with the numbers of converts given.

But it was not only the Methodists. Leading members of the other denominations, shared their Methodist colleagues' evangelical experience, theology, and agenda, and their evangelistic activism.

The Anglicans

During the 1860s the Anglicans continued to grow; but not as much as the Methodists. They had much in their favour: a determined evangelical leadership, a lot of parishioners and churches, and continued migration of adherents from Britain. However, their contribution to evangelistic endeavour lagged somewhat. As bishop, Perry was well placed to give a lead, which he did, consistently preaching an evangelical gospel. However his example was handicapped by his personality. No one doubted his sincerity or his belief in his message, but he was dour and correct, and lacked the charisma of natural evangelists such as Taylor and Burnett. Also, as bishop, much of his time and attention was taken up with church affairs, establishing the diocese, and developing the diocese's form of synodical government. This

³¹ See Blamires & Smith, *Wesleyan Methodist Church*, 185f.

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was inevitable given the heavily institutionalised nature of the Anglican Church, and this is what he is particularly remembered for.³²

In Weberian terms, the Anglican Church was a church-type institution. That is, it identified with the culture and society it found itself in, rather than seeing and setting itself against such. One is born a Christian, rather than becomes one. Many churchmen were thus not naturally disposed to evangelism, and church growth was by extension rather than evangelism. Parishioners needed to be evangelised first. Alas, it seemed that many of them were out of reach. A de Q Robin, Perry's biographer, comments:

The inability of the Church to reach the working man was not confined to the rural areas or to this particular time. In 1869 the *Church of England Messenger* lamented that everywhere the Church was out of touch with the 'labouring classes', and it was undeniable that in this respect the Wesleyans had made much better progress in catering for the spiritual needs of people, especially on the gold fields. The statistics of church attendance and financial support throughout the 1850s and the early 1860s reflect the surprising strength of Methodism.³³

While Perry had the likes of H B Macartney Sr, S L Chase, George Goodman, *et al* alongside of him, men of ability and good examples of committed and diligent evangelicals, he lacked the men the Methodists had for igniting revival (California Taylor and Matthew Burnett).

The Presbyterians

It was much the same with the Presbyterians. Many Scots found their way to Melbourne, and established names for themselves in commerce, business, and politics. Many of them were loyal sons of the *Kirk*, and built churches to match their status as an established church. But the ministers embodied a learned tradition; their expression of the ministry was serious and pastoral rather than enthusiastic. Their theology was Calvinist and Reformed rather than evangelical. The preaching, it was sometimes remarked in synod, was often at length, and not without convolution. The text was made to fit doctrine. With a sometimes wistful reference to the Methodists, there was a also fear that too much (unrestrained) enthusiasm might unsettle folk.

Clergy of the Established Church tradition regretted revivalism's transience and resort to 'childish and fantastic' means ... Revivalism could unsettle evangelical churchmen

³² See J Grant, *Episcopally Led and Synodically Governed. Anglicans in Victoria 1803-1997* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2010), 66.

³³ A de Q Robin, *Charles Perry. Bishop of Melbourne. The Challenges of a Colonial Episcopate, 1847-76* (Nedlands, Univ of Western Australia Press, 1967), 165.

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too. Robert Sutherland felt a need to reassure his peers at the General Assembly in 1859 that 'various agitations of body, and convulsions' should be expected with 'the sudden influx of divine truth'.³⁴

Later, to counter conservative reserve, evangelicals such as the Rev Duncan McEachran used 'missioners' to preach evangelistically on non-church property. Such attempts were not unsuccessful. Generally however, during the 1860s the Presbyterians did not produce notable evangelists. That would come in the 1880s.

The Sectarian Churches (Baptist, Congregational, Brethren, and Churches of Christ)

The Baptists

Though fewer in number than the above-mentioned churches, the Baptists did not neglect their evangelical heritage or the evangelistic mandate. Leading the way was the lively James Taylor who in 1860 was formally designated pastor of the Collins Street Church. His preaching was fluent, evangelical and evangelistic, and with powerful effect. As well as the Sunday services there was a mid-week preaching service, two prayer meetings, a Thursday night bible class for young people, and in 1862 a theological class to equip young men to lead churches. The church grew: 'By 1862 the membership was 424, and Taylor observed that an average of 48 new members had been added annually.' This growth required an expanded building, and in 1861, while the church was being rebuilt, services were held in the Theatre Royal. Not all were happy with this, after all, Jesus did not preach in theatres! But the new venue was reckoned a great success: 'Some 70,000 hymn sheets had been printed, over 30,000 tracts were distributed at the doors and all expenses had been covered.'³⁵

Taylor also gave vibrant leadership to the denomination, until a moral fall led to his resignation in 1868.³⁶ He was followed by James Martin. Born in 1821 in Hackney, England, Martin was converted at 16 and entered Stepney College (now Regents Park College, Oxford) to train for the ministry. After graduating from London University, he pursued post-graduate studies at Bonn, Germany, and pastored churches in Lancashire, Edinburgh, and Nottingham (1858-69). His status and reputation grew, as did his church, and he was known as 'Martin of Nottingham'. He was a fine scholar; well-known for his preaching, which was described as 'clear, impressive and elevating'. These characteristics, together with his

³⁴ Wood, *Presbyterians in Colonial Victoria*, 172.

³⁵ Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to 'Eternity'*, 67.

³⁶ K R Manley, 'A Colonial Evangelical Ministry and a "Clerical Scandal": James Taylor in Melbourne (1857-1868)', *Baptist Quarterly* 39.2 (2001), 56-79. In 1877 Taylor returned to the ministry, acceptably and evangelistically pastoring the Richmond church until his death in 1892.

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gracious personality and strong leadership, commended him to the Collins Street church, and in 1869 the 48 year-old Martin began his ministry there. A welcome change from his turbulent predecessor, he gave leadership to his church and denomination, and was twice elected President of the Victorian Baptist Association. Though not an evangelist (he was different to Taylor in personality and gifts), he was assuredly an evangelical and encouraged church growth – he led in forming the Victorian Home Mission Society (1871) - and the Baptists experienced stability and growth under his leadership.³⁷

The Collins Street church held its own with the other city Protestant churches: Wesley, Presbyterian, Independent, and Anglican,³⁸ as did the nearby Albert Street Baptist Church in East Melbourne. For example, F J Wilkin, lists some of its most prominent members over the following decades: T W Jackson, a foundation member and member of many denominational committees, was Deputy Postmaster-General and Audit and Public Service Commissioner; W C Kernot was Professor of Engineering at Melbourne University; J D Merson was Secretary to the Public Service Commissioner; W G Sprigg was Secretary of the Melbourne Tramway Company; George Lusty, who served on denominational committees and was business manager of the *Southern Baptist* for 25 years; C Vaughan MLC; C J Jenner MLC; H Langlands MLA, and many others. It is an impressive list.³⁹

The Congregationalists.

The Rev Alexander Morison resigned in 1865, joining the Presbyterians and pastoring a Presbyterian church at Clunes 1869-72. He found this the most uninspiring period of his career, and was glad to rejoin the Congregational church, which appointed him to lecture in Hebrew, church history, philosophy and apologetics in the Congregational College. He had some outstanding successors during the rest of the century, but the denomination never managed to capture the hearts and minds of a significant number of Melbournians. In 1866-7 the present distinctive Romanesque Collins Street church was built and remains one of Melbourne's notable buildings.⁴⁰

Following the brief incumbency of the Rev Alexander Fraser (1864-6), who was not able to heal the schism that marked the end of Morison's reign, the deacons of the Independent Church invited the Rev Anketell M Henderson (1866-76) from England to be their minister.

³⁷ See I Breward, 'Dr James Martin, a great Baptist scholar', *Our Yesterdays* vol 4 1996 (Baptist Historical Society of Victoria) 5-18.

³⁸ 'Entering the 1860's Taylor, the revivalist and publicist, with New, more a Nonconformist scholar, gave Baptists in Melbourne a sense of having their place in the religious life of the city.' Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to 'Eternity'*, 66.

³⁹ F J Wilkin, *Baptists in Victoria. Our First Century 1838-1938* (Melbourne: Baptist Union of Victoria, 1939), 35-36,

⁴⁰ See Wood & Askew, *St Michael's Church*, 1-5.

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They chose well. Born in County Monaghan, Ireland, and educated at Trinity College Dublin, Henderson was converted and joined the Wesleyans. He was ordained in 1845 and became an itinerant evangelistic preacher. In 1852, having been convinced that Independency was the correct biblical polity, he resigned from the Wesleyans and became a Congregationalist. He then pastored churches in Islington and other parts of London, undertook further studies, and was appointed principal of New College, from 1850 the Congregational College in London.

Henderson was well suited to the Melbourne church. He had broad pastoral experience in Ireland and London. He was well-educated and intellectually able, qualities that appealed to the leading citizens for whom the Collins Street church was their spiritual home. They were justifiably proud of their minister. Also, he had a strong evangelical faith, and was a more than competent preacher. Each Sunday his flock went home satisfied; their minister was a shining example of the accomplished, nineteenth-century nonconformist clergyman. His energetic leadership brought new life to the church, and to Melbourne society generally, and he stood equal to the ministers of the other city churches.

Henderson's leadership saw a growth of Congregationalism in Melbourne; in particular there were substantial churches in St Kilda, West Melbourne, Richmond. But it was not so much a revival in the sense of sinners coming to the Lord, not like the Methodists and Baptists. The strength of the church was in benefactors such as H Hopkins, Frederick Sargood, J P Fawkner, and John Gardiner. The denomination was evangelical rather than evangelistic. Henderson died in 1876. He was followed briefly by Thomas Jones, another outstanding and highly regarded preacher, but who stayed only three years (1877-80) before ill-health caused him to resign. He and his predecessor Henderson gave 31 years of evangelical ministry to the Independent Church. But there were no significant revivals or growth by conversion as with the Methodists or Baptists.⁴¹ 'By 1900 there were 12 Congregationalist churches within 2 miles (3 km) of the General Post Office, but few new congregations were established in the 20th century.'⁴² With exceptions, the denomination became better known for its liberalism and division, rather than evangelistic zeal.

The Brethren.

Brethren beginnings in Melbourne are obscure. A number of Brethren made their way to Tasmania in colonial days and founded assemblies, mostly in the north of the colony. Often they attracted believers from other churches who were dissatisfied with the life or emphases

⁴¹ The Baptists attracted crowds of 1000, and the not-far-away Albert Street church was also flourishing.

⁴² A Brown-May & S Swain eds, *Encyclopedia of Melbourne* (Melbourne: Cambridge Univ Press, 2005), 169.

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of their church. Some crossed Bass Strait to seek their fortune in Melbourne; and some there found a home in Baptist churches, there being no Brethren assemblies.⁴³ Though they were not always noticed, some came to Melbourne with evangelism in mind. Tasmanian Brethren historian Elisabeth Wilson comments:

Much firmer evidence for early Brethren work is that Perrin, the young evangelist who started several assemblies in Tasmania, was active in Melbourne in the 1860s – eg in Collingwood. I think it's fair to say we don't know exactly when Brethren work started in Melbourne – "by the 1860s" is safest. By the late 1870s there were thriving assemblies at Collingwood, Geelong, St Kilda, Ballarat, Bendigo and ... [the] Assembly Hall in Collins Street. Almost all were affected badly by the Hopkins schism in the 1880s.⁴⁴

Certainly, there were a number of Brethren evangelists who came out from Britain as a result of the 1858-60 revival, some making Melbourne their home.⁴⁵

The Churches of Christ.

Another newer, smaller, and not as noticeable, evangelical sect was the Churches of Christ.⁴⁶ Originating in America in the early 1800s, and born in revival, the movement spread to England, before coming to Melbourne in 1853 in the form of small groups of Disciples meeting together. The movement was fervently evangelical and evangelistic. Its main distinctives were: believer's baptism (by immersion), a weekly celebration of Holy Communion, lay involvement, eg in leading church services, including communion,⁴⁷ the Bible alone, especially the New Testament, was the source of theology and authority, and the language of the Authorised Version deemed most appropriate when discussing theology or the Bible. Also, the church regarded itself as a restorationist movement, aiming at

⁴³ Prime among them was Philip Robinson. See Jason Lim, "Assumptions and Evidence: The Case of Philip Robinson (1830-1886)", *Brethren Archivists and Historians Network Review*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2004, 31. The first Brethren Assembly in Melbourne was founded in 1850: see K Newton, *A History of the Brethren in Australia with Particular Reference to the Open Brethren* (Fuller Theological Seminary PhD. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 1990), 13.

⁴⁴ Elisabeth Wilson, *Email*, 22 November 2009. See too Newton, *A History of the Brethren in Australia*; A F Dyer, *God Was Their Rock* (Sheffield, Tas: Pioneer Publishers, 1974); M Y Lamb, "'Out of All Proportion': Christian Brethren Influence in Australia 1850-2000", *Making History for God. Essays on Evangelicalism, Revival and Mission* (G R Treloar & R D Linder eds, Sydney: Robert Menzies College, 2004), 87-110.

⁴⁵ See I McDowell, *Harrison Ord* (unpublished paper, nd); Newton, *A History of the Brethren in Australia*.

⁴⁶ See G Chapman, *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism: A History of Churches of Christ in Australia* (Melbourne: Vital Publications, 1979). I am indebted to Chapman for much of the information on his church. The denomination was known variously as the Churches of Christ, the Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, or simply Christians. For the sake of convenience I will refer to them using the American term, Disciples.

⁴⁷ Initially at least, Disciples tended to be lower middle class.

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restoring what they perceived to be the New Testament model of the church, and shorn of all later and traditional accretions.

Their historian, G Chapman, comments:

This proved attractive to a number of Bible Christians and Wesleyan Methodists. The Restoration message had a particular fascination for Bible Christians and Wesleyan Methodist local preachers, a number of whom were listed as converts. A successful evangelistic campaign in Moorabbin stirred Wesleyans in the area to organize revival meetings, and there was even talk of a baptistery being constructed in the chapel to keep their members. Appealing to the same social strata, and with a similar message, Methodism was particularly vulnerable.⁴⁸

However Benson, *Century of Victorian Methodism*, and Blamires & Smith, *Wesleyan Methodist Church*, make no mention of this. Relations with the Baptists were cordial, but the other churches tended to regard the Disciples with some reserve.

By 1859, Disciples were meeting in the Russell Street Temperance Hall, and during the 1860s had spread to the suburbs. In the early 1860s the lay leadership of the movement was convinced that substantial progress would only be made if full-time evangelists were engaged. Competent lay speakers were scarce and had insufficient time to prepare addresses or to visit. The first officially appointed evangelist to the Victorian church was I Memelstein, a converted Polish Jew, who was sent to the goldfields of Chiltern-Ovens. Other evangelists were appointed, but proved inadequate, and the church leadership realised that qualified men were needed. To this end, an American evangelist, Henry S Earl, was invited to Melbourne.⁴⁹ Arriving in 1864, his preaching was immediately effective, attracting crowds of 1-2000, and favourable reports in the secular press. The next year, the Disciples built a chapel in Lygon Street, Carlton, two blocks from the State Library and next to the Victorian Trades Hall Council. When Earl arrived in Melbourne, Disciple membership was 400. In the Lygon Street church's first year he added 200.

The Lygon Street church was the first Church of Christ in Melbourne. The original architecture was a Classical church, not untypical of nonconformist denominations. Additions in 1889 changed it to a Gothic-Polychrome type. (a sign of institutionalisation?) However a group within the congregation was unhappy with the freer American attitude and style of worship. They formed the nucleus of what became the Swanston Street Church, which, after

⁴⁸ *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism*, 55.

⁴⁹ Born in Northampton in 1831, Earl's family migrated to America where he was converted in his teens and earned a name as an evangelist, with good reports of his ability reaching the Melbourne Disciples.

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meeting in the Athenaeum Theatre in Collins Street, found its home in James Forbes' John Knox Free Presbyterian Church in Swanston Street, a Gothic-Early English structure built in 1863. For most of its history it was known as the Swanston Street Church of Christ. Then in 2006, reflecting the Asian majority of the congregation, it changed its name to the Cross Culture Church of Christ, though still retaining its evangelical and evangelistic heritage.⁵⁰

In 1867 Earl was joined in Melbourne by G L Surber, a graduate of the College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky. The Americans were placed with the largest churches in Melbourne, but made frequent visits to suburban and country churches, and encouraged itinerancy. They also began 'Adelphian Societies' for the training of laymen, some of whom became evangelists. One of the most colourful was Dr Thomas Porter. Born in 1838 in Belfast, Ireland, Porter came to Melbourne in the 1850s. He did not find his fortune on the goldfields, but he did find Christ in Melbourne, and was baptized in November 1858 by J J Mouritz, a fellow Irish-born and strong-minded Strict and Particular Baptist who came out in the 1840s. Porter moved to South Australia, then to America where he qualified as a doctor, though he does not seem to have practiced medicine. 1878 found him pastoring the Collingwood Church of Christ; evidently successfully, as 56 were soon added to the congregation. But in 1879 he was at loggerheads with the wider movement, and in 1881 he began a successful evangelistic ministry at the Fitzroy Baptist Church. He returned to America for a time; then came back to Melbourne, briefly rejoining the Church of Christ before returning to the Baptists, pastoring the Ballarat Baptist Church 1889-94. He then moved to New South Wales where he had a warmly appreciated ministry, dying in 1926. He had his quirks, and a chequered career in his early ministry, but the Baptists liked him: '... his career clearly reveals that a strong personality who is an evangelist and a loving personality is the archetypal figure of honour among Australian Baptists.'⁵¹

* * * *

During the 1860s Melbourne continued to grow, mostly through migration. As city and suburbs burgeoned, the churches also grew. A lot of this was transfer and biological growth; but a lot was the result of evangelism. There was no one defining evangelistic event, however, in continuity with the preceding decades, the Methodists continued to be more actively evangelistic, and dominant. The death of Draper was a big loss. Nevertheless, with the likes of Joseph Dare *et al*, the Methodists were fortunate in their leadership. The larger-than-life California Taylor surged through their churches. More, he provided a model of evangelism; he encouraged the locals, and set them talking for decades after; and he

⁵⁰ The Disciples began their first Chinese church in the 1870s, providing Chinese-English lessons. Up to 600 per year attended.

⁵¹ Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to Eternity* 1, 150.

CONTINUED ENTHUSIASM

foreshadowed a later trend of visiting overseas evangelists.⁵² But, like most itinerants, his ministry, though inspirational, was ephemeral; he did not provide a focal point of leadership and unity. This lessened his abiding impact. Of greater significance was Matthew Burnett. Taylor was more the celebrity, but Burnett's ministry was more extensive and expansive, longer-lasting, and more effective. Also noteworthy was the work of local evangelists, who 'belonged' and made Melbourne their home. The smaller denominations - Baptists, Brethren and Churches of Christ, grew – but, apart from some outstanding members, their smaller size limited their wider impact. Some of their growth was transfer growth: for example, the attraction of the Disciples to some Methodists. But the Disciples enjoyed growth throughout 1870s–1890s. As we shall see, this was as much due to general evangelistic activity of the evangelical men of Melbourne.

⁵² Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals*, 55: 'The labours of David O'Donnell, Matthew Burnett, and John MacNeil, and other Australian workers, and hearty, sympathetic co-operation given to Messrs Inskip, Torrey, Chapman and Henry, of America, were all traceable to the evangelistic seed implanted by that prince of evangelists – California Taylor.'

Chapter 6

A Decade of Initiative (the 1870s)

Melbourne continued its heady growth throughout the 1870s. Politics continued to be volatile, with four premiers sitting on the government side of the Legislative Assembly, the most prominent being the radical populist Graham Berry. In 1872 the Victorian Education Act decreed that education would be 'secular, free, and compulsory'. It was not that the majority of politicians were anti- or non-religious; it was rather that they were fed up with the churches bickering with each other. Henceforth the state would see to the education of children. The same year saw the completion of the telegraph line to England, facilitating communication with home. The decade also saw the extension of railways throughout the colony. In 1873-4 Scots Church, a dominating Presbyterian presence on the corner of Russell and Collins Streets, was rebuilt by David Mitchell, father of Dame Nelly Melba. In 1876 the Italianate Government House, probably modelled on the Royal Family's Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, became the official residence of Victoria's governors. It was very expensive, but thought appropriate given the colony's wealth and importance. Evangelicals aggressively campaigned for Sabbath observance, temperance, and social purity. And in December 1870 parliament passed a bill allowing marriage to a deceased wife's sister, annoying many conservative clergy.

More positively, the churches continued to display energy and resolve. There was a vigorous and sophisticated theological discussion. Clergy busily pastored their flocks, and encouraged them to be salt and light. And evangelism remained high on the agenda. In particular, there were a number of outstanding evangelists who displayed both leadership and initiative, outstanding examples of the character of Melbourne evangelism. The main ones were: Matthew Burnett, who continued his spirited activism. His fellow-Methodist, the Rev John Watsford, began his distinguished contribution to his church and the wider evangelical movement. The (Irish Anglican) the Rev Hussey Burgh Macartney Jr began his three decade long enthusiastic pre-eminence in the evangelical movement. The (independent) English itinerant Henry Varley returned to preach in Melbourne and more widely afield.

The decade also was marked by initiative. 'Intelligence' (newspapers), in the form of Macartney's *The Missionary at Home and Abroad* and (the Methodist) W H Fitchett's *Southern Cross*, were begun to keep the evangelical public informed and inspired. The beginning of the deeper-life movement (by Macartney) in Melbourne in 1874 (before Keswick) – and conventions of various types - inspired spirituality, missions and evangelism, and shaped the spirituality of the Melbourne evangelicals. At the end of the decade, and in

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preparation for the next, the beginning of a united interdenominational evangelistic organisation further concentrated evangelical intentions. It was not that there were no initiatives in previous or following decades, but those following were notable, and prepared for the outpouring of evangelistic energy in the 1880s and the 1890s.

The Methodists Matthew Burnett and John Watsford

The Methodists continued to ride the wave of the 1859 revival and California Taylor's ministry; and continued in the van of the colonial Melbourne tradition. Their two outstanding evangelists during this decade were Matthew Burnett and John Watsford. Burnett was the itinerant; Watsford was more the churchman, focusing his efforts on the denomination

Matthew Burnett (continued). In 1870, when he was 31, Burnett's beloved wife Sarah (b 1834) died in childbirth. She was a woman of prayer and saintliness who, before they married, had prayed for his conversion; and over the following years proved to be a formative influence on, an unfailing support of, and a help meet for him.¹ Burnett was bereft. He continued preaching throughout 1871 but in 1872 returned to England for a break, and to observe the method and style of Moody and Sankey who were then precipitating revival in parts of England and Scotland.

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Matthew Burnett

During his lengthy absence, Methodist membership in Victoria for 1872 declined by 537.² The reasons given were: a lack of emphasis on sanctification and eternal punishment, little pastoral visitation, the leading laymen were not keen enough, worldly amusement, and too much focus on church organisation. Not unnaturally, there was a commonsensical recourse to prayer. This was the core of evangelical/Methodist spirituality, and the memory of the 1859 revival was still fresh, as was belief in the power of prayer, and the hope for revival. Thus the *Wesleyan Chronicle* (20 January 1872, 1-2), and the Evangelical Alliance, called on Methodists, and others, to hold the first week of January as a week of prayer for revival and an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on churches in Victoria, and around the world. Such weeks of

¹ See *Wesleyan Chronicle*, 20 April 1871, 53-4, for her obituary. Similar things could be said of the wives of many evangelical leaders.

² R Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals In Australia* (Hazelbrook, NSW: R Evans, 2000), 226, lists the statistics for other states: New South Wales an increase of 15 members; Queensland, increase of 107 members; South Australia, decrease of 520 members; Western Australia, decrease of 9 members; Tasmania, decrease of 41 members; New Zealand, increase of 70 members.'

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prayer were widely held in Britain and America and Europe. The call was reiterated for the first week of January 1873 and, despite the oppressive heat of summer, prayer services were held in a large number of churches throughout Melbourne and suburbs, with mid-day services in the Assembly Hall in Collins Street. As well as this, reports of revival in Britain and America nagged.

But still there were no revivals in Victoria, and the 1873 Australasian Wesleyan Conference again expressed its concern about church decline. Another call was issued in April for a special week of prayer in May. Again the Methodists responded: cottage prayer meetings and special services were held in Melbourne and country circuits. Then reports began to come in of blessings, desire for sanctification, and revival in circuits and suburbs including Richmond, Carlton, St Kilda, and North Melbourne, and in country circuits. This was the context Burnett returned to from England in mid-1874, inspired and encouraged, to pick up the traces. The Conference was glad to see him; and on 9 July 1875, the newly-founded Home Missions Department appointed him Home Mission Evangelist. 'From that time onwards special evangelists have had their place within the Home Mission system.'³ For his part, Burnett spent the rest of the decade working under the auspices of the HMD, tirelessly preaching salvation, holiness, and temperance.

His fellow Methodist W H Fitchett, regularly carried reports of Burnett in the *Southern Cross*.⁴ It was not just the Methodists who honoured a favourite son. In 1879, just before he moved to work in other colonies, he was farewelled in open-air meetings at the wharves, the Mint, and vacant land near the Supreme Court, where 'immense crowds collected'.⁵ In November, at a meeting in the Melbourne Town Hall, he was presented with a 250 sovereign purse. There the Anglican philanthropist Hon W J Clarke presided and spoke 'in highly complimentary terms'.⁶ Thereafter Burnett evangelised in the other colonies and New Zealand before returning finally to England (1890-6), where, true to form, he was active to the last. He died 12 January, two days after his 57th birthday, and is buried in Scarborough Cemetery, Stainton Dale near Scarborough. In spite of not having robust health, Burnett's contribution was impressive. Evans records that he preached or lectured some 13 000 times in Australasia. Of these, 60% were evangelistic and 40% were temperance sermons.

... in Victoria the percentage of addresses which were evangelistic was much higher.

'The temperance meetings were mainly on Saturday evenings, and on Monday

³ C I Benson, *A Century of Victorian Methodism* (Melbourne: Spectator Publishing, 1935), 194.

⁴ See SC, 30 August 1879, 3, for a description of Burnett's life and labours.

⁵ SC, 27 September 1879, 1.

⁶ SC, 8 November 1879, 1.

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afternoons. Despite this limitation, the number of people who signed the pledge in his meetings in Victoria between 1863 and 1879 was about 60,000.⁷

John Watsford. After Daniel Draper and Matthew Burnett (and W H Fitchett), John Watsford was the best known of Victorian Methodists. Born in 1820 in Parramatta, Watsford was converted at eighteen in a prayer meeting conducted by Daniel Draper.⁸ He immediately began teaching Sunday School and preaching. In 1841 he was accepted as a probationer for the ministry, the first Australian-born minister, and according to Methodist practice, began the years of labouring for the gospel in many places. In April 1868, after tenure in Adelaide (1862-8) where he helped found Prince Alfred College, Watsford and his family moved to the Lydiard Street, Ballarat church. That church, and nearby circuits, experienced revival as a result of his preaching.⁹ In 1871, the 51 year-old Watsford moved to Melbourne where he was appointed superintendent of the Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, circuit. He spent the rest of his life and ministry in Melbourne before dying in Kew on 24 July 1907, predeceased by his wife Elizabeth and survived by six sons and four daughters.¹⁰

A worthy colleague to the likes of Draper and Burnett, Watsford's contribution to evangelism in Melbourne may be seen in his preaching, his leadership, and his spirituality.¹¹ His Melbourne activities were of a piece with his previous places of ministry. He fervently and compellingly preached a gospel message,¹² and, like any good evangelical, promoted the cause of overseas missions. As with his previous churches, the Fitzroy circuit saw much fruit for his labours. He was a parish man, not an itinerant like Taylor or Burnett, but he gave nothing away to them in evangelistic zeal. He was a child of revival from his earliest days, and he never changed his message, or the expectation that God would honour the preaching of the gospel. In circuits in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria, and in Fiji, he saw notable evangelistic success, with revivals breaking out, and many people sanctified.¹³ As a true Methodist, Watsford preached the need for and hope of sanctification, and of dependence on the Holy Spirit. Of a conversation with California Taylor he remarked: 'I had a long talk with him one day about the secret of his success. He said, 'I look to the

⁷ R Evans, *Matthew Burnett. The Yorkshire Evangelist. Australia's Greatest Evangelist and Social Reformer* (Hazelbrook, NSW: Research in Evangelical Revivals, 2010), 423.

⁸ His father, James Watsford, had been transported for horse stealing. In Sydney, Watsford Senior was converted through the ministry of Samuel Leigh, the first Methodist minister in Australia.

⁹ See Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals*, 176-8, for details.

¹⁰ Watsford was buried in the Boroondara cemetery. His conservative evangelical beliefs are set forth in his autobiography, *Glorious Gospel Triumphs* (London: Charles H Kelly, 1900).

¹¹ Including his prayers. See S Piggin, *Evangelical Christianity in Australia. Spirit, Word, World* (Melbourne: Oxford Univ Press, 1996), 42, for a description of the young Watsford's involvement in the 1840 Parramatta revival.

¹² Watsford did not have a formal theological education, but his preaching was articulate as well as emotional and captivating.

¹³ For details of Watsford's work in the non-Victorian colonies see Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals*; and Watsford, *Glorious Gospel Triumphs*.

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Spirit. He teaches me. I get my message direct from Him. I go to the meeting expecting the presence and power of the Holy Ghost, and He never fails me.’¹⁴

Watsford was a sturdy man: physically, emotionally and spiritually. He was a zealous man, never slacking in his evangelistic endeavours. He was a confident man, never hesitating in his proclamation of the gospel. Watsford’s colleagues appreciated his evangelistic ministry; they also respected his stability and, somewhat unusual for an evangelist, his administrative ability. In 1871 he was elected president of the Conference of the Australasian Wesleyan Church, and in 1878 was elected president of the General Conference of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Church. More significantly, in 1875 he was the main founder and, until 1883, general secretary of the Wesleyan Home Mission. This saw him criss-crossing the colony, raising money and establishing churches in the remote south-east and north-west of the colony. He served in this strenuous capacity until 1883 when he returned to the Brunswick Street circuit until 1891 when he began his active retirement. It was not for nothing that he was known as ‘Father’ Watsford. He was one of the Melbourne evangelical movement’s undoubted leaders. And he was a true Methodist, loyal to his church and its heritage. ‘In his speech upon installation as President he expressed the belief that his ministerial colleagues were still all true followers of everything that John Wesley had stood for.’¹⁵ Especially revival.

The Anglican Hussey Burgh

Macartney¹⁶

In 1876 Bishop Charles Perry officially resigned and moved back to England. In a busy retirement he continued to support CMS and, remembering the inadequate quality of many of his clergy, he invested much of his time and energy into setting up Ridley Hall, Cambridge, (1881) to train ordinands. The Dean of the Diocese, Hussey Burgh Macartney, filled the gap as Vicar-General until Perry’s successor, James Moorhouse arrived. But it was Macartney’s son (of the same name) who succeeded Perry as Melbourne’s foremost

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Hussey Burgh Macartney Jr

¹⁴ Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals*, 54f. See too 459-62 for a summary of Watsford’s beliefs on sanctification.

¹⁵ Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals*, 220.

¹⁶ For further details on Macartney see my ‘Hussey Burgh Macartney: a nineteenth-century missions enthusiast’ <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/pah/TransTasman/papers.php>

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(Anglican) evangelical. Though a loyal Anglican, he also laboured outside of church boundaries. His initiative, drive and leadership were outstanding.

Born in 1840, Macartney came with his father to Melbourne as a boy, but in 1857 returned to Ireland to his father's *alma mater*, Trinity College Dublin, for his university and theological education (BA 1860 – 1st class in divinity, MA 1874).¹⁷ He returned to Melbourne where he was ordained by Perry in 1867, and spent a few years as chaplain to Industrial Schools in Melbourne before becoming vicar of St Mary's, Caulfield (a Melbourne suburb) where he served 1868-98.¹⁸ He was known as a good preacher and a fine bible expositor. He spoke regularly at evangelistic rallies and at meetings of Christian workers, and led in the forming of the Melbourne United Evangelistic Association in 1879 (later the Evangelisation Society of Victoria, then Australasia), and also Scripture Union (1880). He was also the leading promoter and facilitator of Protestant missions in colonial Australia, and was probably the leading evangelical in colonial Melbourne. He resigned from St Mary's in 1898 to become Superintendent, Home Organising Department of the British and Foreign Bible Society in London (1898-1900 and in 1906). He died in October 1908 in Darjeeling, North India while visiting mission stations with his daughter Catherine.¹⁹

Macartney was a driven man. His family background greatly influenced him and prepared him not only for the contribution he made to missions but his whole career. He went back to Ireland to study at his father's university before being ordained, shared his unwearying activism, his (proto-fundamentalist) theology and pietistic spirituality, and the same evangelical agenda. It was not unnatural for him to enter the ministry. The son differed from the father in being more committed to interdenominational evangelicalism. Some of this was because of the collegiality of the Melbourne evangelical network; some because he was not tied to the establishment of the Church of England as was his father (though he was a loyal Anglican

¹⁷ TCD was important. In the nineteenth century, it probably had a better reputation than Oxford or Cambridge for both the courses of study and the quality of the graduates it produced. There was a strong evangelical presence and ethos, with many of its graduates going out with the Church Missionary Society to the mission field. And there was a marked emphasis on premillennial eschatology. The main evangelical influence seems to have been Dr J H Singer, the Regius Professor of Divinity and later Bishop of Meath (1852).

¹⁸ Sir George Stephen, brother of James Stephen, member of the Clapham Sect, had settled in Caulfield and donated the first piece of land for St Mary's. He had been the historian of the anti-slavery movement in the United Kingdom, and was one of the two instigators in the highly innovative public campaign which led to the 1833 victory in parliament. The family was a distinguished one in Victoria. His son James became Attorney General of Victoria. St Mary's also played an important role in nineteenth-century Melbourne. Macartney was vicar during the time of the influence of the Stephen family.

¹⁹ See *Victorian Churchman* (13 November 1908), 485-488; (27 November), 508. *Pacé* the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* article on his father which states he died in 1898.

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and an active member of the diocese²⁰). Combined with his energy and activism it gave him a freer hand to labour outside the boundaries of his parish. Thus his influence was wider and of greater significance than that of his father. An important example of this influence, and initiative, was *The Missionary at Home and Abroad*.

‘Intelligence’: *The Missionary at Home and Abroad* (1873) and the *Southern Cross* (1874)²¹

The written word was also important in preaching and evangelism. For most church members, denominational newspapers satisfactorily fulfilled their function in keeping their readers up to date with churchly matters, local, interstate and overseas. However, a number of evangelicals thought that this was not enough; there was less than full satisfaction with the content and editorial policies of the denominational newspapers which did not cater for their theology, spirituality, or their perception of the church’s fundamental agenda: the proclamation of the gospel at home and abroad. They looked for ‘intelligence’ which both informed and inspired, their need creating a niche market that the official denominational newspapers could not or would not fill. There were some short lived ones: the *Banner* (1853-4), *Australian Evangelist* (1860-), the *Daily Telegraph* (1869-92), *Men of Melbourne* (a YMCA publication), *Words of Grace* (1876-). The more substantial ones were the monthly *The Missionary at Home and Abroad* (1873-1898) and the weekly *Southern Cross* (1874-1928). These two newspapers are indispensable sources of the story of the evangelical movement in nineteenth-century Melbourne.

The Missionary at Home and Abroad. A number of factors contributed to the extent and growth of missionary endeavour during the nineteenth century: innovators and pioneers such as Hudson Taylor captured peoples’ imagination; missionary thinkers and statesmen such as Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson gave vision and leadership; the British empire facilitated the spread of missions; revival movements inspired, and the deeper-life movement challenged, missionary candidates. But those who stayed at home were hungry for news (‘intelligence’) from the field to satisfy their interest, inform them of needs, and shape their prayers. These needs were met by the development of steam power and improved postal

²⁰ For example, St Mary’s donated £500 to the Bishop of Melbourne’s Fund for the expansion of the diocese, a generous amount. J Grant, *Episcopally Led and Synodically Governed. Anglicans in Victoria 1803-1997* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2010), 94.

²¹ George Whitefield had made shrewd use of advertising using the means of communication available to him, word of mouth and, especially, the print media. He published sermons, tracts, information about his itineraries, and reports of his preaching triumphs. A lot of this was self-promotion, but it was canny self-promotion. Wherever he went, people knew beforehand who he was, what he had done, and they turned up in droves. The preacher was also a self-promoter and entrepreneur. His spiritual progeny took note; the written word was important as a medium of communication for evangelicals, whether in-house or to a wider constituency.

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service that revolutionised communications. Thus in 1873 CMS Secretary Eugene Stock began the *Church Missionary Gleaner*. Initially this was for British consumption, but an Australian supplement was soon added for Australian CMSers, and then an Australian *Gleaner* begun. Quite independently of Stock, and on his own initiative, in January 1873 H B Macartney began his *The Missionary at Home and Abroad*, a monthly newsletter that he edited and produced until he left St Mary's in 1898. In an obituary for Macartney, Stock wrote:

When I started the 'Church Missionary Gleaner', just 35 years ago, he wrote to me from Melbourne a warm letter, sending me copies of his own, 'The Missionary', of which I had never heard. He had for some years pushed the cause of Missions in Australia, and was raising 'off his own bat' some £2,000 a year, from personal friends and correspondents there, which he remitted direct to C.M.S. missionaries in India for the support of schools, native evangelists, etc., the C.M.S. itself knowing nothing of this important help to its work.²²

Each month Melbourne evangelicals opened their copy of *MAHA* to read about who was leaving for the mission field and who was home on furlough, the latest 'intelligence' from various organisations, and editorials encouraging the reader to faithfulness and prayer. The number of organisations associated with *MAHA* is striking. It included the Aborigines Mission, Condah Aboriginal Mission, the Australian Mission to South Africa, Lovedale Mission South Africa, the Bible Union, Children's Scripture Union,²³ Children's Special Service Mission, Proportionate Giving Union, China Inland Mission, India, China and Ceylon Mission, Chinese Mission, Christmas Letter Mission,²⁴ Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, Daily Prayer Union,²⁵ Bible Union, Hotel Bible Society, India Mission, Lighthouse Mission,²⁶

²² 'In Memorium', *Victorian Churchman* 11 December 1908, 532.

²³ 'The Young People's Scripture Union is a living example of the power of God's Word, and of united prayer. Though only sixteen years in existence in the colonies, the membership has grown in the Victorian division, from 700 in 1878 to 18,000 in the present year; and the workers in connection with it are sanguine enough to expect a roll of, at least, 20,000 for 1895. ...' *Church of England Messenger*, 11 January 1895, 12.

²⁴ Founded 1 October 1883, this organisation sent letters to hospitals, prisons, infirmaries, asylums, and like institutions.

²⁵ This 'was instituted in 1879, .. has 65,000 members, of which the Reverend Bishop Perry is President, and the object of which is "To promote prayer for the Holy Spirit throughout the world,"' *MAHA* February 1891, 18. An 'extension' of this was the Union of Daily Prayer for the Blessed Holy Spirit which stemmed from the Rev H L Harness, St Swithin's, Worcester. See *MAHA* September 1889, 131. The next edition of *MAHA* carried a reply which stated that '77 000 members had already joined'.

²⁶ This mission was established in 1877; it sent a monthly packet of evangelical literature to 128 lighthouse stations around the Australian and Tasmanian coasts. By 1893 this had grown to 148, including lightships and New Zealand: Queensland 39, New Zealand 30, New South Wales 25, Victoria 18, South Australia 14, Tasmania 13, and Western Australia 9. *MAHA* December 1893.

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Melanesian Mission, Mission to the Jews of Victoria,²⁷ Police Mission, Proportionate Giving Union, South American Missionary Society, Telugu Native Ministry Fund, and the World-Wide Second Advent Prayer Union. This 'intelligence', and its propagation, gives a significant insight into the Melbourne evangelicals. For them, evangelism and (overseas) missions were coterminous. Their interests were international as well as interdenominational. Their vitality and voluntarism were prominent: no one denomination dominated. It is not just the number of organisations that is noteworthy. While impossible to quantify, the *MAHA* allows a glimpse of the readers and the home support. It provides the raw material for further missiological study, not just the practice but the theory of mission that underlay Macartney's and his colleagues' activism.

Macartney was not a leader or statesman like Stock or Venn. He was too much an activist and too involved with many organisations, but his role was critical. With his energy and vision he was more a facilitator of missions, and *MAHA* was his most effective instrument. It informed the minds and hearts of the readers, stimulated their prayers and giving, and reminded them of their fundamental unity, that grass roots ecumenism that was such a potent force in the nineteenth century in fulfilling the great commission. Also, his administrative ability saw that missionaries were sent out and supported. He did not dominate, but was one of the network of very able (lay and ordained) men who made Melbourne evangelicalism collegial as well as formidable.²⁸

The Southern Cross was founded in 1874 by Andrew Cameron, minister of the St Kilda Presbyterian Church, with the help of James Balfour and others. Like the *Daily Telegraph*, it was ambitiously intended to counter the secularism of the *Argus* and the *Age*, but was agreeable only to the general evangelical public. A change of ownership and editor in 1882 saw SC fortunes improve; and while it did not fulfil all the hopes of its principals, it soon flourished among its natural evangelical clientele. The new editor was the formidable Methodist, the Rev Dr W H Fitchett.²⁹ Born in Grantham, Lincolnshire in 1841, Fitchett arrived in Geelong on the *Larpen* as an eight year-old. A voracious reader, he was largely self-educated. Converted in his teens, he was ordained in 1866 and began a largely itinerant ministry. Fitchett was also a gifted writer and was soon contributing to the *Spectator* and writing books and novels. He was best known for his world-wide best-seller, *Deeds That Won the Empire*. But it was through the SC, which he edited for more than 40 years, that Fitchett

²⁷ This was founded by Macartney Senior. See *MAHA* February 1892.

²⁸ This collegiality bears comparison with Sydney. There, leading evangelicals such as Bertie Boyce and T C Hammond were not as good working in a team as Macartney and his colleagues were.

²⁹ The same year he became editor, warmly supported by the staff and friends and benefactors such as Henry Berry, and F J Cato, and the Nicholas brothers, Fitchett became founding principal of the Methodist Ladies College.

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played an important role in the evangelical movement. Though a committed Methodist, he had a comfortable regard for other churches and evangelicals of every hue, and the SC carried regular reports of different churches. He was prominent in Melbourne and world Methodism, and the evangelical movement. True to his conversion and heritage, he was an evangelical who never for a moment shirked the evangelistic imperative of the gospel. 'Known in private life for an affable manner and a chuckling sense of humour, in public affairs, he could be a great hater, with a fighting instinct and a love of unblunted truth which sprang from his conviction that he was always right.'³⁰

Mention should also be made in this context of *Willing Work* (1877-82/3).³¹ The founding editor was the Brethren, C Edwin Good, who was a member of the evangelical brotherhood, a member of the Evangelisation Society of Victoria, secretary of Dr A Somerville's campaigns, and a capable speaker in his own right. He was followed as editor by a Mr Cave and then Philip Kitchen, who also owned the paper.³² *WW* was not officially a Brethren publication, but it focused on evangelism, deeper-life activities, and 'puffed' Henry Varley. Indeed, noting the date of first publication, one has the impression that Varley might have been the purpose of publication. The second edition had an article on Varley's return to Melbourne and the visit of the Scottish evangelist Dr A N Somerville, which, the author breathlessly opined, were the harbingers of revival. However, its narrow focus, conservatism, and independence limited its appeal, even among evangelicals.

The Deeper-Life Movement (1874) ³³

The evangelistic agenda of Macartney and his peers was motivated and sustained by their piety. This was fostered by another (and greater) medium of information and inspiration, deeper-life conferences. The deeper-life movement is generally referred to as being part of the holiness movement, which to a degree it is. Strictly speaking however, the expression 'the holiness movement' is more applicable to the American Wesleyan/Arminian holiness tradition,³⁴ and it is better to think of the deeper-life movement as having a distinct life of its

³⁰ B Dickey ed, *The Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography* (Sydney: Evangelical History Association, 1994), 114. For a fuller appreciation of Fitchett see R D Linder, 'William Henry Fitchett (1841-1928): Forgotten Methodist "Tall Poppy"' in G R Treloar & R D Linder ed, *Making History for God. Essays on Evangelicalism, Revival and Mission* (Sydney: Robert Menzies College, 2004), 197-238.

³¹ For information about *Willing Work* I am indebted to Elisabeth Wilson of Hobart.

³² The Kitchens were a prominent Melbourne evangelical dynasty. See C Dyer, 'The Role of the Kitchen Family in the History of Victorian Evangelicalism', *Our Yesterdays*, vol 9, 2001, 4-17.

³³ For fuller details see my chapter 'The Deeper-Life Movement in Victoria', *Our Yesterdays*, vol 10 2002, 53-78.

³⁴ Keswick was quieter and more orderly, and its message found a wide acceptance among Calvinist-oriented premillennialists. C H Hopkins, *John R. Mott 1865-1935. A Biography* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 114, points out:

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own. W E Boardman's seminal *The Higher Christian Life*, was published in 1860, and most of the Keswick leaders were either evangelists or converts of the 1859 revival in Britain. The connection between this revival context and the deeper-life convention movement is important. The movement and convention captured the imagination of perhaps most evangelicals and it became a classic expression of evangelical spirituality and theology. The message became identified with the medium: that is, the convention, and Keswick (begun in 1875) became shorthand for both the deeper-life movement and the convention format which promulgated it.³⁵ The format was critical in promoting and institutionalising Keswick deeper-life teaching. The beginnings of the convention movement lay in the revivalistic camp meetings of the early 1800s in Kentucky. These later developed as camp meetings for holiness revival. Some attempts were made to introduce camp meetings to England but the exuberance of the American revivalists and holiness promoters did not fit the English culture, or the weather.³⁶ However the (Keswick) deeper-life conventions did take root and indeed were transplanted to America.³⁷

Evangelicals were intensely interested in a sanctified life. Sanctification, the status or process of the believer being made holy, is a recurring theme in Christian history. Indeed the desire for this might be reckoned as a part of the human condition: an expression of a sense of dissatisfaction, a yearning for something more, something better.³⁸ The habitués of Keswick were those evangelicals who had experienced defeat in their lives, ministries, and hopes. For by the second half of the nineteenth century, in spite of the energy and efforts of revivalists such as Moody, a tiredness had crept into evangelicalism. It was not a spent force, but there was a feeling of frustration and powerlessness among many. Earnest believers had always had a heightened sense of responsibility for the world, and when the world became more secular, and the church seemingly more marginalised, the tiredness became more of a worry; was this typical for the Christian? Thus they came for encouragement, for the Keswick message offered a new hope to tired and dispirited Christians, both clergy and lay.

Mott noted that at Keswick one could, without much difficulty, 'imagine himself at Northfield'. The student conference, he made it clear, was not to be confused with the 'Convention for the deepening of Spiritual Life' ... This was, in a sense, a distinction without a difference, because both movements shared largely in the evangelical currents that had swirled back and forth across the Atlantic ...

³⁵ Keswick was also an occasion for spiritual formation of young believers, and foreshadowed the later church camp/conference movement.

³⁶ The Primitive Methodists ran some successful camp meetings for a while but they did not generally catch on, and in August 1807 the Wesleyan Conference forbade camp meetings altogether. See J Kent, *Holding the Fort. Studies in Victorian Revivalism* (London: Epworth, 1978), 53-8, 61-2.

³⁷ See D Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain. A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 151-180.

³⁸ Cf the prevalence of the themes of alienation, *anomie*, isolation *et al* in literature, psychology and sociology.

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'I came here', announced a clergyman at the Oxford holiness conference, 'because I felt a great want in my ministry' ... The attenders of the Oxford conference, it was said, had discovered 'a secret of power in service'. The holiness movement offered what many late nineteenth century Evangelicals wanted: a means of coping with the challenges of their era.³⁹

Keswick aimed at deepening the spiritual life of the believer by a full surrender to Christ and an infilling of the Holy Spirit. This emphasis on the need for the Christian to be filled with the Spirit (for service) is a distinctive Keswick emphasis. It led naturally to teaching about living a deeper/victorious Christian life, evangelism, and missions.

They came to be part of a fellowship of like-minded people. In spite of the individualism and independent ecclesiology of many evangelicals, the idea and experience of communion and community with others was important. The tired evangelical found himself surrounded by thousands of other like-minded Christians as he was addressed by warm and inspirational speakers. It was all so very positive, and designed to encourage. Indeed Keswick was a potent expression of a grass roots ecumenism, its motto being 'All One in Christ Jesus'.

This ethos was reinforced by the setting. Keswick is in the scenic Lake District, and as Bebbington points out:

The setting was essential to the experience. 'The lovely face of nature's panorama in this valley', ran a report of the 1895 convention, 'if gazed upon with eyes sanctified by thankfulness to God for the gift and vision to appreciate its charms, must ever have a chaste and purifying effect. The consecrated Christian of all men has a right to enjoy these outer garments of creation that speak so eloquently of God's power, and wish to make all things of the soul beautiful as well as new.'⁴⁰

We see here something of that stress on feeling which was so important a part of the evangelical tradition, the antecedents of which may be seen in the Pietist movement of the previous century, and which provided an important strand in the evolving evangelical movement. This could, and often did, descend into bathos and sentimentality, and the

³⁹ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 152.

⁴⁰ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 168. He further expresses this point in his 'Evangelical Christianity and Romanticism', *Crux*, Vol.XXVI, No.1 (March 1990), 9-15. Romanticism, he writes, was

the new cultural mood which supplanted the Enlightenment at the end of the eighteenth century and in the early years of the nineteenth ... Essentially it replaced the Enlightenment's stress on reason with a new stress on will and emotion. More specifically, in the area of metaphysics there was a greater awareness of the spiritual. ... There was a feeling in the Romantics for the numinous, in mountains and seas, in dramatic panoramas. ... The music of the period illustrates the surges of feeling which were characteristic of the new cultural mood. (page 9)

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deeper-life could become a Romantic escape that enabled the individual to disengage from their culture. At another level, this stress on feeling may be seen as something of a Romantic reaction to industrialisation, and to the influence of rationalism on both church and society. But, at its best, it tapped into the emotional dimension of the faith, a dimension expressed in favourite hymns,⁴¹ extravagant sermons and 'bible readings'. This emotional dimension was linked to the will and the spirit. It was no adolescent spirituality focusing on feeling right; the Keswick experience and teaching advocated a robust spirituality that produced character, was intentional about personal godliness, and sent men and women around the world in mission. The message, the ethos and the setting all combined to make Keswick a means of revival.

They came to be informed by the teaching. This was of a piece with Bebbington's 'biblicist' principle. Bible 'readings', or expositions, were central to each convention; for deeper-life spirituality was based on the authoritative word of God. As with Puritan sermons of a previous century, the readings were never simply exegesis. Exegesis was made to serve the exposition of the text, the aim of which was to expound the devotional meaning essential for Christian living. The speakers were evangelical worthies, not chosen simply for their speaking/preaching ability but because they were exemplars of the faith; they embodied the message. There was the sense that there was something fundamental and new and necessary about Keswick. Bebbington refers to the significance of the Mildmay Conference and others: 'The network of conventions was essential to the dissemination of the new ideas.'⁴²

And they came to seek the fullness of the Spirit for service. This had to do with what Jonathan Edwards defined as the 'affections'; that is, the driving inclination or passion rather than ephemeral emotions. We see here the symbiotic relationship of Keswick with nineteenth-century Protestant missions. Evangelical spirituality flowed naturally from the conversion experience of the evangelical. And it just as naturally shaped his evangelistic and missiological agenda. The Keswick message and program also had a profound impact on missions, even though it did not emphasise missions in the early years. This was because the trustees were cautious: the primary reason for Keswick was to encourage the deeper (/higher) Christian life and they did not want anything to detract from this. There was at first no mission section and no missionary 'call'. However they soon found that missionary enthusiasm flowed

⁴¹ See I Bradley, *Abide With Me. The World of Victorian Hymns* (London: SCM, 1997).

⁴² Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 160. Also, in some sense Keswick was heir to the Puritan emphasis on didacticism; though of course a didacticism balanced by the emphasis on the need to be filled with the Spirit.

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from the emphasis on consecration and, as J Pollock points out, the missionary societies inexorably became a fundamental part of the movement.⁴³

But before Keswick began,⁴⁴ and the year after he founded *MAHA*, Macartney introduced deeper-life teaching and the convention format to Melbourne, the first such conference on mainland Australia. The date was 21-24 July, and the venue was St Mary's. About 300 attended, and Macartney set the tone with the first address 'The Lord Jesus in Union with the Believer and His Practical Power over the Soul'.⁴⁵ The St Mary's convention met a felt need of the Melbourne evangelicals and they eagerly embraced both the message and the medium. It was a catalyst and a model and, although held on Anglican premises, was intended to be interdenominational.

The deeper-life movement in Victoria was preceded by and influenced by the convention movement in Tasmania. The élan for this movement came from the Brethren who were lively and earnest, especially in the northwest of the island.⁴⁶ In January 1873 the first 'Conference for Christians' was held; the main organiser was the Rev Richard Smith, who later became a Brethren and helped found the Launceston Assembly. The following year, conferences were held at Sheffield at Christmas and Table Cape in January.⁴⁷ (Henry Reed was associated

⁴³ J Pollock, *The Keswick Story: The Authorised History of the Keswick Convention* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), 80. The whole chapter is important in describing how missions came to have a central place at Keswick. A B Simpson, the founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, found the same thing. When asked about mission, he said that he only preached a Christ-centred life, and that mission followed naturally from this focus on sanctification.

⁴⁴ Pollock, *The Keswick Story*, 51, says of Macartney:

To the Keswick of 1878 came a thick bearded visitor from Australia. Hussey Burgh Macartney was an Irishman from Trinity College, Dublin, who had migrated with his father, the first Dean of Melbourne, and became Vicar of Caulfield, a Melbourne suburb.

He did more than any man to promote Australian interest in the Church Missionary Society, and afterwards in the China Inland Mission too, and when in 1874-5 he read of Oxford and Brighton he promptly organized similar conventions in Victoria.

Pollock errs; Macartney's initiative was independent of the British movement and more influenced by the Tasmanian Brethren. See his 'Story of a Work of Grace at the North West Coast of Tasmania', *Christian Witness* (16 May 1874), 299 - an abridgment of his article in his *The Missionary at Home and Abroad* (April 1874).

⁴⁵ H B Macartney ed, *Conference Addresses delivered at St Mary's, Caulfield by ministers and laymen of different denominations* (Melbourne: Mason, Firth & McCutcheon, 1874). Dr John Singleton gave a paper on 'Rejoicing in Hope', an unselfconscious union of deeper-life spirituality and evangelical social welfare.

⁴⁶ See H Martin, *Some Brief Notes of a Visit to Tasmania during the Annual Conferences of Believers held in the North-Western District also some information concerning Times of Refreshing in the Circular Head district including Stanley, Forest, Mengha, and Irishtown* (Hobart: privately published, 1914). The impetus for this probably came from the visit of 'two travelling evangelists from the Christian Brethren assemblies in England' in 1872. See Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals*, 151ff.

⁴⁷ Elisabeth Wilson, *Email* 27 February 2006, remarked: 'I don't know that you could call the Table Cape Conference a deeper life conference - they called it a Christian's Conference and the topics were not all about the deeper life. ... They were more Bible teaching conferences for new converts. They start after Brown, Perrin and Moyes had experienced mini-revivals in Scottsdale, the Huon, the NW coast etc'. In Melbourne, in 1873, Macartney began holding 'Christian Conventions' in St Mary's. See *Australian Christian World*, 20 August 1886, 323, which refers to the 13th annual 'Christian

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with the former.) The Brethren were encouraged by two Anglican clergymen, Macartney and George Wilkinson. K Newton refers to G Wilkinson's important contribution to the development of Brethrenism in north-west Tasmania, adding: 'About this time Wilkinson voiced objections to certain Anglican practices and withdrew from that ministry to become a self-supporting lay preacher'.⁴⁸ Wilkinson later resumed his Anglican ministry and moved to Melbourne where he became a respected vicar of Holy Trinity, Williamstown. He and his family are buried in the Williamstown cemetery.

But the key person was Macartney. His enthusiasm for evangelism and missions caught the attention of the Brethren in Tasmania. M Lamb points out:

The Christian Brethren started convention movements in Tasmania even earlier - 1st Jan. 1873. H.B. Macartney had clearly been contacted by this first group. This would have been one influence on the commencement of his own *Keswick* convention a few years later. ... Victorian and Tasmanian evangelicals had close contact in those early years, probably for encouragement when the going was tough.⁴⁹

Displaying some of the headstrong characteristics of his father and race, he advised a number of Anglicans to go to Brethren assemblies because, apart from a few parishes, Tasmania diocese was not hospitable to evangelicals, especially during the reign of Bishop C H Bromby (1864-1882).

We should also note that Macartney's inspiration did not only come from the Tasmanian Brethren. Throughout the nineteenth century, evangelicals had been used to meeting in assembly for different reasons. In the 1830s they filled Exeter Hall in London to demonstrate against slavery. The Religious Worship Act of 1855 made it possible to hold church services in un-consecrated buildings, and two years later Exeter Hall was filled for twelve services for the benefit of non-churchgoers. Evangelistic meetings were held throughout Britain. There were missionary meetings, beginning perhaps, with the meetings that led to the formation of the London Missionary Society in 1795, and continuing with the yearly meetings of other

Conference' in Melbourne, which Macartney started. Leadership later passed to the Evangelisation Society of Victoria and then to the YMCA. The article wondered what the practical outcome might be, perhaps indicating that it was a bit of a talk-fest, and lacked the vibrancy of the deeper-life conventions.

⁴⁸ K Newton, *A History of the Brethren in Australia with Particular Reference to the Open Brethren* (Pasadena, Cal: Fuller Theological Seminary PhD 1990), 93.

⁴⁹ M Lamb, *Correspondence*, 14 June 1992. There was another happy outcome of Macartney's interest in Tasmania. On 7 March 1872 he married Emily Kermode, widow of Tasmanian grandee Hon Robert Quayle Kermode. See too M Lamb, "'Out of All Proportion": Christian Brethren Influence in Australian Evangelicalism' 1850-2000' in G R Treloar & R D Linder eds, *Making History for God. Essays on Evangelicalism, Revival and Mission* (Sydney: Robert Menzies College, 2004), 87-110.

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missionary societies. The nineteenth century also saw the development of synodical government in the Church of England. Arthur Burns points out that this was not, as is usually supposed, primarily for utilitarian purposes, to improve efficiency. Rather they reflected a desire for means for renewing/reviving the church.⁵⁰ And the evangelicals were in the van. All this was part of Macartney's evangelical and Anglican heritage.

Further deeper-life conferences were held until, in 1891, the local movement was especially stimulated by three related catalysts, Macartney being connected with each one: an enthusiastic Presbyterian evangelist of Scottish extraction, a volatile Church of Ireland man, and a notable conference in Geelong. See pages 169ff.

The independent Henry Varley

Henry Varley was the best-known British evangelist who visited Melbourne in the nineteenth century. In Britain and America he was a star, and he brought his celebrity status to Melbourne, whose evangelicals longed for effective evangelists. He was warmly embraced and endorsed; but many were later cautious. He was a bit too independent, and this did not fit with the locals' denominational faithfulness. According to Varley, in 1877 came a 'pressing and repeated invitation to spend some time in evangelistic work in Australia' from Theo Kitchen on behalf of the United Evangelistic Committee. (On the UEC and its succeeding nomenclature, see page 126f.)⁵¹ The invitation was attractive to Varley for a number of reasons. He was renewing acquaintances with the colony which gave him his start in business.

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Henry Varley

⁵⁰ A Burns, *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England c.1800-1870* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999). I am indebted to Dr Geoff Treloar of Sydney for this information.

⁵¹ H Varley, *Henry Varley's Life-Story* (London: Alfred Holness, nd), 121. At the conclusion of the visit, at the farewell service for Varley in the Melbourne Town Hall on 7 April 1879, Kitchen recounted how he called on Varley three years before at his Notting Hill, London, church and suggested he come to Australia. (Kitchen was a Brethren and so would have been aware of Varley through the Brethren network as well as his reputation.) However, a little later at that same meeting Varley insisted that 'he had come uninvited by any ministers, neither had he been responsible to any committee'. Cf *WW*, 18 April 1978: at a 'Conference of Christians' held in Melbourne 22 May 1878, Varley said that 'He came to these colonies, not at the invitation of anyone, but to fulfil a longstanding promise to the Lord ...' Why this distancing from the UEC? Varley tipped his hand: his independence masked a separatist streak.

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And Melbourne was not a backwater: it was the premier city of the Australian colonies, and a worthy place for an international evangelist to invest his efforts. It provided a challenge to the evangelist to go where he had not preached before, and where the evangelicals were united and earnest.⁵² And so on 5 May 1877, Varley, with a purse of sovereigns and good wishes from his Notting Hill Tabernacle, sailed on the *Collingwood* for Melbourne, arriving at the end of July. For the next five months he did the work of an evangelist in Victoria. There followed campaigns of varying length in Tasmania, Adelaide, Sydney and New Zealand. But Melbourne was his base.

This was a significant moment in Varley's career. Hitherto, the Melbourne evangelicals had known of him only by repute. But he spent a longer time in Melbourne, apart from his campaigns in the other colonies and New Zealand, than in Canada and America, or Scotland and Ireland.⁵³ Thus he established himself as an important figure in the history of evangelism in Melbourne. He would be near his children who had or would settle in Melbourne. And a decade later he would return again and call Melbourne home. His visit was significant for Melbourne too. The evangelicals were already lively and determined, and Varley's ministry added to this. Many people were won to the Lord, and the faithful rallied and encouraged. There was opposition of course. Varley was outspoken about most things and in a way that attracted the attention, and the annoyance, of the secular press, notably the *Argus*, which did not appreciate his kind of evangelism or his meddling in society's affairs. There was also some church opposition.

Varley spoke in the central business district of Melbourne, the suburbs, and country centres. Whenever he could, he chose neutral ground. The Athenaeum Hall in Collins Street was a regular venue: it was central and had not yet acquired the aura of exclusivity that it assumed in the 1880s. Prayer was an important, and routine, part of his ministry, and he held regular noon prayer meetings in the smaller downstairs hall. Not that Varley initiated these meetings:

⁵² Indeed, during the time of Varley's ministry the evangelicals sought to institutionalise their unity. 'On Friday evening last about sixty ministers and laymen, representing the various denominations of evangelical Christians, met in the Association Hall, Russell-street to consider the advisability of forming an Evangelical Alliance in Victoria. *WW* 27 October 1877, 10. An Evangelical Alliance had been formed in 1856 with the Congregationalist Rev Richard Fletcher and the Anglican Judge Robert Pohlman leading figures. It met quarterly. However it became more and more polemical and anti-Catholic and did not last long. Bishop Perry gave the first paper, on Christian union, but soon dissociated himself from it. See A de Q Robin, *Charles Perry. Bishop of Melbourne. The Challenges of a Colonial Episcopate, 1847-76* (Nedlands: Univ of Western Australia Press, 1967), 139.

⁵³ He originally intended to leave Melbourne at beginning of December (*WW*, 24 Nov 1877, 44), however a letter from the Tabernacle (*WW*, 8 Dec 1877, 64) gave him confidence to extend his visit. On behalf of the church, Jesse Stockford assured him of the church's prayers for him and his family and reported that the church and its various organisations were going well; 46 people had been baptised, 66 received into communion and 50 welcomed into membership. And Varley was encouraged to read: 'Your dear son, Harry, has so many calls for his service that we seldom have him with us on the Sunday, and having so many duties to attend to, has been obliged to resign his post as secretary. We also pray for him that he may be greatly used of God ...'

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they were already part of the evangelical scene in Melbourne, Macartney having begun them in 1875.⁵⁴ A number of evangelistic services were held in the larger upstairs hall. The Temperance Hall in Russell Street was another popular venue. It was not exactly neutral ground for the non-believer, but temperance was an approved cause for many nineteenth-century evangelicals, and Varley had no hesitation in declaring his total abstinence.

In England at this time, some daring churchmen had advocated and were using theatres and public halls for 'popular' services to reach the unchurched masses. Varley followed suit, and held evangelistic services in the Theatre Royal in Bourke Street, between Swanston and Russell Streets. Opened in July 1855, it did not have the best reputation in its early years when its vestibule and the adjoining Royal Hotel were used as dallying places by prostitutes. But by the late 1870s it had become a respectable theatre, and a 'natural' venue for a revivalist to address large crowds of the curious, the unchurched, and the faithful.

If anyone had ventured to prophesy six months ago that in the heart of the city of Melbourne, a vast concourse of people would gather week after week for prayer and praise, no one would have believed it. And yet so it has been. And these gatherings in the Assembly Hall, in the Collins-street Independent Church, in the Baptist Church, and in the Athenaeum, bear witness to the fact that a great quickening of spiritual life has taken place ... we refer to the crowds gathered in the Town Hall night after night ... Think of the Temperance Hall filled every Saturday with children and young people; think of the numbers, many hundreds, in fact, who have stood up at these meetings to testify their reception of Christ; think of the vast audiences that thronged the Town Hall ... and of the hundreds here also, who by rising to their feet signified their faith in Jesus as their own Saviour ...⁵⁵

The most central venue was the Melbourne Town Hall in Swanston Street; and as Varley became better known, the United Evangelistic Association (UEA - see below) hired it for regular Sunday evening services. These services were mainly for non-church-goers and were successful. They might have passed without notice except that Varley did not confine himself to simply 'preaching the gospel'. At a November meeting, with James Balfour in the chair, and following addresses by Macartney and the Rev S C Kent,⁵⁶ Varley spoke on 'The Social Evil', ie fornication and prostitution. He graphically described the results of fornication on young men, quoted Paul's words that it was good for a man not to touch a woman, and

⁵⁴ *WW*, 8 February 1878, 51.

⁵⁵ *WW*, 27 October 1877, 9.

⁵⁶ S C Kent was a prominent Sydney Congregationalist minister who moved south of the Murray, became an Anglican, played a leading role in the evangelical network, and was one of the local evangelists in the 1902 Torrey-Alexander mission.

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lamented the numbers of prostitutes in Melbourne: 'I know of no other city, the size of Melbourne, that has so many prostitutes in it'. Varley was simply adding a bit of hyperbole to the current evangelical practice of speaking out on perceived social practices and evils that were contrary to the gospel.

Not all approved though. The *Argus* made some denigratory comments on revivalism and Varley. On 7 December 1877 it carried a report of Dr A N Somerville, who had recently been in Melbourne and was then in Brisbane.⁵⁷ According to the report, in a meeting there he harangued a number of young women, causing them great distress. The writer was incensed:

Everyone knows them for exemplars of all that is innocent and pure in girlhood, and a sentiment of deep indignation pervaded all but the fatuous circles of evangelicalism at the cruel torture arising from the conceited assumption of infallible insight by a sensational travelling preacher. ...

The *Argus* tarred Varley with the same brush. On 10 December, 4-5 the leading editorial said:

.. in our own city there have been some very strange evangelical proceedings. A Mr Henry Varley, who has been run after even more than Dr Somerville was when he was here, like Dr.Somerville, has been addressing separate audiences of men and women. Now, we hold it to be in itself an outrage upon propriety this assembling of men and women separately to receive religious instruction and admonition. There is nothing that a Christian gentleman can have to say to either sex that is unfit for the ears of the other.

From behaviour the editorial turned to character.

So far as we are aware he was never called to the ministry except by his own vanity, was never educated or trained for it, and never showed any qualifications or aptitude for the performance of the duties of the pulpit except the confidence that comes of ignorance and presumption. Yet this man has arrogated to himself the power to impute and remit sin. ...

It reported that a Councillor Patterson had protested to the Public Works Committee about Varley being allowed to use the hall, a protest the *Argus* endorsed: 'We hope that the City

⁵⁷ See SC, 11 January 1879.

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Council will support its committee in the determination at which they have arrived, and that the chief meeting hall of the city will not again be disgraced by such proceedings ...'

The Town Hall doors were shut and the UEA was forced to move the services to the Temperance Hall.⁵⁸ But Varley, never one to turn the other cheek, promptly wrote to the City Council protesting the action of the Public Works Committee, in particular referring to 'the untrue and exaggerated reports in circulation, and the libellous statements of a portion of the Press, which, as one having a public character to maintain, he should not quietly submit to'. For this was not the first time the *Argus* had referred to him. In his preface to the second edition of his address, *Mr. Varley's Full Address on "the Social Evil" delivered at the Town Hall, Melbourne*,⁵⁹ Varley said in his introduction: 'In March, 1875, when I was in New York, gathering as many as twenty thousand persons to the meetings, and my friend Mr. Moody was carrying on a much more remarkable work in England and Scotland, the *Argus* assailed us in the most unscrupulous manner.' He went on to defend his speaking on the topic, and mention darkly in one sentence his distress over 'a recent royal visit' and 'elegantly furnished brothels', and then his own visit to the then notorious red light district of Little Bourke Street. The Council overruled the Public Works Committee, and the Town Hall was again crowded on Sunday evenings. *WW* (29 December 1877, 5) triumphantly announced: 'In answer to much prayer that had gone up from many hearts, once more God opened the closed doors of the above building, and again an immense throng of people were there assembled to hear God's honoured servant.'

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Rev Samuel Chapman

But of the city churches, only Collins Street Baptist Church opened its doors for Varley to preach. Its pastor, the Rev Samuel Chapman (1831-99), was born in Sheffield, England, and studied at the University of Edinburgh and Rawdon College. He then pastored Baptist

⁵⁸ The editor of *Willing Work* was under no illusions as to who was to blame for the locked doors. In an editorial 15 December 1877, 71, he referred to the 'enemies of religion and morality [who] misrepresent the words of social reformers' and commented: 'The *Argus*, as the well-known opponent of the Gospel, has taken occasion from what we believe to be a distortion of an incident of one of Dr. Somerville's meetings at Brisbane, to make a most unwarrantable attack on that eminent minister of Christ, and deemed it a suitable opportunity to attack Mr. Varley also.' See too Serle, *The Rush to be Rich*, 153-178.

⁵⁹ (Melbourne: C T Scown, 1878). Varley made great use of the printed word. *WW*, 15 August 1879, 110, stated that over 80 000 of his printed addresses had been distributed.

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churches in Birmingham, Rochdale, and Hope Street, Edinburgh. He might have continued with an impressive ministry in Britain but his wife's poor health led him to accept a call from the Collins Street church, and in 1877 the 46-year-old Chapman began his dynamic 22 year incumbency at Melbourne's leading Baptist Church, and as the acknowledged leader of the Baptists.⁶⁰

The deacons had chosen well. Chapman gained renown as a pastor, as a preacher, and as vitally concerned with moral and social issues.⁶¹ Like the pastors of the other city churches there was no bifurcation in his thinking between social and evangelistic causes. The church grew, Chapman building on the quiet, substantial foundations James Martin had laid. And when in 1885 the renovation of the church meant that the congregation met in the Theatre Royal, more than two thousand attended special evening services. Chapman was deeply pious, a great supporter of the developing Keswick movement, and fervently evangelistic; he had no trouble identifying with Varley's message and method. And the Baptists generally supported, and benefited, from Somerville's and Varley's evangelism. K Manley comments:

... At these Melbourne services there had been over 1,000 responses to the non-denominationalist evangelist Varley. ... During 1877-78 an increase of almost 15% in church membership was recorded, due at least in part to these evangelistic meetings. These revivalistic successes both reflected and shaped the optimism of the Baptist Association.⁶²

The evangelical liberal Bishop James Moorhouse (1876-86) also filled the Town Hall on a number of occasions; but his broad church, scholarly apologia to the cultured despisers of Christianity was a long way from Varley's populist revivalism.⁶³ However, for all its cutting words about Varley and Somerville, the *Argus* was not as a matter of policy antipathetic to Christianity or the church. It is instructive to note that at the same time it respectfully carried full reports of Moorhouse's expositions of John's gospel to a crowded cathedral. Only a week prior to its attack on Varley it said in an editorial (1 December 1877, 4):

⁶⁰ He was President of the Baptist Association of Victoria 1879-80 (note the date), 1884-6, 1888-9, and led in the foundation of the Baptist College of Victoria and the Victorian Baptist Fund.

⁶¹ And missions of course. He was a supporter of the China Inland Mission, with whom his daughter went to China.

⁶² K Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to 'Eternity': a History of Australian Baptists. Vol 1: Growing and Australian Church* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 78.

⁶³ Of the pastors of the city churches, Chapman was the most obvious evangelical. Moorhouse's St Paul's Cathedral was a block away, and the Rev Charles Strong was preaching unorthodoxy at Scots Church, just a few doors up from Chapman's church. Not unexpectedly, Strong 'was critical of revival meetings, as tending to crush out mental life, and of evangelistic work in the Melbourne area by Rev Dr A.N.Somerville (1813-89) of the Free Church in Glasgow'. R Ward, *History of Scots Church* (forthcoming) chapter 9. See too *The Presbyterian Review*, July 1978, 85-6; January 1879, 302.

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Judging by what has transpired since the arrival of the present bishop of Melbourne, we are not venturing on a very hazardous prophecy when we say that the right rev gentleman is destined to play an important part in this community. There is a breadth and liberality about his views which must gain him a hearing among those who turn with disgust from the narrow creeds and dogmatic utterances which constitute the ordinary stock in trade of average theologians. ... He evidently sees that if Christianity is to stand the test of an age distinguished by its intellectual daring and critical acumen it must commend itself to the judgement of all men by its influence on society, and its evident ability to supply the wants and aspirations of humanity. ..

One suspects that Bishop Perry would not have endorsed the free-wheeling Varley. Moorhouse's successor Field Flowers Goe (1887-1901) hosted and spoke favourable words about the mercurial George Grubb (whose theology was not all that different to Varley's, and who later became a Baptist), but Grubb was an ordained Church of Ireland minister.⁶⁴ In those pre-ecumenical days a bishop was always a bishop and could not embrace too closely someone from another church, especially if that person's ecclesiology was ambivalent. Varley's support was non- rather than inter-denominational; neither he nor his ministry were officially acknowledged by the mainline churches.⁶⁵

In the nineteenth century when communication was slower and travel more leisurely, evangelists tended to stay longer in a place than they do today. Varley did not put down permanent roots in Melbourne, but he stayed for some time, time enough to engage in evangelistic work beyond the city centre. He was encouraged to do this because of his general acceptance, his affection for Melbourne, because Melbourne was an important city, and because the suburbs were burgeoning. Though he did not realise it at the time, he was laying a base for his longer stay in 1888-96. Thus he spoke at a number of churches of different denominations, church halls, and town halls of suburbs such as Collingwood, Carlton, Prahran, South Yarra, Brunswick, Fitzroy, Sandridge and Emerald Hill (now South Melbourne). The meetings were faithfully and fulsomely reported by *WW*.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ On Grubb see pages 169ff.

⁶⁵ A Deane, *The Contribution of the New Evangelical Movements of the Late Nineteenth Century to Evangelical Enterprise in Australia, 1870-1920* (Univ of Sydney MA, 1983), 61, draws attention to Varley's evident evangelistic success, and the clerical reserve:

A report on those [Town Hall] meetings made at the time claimed that they were the most remarkable gospel services that Melbourne had ever witnessed. [the source was Macartney's monthly journal *The Missionary At Home And Abroad* 1 August & 1 October 1877] The Town Hall was filled, night after night. Significantly, employers later bore witness to the edifying influence of Varley's ministry on their employees. Surprisingly, however, Varley subsequently wrote of the lack of support he found from Melbourne's ministers. He attributed this to lack of spiritual power, worldliness and what he called a dwarfed Christian life within the churches.

⁶⁶ For example, at the first service at Emerald Hill,

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Also of interest were Varley's visits to Pentridge Gaol in November and December of 1877. The initiative for these probably came from the redoubtable Dr John Singleton who, as well as his medical practice and social work in Collingwood, regularly visited Pentridge from his arrival in Victoria just after gold was discovered.⁶⁷ With the permission of the governor, Sunday afternoon services were held, first for the women prisoners and then the men. Varley was accompanied by the Melbourne United Evangelistic Choir, the (well-respected Congregationalist) Rev W H Lawrence, and Singleton. By and large there was a good response, except for the jail chaplain who protested against Varley's method and message. His protest though fell on deaf ears and the governor permitted Varley to return for another service on Saturday 29 December (and later on Sunday 12 January 1888). Singleton commented, noting Varley's appeal:

For forty-seven years I have been in the habit of visiting prisons, but never before witnessed such rapt, respectful attention, and deep feeling as on those occasions were aroused by the faithful, intelligent, and heart searching declarations of the Gospel, delivered by this earnest servant of God, who, it could be plainly seen by all appeared deeply to sympathise with them as men of like passions, rights, privileges, as well as responsibilities, as he himself had.⁶⁸

Varley spoke at only a few country centres: Sandhurst (Bendigo), Blackwood, and Geelong, where he stayed for two weeks. Geelong was the largest provincial city in Victoria; he was familiar with it from his time there in the 1850s; and it had a significant evangelical presence. Canon George Goodman of Christ Church and the Rev A J Campbell of St George's Presbyterian Church were staunch evangelicals; the Methodists had had a strong work there since before Separation; Aberdeen Street Baptist, with the Rev C W Bunning as pastor,⁶⁹

The [Wesleyan] church was crowded, it was calculated that there could not have been fewer than 1000 people present, ... A more earnest and attentive audience never collected around a preacher. ... The results of the four services are certainly very cheering: no fewer than 117 in all stood up and professed to have found Christ. ... On the whole, we believe that nowhere have Mr. Varley's meetings been more successful than in Sandridge, and the feeling of regret is universal that he had not more time to give to a place where he was so "gladly received" and where his words were clearly attended by so much power.

Thirty stood at the Prahran Town Hall meeting on 15 October, and another thirty were counselled after the meetings in the Wesleyan Church in Brunswick Street Fitzroy on 18-19 October. *WW*, 3 November 1877, 23-4.

⁶⁷ See J Singleton, *A Narrative of Incidents in the Eventful Life of a Physician* (Melbourne: M L Hutchinson, 1891). Singleton was a voluntary visitor to jails for over 60 years. See too G Davison, D Dunstan and C McConville eds, *The Outcasts of Melbourne. Essays in Social History* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1985), 8-10, 24, 25, 79.

⁶⁸ *WW*, 12 January 1878, 21.

⁶⁹ See too C Skinner, *Lamplighter and Son* (Nashville: Broadman, 1984), 15. Another English visitor at this time, on a tour of the Antipodes, was Thomas Spurgeon, the 21-year-old son of the famous London preacher. He preached in the Aberdeen Street Church in September and November, and

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had for many years flourished and planted other Baptist churches in the city; and there had been a Brethren Assembly since 1866.⁷⁰ Apart from the noon prayer meetings, services were held in the Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist, and Wesleyan churches and the Mechanics' Institute where the three final services were held on Sunday 23 December.⁷¹ He also visited and distributed his printed addresses to the sailors on *HMVS Cerberus* which was in port at the time. There was a mood of buoyancy and expectancy, and regret that Varley had to go.⁷²

Varley returned to Melbourne for a moving watch night service in the Temperance Hall on the last night of 1877, and for more meetings in January. He spoke again in the Temperance Hall to 4-500 young converts and enquirers, at Pentridge, and at the Melbourne Town Hall. He crowned his Melbourne ministry with a Monday evening service on at St Kilda beach when he baptised 120 before a crowd of 700. This was ill advised; there was a warm collegiality among Victorian evangelicals, but people were cautious of anything that might be construed as being too independent or smacked of sheep stealing. He was accused of advising new converts at the Albert Street Baptist church in East Melbourne to become Baptist, and of being a Brethren! In his defence, a letter to *WW* (15 February 1878, 60) pointed out that the loyal churchman H B Macartney was his friend, and that he had refused the use of a Baptist baptistry lest he be accused of favouring one denomination. In the 8 March edition (pages 65, 84) in his own defence he described the founding of his Free Tabernacle in London, his association with Christians of all denominations, that he was not a Plymouth Brethren, and that he did not intend to start a new denomination.

However, by this time Varley was exhausted, and on Tuesday 22 January he and Sarah and their son Thomas (born 1866) boarded the *SS Derwent* and sailed to Tasmania to escape

again in 1880 (That year the members also heard the local evangelists the Rev A J Clark and the converted Jewess Emilia Baeyertz preach from their pulpit.), and in 1884 was guest preacher at the Melbourne Town Hall. The name was magic, evangelism was in the air, and there was a lot of interest and enthusiasm from Baptists and non-Baptists alike, but his presence was not really important. He 'preached the gospel', but his was really just a minor-celebrity visit. Thomas, though lionised as the son of a famous father, did not settle in Australia, but later accepted a call to the Auckland Tabernacle.

⁷⁰ Also, Somerville had not long left for Brisbane. *WW*, 27 October 1877, 10, included the following statistics of his Geelong visit:

Twenty-one different meetings were held, besides four after-meetings, 22,284 persons estimated to have attended; 329 requests for prayer sent to noon-day prayer meeting; twenty-five requests for thanksgiving sent to noon-day prayer meeting; sixteen different ministers took part in the meetings; forty-four ladies and gentlemen formed the choir; sixteen gentlemen acted as stewards. The expenses connected with the mission amounted to £8, the whole of which was met by voluntary contributions.

⁷¹ He did not speak in Christ Church though. He was too independent for the Cambridge-educated Canon Goodman.

⁷² *WW*, 5 Jan 1878, 12, commented: 'This meeting closed the series of meetings in Geelong, and it believed that had Mr. Varley been able to make a longer stay in that town, there would have been a wide spread awakening, as the interest seemed to be growing rapidly.' However his visit was not without criticism. The *Geelong Advertiser* (11 December 1877) noted that he had earlier been accused of 'intemperate and questionable language used at a men only service'. The 14 December edition followed this with a leading article on the alleged utterances of Varley 'and others'.

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the Melbourne summer, to recover his strength, and to engage in ministry in the island colony. Their sojourn lasted from February to April. Then, after being farewelled at Kings Wharf, Launceston, by a crowd singing some of Sankey's songs, the Varleys sailed back to Melbourne on the *Mangana* with Emilia Baeyertz, arriving on Saturday 4 May. Varley was not sure whether to stay in Melbourne or go to Adelaide. His Melbourne supporters wanted him to stay of course: *WW* (26 April 1878, 139) said that 'Melbourne with its more than 200 000 souls, its vice and its iniquity, its various forms of erroneous teaching ... needs the vigorous proclamation of that gospel'. So he did both, staying in Melbourne until Thursday 23 May. He picked up his previous ministry in the suburbs, Pentridge, and the Melbourne Town Hall, continuing to draw large crowds.

But his success was not unalloyed. The day before he left for ministry in Adelaide he spoke at a Conference for Christians in the Temperance Hall. The purpose of this meeting was not evangelistic but 'the edification of believers through their growth in the Lord Jesus Christ'.⁷³ It was meant to be an expression of grass roots evangelical ecumenism. However it did not fulfil the hopes of the organisers. Most of Melbourne's Protestant ministers had been invited but very few came; it seems that reports of Varley's ecclesiology caused misgivings. He recognised this when he referred to a minister who drew back from fellowship because he had heard that when Varley returned from Adelaide he intended to build a non-denominational church along the lines of his London church.⁷⁴

It was Somerville who suggested this to Varley, and there was a meeting to discuss the proposal in a lower room of the Melbourne Town Hall. It was a tempting suggestion: 'Tabernacles were the evangelists' dream. Baptist Charles H. Spurgeon built Metropolitan Tabernacle in South London, and Congregationalists John Campbell and Joseph Parker built Moorfields Tabernacle and City Temple to draw crowds of working class Londoners.'⁷⁵ It was proposed to call it the Metropolitan Tabernacle, obviously in imitation of Spurgeon's church. Did Varley or his supporters see him as an antipodean Spurgeon? Did he encourage this idea in any way? In any case it never really looked like getting off the ground. The loyally supportive *WW* (25 October 1878, 349) commented: 'We have noticed with regret a desire to depreciate the reality and permanency of the good effects of Mr. Varley's ministry.' Varley did little to help such reports when he declined to give an undertaking that he would not do this. 'Speaking of the proposed Gospel Tabernacle, and after referring to his thankfulness for the interest taken in it, he says, "I do not believe our Lord needs buildings so much as living men

⁷³ The idea might have come from the Conference of Christian Workers which met quarterly in London, which was really an association of evangelists, and in which Varley and Harry Moorhouse were prominent.

⁷⁴ *WW*, 28 June 1878, 215.

⁷⁵ N H Murdoch, *Origins of the Salvation Army* (Knoxville, Tenn: Univ of Tennessee Press, 1994), 59.

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and women whose hearts are full of goodness and love. ...”⁷⁶ This is true enough; but Varley had not hesitated to build and delight in his London tabernacle. His words were an exercise in self justification, as well as a typical independent criticism of denominationalism.

In counterpart with this was the formation of the Metropolitan Evangelistic Association (MEA) in March 1878. Of these proposals, two things stand out: (1) ‘Metropolitan’ carried echoes of his friend Spurgeon’s church, appealed to those believers who revered the London preacher, and implied, if not gave, credence to Varley’s Melbourne effort. (2) It was an attempt to institutionalise Varley’s activism. He was doubtless thinking of making Melbourne his home base rather than his London Tabernacle. Varley’s vision lingered. He and his friends had still not given up on building their own tabernacle. In August the MEA announced that it proposed to build an unsectarian hall capable of holding 3-4000. The staunch Irish-born Presbyterian R S Anderson MLC would be president and Singleton treasurer *pro tem*, and set out the organisation and management. But missing were other evangelical leaders.⁷⁷

At another Conference for Christians on 10 September 1878 in the Temperance Hall, in his closing address, Varley deplored the number of different denominations. But this was more than just a motherhood statement; Varley had an agenda, as the evangelical leadership recognised. They did not have too much trouble with denominational differences, and their growing ambivalence spilled over into disquiet.⁷⁸ The London Brethren publication *Missionary Echo* (1878), 80, added a reference to the clerical hesitation in supporting him and bad reports in newspapers:

Even when, in consequence of his outspokenness about the truth, most of the ministers had deserted him, God still stood by His servant, and the hall was crammed, mostly by non-churchgoers. The number really converted we cannot estimate. One meeting sometimes a hundred professed Christ, and the influence of the work is felt over all the city in the changed life of many citizens. [*sic*]

And so, in 1879, Varley returned to London. There had been criticism from some, non-support from some clergy, and the proposed Metropolitan Tabernacle did not get off the ground. But his stay had been more than moderately successful. It is difficult to quantify the results as few statistics are given, the language is always flowery and positive, and the

⁷⁶ *WW*, 5 July 1878, 222. But the churches were wary, and his words were to haunt him.

⁷⁷ *SC*, 27 July 1878, 2; 3 August 1878, 2.

⁷⁸ For example, *SC*, 23 March 1878, 1, carried an editorial on Varley’s false accusation against a Mr Fawns, a respected citizen of Launceston and chief elder in Presbyterian Church, that he gained a lot of his wealth from public houses, which were a source of immorality. The 18 April 1878 edition carried an editorial on Varley as a fighter, and pointing out that the *SC* did not endorse everything he said or did.

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evidence buoyantly impressionistic. As grateful as they were for the number of people converted through Varley's evangelism, the evangelicals sensed the need for a focal point of leadership, and unity. They had rejoiced to see and hear of Varley's evangelistic successes. But would he dominate Melbourne – like his friends Spurgeon and Moody in their respective bailiwicks? No. Quite apart from Varley having itchy feet, the local leadership was not inclined to be dragged along on his coat-tails; they looked to themselves for leadership and unity.

The (Melbourne) United Evangelistic Association

Fitchett's SC, representing 'mainstream' evangelicalism, expressed concern that the MEA threatened evangelical unity. Singleton wrote chiding the SC for criticising the MEA. The SC replied that, though it respected Singleton, it had problems with the ostentatious exclusion of ministers from the management of the MEA. Then, on 3 July 1878, the United Evangelistic Association (UEA) was formed at a meeting in the Assembly Hall at which Somerville presided.⁷⁹ The first act was to hold a United Communion Service – the sacrament of unity – on 1 August in the Town Hall at which 3/4000 were present, and the respected Dr Adam Cairns presided.⁸⁰ The new organisation was a focal point of unity and leadership: the adjective 'United' was deliberate and characteristic of the Melbourne evangelicals throughout the nineteenth century. It provided cohesion and direction of evangelistic efforts, and put things on a more permanent footing.

As may be seen in the membership of the UEA, and the names mentioned in other chapters of this thesis, evangelical leadership in colonial Melbourne was not *ad hoc*. Many were parish men who also laboured evangelistically outside of their church's boundaries. It was inter- not non-denominational. It was consensual. It was outstanding: see English evangelist George Clarke's comment on the Melbourne leadership, page 147. Many were leaders in their denominations, and their denominations accordingly experienced growth from their labours. They included Macartney, the Presbyterians Balfour and Cairns, the Brethren Kitchen and C Edwin Good,⁸¹ the Baptists Chapman and A Bird, and the Methodists A R Edgar and J Watsford, men of initiative and drive. No one man dominated.

⁷⁹ SC 12 July 1879, 3. In the 20 July edition (page 2), Fitchett asked his readers to support the UEA. A two page supplement in the 10 August edition carried a full report of the beginning of the organisation, and an editorial on Somerville.

⁸⁰ During its history the organisation has gone through five changes of name: United Evangelisation Association, Evangelisation Society of Victoria, Evangelisation Society of Australasia, Evangelisation Society of Australia, and ESA = Equipping, Serving, Assisting Ministries.

⁸¹ SC editorial 10 August 1878, 1, congratulated the UEA on appointing Good secretary. He had shown 'foresight, promptitude and precision' in working with Dr Somerville; was very efficient with 'business habits, large experience and the recommendation of success'; had been associated with Moody and Sankey in London where he exercised 'active superintendence of extensive evangelical organisation in the city of London'; and had established a mission station in NSW, including a large

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Varley's non-membership of the UEA did not mean a diminution of evangelism in Melbourne. From its beginning, the UEA exemplified its *raison d'être*, and the leadership were not shy of evangelistic work in working-class suburbs. For example, a Melbourne Gospel Tent was purchased and set up in Sackville Street, Collingwood, to reach 'the poorer classes of the city'. The venture met a need: *WW* (10 May 1878) reported: 'We are glad to be able to report the continued success of the meetings held in the Gospel Tent in Collingwood.'⁸² The Gospel Tent was not alone. The *SC* (23 November 1878, 1) also carried a pamphlet advertising the Collingwood United Evangelistic Hall and Coffee Rooms whose referees included J M Bruce (YMCA), Dr A Cairns,⁸³ S C Kent, J King (Congregationalist), P Kitchen, H A Langley (St Matthew's Prahran), and the Rev W Poole (Baptist). The report noted the outgrowth of work recently carried out in connection with the Melbourne Gospel Tent, the Young Men's Bible Class, Sunday School, evangelistic services, mothers' sowing meeting, and the Band of Hope meeting. In October the tent was moved to South Yarra where a number of navvies were building a railway line. There it was also used as a temporary coffee house for the navvies.⁸⁴

Macartney was absent during this busy time. In 1877 he and his wife Emily visited New Zealand, and then spent most of 1878 in England where (in the wake of the Moody and Sankey campaign) he visited the Keswick, Dublin, and Mildmay Conventions, and prominent Brethren and Anglican churchmen and evangelical personalities of the day. When visiting the leading Brethren Sir Edward Denny (with whom Moody, George Müller and others stayed), he saw 'a drawing room evangelistic service held for over 200 aristocratic young men'. Before the trip, as well as deeper-life meetings and missions, Macartney had been deeply involved in evangelistic endeavours. The trip 'home' vitalised him; and on his return, in February 1879, aware of the disunity while he was away, he was ready to pour his energy and enthusiasm into the two strenuous decades that remained to him.

hall. In short, 'members of our churches may have perfect confidence in Mr Good's loyalty to church order. In full communion with one of our city congregations, and warmly attached to the denomination to which he belongs, he has shown no trace of denominational bias in prosecuting the labours of an evangelical character in which he has been so largely engaged.' I am indebted to Elisabeth Wilson of Hobart for this observation: *Email* 17 January 2011. She adds: 'I actually wonder if the editor is emphasising his reliability and lack of bias because he was with the Brethren (notice this is carefully not stated), and wants to allay fears'

⁸² *WW* later said of the Gospel Tent: 'One of these useful and much used means of gathering-in the masses to hear the Gospel has been set, now for some weeks, in North Fitzroy and Fitzroy. We hear that the Christians engaged in Gospel testimony have received encouragement.' *WW*, 18 February 1880, 53. Varley was not involved in these ventures. Perhaps he and his supporters thought that public buildings and churches were more readily and more conveniently available

⁸³ *SC*, 28 September 1878, 2, contains almost a whole page honouring Cairns' jubilee. See *SC*, 5 February 1881, 2, for Cairns' obituary, and R Ward ed, *Presbyterian Leaders in Nineteenth Century Australia* (Wantirna, Vic: R Ward, 1993), 55-69.

⁸⁴ *SC*, 19 October 1878, 2. See too 2 November 1878, 2, for a report on its use.

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In April 1879 a Conference for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness was held in the Temperance Hall in Russell Street.⁸⁵ This was followed by two Christian Conferences in April and June. The April conference saw evangelical worthies present, the United Evangelistic Choir singing, and Varley presiding (a sign of evangelical inclusiveness). He invited Macartney (recently returned from England) to give an address on 1 John 1:3 – ‘that which we have seen and heard we proclaim to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.’ – the text chosen to emphasise the gospel and Christian unity. During May, preparatory prayer meetings were held in city and suburbs for the June conference. This was intended to keep the pot boiling, and leadership and initiative with UEA. (Those present included James Balfour (president), J F Horsley, H A Langley, Macartney, R V Danne, and C Edwin Good and the prominent Brethren evangelist Harrison Ord.) The SC included a long report of the conference, which was deemed to be a pronounced success.⁸⁶ This was followed by a UEA Christian Conference Breakfast in the Café Gunsler in Collins Street on 27 June. Present were about 100 who had been invited by Balfour.⁸⁷

* * * *

Church life and evangelical activism continued to be vital, committed and widespread throughout the 1870s. Evangelism was vigorously promoted by many lesser-known local evangelists, who should not be overlooked, as well as the ones mentioned above. The evangelical public was informed and encouraged by the publication of Macartney’s monthly *The Missionary At Home and Abroad* and Fitchett’s fortnightly *Southern Cross*. Conferences – deeper-life, prophetic, teaching (‘Christian’) - were held to meet the different aspects of evangelical spirituality and became part of evangelical life. Evangelism was prepared for and sustained by prayer - individual prayer, prayer unions (societies), and prayer meetings. The Christian life, with reference to such as Hudson Taylor and other exemplars, was commonly set forth as a heroic life of prayer.⁸⁸ Stemming from the early decades of the Port Phillip era, the evangelical movement was characterised by a broad-based grass-roots ecumenism, apart from such as Varley. (who went back to England, but returned a decade later, this time to settle for eight years.) At the end of the 1870s, this ecumenism saw the beginning of a united interdenominational evangelical organisation focused on evangelism, and which was to prove crucial in the rest of the colonial era and beyond. Macartney returned from a lengthy

⁸⁵ SC, 12 April 1879, 2; 19 April 1879, 3; 24 May, 3. The 27-29 May 1879, edition carried reports of prayer meetings.

⁸⁶ SC, 5 July 1879. 2 & 3. The edition included three long columns honouring Macartney Senior’s 80th birthday.

⁸⁷ SC, 12 July 1879, 3.

⁸⁸ At the end of December 1878, the Evangelical Alliance issued its annual invitation to a Week of United Universal Prayer. SC, 21 December 1878, 3.

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and refreshing trip to the old country, full of ideas and enthusiasm. The marvellous Melbourne decade was about to begin. What would he and his colleagues do? Would the élan they hitherto displayed continue?

Chapter 7

Evangelism in the 'Marvellous Melbourne' Decade (the 1880s)

Colonial Melbourne was initially founded mainly by venture capitalists who came seeking land and profits. The following decades saw businesses, commerce and industry which, fed by capital from London investors eager to profit from the burgeoning, buoyant colony, grow and flourish. The madcap development saw some land values in the 1880s rise as high as those in central London. Railway lines snaked out to the burgeoning suburbs (resulting in windfalls for some speculators). Lavish buildings sprang up around the city (building activity increased by 50% when national output rose by only 25%) in grand architectural styles and often in bluestone, which gave Melbourne much of its character. It could not last of course; there was too much speculation based on easy finance and too rapid expansion. The boom burst in the early 1890s and the resultant economic depression bankrupted and devastated individuals, banks and businesses. This too was a symbol of Melbourne capitalism.

This was also a golden age of church building; church attendances were healthy, more so than in England;¹ there were lively theological discussions; and religion was news. The major dailies carried regular reports of sermons for Monday publication, and pronouncements of leading churchmen. But, as in the northern hemisphere, the challenges posed by science and biblical criticism to faith and orthodoxy were a concern for many. Any hope of a particular church being established had long since evaporated. Even the idea of Christianity maintaining its *de facto* establishment status seemed to be under threat with the increase of secularism and alternative forms of belief. And there were the predictable lamentations by churchmen of the drift from traditional Judeo-Christian moorings. Thus there were still plenty of sinners to be saved, the malignant forces of secularism and infidelity to be countered, and the unorthodoxy of the Rev Charles Strong of Scots Church to be resisted. A climax came in 1883 with the address by Justice George Higinbotham in Strong's church on 'Science and Religion', in which he

denounced the clergy for ignorance and dogmatic theology, [and] called on the laity to abandon the churches and the supernatural and to meet on the high central plane of

¹ Cf G Blainey, *Our Side of the Country. The Story of Victoria* (Melbourne: Methuen Haynes, 1984), 113; W Phillips, 'Statistics on Church Going and Sunday School Attendance in Victoria, 1851-1901', *Australian Historical Statistics* 5 (1982), 27-40; 'Statistics on Religious Affiliation in Australia 1891-1961'. *Australian Historical Statistics* 4 (1981), 5-15.

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thought - .. God, revealed anew to the intellect, and also to the responsive heart, as the Father, Friend, the Guide and also to the Support of our race ... and also in the sublimest life, of Jesus of Nazareth, the Light of the World.²

Alfred Deakin referred to Higinbotham's 'holiness of purpose', but the conservative churchmen of Melbourne were unhappy with his (Higinbotham's) fervid vapourings.

A more abrasive counterpart was the arrival the following year of Joseph Syme. Syme was a tall, colourful, and dignified ex-Wesleyan minister who had been sent by the militantly atheist MP for Northampton, Charles Bradlaugh, at the request of the Australian Secular Association.³ With all the enthusiasm and conviction of the convert, Syme held well-attended public lectures and debates in which he excoriated Christianity, and just about everybody who did not see things his way, especially clergy of course, but also conservative politicians. Echoing the Sunday Free Discussion Society, he began a Sunday morning 'service' together with a Secular Sunday School and a mutual improvement society. Emboldened, Syme tried to seek religious status for his efforts in order to circumvent Sabbatarian laws, arguing before the Supreme Court in August 1885 that the Secular Association was a denomination and thus be allowed to conduct its meetings on Sundays! The case appeared before the grave Higinbotham, who reminded the jury of Syme's vituperative attacks on the faith of most of the community. However, two juries could not reach a verdict, and the Attorney General did not pursue the matter further. But atheism did not conquer Melbourne. The failure of the juries to condemn Syme was not an indication of godless secularism or atheism on their part, but of respect for traditional freedom of expression. Syme was jubilant. Invincibly self-righteous at the best of times, his attacks on politicians and Christianity became more aggressive and unbalanced.

Like many other evangelists Syme made use of the written word, on 1 June 1884 founding *The Liberator: a weekly radical and freethought paper*. At its peak in 1886 the *Liberator* had 20 pages and a circulation of about 1000, a not-insignificant number. Melbourne was a

² G Serle, *The Rush to be Rich. A History of the Colony of Victoria 1883-1889* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1971), 131f. The prominent banker and historian H G Turner, who similarly hated what he perceived as ecclesiastical tyranny, supported Higinbotham and Strong in the Scots Church conflict. He joined the anti-Sabbatarian Sunday Libertarian Society the same year, and in 1907 became president of the Education Act Defence League, the purpose of which was to resist the teaching of the Bible in state schools.

³ Serle, *The Rush to be Rich*, 144-6, comments:

In the mid-eighties militant atheism made a sustained challenge. Throughout the seventies the Sunday Free Discussion Society ... had nurtured a small group of dissidents of varying viewpoints. .. On 17 July 1882 the 'materialist' section of the society joined with a minority atheist and agnostic group in the Victorian Association of Spiritualists to form the Australasian Secular Association. ...'

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religious city, but there were many who did not ascribe to traditional piety.⁴ But for all the attention he attracted, and the size of his audiences, it was curiosity rather than hard-core atheism or agnosticism that swelled audience numbers. Most atheists were inclined to be respectable; Syme's radicalism alienated them as well as believers.⁵ He did not herald or spark an atheistic movement; his presence and influence in Melbourne were ephemeral, but a challenge to the evangelicals nonetheless.

For if infidels were enthusiastic at the prospect of the demise of orthodox Christianity, the Melbourne evangelicals were just as enthusiastic, and active: they had a tradition to maintain, and a challenge to respond to. Evangelism for them was an expression not of desperation but of determination, and confidence. In this decade: the Salvation Army began work in 1882. As well as local evangelists, five overseas evangelists – three men and two women, came to Melbourne. In 1883 the United Evangelistic Association became the Evangelisation Society of Victoria and, in 1888, at the initiative and under the auspices of the ESV, a state-wide Centennial Mission was held, and Henry Varley returned to join the fray. In short, evangelism in Melbourne continued its prominent place on the evangelicals' agenda. It was characterised by earnest desire, motivated by impressive local leadership, and lacked nothing in initiative. There was nothing *ad hoc* about it, and it continued to be definitive of (most of) the Protestant churches.

The Evangelisation Society of Victoria⁶

Evangelism does not just happen. It is voluntaristic; and feeds on encouragement, exhortation, and continual PR by its leaders. Thus, on 20-22 July 1880, H B Macartney presided over a United Evangelistic Association Christian Conference to lift the spirits of evangelicals.⁷ He especially had in mind his fellow evangelical Anglicans. In September 1880, they proposed an Eight Days' Mission to be held mid-1881 following the 1880 Exhibition. *The Church of England Messenger* commented:

.. a strong committee representing the church in its comprehensiveness and catholicity, [has been formed] who will see that the necessary preparations are pressed on with zeal and judgment.

⁴ Two years later he published *Ancient and Modern Phallic or Sex-Worship* (Melbourne: Joseph Symes Hall of Science, Melbourne, 1887), a fanciful and scurrilous attack on Christianity, and which no one took seriously. The *Liberator* ceased publication in 1904.

⁵ Serle, *Rush to be Rich*, 145ff. At its peak, membership of his 'church' was 843, and he could draw audiences of 1000.

⁶ In 1897, ESV changed its name to the Evangelisation Society of Australasia, and expanded its ministry to include NSW, SA and NZ.

⁷ See SC, 31 July 1880, 1, for a long report on the conference.

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Powerful and earnest preaching that confines itself to a simple setting forth of a crucified Saviour, is the only means to this day of winning back the masses from the materialism and sensuality into which ignorance and neglect have brought them ... There is a spiritual malady that prays like a canker on the strength of the church, the chief symptoms of which are a fixed aversion to sound doctrine and a continual demand for spiritual excitement.⁸

The language is deliberate, enthusiastic, and in-tune with evangelical sentiment of the day. And the English Anglican evangelists Messrs Aitken, Boddy and Knox-Little had been invited. But it did not happen; and the SC (16 July 1881, 1) announced its cancellation because of 'conflict in the diocese'. The main stumbling block was Bishop Moorhouse, whose restrictions were irksome for the evangelicals.⁹

With the Exhibition also in mind, in an editorial in the SC (30 April 1881, 2), W H Fitchett drew attention to the importance of Special Religious Services, and the methods and theology of revivalism, reminding his readers: 'A very large percentage of those who fill the pulpits of the Methodist church in these colonies today are the direct fruits of the services conducted by the Rev William Taylor 17 years ago.' He included a positive reference to Dr A N Somerville – 'the old man eloquent', a hope that Moody and Sankey might visit Melbourne, and encouraged churches to be evangelistic. Alas, it was a fond hope; not all evangelicals were as united as they might be. The SC (25 June 1881, 2) included a long letter from the Melbourne City Mission in which the secretary, H N Wollaston, argued that it was no good waiting for 'the consummation [*sic*] of an evangelical voice of all the churches in Melbourne'; there were too many differences. It would be better to support the MCM, the 'best agency that the Christians in this colony can organise to procure the evangelization of the lapsed masses of the people'. Wollaston reminded SC readers that its 'managing committee consists of clergymen and laymen of all its evangelical denominations', but it lacked sufficient funds: in spite of the MCM's evangelical credentials, it had not managed to capture the evangelicals' imagination. Perhaps there was a perception that it was not focused enough on evangelism. Whatever the reason, the letter indicated frustration among some evangelicals.

Partly in response to this, the UEA sent an invitation to C H Spurgeon, hoping that his fame and presence might be a unifying factor. But he declined.¹⁰ Also, about the same time, James Balfour MLC suggested at a Christian Conference that a month's evangelistic work be held in a specially chosen part of Melbourne, with ministers and laymen of all churches to

⁸ *Messenger*, 7 September 1880, 1.

⁹ *Messenger*, November 1880, Speech to Assembly, columns 2 and 3.

¹⁰ SC, 27 August 1881, 1.

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participate. This venture would be under the sanction and management of UEA. Balfour included a request for prayer, adding: 'MUEA is really an alliance of the Protestant churches of the city ...' (a riposte to the MCM letter?). This proposal was a prelude to the much larger, more ambitious Centennial Mission.¹¹

Also, evangelism continued apart from UEA endeavours. The Methodist Holiness Association sponsored the well-known American Methodist holiness preachers the Revs John Inskip and W B Osborne who held evangelistic rallies in Melbourne during 1881, Inskip at Wesley Church, as well as Ballarat and Geelong and then Sydney.¹² Evans, points out: 'The visit to Australia lasted for eight weeks only, and Inskip preached eighty sermons in that time. About 2,500 responded to his appeals, of whom about two-thirds were converts, and the others were seeking entire sanctification.'¹³ The Baptists were also busy. In particular, the Rev W C Bunning reported on the second visit by Baptist evangelists the Revs J S Harrison and Edward Isaacs to Brunswick in June-July. This included packed daily noon prayer meetings in the YMCA rooms, and three weeks of crowded meetings in the Mechanics' Hall, which seated 1000.¹⁴

The Salvation Army

1882 saw the Salvation Army 'open fire' on Marvellous Melbourne. For all its growth and prosperity, there was a sombre side of Melbourne. It was founded and grew up in the time of the industrial revolution, of urbanisation, of 'dark satanic mills', of Charles Darwin, Charles Dickens and Karl Marx. Melbourne did not have the extent of the problems of the great industrial cities of Britain, but there was much poverty: poverty of material goods, poverty of hope, and poverty of spirit. But from early days, the Melbourne evangelicals diligently invested their time and substance and energy in good works. As mentioned above, they and their fellow churchmen led in the founding and running of organisations such as the Melbourne City Mission, hospitals, free medical dispensaries, male and female 'rescue' homes, orphanages, facilities for aged care, the mentally ill, the physically disabled, and the lawless and the destitute. Don Garden is incorrect to state that there was 'little compassion from the churches'.¹⁵ Concern for, and provision for, the disadvantaged were part of and characteristic of the churches and churchmen from early days.

¹¹ SC, 1 October 1881, 2.

¹² SC, 9 & 16 April 1881. See too SC, 15 October 1881, 1, re evangelistic work in the Wesleyan church in Franklyn Street, West Melbourne.

¹³ R Evans, *Evangelism and Revivals in Australia 1880-1914* (Hazelbrook, NSW: Research in Evangelical Revivals, 2005), 75, 127-30.

¹⁴ SC, 23 July 1881, 1. See too SC, 22 October, 1, re Baptist involvement with Macartney preaching in a tent seating 7-800.

¹⁵ D Garden, *Victoria. A History* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1984), 195:

Unemployment, the loss of family savings, the victory of greed over frugality, the absence of any government direction, *little compassion from church or temperance leaders* and a plethora

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But there was still lots to do, and Melbourne was a natural 'enemy stronghold' for the Salvation Army leadership to set its sights on.¹⁶ But the Army also came to 'save souls', though Bishop James Moorhouse initially expressed concern about how they did this.

He deplored their crude 'jumping up and down' at that stage, declaring 'their ways are not our ways, and the doctrines taught not scriptural.' [But] Two years later the bishop more than compensated, by declaring the Army to be 'inspired by the noblest impulses which can direct human energies'. ... His ultimate compliment to the Salvationists was to say 'If the Master were here, I am sure he would own them and honour them above me.'¹⁷

However, not all of Melbourne's citizens were as sanguine as the bishop. There were many complaints to the Melbourne City Council about their methods, and regular attempts to drown them out. The Army though was not intimidated; convinced of the righteousness of its cause, and drawing strength from persecution, it established itself as an important evangelistic, as well as social, force in Melbourne,¹⁸ and formed many friends, not least among them the irrepressible Dr John Singleton. In 1879 he bought land in Little Bourke Street to build a mission hall, and in 1883 offered the use of it to the Army.¹⁹ He also gave the Army the use of his Collingwood Mission Hall and laid the stone for their Collingwood citadel. Singleton also encouraged the Army to visit prisoners in Pentridge. This soon became a significant part of its ministry, including establishing the first home for the care of discharged prisoners.

of other factors conspired in ways that the 'laissez faire policy of successive colonial governments created one of the greatest social tragedies in Victoria's history'. [emphasis added]

See too B R Ussher, *Religion and Social Structure. An Analysis of the Salvation Army's Role in Late Nineteenth Century Melbourne* (Univ of Melbourne MA 1979); B Ussher, *Protestant Churches and the Working Class in Melbourne circa 1880-1900* (Univ of Melbourne PhD 1979); G Davison, D Dunstan and C McConville eds, *The Outcasts of Melbourne. Essays in Social History* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1985).

¹⁶ The SA also 'opened fire' on Geelong. See P Mansfield, 'The Salvation Army in Geelong: part one – Formation of the Salvation Army', *Investigator* vol 41 no 3, September 2006, 110-18; 'History of the Salvation Army in Geelong: part 2 - Darkest England and Boothian Colonies', *Investigator* vol 41 no 4, December 2006, 137-43. Booth himself later visited Victoria: see R Howe, "'Five Conquering Years": the Leadership of Commandant and Mrs H Booth of the Salvation Army in Victoria, 1896 to 1901', *Journal of Religious History* vol 6, 1970-1, 177-97.

¹⁷ M Sturrock. *Bishop of Magnetic Power. James Moorhouse in Melbourne, 1876-1886* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2005), 215.

¹⁸ See A Brown-May, *Melbourne Street Life. The Itinerary of Our Days* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1998), 190-194, for a description of the Army's proselytising methods. The reservation expressed by some might have been class-based. (The ESV leaders were middle-class.) It is worth noting that the Army only contributed one local evangelist to the 1902 Torrey-Alexander campaign.

¹⁹ SC, 4 September 1880, 2, included a letter from Singleton about the Mission Hall in Little Bourke Street stating that he hoped it would be completed by 25 September, and opened free of debt. It would host services of song, evangelism, popular instruction, lectures, and temperance meetings. He invited contributions to defray the cost.

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*1883: a seminal year*²⁰

Then, in February 1883, a group of evangelical leaders, both lay and clerical - their names were almost a Who's Who of evangelicalism in Melbourne, - met in Balfour's parliamentary offices. They were the same men who founded and ran UEA. They decided to re-invent their organisation which showed signs of faltering. They recognised the challenge and had enthusiasm, unity, ability, and leadership; but they lacked evangelists and finance. Partly to meet this need they amalgamated with the Mission and Devotion Committee of the YMCA. At a public breakfast for the Rev Joseph Cook of the YMCA, the committee made known its aims and need. To set the ball rolling, Balfour promised £500 if another £500 were subscribed.²¹ At the first quarterly meeting (in April) the name of the association was changed to the Evangelisation Society of Victoria. An advertisement publicising the association appeared in the Wesleyan Methodist *Spectator* (27 July 1883) and other religious newspapers of the time. It listed the committee:²²

Rev W Allen	Rev G W Gillings	Philip Kitchen	Andrew Scott
James Balfour MLC	R Gillespie	Theo Kitchen	Robert Scott
Edward Baines	James Griffiths	Rev H A Langley	Thomas Scott
David Beath	F Haller	Rev H B Macartney	Rev W P Wells
A J Clarke (evangelist)	J H Hill	Rev Dr Porter	James White
J H Davies	W Howat	Rev B Rodda	Dr W Warren
W George	A B G Johnston	J W Rosier	Rev A Youl

The executive committee was J Balfour, R Gillespie and Theo Kitchen. The Council set to work with a will, stating the aims of the society in the advertisement they placed in the Melbourne religious press:

²⁰ Also in 1883, an evangelical syndicate headed by Balfour purchased the *Daily Telegraph*. It was meant to be a secular daily sympathetic to Christian interests. But, focusing as it did on temperance, Sabbath observance, Bible instruction and missionary causes, its appeal was limited and his hopes unfulfilled. "Conservative" in politics, it was ably and energetically managed, with the Rev W.H.Fitchett as consulting editor and rivalled the *Argus* in circulation... an evening paper since 1869, [It had] a sensational style and little political influence.' Serle, *The Rush to be Rich*, 31. It was sold to the Herald and Weekly Times Ltd in 1892

²¹ A Lemon, *The Young Man From Home. James Balfour 1830-1913* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1982), 97, mentions that 'He [Balfour] handled the business dealings of clergymen and kept visiting evangelist George Clarke from ever-threatening bankruptcy.' This is probably a reference to the financial viability of the Centennial Mission

²² In Britain an Evangelization Society was begun in 1864. One of its members was a Charles Carter, 'who in the Providence of God, was sent to that Continent [Australia] more than twenty years ago. He has since organized work on similar lines to our own throughout the Australian colonies, ...'. J Wood, *The Story of the Evangelization Society* (London: Evangelization Society, nd), 74. Unfortunately Wood does not indicate when this Carter came to Australia or where he worked in Australia, nor does he give any biographical information. A Charles Carter was a member of the original council of the UEA. If he is the same Carter then he had evidently settled in Australia and thrown in his lot with the ESV. I have not been able to discover any biographical details about the ESV Carter.

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The society has been formed with the view of reaching the non-church-going population of Victoria. It is well known that many will go to special meetings held in a hall or tent who will not attend the usual religious services. The work is conducted on strictly undenominational grounds, the Evangelists going out not as members of any particular Church, but to preach Jesus to the unconverted. The Society is now prepared to send Evangelists to any place in Victoria ...²³

The first two evangelists were the Rev Alfred J Clarke (Baptist) and Arthur E Eustace (who had Brethren and Congregationalist background). Born in 1852 in Kingsbury, Middlesex, Eustace was converted in 1875 in a tent mission conducted by the Brethren Charles H Hurditch. He promptly began evangelistic work in a Congregational church in Surrey, and then with the Country Towns Mission. His work was successful, but his health was a problem. He sailed to Melbourne, arriving in 1883, just in time to join the ESV as a full-time evangelist. His credentials were good, he was young (31), and he had a successful 10-year evangelistic ministry.

ESV sent him to, mainly, country centres in which he proved as successful as he had been in England. For example, the SC was warm in its praise of his missions in Bolac and Wickliffe: these were well attended, in spite of inclement weather, and 'The mission throughout was a decided success. Mr Eustace's method of presenting truth was much appreciated, and many will not easily forget his pointed illustrations and practical remarks.'²⁴ But Eustace did not stay long in Victoria. In 1887 he and his wife moved to Queensland and joined the newly formed Queensland Kanaka Mission (1886). In 1895 his health failed again and he pastored Baptist churches in Brisbane before dying in 1903.²⁵

Clarke was more effective. A note in the journal of Spurgeon's College, *Sword and Trowel* 1884, 560 (quite a few of Spurgeon's disciples found their way to the Australian colonies) reads:

Mr A.J.Clarke ... sends us a most cheering report of his work in connection with the Evangelization Society of Victoria, an undenominational society which sends its agents free to all parts of that colony. During the year which ended on June 30th, Mr

²³ *The Victorian Freeman* (September 1883). Denominational missionaries also laboured. R Evans notes: 'The church leaders in those days did not see any problem in having evangelistic missions one after the other in a district, although, some decades later it was viewed as distinctive.' *Church Heritage. Historical Journal of the Uniting Church of Australia*, vol 16 no 4 (September 2010), 260. See following pages.

²⁴ SC, 8 October 1886, 12.

²⁵ R Evans, 'The Evangelisation Society of Australasia: Arthur E Eustace, the first lay evangelist', *Church Heritage*, September 2010, 252-68.

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Clarke conducted 373 meetings, at which it was estimated that between eighty and ninety thousand persons were present, of whom over 900 have united with the churches as a result of the services.²⁶

Much of the difference was due to Clarke's ministry focusing on the more populous Melbourne and suburbs. But Clarke also resigned in 1887, to take up a Sydney pastorate.²⁷ Others evangelists followed, some on a casual basis.

In need of a full-time replacement, in 1888 ESV invited William Scurr to become their full-time evangelist. Born 15 April 1861 in Canberra, Scurr moved to Albury where, as a teenager, he was converted during a visit by Matthew Burnett.²⁸ Intelligent and capable, Scurr felt called by God to be a preacher and evangelist. His sense of call was endorsed by the Rev Dr E I Watkin, a leading Methodist pastor and sparring partner of W H Fitchett. Scurr was a Home Missionary 1883-87 in country and suburban postings, and the *Spectator* carried glowing reports of his ministry, especially as an evangelist. But he was not accepted as an ordinand, and the invitation of ESV was timely.²⁹ This was his brief for the next 15 years until his health declined. He resigned from the ESV in 1902 and joined the Torrey-Alexander campaign committee

Scurr made a fine contribution to the work of ESV. For example, SC 18 May 1888, 391, 395, printed a letter from the ESV endorsing his work and the 'excellent results' of the R Robertson mission at Smythesdale: 'No such religious revival has taken place in the district since Mr Matthew Burnett's visit, some twenty years ago'. Evans comments:

Scurr had always viewed his years as an evangelist as 'Pentecostal days and spoke of thousands of conversions'. In one instance he said that there had been 'between eighty and ninety thousand conversions' ... Perhaps the 80,000 or 90,000 conversions refers to the combined number of conversions seen by all the evangelists in the years from about 1901 to 1905.

²⁶ SC, 13 January 1888, 13.

²⁷ K Manley *From Woolloomooloo to Eternity. A History of the Australian Baptists*. Vol 1 (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 147, and 157. Also, SC, 18 March, 1887, 203; and 8 July, 1887, 535.

²⁸ While at Albury Grammar, he began a life-long friendship with Sir Isaac Isaacs.

²⁹ *Methodist Journal*. 24 February 1888, 4; and *Spectator*. 24 February 1888, 94. *Victoria and Tasmania Methodist Conference Minutes*. 1952, 50. Quoted by R Evans, *William Henry Scurr: Lay Evangelist and Methodist Minister in Victoria* (unpublished ms). Evans suggests that his trial sermon was unacceptable and too evangelistic. He was finally ordained to the parish ministry in 1911.

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[Scurr's] career as an evangelist, and later as a Methodist minister, gives us a glimpse into the type of aggressive evangelism which occurred in those days, which in many ways represents the hey-day of evangelicalism in Australia.³⁰

However, this evangelism was not an end in itself; it was a prelude to the greatest evangelistic mission thus far held in Melbourne.

The 1888 Centennial Mission

In 1888 Melbourne celebrated, in its own style, the centenary of white settlement of Australia, with much imagination and even more money expended on various extravagant public occasions. It was a great opportunity for marvellous Melbourne to display its growth and sophistication, and was, with a northwards glance at Sydney, also a statement of its vigour and boosterism. 'The Victorian Government, knowing that New South Wales lacked an Exhibition Building, and had left it too late to organise an Exhibition as part of its centennial celebrations, brought off a prestige-building coup ..'³¹ It was a heady and an expensive time.

Of great interest in all of this is the way that religion was seamlessly part of Melbourne capitalism; the Melbourne burghers bowed their knees to the Lord Yahweh as well as to Mammon. Weber's Protestant ethic was alive and well, and a number of prominent evangelicals brought their entrepreneurial spirit to their religion. A characteristic of Melbourne evangelicalism was that many of its leaders belonged to the mercantile and business elite.³² The high point was the 1888 Centennial Exhibition. The Exhibition was opened with prayer (by the president, not a clergyman. This was a matter of diplomacy, not secularism; having a clergyman pray might provoke sectarian jealousy.) The Old Hundredth was sung. The proceedings included a cantata by the Rev William Allen, minister of the Carlton Congregational church. The theme was the coming of European civilisation to the new land, a civilisation that had brought material benefits to the land. Above the arch of the north transept was the text: *The Earth is the Lord's and the Fullness Thereof*. Handel's Hallelujah Chorus was sung and then the national anthem, a fitting combination of religion and crown.³³ The commissioners behind the 1888 Centennial Exhibition included the evangelical businessman, parliamentarian, and temperance advocate, John Nimmo. Not that the

³⁰ Evans, *Scurr*, 19-20.

³¹ Serle, *The Rush to be Rich*, 285. The centrepiece of the Exhibition was the Exhibition Building, built in 1880 for the International Exhibition of 1880-1. See D Dunstan ed, *Victorian Icon. The Royal Exhibition Building. Melbourne* (Melbourne: Exhibition Trustees, 1996).

³² This may be seen in the leading figures on the EUA/ESV. The tradition continued. It is outside the scope of this thesis, but the same may be said of the next generation in the early twentieth century, which formed a kind of Clapham Sect, supporting C H Nash and the Melbourne Bible Institute, who formed a focal point of leadership and unity in the evangelical movement.

³³ Prince Albert had chosen the same text as motto for the Great Exhibition in London, when the Hallelujah Chorus was also sung.

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evangelicals dominated: the theologically liberal Unitarian, and foe of orthodoxy, banker and historian H G Turner was Commissioner of the Exhibition.

The Melbourne evangelicals were also conscious of the challenge and opportunity this occasion posed for the churches; were they a significant part of this culture and society, or had they been marginalised? They decided that it would be a good time to hold an evangelistic mission. They had in mind Melbourne's proud history of evangelism, but this was to be bigger than previous endeavours. It was to be a united effort, something worthy of the occasion, and extending over some months. It was to be part of, and a continuation of, Melbourne's evangelistic heritage,³⁴ a window into the nature and vitality of the Melbourne evangelicals, and the main evangelistic event before the Torrey-Alexander Simultaneous Mission of 1902.³⁵

The essential message was the standard and simple statement that Christ died for sins, and called all to repent and turn to him for forgiveness and eternal life. There was also a predilection for understanding evangelism (and missions) in the context of premillennialism, and local annual 'prophetic conferences' featured the leading evangelical clergy among their speakers.³⁶ In 1883 the Second Advent Prayer Union had been founded, and in 1885 the Victorian Prophetic Conference. The SC regularly reported Macartney's presence at such meetings. For example, he was the chair for the fourth annual meeting of Second Advent Prayer Union at YMCA upper Hall (7 January 1887, 15); he spoke on 'The state of the world at the coming of Christ', and 'How the hope of the Lord's return should influence effort for the evangelisation of the world', at the Presbyterian Conference at Alfred Hall Ballarat, 6-8 December 1887 (16 December 1887, 991), 'The practical influence of the blessed hope upon the character and conduct of Christians'; and he presided at the third annual session of Victorian Prophetic Conference in the Freemasons Hall. His father was unable to be present but the stalwart Anglican evangelicals in attendance included Canon H A Langley and the Rev Digby Berry. Macartney spoke on 'The practical Relation of Prophetic Truth to Evangelistic Work' at a prophecy conference which also included the (Presbyterian) Rev W Lockhart Morton, Henry Varley, and the Rev Alfred Bird (21 December 1888, 1015).³⁷

³⁴ See Blainey, *Our Side of the Country*, 112-8, and Serle, *The Rush to be Rich*, 153-79.

³⁵ *Methodist Spectator Conference Report*, 17 January 1888, 55, endorsed the proposal: 'This conference, having learned that a united committee of Protestant Churches [sic] desires to celebrate this centennial year of Australia's settlement by special religious services and missions, expresses its full sympathy with such celebrations and recommends our ministers, members and congregations to cooperate in such services.'

³⁶ A B Simpson spoke about evangelism being a primary means to 'bring back the King', and this view was held by many evangelicals. In 1902 though, Torrey and Chapman did not allow their premillennialism to intrude in their preaching in Melbourne.

³⁷ Macartney had been influenced by his time at Trinity College, Dublin, and by his contact with the Tasmanian Brethren. G Featherstone, 'The Millennial Voice in Victoria to 1914', *Journal of Religious History*, vol 35 no 2, June 2011, 233-63, argues for a slight impact of adventism on the general

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Such meetings fuelled the sense of urgency and expectation.

Evangelicalism is surely not dying under these skies. And the evangelicalism of the last quarter of the century, if it differs from the evangelicalism of the first quarter of the century, differs only by improvement. It is, we think, not less earnest; and it is certainly wiser and more cultured. It does at least as much for missions as the evangelicals of fifty years ago did, and it does very much more for the social welfare [!] of the masses in Christian lands.³⁸

At the October 1887 ESV meeting it was decided that something evangelistic should be done with regard to the proposed International Centennial Exhibition the following year. So the ESV leadership advertised a meeting of clergy and laymen of all the Protestant denominations to be held on 24 October in the YMCA rooms in Collins Street to broaden the discussion.³⁹ At that meeting A J Campbell, minister of St George's Presbyterian Church, Geelong, suggested a Centennial Mission (CM), and that it be 'carried out by all the churches'.⁴⁰ This met with eager approval. The meeting declared itself to be a General Committee, and appointed an Executive Committee which included L D Bevan, W L Blamires,⁴¹ S Bracewell, H Herlitz, W H Hoskin, Canon H A Langley, D S McEachran, J G Ruddock, Balfour, W H George, W Oakey, W A Southwell (secretary), and F Wheen, with Campbell as chairman. At a follow-up meeting on 14 November it was decided:

This movement will embrace the four following objects:-

1) To engage the people of God in earnest, unceasing, believing prayer, for a gracious outpouring of the Holy Ghost during the coming year.

The emphasis on prayer and seeking an outpouring of the Spirit were characteristic of evangelicals then.

2) To draw the attention of this community to the many and great mercies which Australia has enjoyed at the hands of Almighty God during the first century of her existence as a British possession; and to press upon our people - in view of the

religious experience. However the impact on the evangelicals was anything but slight, and there were a lot of them.

³⁸ SC, 7 October 1887, 790f.

³⁹ SC, 6 January 1888, 13.

⁴⁰ *Argus* 28 June 1889, 5. See A H Campbell, *Rev Dr A.J. Campbell 1815-1909. Influence in Scotland and Australia* (Richmond: Spectrum, 1995). No narrow denominationalist, Campbell was an enthusiast who cooperated easily with members of other churches. He was the first president of the Victorian Council of Churches.

⁴¹ Methodist. The Methodists were confident, having recently celebrated (in May 1886) their golden jubilee with a series of crowded, fervent celebrations at Wesley Church in Lonsdale Street and the Exhibition Building. See W L Blamires & J B Smith, *The Early Story of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Victoria* (Melbourne: Wesleyan Book Depot, 1886), 311. 'Mighty Methodism' was the term used.

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approaching Centennial celebration on the 26th January - the duty of our meeting in a public act of national thanksgiving

The leadership regarded Australia as a Christian country. This aim was realised: there were united thanksgiving services, including one in the Town Hall, and the Exhibition was opened with prayer by the staunch Presbyterian MLC, Hon James McBain, President of the Exhibition.

3) To arrange for Mission Services in town and country with the Christian Churches with all other Christian agencies, and with the help of all Christian men and women, shall endeavour to secure that the whole population of Victoria shall have the offer of salvation through the blood of the Cross, brought within reach during the coming twelvemonth.

The ecumenical breadth of the planners' thinking was important; they wanted no charges of independence laid against them. Note too the reference to women; was this Macartney's influence? Mesdames Hampson and Baeyertz had been impressive in their evangelistic work, and others who worked for the Bible Christians, and others of a more interdenominational character.

4) To promote the increased circulation of the Holy Scriptures and the reading of them in private, in the families of the people; to encourage family religion and the more careful training of the young; and to urge upon the whole community a deeper argument for, and a more earnest observance of, the Lord's Day.

Sabbatarism was a major interest of many churchmen, not all evangelicals, as were children. Macartney's MAHA made specific reference to the Children's Scripture Union and the Children's Special Service Mission (which he founded); the Zenana Missionary Society had teaching literacy to children as one of its aims; and evangelists typically held meetings focusing on children. In September 1890, Victorian Christian Endeavour was incorporated with 12 societies and 560 members representing five denominations.

A plan of the proposed mission was submitted to the assemblies of the main Protestant churches, which 'received a general and cordial approval', and a letter sent to every Protestant minister in Victoria ('with three or four obvious exceptions'), and 40 000 copies of an invitation to prayer sent out to individuals and churches. This was not going to be a short, sharp campaign, but one spread over half the year.⁴² Efforts were concentrated on

⁴² As might be expected, the Methodists were optimistic. An editorial in the *Spectator*, 23 March 1888, 139, warmly endorsed the CM, noting that it was not an extension of denominationalism.

For its successful development this mission requires the broadest charity and the profoundest piety.' ... 'need to watch substitution of platitude for doctrine, iteration for explanation, and human persistence for Divine authority. ... The outlook is hopeful. Victorians have not refused the Gospel of Christ. Very largely they have accepted it. [!] The opportunity therefore is ripe

....

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Melbourne during May, the suburbs during June-July, and suburbs and country centres (such as Geelong and Ballarat) July to November, with closing meetings in Melbourne early December. What follows is based mainly on reports in the *Southern Cross*, beginning with the events leading up to the mission proper.

The initial planning meetings were followed by weekly prayer meetings held in the YMCA building throughout December 1887 and January 1888, including a United Week of Prayer, which the SC declared to be a great success. There were also reports of evangelistic endeavours of ESV in country areas not directly part of the CM. But at the March committee meeting, it was noted that the Anglicans were officially hesitant. Bishop F F Goe thought 'the plan of holding a Centennial Mission seemed to him an excellent one in which the clergy of his diocese were at liberty to co-operate *as far as church order will allow*' (emphasis added; the cautious Goe had to live with a mixed diocese. Anglican ministers were permitted to attend meetings in other churches but not to open their own churches.). At the same meeting, Macartney advocated meetings for women conducted by women. This was in keeping with his support for women missionaries. It was also a precaution against another occurrence of the *Argus*' criticism twelve years before of Somerville and Varley.⁴³

Then, in April, at a meeting in James Balfour's Toorak home to hear the quarterly report of ESV, committee members David Beath and Dr W Warren were commissioned to go to London with letters of introduction to invite an evangelist to lead the mission.⁴⁴ Significantly, the committee did not invite Varley, who had worked and lived in Melbourne at different times for a number of years. The same meeting referred to the Church of England Mission Week, to be held 15-22 July. The committee, diplomatically, stated that it did not see this as being divisive, and would support it as best it could (though they, especially the Anglicans among them, must have been disappointed.). The members were naturally glad the Anglicans were so disposed, and noted the comment in a paper given by Canon H A Langley of St Matthew's, Prahran, that the mission would annoy only those who wanted quiet; and Campbell testily expressed frustration at those who were concerned only about theological

A R Edgar, founding superintendent of the Wesley Central Mission and champion of the poor and needy, enthused in the 14 December edition, page 597: 'Revival work is in full swing in Chilwell [a suburb of Geelong]. ... 40 souls were saved last week. ... [the influence of the revival is spreading with] many under conviction. Praise the Lord!'

⁴³ The committee was naturally sensitive. At another March committee meeting Campbell defended himself 'stoutly' against the complaint that there was not enough publicity about the aims and methods of the mission. SC, 30 March 1888, 248.

⁴⁴ The businessman Beath was a Flinders Lane soft-goods manufacturer and on the boards of the Grand Coffee Palace Co and the Australian Economic Bank - later the Mercantile Bank. In 1902 ESV again sent Warren to England, this time with fellow Baptist G P Barber, to seek an evangelist to come to Victoria.

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niceties.⁴⁵ A similar theme surfaced at the next meeting, also in April, when the committee answered forthrightly the lament of a minister who complained that he did not have time for mission. More positively, it added that a Mrs Faulkner from London would hold bible readings in the Assembly Hall in Collins Street. The converted Jewish evangelist Mrs Baeyertz would also speak. Over the following months the SC carried regular reports of Mrs Baeyertz's evangelistic meetings, including a YWCA mission in July that targeted women.

Meanwhile, in London, Beath and Warren invited George Clarke, a well-known Anglican lay evangelist, to come to Melbourne to lead the mission. The son of a Church of England vicar, Clarke enjoyed a reputation as a 'great athlete and footballer' and was known as 'the Christian athlete'. An example of evangelical 'muscular Christianity', this would give him additional appeal to young men. Converted in 1878 by D L Moody during the latter's ministry in England, he very soon began working as an evangelist, both in England and America. Thus his conversion experience, spirituality, and a decade of work as an evangelist appealed. His being an Anglican was no disadvantage either, especially as he intended eventually to seek ordination. The SC was enthusiastic: he 'seems to possess in a remarkable degree all the qualities which go to make a signally successful evangelist'.⁴⁶

Melbourne meetings (May). Clarke wasted no time in accepting the invitation and sailed on the *Britannia*, arriving early May.⁴⁷ His first public occasion was an informal meeting at the Grand (later, Windsor) Hotel with clergy and leading laymen. The following evening he addressed 'a largely attended meeting' of university students in the Assembly Hall, organised by the University Christian Alliance. There he gave 'an eloquent and impressive address, in which he sketched his plan for action, and exhorted his hearers to do their utmost to bring other young men to a knowledge of grace. His remarks were listened to with marked attention'.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ See too *Victorian Freeman*, April 1888, 74-6, which reported the substance of an address by Allan Webb before the Baptist Association and a sermon preached at Hawthorn on Luke 1:1 'a declaration of the things assuredly believed among us.' The headings were (1) we are supernaturalists, (2) we are believers in the Bible as plenary inspired, (3) we are Trinitarians, (4) we are Evangelical, and (5) the destiny of the hopelessly impenitent.

⁴⁶ SC, 27 April 1888, 335; - SC 4 May 1888, 343. The English evangelical newspaper *The Christian* regularly carried appreciative accounts of Clarke's evangelistic endeavours throughout Britain and Ireland. Reporting on a successful campaign in Kirkcaldy, *The Christian* (23 September 1886, 713) mused that it was not easy to say what the basis of his power was: he did not have the charisma of Moody nor the 'accurate culture and thoughtful originality' of Henry Drummond. But he was 'bold and manly' and preached 'the marrow of the Gospel with intense earnestness, and the power of God rests upon him'.

⁴⁷ On his way to Melbourne, Clarke met Varley at Brindisi who wrote: 'I trust he may be used abundantly'. (*Christian* 15 June 1888, 551.) A motherhood statement? Was Varley annoyed that he was not invited?

⁴⁸ SC, 20 April 1888, 315, reported on the year's first meeting of the Melbourne University Christian Alliance (founded 18884). Many were eager for the well-known scientist, apologist and evangelist Professor Henry Drummond to be invited. But because of the ESV's Centennial Mission and the work

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At his third meeting Clarke addressed Christian workers in the Assembly Hall where he 'gave an interesting address to a crowded meeting ..'. These were the frontline troops of the mission, looking for inspiration and leadership, and Clarke indicated the tone and style for his ministry as well as the agenda.

The secret of Mr Clarke's curious impressiveness is of the business order, and goes with practical directness straight to its end; he has a certain transparent sincerity which discerns prejudice; his own faith is of an unique calmness and certainty, and the contagion of it lays hold of perplexed intellects and wavering hearts, and lifts it up to the clear air where it dwells. ..

This was pleasing to the evangelical leadership, fitting their preference of method. To disarm any possible criticism or hesitation, Clarke stated:

My plan is first and foremost to work with the Churches, and if I am not going to carry on my mission with them and their aid, I am not going to have any mission at all. Some evangelists, as you are probably aware, act independently. Perhaps they have good reasons for doing so, but then that is not my way. Even though I hold meetings on Sunday, I take care never to speak in church hours.⁴⁹

The SC purred with satisfaction, and he was invited to speak in Dr L D Bevan's Independent Church in Collins Street. Other invitations followed, and Clarke spent most of May speaking in Melbourne city churches and halls. The SC confidently informed its readers: 'Mr Clarke's mission work in Melbourne may be already pronounced a great success ...' and that he was about to begin 'his first suburban mission at St Kilda [and] ... thence to South Melbourne, Kew, Hawthorn, etc'.⁵⁰

Suburban meetings (June-July) During the winter months from June to September, Clarke spoke in different suburbs. The first two weeks of June were spent in St Kilda. It was a 'simply wonderful success', and in laudatory remarks E Handel Jones, minister of the St Kilda Congregationalist Church, referred to Clarke's simplicity of style, tender sympathy, and freedom from cant and sensationalism. There was unity among the clergy, and (the editor

of George Clarke: 'it was resolved to await his arrival, ask him to preside at a meeting, and then decide as to the proposal'. However, the next significant gatherings of Christian university students were the visits by the American missionary statesman John R Mott in 1896, 1903 and 1926.

⁴⁹ SC, 4 May 1888, 343. This was polite, and politic, but not insincere. We may assume the leadership had informed him of Melbourne's recent evangelistic history. Cf my 'Henry Varley and the Melbourne Evangelicals', *Journal of Religious History*, February 2001. 173-87. Clarke's words certainly underscore the ecumenical spirit of the Melbourne evangelicals.

⁵⁰ SC, 25 May 1888, 411.

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added pointedly) 'The unanimity of action on the part of the churches needed only the co-operation of Episcopacy to render it perfect'.⁵¹ At the close of the mission a thank-offering at the afternoon and evening meetings resulted in £449-19-3. Clarke invited the people to indicate where they wanted money to go to, resulting in £128-5-3 to the general fund and £273-14-0 to the YWCA.⁵² At the end of June, Macartney chaired and gave the closing address at a YWCA meeting. A few weeks later Clarke gave a 'splendid address' on the occasion of the YWCA's 17th anniversary, endorsing the organisation and its world-wide significance.⁵³ There followed missions in Camberwell and Kew where Clarke spoke to overflowing crowds in the Presbyterian, Wesleyan and Congregational churches, and a fortnight of special united prayer for churches of East Melbourne, Footscray and Collingwood.

Suburban and country (July to November) Clarke's suburban efforts included being seconded to Melbourne Anglican diocese for the Anglican Centennial Mission week, 15-22 July – see below. Following this, he made his first foray into country Victoria to lead the Ballarat United Town Mission. During this mission he returned to Melbourne, where the end of July and beginning of August saw him speaking at the Prahran United Mission, which used St Matthew's as a base. This lasted a fortnight, and was deemed a marked success.⁵⁴ He then returned to Ballarat to conclude the mission there. This was not only successful evangelistically but was a significant social and ecumenical occasion, with the Mayor of Ballarat (Cr M McDonald) presiding, and assisted by W Lockhart Morton (Ebenezer Presbyterian Church), and Archdeacon Churchill Julius.⁵⁵ Clarke returned a week later and spoke at the Ballarat Academy of Music. The local evangelicals were buoyed, and the Ballarat Evangelical Alliance saw a large attendance at their half-yearly united service at which Morton led the prayers and A Bird (Dawson Street Baptist Church) preached. Around the same time, other ESV evangelists conducted services at Newtown, Scarsdale, Ross Creek, Haddon, and Arundel.

From Ballarat, Clarke went to Geelong where he led a week-long mission which saw 'good crowds'. The latter part of August saw a brief return to Melbourne to lead a mission at the

⁵¹ SC, 8 June 1888, 443 (see too page 435); 29 June, 511.

⁵² SC, 15 June 1888, 471, carefully pointed out that no special appeal was made for gifts; the giving was 'absolutely spontaneous', and the large sum received was made up mainly of small donations.

⁵³ In September, Clarke was invited back, with Mrs Faulkner, to speak on behalf of the projected YWCA hall. He reiterated his endorsement of the YWCA and its work overseas.

⁵⁴ Clarke also preached again at Christ Church, South Yarra, 'to a large crowd'. During these Anglican meetings Clarke opened with prayer a combined meeting of the churches involved in the mission at the Exhibition Building. SC, 3 August 1888, 603.

⁵⁵ SC, 17 August 1888, 654. The evangelical Julius was rector of Holy Trinity, Islington before becoming Archdeacon of Ballarat 1884-90, and then Bishop of Christchurch, New Zealand. He had much in common with Lockhart Morton's rescue work, but more with the Congregationalist Dr L D Bevan.

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Cairns Memorial Church (Presbyterian) in East Melbourne, where the energetic and popular Rev G D Buchanan exercised an evangelical ministry. September saw Clarke conduct a very successful mission in Richmond, where the unity of the local clergy was 'impressive',⁵⁶ before sallying again to the Ballarat area to lead and speak at a crowded meeting of the united mission service at Buninyong. In September Clarke also spoke of his

high estimate of the colony especially 'the stability of your great men'. 'As you know I have spent a good deal of time in America, and one feels that the men around him are sharp and cute, and up to everything, but with this feeling comes the conviction that unless he looks after himself these men will get the best of him. Now, ever since I have been in Melbourne I have found men not a bit less sharp, or a degree less cute, but, at the same time, I have known at once they were men who would act fairly, squarely, honestly, and uprightly in all their transactions. ... *It is only necessary to know these men briefly to understand the greatness of Melbourne.*' [emphasis added]⁵⁷

October saw further missions in the suburbs, including one at Toorak Presbyterian Church (6-14 October), where the highly-regarded and well-liked Rev J F Ewing was delighted to see his church 'crowded to excess'. This fittingly completed Clarke's work in the suburbs. The *Daily Telegraph* noted that a number of young men of good social standing were converted. This completed, for the moment, Clarke's mission to Victoria. After a few days rest he travelled to Sydney for a 'series of services' before returning to Melbourne for five days of mission at the Town Hall. It was also triumphantly announced that the YWCA had taken possession of the Secularist Hall of Science in Bourke Street as part of their new site, and that more than £8000 had been given or promised towards the £15 000 target. 'It is gratifying to know that Mr Joseph Syme and Company will vanish from at least this particular locality; and where Christianity and the Bible have been so persistently dishonoured the Gospel will now be systematically proclaimed.'⁵⁸

November saw Clarke make another quick trip to Sydney where the venerable Dean W M Cowper of St Andrews Cathedral chaired the meetings, and which Clarke described as 'large scale and highly successful in character'. Back in Melbourne he led a mission at Campbelltown in cooperation with the local clergy. There followed a further three-day mission at Ballarat that saw 4000 crowd into the Albert Hall. Finally, in Melbourne again, the fatigued

⁵⁶ September saw the preliminary meeting of the Victorian Railways Christian Union. Clarke spoke to the railway men on a Saturday in the Assembly Hall. SC, 14 September 1888, 735.

⁵⁷ SC, 21 September 1888, 743 (quoting an interview in the *Daily Telegraph*). Clarke was not gilding the lily; his words were an apposite assessment of the quality of the evangelical leadership.

⁵⁸ SC, 19 October 1888, 823, 835.

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but satisfied Clarke attended an appreciative, and extensive, three days of farewell services in the Melbourne Town Hall where he shared the platform with evangelical leaders including Bp F F Goe,⁵⁹ L D Bevan, A J Campbell, and A Webb (who presided).⁶⁰

But still Clarke's departure was delayed. The end of November saw him speak at special children's services in South Melbourne, and travel to Geelong for farewell ceremonies on 19 November in a packed Exhibition Theatre. As with the other farewells, this was a statement of evangelical unity and cooperation as much as appreciation of Clarke's ministry. With him on the platform were Lockhart Morton (who had travelled from Ballarat for the occasion) and Canon Charles Goodman of Christ Church, Geelong, one of the oldest and leading Anglican ministers of the colony, who noted: 'Mr Clarke has done an immense amount of good in Geelong, and is greatly beloved by all classes'. From Geelong Clarke returned to Melbourne to speak at a crowded Assembly Hall meeting, presumably at the behest of Lockhart Morton, as the topic was Hope Lodge, a major part of Morton's rescue ministry in Ballarat. Clarke's presence and endorsement saw a collection of over £100 given. The same report noted that the YWCA building appeal now had £11 500.

Women evangelists

Colonial Melbourne also saw a number of women engage in evangelism. For decades, under the auspices of the Melbourne City Mission and various churches, 'Bible women', many of whom were sent out by the YWCA, brought the gospel to the masses, especially those who lived in working-class suburbs. And in the 1880s, three female itinerant evangelists, Margaret Hampson, Bessie Lee and Emilia Baeyertz, also made their contribution to the spread of the gospel. Converted at St Jude's Liverpool under the ministry of the leading evangelical rector, Hugh McNeile, Margaret Hampson and her husband straightway busied themselves in Christian work. In 1880 they migrated to New Zealand where he died, but, in 1881 her career as an evangelist began in earnest.⁶¹ In 1882 she founded a Woman's Prayer Union; this was to be characteristic of her evangelism.⁶² Her reputation spread, and in 1883 she was invited to Melbourne. There, in city and suburbs, she founded or fostered prayer meetings, sometimes for women; sometimes for men as well (Melbourne and Suburban Prayer Unions). The highlight was in late May to mid June when she held crowded meetings in the

⁵⁹ Emboldened by the success of the mission, Goe's presence was a significant public statement.

⁶⁰ Webb was minister of Aberdeen Street Baptist Church, the *mitherkirk* of the Geelong Baptist churches.

⁶¹ She remained an Anglican but gradually became more interdenominational.

⁶² There were a number of Ladies Prayer Unions in the 1880s and 1890s. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 September 1902 reported on the nineteenth AGM of the prayer union 'established by Mrs Hampson in 1883'. See E Wilson, *Wandering Stars: the Impact of British Evangelists in Australia 1875-1900* (Univ of Tasmania PhD 2011), 389. Wilson comments: 'It is likely that, as this was a women's meeting, it was more sustainable in that middle-class women might have some flexibility in the use of their time than men who were in paid work.'

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Melbourne Town Hall which resulted in some 700 converts. People were openly speaking of revival.⁶³

People remarked that Hampson was an able preacher, a woman of wisdom and prayer, and had a 'strange spiritual power'.

More and more women spoke in public, from the 1880s onwards. .. The first woman to address large Australian audiences was probably the British evangelist, Margaret Hampson, who made a national tour in 1883. Her eloquence and demeanour helped halt the tide of disfavour towards female orators. A Melbourne religious weekly that announced magisterially 'we do not view with favour the spectacle of a woman addressing an audience of both sexes', conceded that Mrs Hampson was so impressive that an exception could be made just for her.⁶⁴

There were no women on the ESV or CM councils but, in a patriarchal society, such awareness and endorsement is noteworthy. The initiative came from Macartney. At the meeting of the General and Local Committees on 28 February, A J Campbell

stated that he had been requested by the Rev Mr Macartney to bring before the meeting the exceeding desirableness of embracing in their mission work special meetings for women – rich and poor [note the class consciousness] – to be held in the afternoons, and to be chiefly in the hands of ladies. Such meetings, he knew, had been the means of much blessing. Ladies willing to assist in that work, and well qualified for it, would be found.⁶⁵

Hampson made a great impact on Bessie Lee (1860-1959). Born in Daylesford, Victoria, Lee had a deprived childhood and little formal education, but read insatiably. A difficult marriage, and life in a slum area of Richmond, led her to invest her time in social work. A true Dorcas, she began Sunday Schools, visited the sick, and, with Dr Singleton, visited slums, refuges and jails. Then, in 1883, she heard Margaret Hampson speak, and soon after began her career in public speaking. The next year, a visit by American temperance speakers of the Blue Ribbon Gospel Temperance Army built on her unfortunate childhood and marriage

⁶³ She also spoke, successfully, in the main Victoria country centres (Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo) (1884), Adelaide, Sydney, Tasmania, and Melbourne in July for one meeting before returning to New Zealand.

⁶⁴ G Blainey, *Black Kettle and Full Moon. Daily Life in a Vanished Australia* (Camberwell, Vic: Viking, 2003), 146. R Evans, *Evangelism and Revivals in Australia 1880-1914* (Hazelbrook, NSW: Research in Evangelical Revivals, 2005), 22, also notes that there were 'several female evangelists in the antipodes. These ladies enjoyed an excellent degree of success in winning souls for Christ, in promoting Christian holiness, and in raising the level of prayer in the life of the churches.'

⁶⁵ *Spectator*, 16 March 1888, 125.

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experiences. She became a prohibitionist, an early member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (Melbourne branch founded in 1887), preached the temperance gospel, and fought local option battles about the number of hotels in a local area. She itinerated, spoke ceaselessly and fluently, and wrote extensively for dailies and the temperance press. In the 1890s she travelled overseas to Britain, New Zealand and America, where she died, having settled in Pasadena, California. Lee was sincere, strong minded, and conscious of God's guidance. Overcoming great odds, hers was a remarkable career, and she struck a chord with many women, who admired and supported her.

Probably the best known and most successful woman evangelist was Emilia Baeyertz.⁶⁶ Born in 1842 in Bangor, North Wales to wealthy Jewish parents, in 1864 the eighteen-year old Emilia Aronson came to Melbourne for her health. Here she married Charles Bayertz, a(n Anglican) Christian bank manager to whom she had two children. In 1871 her husband was killed in a shooting accident. The following year she was converted, and in 1875 was baptised at Aberdeen Street Baptist Church, Geelong, by W C Bunning.⁶⁷ Five years later she began her public career as an evangelist, mostly in Victoria and South Australia.⁶⁸ She attracted great attention as a revivalist, with meetings commonly

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Amelia Baeyertz

crowded. Some of this was due to the novelty factor: a woman, preaching! Her Jewish background added an exotic flavour. And people found her demeanour and style of preaching attractive: she was not extravagant or emotional, preferring understatement, and allowing the force of the message of the gospel to come through naturally. Like her male colleagues of the day, her preaching emphasised sanctification and the gifts of the Spirit. Her most fruitful time in Melbourne was in the 1880s. In 1890 she travelled to New Zealand, America and Canada, and then to England, where she died in London in 1926.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ See E Wilson, "Totally Devoid of Sensationalism": Mrs Baeyertz, the Jewish 'Lady Evangelist' from Melbourne', *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings*, vol 49 no 2 September 2002; S Swain, 'In These Days of Hallelujah Lasses: Women Preachers and the Redefinition of Gender Roles in the Churches in Late Nineteenth-Century Australia', *Journal of Religious History* vol 26 no 1, February 2002, 65-77; and R Evans, *Emilia Baeyertz - Evangelist. Her Career in Australia and Great Britain* (Hazelbrook, NSW: Research in Evangelical Revivals, 2007).

⁶⁷ In 1881 she had the satisfaction of preaching at the baptisms of her son and daughter at the same church.

⁶⁸ There, among later leaders converted under her 'preaching were J.J.Virgo, later general secretary of the YMCA and an evangelist, and J.T.Mellor (1865-1914) lawyer and a later President of the South Australian Baptist Union.' Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to Eternity*, 1, 213.

⁶⁹ For a summary of Baeyertz and Baptist attitudes to women preachers see Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to Eternity*, 1, 211ff.

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The churches and the Centennial Mission

But for all the energy expounded, and success enjoyed, the mission reminded evangelicals of a lack of dominance in their churches. This was perhaps most notable in the Church of England which conducted its own CM. This was laudable in that it showed that many in the diocese were serious about evangelism. But it also indicated that the ecumenical collegiality they enjoyed with non-Anglican evangelicals was not official; and that the evangelicals lost ground under the diocese's second bishop. This would be a recurring theme.

Charles Perry's lengthy, pioneering and evangelical episcopate (1847-76) was followed by that of the broad-church James Moorhouse (1876-86). Initially endorsing Moorhouse's selection, Perry became disillusioned and, as a member of the selection panel to choose Moorhouse's successor, stubbornly refused to consider anyone not a committed evangelical. And Macartney Senior, late in life, commented on Moorhouse: 'I knew that his episcopate had lowered the spiritual tone of the Church, while it had greatly added to her popularity – so that I could not but hope that God would send us one more entirely guarded by His Word and Spirit ...'⁷⁰ Thus Moorhouse was followed by the evangelical Field Flowers Goe (1887-1901).

Born in 1832 in Louth, Lincolnshire, and educated at King Edward VI Grammar School at Louth and Magdalen College, Oxford (BA 1857, MA 1860), Field Flowers Goe was ordained deacon 1858. After incumbencies in Christ Church, Kingston-upon-Hull (where in 1861 he married Emma nee Hurst), and Sunderland in 1877, he was inducted to St George's Bloomsbury, next door to the British Museum. There he gained a reputation as an organiser and administrator, and as a preacher, especially of parish missions. By mid-1880s he was a leading London incumbent and a regular participator at Islington

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Bishop Field Flowers Goe

Conferences. His ability was unquestioned, as were his evangelical credentials. And so, in 1887, with high expectations from the local evangelicals, the 55 year-old Goe came to Melbourne. A somewhat more 'tolerant' evangelical than Perry, and not as dynamic as the charismatic Moorhouse, Goe's episcopate is usually regarded as being not as distinguished as those of his predecessors. His contribution though was not without merit. He had a genuine pastoral concern for people, organisational and administrative ability, and gave sound leadership during the difficult depression years of the 1890s. He also prepared for the

⁷⁰ Wei-Han Kuan in P Adam and G Denholm eds, *Proclaiming Christ. Ridley College Melbourne 1910-2010* (Melbourne: Ridley Melbourne, 2010), 166f.

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subdivision of his unwieldy diocese, and, with great satisfaction, consecrated St Paul's Cathedral on 2 January 1891 (except for the spires; they were not completed until 1933). As bishop, Goe had to work with churchmen of a different hue who were not comfortable with evangelism. This he did with charity, but without fudging on the need to spread the gospel. For example, he endorsed the Church of England Centennial Mission and unqualifiedly recommended the Keswick missionary, the Rev George Grubb, and hosted him in Bishops court. He promoted mission work in the parishes, and missions to Chinese and Aborigines. Importantly, Goe arrived just in time to give Anglican support for the CM.⁷¹

At a clergy meeting in the Diocesan Registry on 13 March 1888, Canon H A Langley (member of the ESV executive) suggested holding a simultaneous parochial mission (that is, evangelistic missions held in a number of parishes at the same time) 15-22 July. This met with episcopal and wider approval and the following months saw careful preparation with weekly prayer meetings, parishes advised of aims, and visitation. 'The real success of the work depends not so much on organisation, as upon the organisation being used to seek and obtain an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the whole work, and on each particular parish engaged.'⁷² On 11 June, Goe hosted a quiet day at Bishops court for clergy and mission workers when encouraging reports were heard of preparations for the mission. Before it began, there was a dedicatory communion service at St James' Cathedral on Friday 13 July which was attended by 40 to 50 clergy, including many of the missionaries. On Sunday the preaching began.

Seconded by the ESV, and licensed by Goe, George Clarke spoke to packed Anglican churches, including St Columb's, Hawthorn, and Christ Church, South Yarra, where the Governor Sir Henry Loch was present. This was reckoned rather daring: 'A layman in a Church of England pulpit preaching a discourse of his own is a sufficiently strange phenomenon'.⁷³ But the numbers and excitement outweighed tradition, and it was regretted that Clarke's stay in Victoria could not be longer (even though the ESV CM was planned to last until December). By now Clarke was feeling the strain and took a brief holiday mid-July before going to North Melbourne and Essendon where he preached in St James, Moonee Ponds (a branch church of St Thomas', Essendon, where the combative evangelical Digby Berry was vicar), and St Thomas', Essendon. The mission was deemed to be 'a distinct and

⁷¹ See J Grant, *Episcopally Led and Synodically Governed. Anglicans in Victoria 1803-1997* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2010), 90-107, for a summary of Goe and his ministry. The diocese became markedly less congenial to evangelicals during the reign of Goe's successor, H Lowther Clarke (1902-20).

⁷² *Messenger*, April 1888.

⁷³ Non-Anglicans though were bemused, not understanding the need for Clarke to be so licensed. The SC praised Goe for his 'wise and careful organisation' – he was a good administrator. 'But for missions purposes the Church of England has, in a sense, to work in fetters.' The *Spectator* added its criticisms of the diocese being too hamstrung by canon law, and the Anglicans having their own CM.

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great success, and will set a happy precedent for future years. Mr George Clarke, who conducted the Mission at Essendon, has had a most successful week, and the thank-offering at the close amounted to £478-14-3.⁷⁴

In its response, the *Messenger* initially expressed a mixture of caution and appreciation. 'We cannot pretend to give any account of the mission other than in the most general terms. We have not the official statistics necessary for a complete report, and a partial one, based on hearsay and impressions would be unsatisfactory and unfair.' But it also noted Clarke's 'stirring addresses in connection with the Evangelisation Society's mission [which] had made a deep impression on people of all classes..', and the worthy efforts of the other missionaries. Then appreciation gave way to jubilation. A month later, on 21 August, there was 'an enormous attendance at the final thanksgiving service at the Melbourne Town Hall in connection with the Centennial Mission of the Church of England'. The doors had to be closed earlier than the advertised time of the start of the service and the overflow crowd directed to St Paul's one block away. The attendees heard reports of the gratifying results of the preparations and prayers and efforts, and the need to engage in similar missions in country centres the next year.⁷⁵

In his address to the Church Assembly in October an enthusiastic Goe said:

The most interesting and important event in the annals of our diocese for the year 1888 was the Centennial Mission ...George Clarke, a lay evangelist, from England, greatly strengthened the mission by his indefatigable and successful labours – (hear, hear) – and the church is greatly indebted to the Rev Canon Langley ... whose arrangements left nothing to be desired. (Cheers.) .. in some parishes the Church's work needs to be supplemented by mission halls (hear, hear) – in which evangelistic services of a popular kind may be held to attract those who are not yet prepared for the regular service of the parish church. (Cheers.) [had Goe read the SC comments?] .. next year the benefits of a mission should be extended to the country districts ..⁷⁶

The Baptists The presence of the assertive Rev Allan Webb, editor of the *Victorian Freeman* and leading Baptist minister, on the CM committee was to be expected. The report of the meetings of the General and Local Committee on 28 February 1888 advised its readers:

⁷⁴ SC, 20 July 1888, 563; 27 July, 583.

⁷⁵ *Messenger*, 14 August 1888, 1, 5.

⁷⁶ *Messenger*, 16 October 1888, 13.

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Some encouraging statements were made by Messrs Allan Webb and W C Bunning, especially with regard to open-air preaching on Sunday evenings, when they had extra-church, but orderly and attentive, congregations. They earnestly recommended the brethren to betake themselves to that apostolic method of preaching.

But during the mission the *VF* was sparing in its references to the CM, and almost damned Clarke with faint praise.

Mr George Clarke, the Evangelist, whose labours amongst young men, have been specially used of God in Scotland and elsewhere, is holding mission services in the suburbs of Melbourne. Without joining the chorus of extravagant laudation which has been raised by certain portions of the press, we are rejoiced to recognise in him a devoted worker for souls, whom God has used, and whose earnest appeals will, we trust, issue in the religious decision of large numbers.⁷⁷

Webb mentioned and endorsed the mission in the *VF*, though perhaps not with the kind of enthusiasm one might have expected, especially as Webb was an unbending evangelical who supported evangelism. Webb's official reticence might have been because 1888 was a very busy year for Baptists and distracted what otherwise would have been wholehearted endorsement. It was their jubilee; and £25 000 had been anonymously promised if the churches could raise a similar amount. Webb and other leading ministers were busy encouraging Baptists to be proud of their tradition and identity, and to give to the appeal; and editions of the *VF* regularly carried editorials and articles on Baptist history and identity.⁷⁸ Also, jubilee celebrations were due to begin in November. Thus the CM did not receive the amount of endorsement it might have otherwise received.⁷⁹

Similarly, the Methodist *Spectator* (March 1888) carried an informative and positive editorial, but did not bother to report anything about the mission for the rest of the year. The Conference Minutes for January 1888 included a motion endorsing the mission, but there was no report in the 1889 minutes. It was not that the *Spectator* was not interested in evangelism – it regularly carried reports of the activities of the official Conference Evangelist, but denominational concerns overrode non-denominational.

⁷⁷ *VF*, June 1888, 99.

⁷⁸ For example, note the title of an address by Webb to the Baptist Association – 'Our Denominational Faith', *VF* April 1888, 74.

⁷⁹ However *VF*, August 1889, 113-4, contained an editorial on revival, noting the need for it and the qualities for preparation. Did Webb see in his lack of endorsement of and involvement in the CM an opportunity lost? It should be added that he was an enthusiastic participant in the 1902 Torrey-Alexander mission. See my 'Rev Allan Webb', *Our Yesterdays* (Victorian Baptist Historical Society) Vol 17, 2009, 6-62.

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Thus there was a certain official ambivalence among the churches. The Anglicans were happy to use George Clarke in their mission – he was, after all, one of them – but could not officially cooperate with the ESV, even though the initiative for a centennial mission came from them, and the diocese unblushingly also called their own evangelistic effort a Centennial Mission. Evangelical ecumenism was an individual thing, and the churches were not yet ready for joint ecumenical ventures. It is not without interest that three decades earlier (on 7 July 1857) an Evangelical Alliance of Victoria held its first meeting.⁸⁰ But that organisation did not last, probably because it involved churches rather than individuals, and was perceived as a threat to denominational loyalty, even by so steadfast an evangelical as Bishop Perry.

It is not my wish to justify my further connection with the Evangelical Alliance, but to say that the offset in this city has long since died a natural death, and that, if it were revived I should not rejoin it, because, I agree that on account of the offence occasioned thereby its effect would be to divide the Church, not to unite it.⁸¹

A United Evangelical Alliance was formed in 1878, but it did not last either.⁸² By contrast the ESV was a network of individuals. Evangelical unity works best on such a basis, however inherently fragile it might be.

In short, the 1888 Centennial Mission was the largest and most successful evangelistic mission in Melbourne's history thus far. In each case the aims stated in the November 1887 meeting were achieved,⁸³ and the results gladdened the hearts of the ESV and clergy and laymen throughout the colony. Unfortunately there is little in the way of statistics. Apart from figures quoted above at different points, impressionistic expressions such as 'crowded meetings', 'successful mission', and the like, substituted for accurate numbers. But, as the following quotations indicate, the CM may be reckoned as significantly successful. The *Argus* reported on the fifth annual meeting of the ESV held 25 June 1889 in the Melbourne Coffee Palace: 'Special reference was made to the fact of the Society having secured during the year a visit from Mr. George Clarke, who had fully justified the expectations of his spirit and power in evangelistic work.' It added that, thanks to large thank offerings, costs were covered and the balance sheet for the year showed a credit of £37.⁸⁴ The SC quoted a *Daily Telegraph* interview with Clarke in which he expressed his satisfaction of the success of the

⁸⁰ See *Argus*, 9 July 1857, 5.

⁸¹ A De Q Robin, *Charles Perry. Bishop of Melbourne. The Challenges of a Colonial Episcopate 1847-76* (Nedlands, WA: Univ of Western Australia, 1967), 139.

⁸² See *Supplement* of SC, 13 July 1878.

⁸³ See Campbell's heartfelt editorial, SC, 28 December 1888, 1031, where he recounts the story of the CM.

⁸⁴ *Argus*, 28 June 1889, 5.

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mission. He thought the best results were at St Kilda and Prahran, and outside of Melbourne, at Geelong and Ballarat.⁸⁵

The size and comprehensiveness of the CM set it apart from previous campaigns. It was the first of the four largest evangelistic missions in Melbourne's history: the others were the 1902 Torrey-Alexander Simultaneous Mission, and the 1959 and 1969 Billy Graham Crusades. The ESV committee's aim was that (as much as possible) every Victorian should hear the gospel. Thus Clarke traversed the colony, at least representatively. And where he could not, local evangelists and clergy filled in: eg Ewing in Warrnambool, Langley in Camperdown, Rolland in Ararat, and Howard, Ewing and Campbell in Castlemaine, and in many other places. The proclamation of the gospel was impressively widespread, and did not escape the notice of the historian of colonial Victoria, Geoffrey Serle, who commented:

The Evangelistic Association, formed in 1883, was yet another interdenominational body, in which Balfour again was prominent; after its first conference, members dispersed into the streets and induced passers-by into the Temperance Hall for a service. Six years later, its annual meeting was told that in the previous year sixty-two missions had been undertaken - to shearers in the Western District, navvies on the waterworks and the Healesville railway, and many more.⁸⁶

As with 1902, 1959, and 1969, there was impressive cooperation by many of the churches: the cautious collaboration with the Church of England mission managed to sidestep traditional sectarian division; there were united prayer meetings, and several instances of clergy crossing denominational barriers; leading individual churchmen were happily involved (in July, the Baptist Alfred Bird took special CM services in the Prahran Presbyterian church); church leaders such as Bishop Goe endorsed the mission;⁸⁷ and Clarke's public support of Lockhart Morton's Hope Lodge work gave approval to an evangelical social work.

Apart from the lengthy preparation, the CM was spread over the second half of the year, which made it the longest evangelistic mission in Melbourne's history. Some of this was because it was before radio and television, and communication and travel were comparatively slow. These missions were distinguished from other, and ongoing, evangelistic undertakings by the extent of their preparation. It was careful, thorough, and state-wide in

⁸⁵ See SC, 21 September 1888, 743. Clarke, in responding to a question, concluded with: 'My work! Satisfied with the results? I am more. I am astounded. ...' He added the observation that the main social defect of the colony was 'a lack of stability in the younger generation'. Two years before, the Methodists had noted the loss of young men, and to special difficulties which arose from the rapid growth of suburban Melbourne which saw many lose contact with their churches.

⁸⁶ Serle, *The Rush to be Rich*, 174.

⁸⁷ See his remarks on church union in SC, 28 September, 767.

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organisation: the Melbourne city centre, select suburbs, and country centres, especially Ballarat and Geelong, were specifically targeted. The mission was a lively expression of the evangelical presence in most of the Protestant churches of the colony.⁸⁸

The evangelists, both local and overseas, plied their trade to good effect.⁸⁹ Outstanding was the overseas import, George Clarke. He did not have the charisma of Moody, the oratorical ability of Spurgeon, the forcefulness of Varley, and was not as well known as any of them. But the ESV committee had done their homework; and his personality and style met with approval. He brought a dignity and hard-working earnestness to the task, and soon stamped his leadership on the mission and achieved a celebratory status. Fitchett's SC gave him unstinting support, and he received favourable mention in the denominational papers. At the fifth annual meeting of ESV held on Tuesday night 25 June 1889 in the Melbourne Coffee Palace: 'Special reference was made to the fact of the Society having secured during the year a visit from Mr. George Clarke, who had fully justified the expectations of his spirit and power in evangelistic work.'⁹⁰ The SC regularly reported on the efforts of long-forgotten local evangelists such as R Robertson at Allandale, Smythesdale, Ross Creek near Ballarat, and Healesville, W H Scurr at Burnley, Scarsdale and Telangatuk. Clarke and the ESV were very aware of them, and endorsed their work and importance, especially at meetings for 'Christian workers'; the campaign was a collaborative effort. Also mentioned were local clergy who heeded Paul's injunction to Timothy to do the work of an evangelist: eg the Revs J F Ewing, J Watsford, A Bird, H B Macartney, and W Lockhart Morton. At Stawell in the Western District, the local ministers themselves led a mission. Also prominent were evangelists such as John MacNeil, Henry Varley (who ran evangelistic meetings in the Theatre Royal for some weeks during November),⁹¹ and the Brethren George Müller who visited Melbourne in August.

George Müller

George Müller visited in 1886-8, when he spoke in Melbourne and a number of country centres. Referring to Müller's 1886 mission in Sydney, W H Fitchett commented in the SC:

⁸⁸ Torrey and Alexander ventured to Ballarat, Geelong, Bendigo, Warrnambool, Maryborough and Kerang, but did not visit as many country centres as Clarke did. In the next century Billy Graham was able to travel further and spoke to more people than Clarke did, but his stays in Australia were much shorter.

⁸⁹ For example, see the obituary for evangelist Wilmot Oakey and an appeal to help his family in SC, 24 February 1888, 143. The Rev P J Murdoch commented: 'During the past two years I have known Mr Oakey's work in the Victoria Hall, Bourke-street, where he has been able to assemble and hold 600 to 800 young men every Sunday evening. He has very generally spoken on the wharves on the Sunday afternoon also'.

⁹⁰ *Argus*, 28 June 1889, 5.

⁹¹ Varley spoke frequently, and in city and suburbs, but did not hold city-wide crusades in Melbourne, probably because his style and stature did not appeal to all evangelicals. He later raised the hackles of the pugnacious denominational loyalist Allan Webb. See *Victorian Baptist* July 1890, 107.

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He is not an orator. Many indeed heard imperfectly. Nor does he draw new and striking lessons from the text. His teaching is simplicity itself, and has nothing of the 'advanced'. Staid, sedate, and unimpassioned ... He is not a revivalist, and there is no attempt at effect. Leading men to decision is not the chief aim of his addresses ... But he is not here without a mission. He has come to confront and cheer God's own children, to lead them to find faith in every word of God, to bid them continue in prayer, and to walk by faith and not by sight.⁹²

Müller's stories of God's miraculous provision for his orphanages were legendary, though few seemed to notice how much of a publicist he was; that he spent an inordinate amount of his time telling of God's miraculous provision in answer to prayer, supposedly with him telling only God of his need! One wonders how often such provision would have happened if he had only prayed and not told anyone.⁹³

Müller especially modelled a certain kind of evangelicalism. His orphan homes and rescue work epitomised a social gospel that was well known in the evangelical world. His grassroots ecumenism fitted well with wide-spread evangelical network and its various endeavours. Just as notably, Müller used his celebrity status. He was the great publicist for the Christian life as a stout-hearted life of prayer. This was an important *modus operandi* of nineteenth-century evangelicals as they thought about and engaged in missions and forms of ministry, and his addresses were vibrant testimonies to God's miraculous provision. He exemplified the introspective, intense, subjective piety that was institutionalised in the Keswick deeper-life movement. His meetings were not deeper-life meetings but the theology and spirituality espoused were much the same, and fostered the introspective piety of the evangelicals. However, most of what Müller had to say was already part of the Melbourne evangelicals' universe of discourse; he did not say or initiate anything new.

Henry Varley's third visit 1888-96

Hovering round the edges of the CM was Henry Varley. His return to London was only a temporary one, and in 1887 he paid a short visit to Melbourne to see his children and to get relief for a bronchial condition. However he decided to stay, and returned to London only long enough to pack and move (more) permanently to Melbourne the following year. For while church life in Melbourne was bustling and confident, there were still plenty of sinners to be

⁹² SC, 12 Feb 1886, 13. See too M Lamb, "'Out of All Proportion': Christian Brethren Influence in Australia, Evangelicalism, 1850-1890' in G R Treloar & R D Linder eds, *Making History for God. Essays on Evangelicalism, Revival and Mission* (Sydney: Robert Menzies College, 2004), 87-110; and D Lenz, *Strengthening the Faith of the Children of God: Pietism, Print and Prayer in the Making of a World Evangelical Hero, George Müller of Bristol, 1805-1898* (Kansas State Univ PhD, 2010).

⁹³ See R Ostrander, 'Proving the Living God: Answered Prayer as a Modern Fundamentalist Apologetic', *Fides et Historia*, XXVIII:3 (Fall 1996), 69-89.

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saved; latitudinarianism was in the air; spiritualism and free thought challenged the churches; the science versus religion debate was a worry to many; social problems abounded; and churchmen of all denominations found it necessary to argue the causes of Sabbatarianism and temperance.

It seemed that the evangelical grip was hardly shaken and that church-going habits remained unimpaired. But statistics alone tell us nothing about the inroads of creeping doubt; or the degree to which materialist assumptions and secular notions about the pursuit of happiness in this world were reducing religious fervour; or whether the rising generation, though schooled into church, would retain their faith or as active a faith.⁹⁴

In the *Southern Cross*, Fitchett quoted the *Daily Telegraph*:

... church attendance in London is 1 in 10, Liverpool 1 in 9, Melbourne 1 in 6; argues that from the total population must be deducted the busy, the sick, the old, the very young etc who cannot attend church, reducing the actual church going population to say 175 000. The total morning & evening congregations in Melbourne amount to 113 107; and a very large proportion of these attend only once, the number of individual worshipers on any given Sunday will probably reach, and the *Daily Telegraph* thinks, about 85 000. But this leaves a vast multitude of no less than 90 000 unaccounted for.⁹⁵

Clearly there was need for evangelism, and evangelists. It seemed just right for Varley. He was only 53 and had a good few years left in him yet, and the family would be a support. He was also heartened to find that many converts from his previous ministry had remained faithful. Moreover, he could opportunistically ride the wave of the CM, but with some caution. Unlike 1877, Varley was not invited, even though Theo Kitchen, who invited him to Melbourne in 1877, was secretary of the ESV, and Balfour and Macartney had sat on the platform with him at Melbourne Town Hall meetings. It is unlikely his age was a factor; but he had shown himself to be a bit too independent when here previously. The Melbourne evangelicals wanted the mission to be supported as much as possible by the churches.

Nevertheless, Varley intended to make his mark, even if he did not have top billing or the official endorsement of the ESV. He was to be in Melbourne for more than 1888, not returning permanently home to London until 1896; though of these eight years only four were

⁹⁴ Serle, *The Rush to be Rich*, 151f.

⁹⁵ SC, 13 May 1887, 370. The population of Melbourne then was 350 000.

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spent in Melbourne, with short forays to Sydney and Adelaide, and longer trips overseas. He bought a house in Kew, a suburb four miles from the CBD, and picked up where he had left off in 1879. *Willing Work* had ceased publication in 1881, and so fuller details of his endeavours were not reported. The SC mentioned him in its reports: for example, in November he held 'well attended' services in the Theatre Royal; in December he led some of the midday prayer meetings, and was present at the third annual Victorian Prophetic Conference, the theme of which was 'The Practical Relation of Prophetic Truth to Evangelistic Work'. But (and the editor Fitchett was a friend) he did not receive the top billing he did in *Willing Work*. Fitchett was more concerned to give a more balanced overall report of the Mission than to 'puff' Varley.

Varley spent August-September 1889 in Sydney speaking to large crowds in various halls and, on Sunday afternoons, in the Domain. The topics were familiar ones: sexual immorality, gambling, Sabbatarianism, and calling sinners to repentance. Generally the crowds were responsive; he was saying what they expected to hear. As a farewell volley 'he took part in an all-day united conference in Pitt Street Congregational Church where he thundered at the iniquities of Sydney - "Satan has his seat in this city" - and the lethargy of the churches which he urged to unite in a common front against the forces of evil'.⁹⁶ Note that he 'took part' in this conference; he was not the only speaker, there were others.

* * * *

At the end of the 1880s, Melbourne could look back on a half-century tradition of evangelistic activism of which the marvellous Melbourne decade was the high-water-mark thus far. The evangelists were outstanding, as was the leadership and organisation. Samuel Chapman continued his long and distinguished incumbency of Collins Street Baptist Church, providing evangelistic leadership for his fellow Baptists and the evangelical cause generally. He fitted well the Melbourne tradition of capable pastors of the city churches. The Salvation Army arrived with its characteristic combining of evangelistic fire with deep social concern. This too was a Melbourne tradition. The indomitable H B Macartney led in forming the ESV, an organisation whose activism culminated in the 1888 Centennial Mission. This was the highlight of all that had gone before. Evangelistic activism was also stimulated by prayer, deeper-life conferences, 'prophecy' conferences, the overseas visitors George Clarke, George Müller, and Henry Varley, and the lady evangelists Margaret Hampson, Bessie Lee and Emilia Baeyertz. But none of this was an end in itself; it was both ongoing and

⁹⁶ W Phillips, *Defending 'A Christian Country' Churchmen and Society in New South Wales in the 1880s and after* (St Lucia, Qld: Univ of Queensland Press, 1981), 73. On this and the preceding pages Phillips gives a report and assessment of Varley's time in Sydney.

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preparatory for the next decade. But what would the evangelical men of Melbourne do in the legendary 90s?

Chapter 8

The Culmination of Colonial Melbourne's Evangelistic Tradition (1890-1903)

In the last decade of the nineteenth century the Melbourne evangelicals looked back on a tradition that was innovative, blessed with competent leadership, which saw much fruit. However, things did not seem promising. The marvellous Melbourne decade was followed by the 'legendary nineties', another boisterous decade which seemed to typify the weaknesses and promise of the nation. As if to herald the approach of the new century, electric street lighting was introduced to Melbourne in 1890. The larrikin *Bulletin* was 10 years old and aggressively endorsing the burgeoning nationalist movement that was to culminate in 1901 with the Australian colonies federating to form the Commonwealth of Australia. But confidence in the future of the emerging nation was mixed. The early years of the decade saw the shearers' strike, the formation of the Victorian Labor Party, the crash of the land boom, the failure of many banks and a severe economic depression. There was more than a whiff of greed in all of this. Melbourne's ill-gotten wealth and over-weening pride, many people thought, must produce an inevitable fall. Sydney's *Bulletin* gleefully attacked the financial scandals of 'marvellous Smellboom' when the main trading banks closed their doors. Disturbingly, a number of evangelicals, caught up in the capitalist spirit, were prominent land boomers. The Anglican Bishop of Melbourne called for a special Day of Humiliation and Prayer: marvellous Melbourne had become 'miserable Melbourne'.

But despite obeisance to Mammon, evangelism continued apace: the evangelical men of Melbourne were neither moribund nor somnolent. The outstanding exemplars, and culmination, of Melbourne's evangelistic tradition, included the Rev John MacNeil, and an organisation focused on prayer. A large missionary meeting in the Melbourne Town Hall featuring an English (Methodist) missionary statesman reminded the attendees of the local heritage of evangelism to non-Anglo-Saxons at home and abroad, a heritage that went back to the early days of the colony. And a deeper-life convention in Geelong with the Rev George Grubb as featured speaker was crowded and excited. Both used the convention format, were expressions of movement-wide unity, not the outbursts of a few, and were ardently missions and evangelism centred. They were not ephemeral, limited in duration and effect. Also, coming only a few years after the 1888 Centennial Mission, they may be seen as continued

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expressions of the vibrancy of the Melbourne evangelical tradition,¹ a tradition which continued throughout the rest of the decade. For the local evangelists (or promoters of evangelism), now including Henry Varley who had made Melbourne his home, were men of persevering enthusiasm. They were also fortunate in the capable leadership provided by the leading evangelical clergy, both in the city churches and the main suburban ones. As before, prayer undergirded their efforts and vision, and their spirituality was stimulated and encouraged by the resurgent deeper-life movement.

Melbourne also played host to two visits by four outstanding American evangelists – R A Torrey, C F Alexander, E Geil in 1902, and John R Mott in 1903. The outcomes of these visits were world-wide in their impact, and were a worthy climax to the preceding half-century of evangelistic endeavours by the locals, efforts that frequently resulted in many minor revivals. The Americans were the stars, but the events were initiated and organised by the locals. The chapter concludes with a section on evangelism to youth and young people, highlighting Mott's 1903 mission to students.

John MacNeil and the Band

The Rev John MacNeil was an evangelical Presbyterian minister who spent his ministry doing the work of an evangelist.² He was a tall athletic man who, in nineteenth-century fashion, wore a full beard in his mature years. But it was his definite and striking personality which impressed people. He had a manly uprightness of character, and a frank, open and earnest manner. There was also an engaging naturalness and an absence of self seeking. He inherited from his father a strong will, an iron constitution, and a boundless capacity for work. From his mother he inherited an open, generous and unselfish nature: there was a 'buoyancy of disposition which rose above all wetblanketting'.³ There was also a certain impetuosity and nervous energy which often characterise the itinerant evangelist.

MacNeil was born 19 October 1854 in the village of Dingwall, Ross-shire, Scotland. The family moved to Victoria, and in 1871 MacNeil began study at Melbourne University. His time at university was also crucial for his spiritual development. He attended the flourishing St Andrew's, Carlton, the largest Presbyterian church in the colony. The minister was the Rev Duncan McEachran, a Free Kirker of the 1843 generation. His warm evangelical piety found

¹ They included missions to Chinese and Aborigines, the London Missionary Society, denominational missions, and the organizations referred to in Macartney's *Missionary at Home and Abroad*.

² See my 'Rev John MacNeil (1854-1896): Australia for Christ', *Presbyterian Leaders in Nineteenth Century Australia* (Melbourne: Rowland S Ward, 1993), 150-64. MacNeil is to be distinguished from the contemporary Scottish evangelist the Rev John McNeill, the 'Scottish Spurgeon'.

³ H MacNeil, *John MacNeil. Late Evangelist in Australia and Author of "The Spirit-filled Life". A Memoir by His Wife* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1897), 88. The Introduction was by the Rev D S McEachran, and the book was edited by H B Macartney.

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a response in the young impressionable MacNeil who, under McEachran's ministry, came to assurance of faith: 'it was in a back seat in St Andrew's', he said, 'that I first found the light'. It was not a sudden conversion; rather a natural culmination of his spiritual growth up to that point. MacNeil was one of a number of young men who entered the ministry as a result of McEachran's influence.

Following graduation, MacNeil studied for the ministry in New College, Edinburgh, where he distinguished himself in evangelistic work for the Student Mission in the nearby slums. Returning to Australia, the Free Church sent him to Adelaide to build up the church there. On 20 May 1879, he was ordained by the Presbytery of Adelaide 'as a Missionary'. He spent 18 strenuous months at the Jamestown church, which was at a low ebb. 'After passing through a crisis in his spiritual life, he resigned in February 1881 to become a full time evangelist. But he left a strong and active church.'⁴ The 'spiritual crisis' probably stemmed from a growing conviction that the parish ministry was not for him: he became increasingly aware of a 'call' to be a full time evangelist. This was fostered by his

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Rev John MacNeil

awareness of the impact of Moody's revivalism in Edinburgh, and his desire for an 'endowment of power' for such work.⁵ He borrowed books on Christian holiness and the higher Christian life from a Methodist friend and in his diary recorded on 1 January 1881: 'The new year opened and found me on my knees asking the fulfilment of the promised baptism of the Holy Spirit in a Wesleyan Watch-night service.' Then, on 13 February 1881: 'This morning He told me, "You have the endowment." I believe Him. Alleluia. I believe Him.' The rest of his life was to be spent mostly in itinerant evangelism. He was in charge of some parishes during this time, but these incumbencies were really only interludes.

⁴ R J Scrimgeour, *Some Scots Were Here. A History of the Presbyterian Church in South Australia* (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1986), 80. MacNeil's brief tenure laid the foundation for Matthew Burnett's two-week, enthusiastic and successful mission there in February-March 1881. See R Evans, *Matthew Burnett. The Yorkshire Evangelist. Australia's Greatest Evangelist and Social Reformer* (Hazelbrook, NSW: Research in Evangelical Revivals, 2010), 233-4.

⁵ J Edwin Orr, *Evangelical Awakenings in the South Seas* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship 1976), 77, records:

... John R. Mott met the evangelist John MacNeil and asked him what had led him to desire the fullness of the Spirit. MacNeil replied that it was A.B. Earle's little book, describing his work 'bringing in the sheaves'. [1871] The narrative made MacNeil so dissatisfied with the comparative barrenness of his own life and work that he shut himself up alone with God until 'he was baptized with the Holy Ghost in power'.

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MacNeil returned to Victoria where for nearly four years he worked as an itinerant evangelist. In 1889 the Melbourne Presbytery asked him to accept charge of the old Simpson's Road Church in Abbotsford. Abbotsford was a working class suburb and the church almost dead; but, as with Jamestown, under MacNeil it was not long before the church revived, increasing its membership from 44 to 140 in eighteen months. As with his other parishes he continued to lead missions in other parts of Victoria. He also took to preaching in the open air in the nearby Studley Park on Sunday afternoons during the summer months, attracting audiences of 500 to 1000, and one occasion 5000.⁶ He also naturally became part of the evangelical network.

When MacNeil accepted the parish of Abbotsford neither he nor the Presbytery of Melbourne thought it would be a long appointment. Thus on 19 November of that year the Assembly unanimously appointed him as the official evangelist of the Presbytery, expecting him to devote himself to that role when his time at Abbotsford was finished. That time arrived in April 1891 when he resigned the parish to spend the last five years of his life in uninterrupted, itinerant evangelism. Following a mission to New Zealand⁷ he began his official work as Assembly Evangelist on 1 August 1891, conducting missions in nine churches prior to the Assembly of November that year. The years 1892 and 1893 were spent largely evangelising Victorian country centres, with quick trips to South Australia and Tasmania. In 1893 there were no less than 35 missions in Victorian churches between February and November.⁸ In May 1894, after his return from his second visit to New Zealand, he travelled to Adelaide. There he heard the English evangelist Gipsy Smith and for the next four months conducted missions at South Australian centres; although this work was, significantly, chiefly in non-Presbyterian churches.⁹

His next area of operations was Western Australia; but before that he returned to Melbourne for a brief rest and preparation. There was great excitement among the evangelical community over MacNeil's Scottish namesake the Rev John McNeill who was paying a long expected visit to Australia, including 4 weeks of meetings in Melbourne. Three extra meetings were held in the Exhibition Building on 29-31 August which enabled MacNeil to attend one. He was recognised and brought to the platform where he led in prayer before the audience of 5000.

⁶ *Reports to the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria*, November 1890, xxxi.

⁷ The results of the campaign were positive, but it was a struggle. MacNeil sometimes spoke about being in chains and referred to the early Methodist preachers knowing the difference between bondage and liberty.

⁸ *Assembly Reports*, November 1893, xviii.

⁹ *Assembly Reports*, November 1894, xxxviii.

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MacNeil then sailed for Perth, arriving there on 12 September 1894. Back in Melbourne he formally resigned his commission as official evangelist for the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, and his activity became increasing non-denominational.¹⁰ But his time was short. On 27 August 1896, during a campaign in Queensland, suddenly and unexpectedly, he collapsed and died. He was 41. He was buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery opposite Melbourne University. Large crowds lined the journey from his home in Sandringham and a large crowd waited at the graveside. There the service was conducted by the Revs D Gordon and D S McEachran, H B Macartney, S Chapman,¹¹ and J Watsford. Each testified to the quality of MacNeil's life, ministry and influence. It was an emotional and moving tribute to a winsome man who burnt himself out for Christ,¹² and a sincere statement of evangelical ecumenism. J Edwin Orr commented: his death caused 'tears from Geraldton on the west coast of Western Australia to Cooktown on the east coast of Queensland. He taught other ministers to pray'.¹³ And D L Moody commented: 'The death of John MacNeil, of Australia, author of *The Spirit-filled Life*, had roused the Christian people of that island-continent to a sense of responsibility and the need for spiritual activity'.¹⁴

The Band

In 1889, when he was appointed to the Abbotsford parish, John MacNeil promptly began meeting with a group of ministers who committed themselves to spending one night a week praying for themselves, their congregations and the colony.¹⁵ The Band, as they were called, grew to include ministers of other denominations, including Macartney, a close friend, and one layman, the Baptist Dr D S MacColl.¹⁶ The Band was not intended to be exclusively

¹⁰ A B Simpson (founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance) referred to 'the need of irregulars in the work of the gospel. God has always done a great deal of his work out of season as well as in season, irregularly as well as regularly.' That is, independently of denominational allegiance or control. Simpson was a Canadian Presbyterian minister who sought the baptism of the Spirit; and moved outside of the Presbyterian Church to do his greatest work. 'The Training and Sending Forth of Christian Workers' (1891), *The Man, the Movement and the Mission. A Documentary History of the Christian and Missionary Alliance vol.1* (compiled and privately published by C.Nienkirchen, 1987), 162.

¹¹ After failing health, Chapman died in 1899. And Macartney left for England the year before. These were great losses to the evangelical cause.

¹² 'He was as intensely natural as he was deeply spiritual... His family were in his heart to live and die with him. The daily letter, when from home, and the abounding delight in returning and resting ever and anon at home, proved this. But he gave his life for souls'. 'In Memoriam' *The Presbyterian Monthly* (1 October 1896), 368.

¹³ Orr, *Evangelical Awakenings in the South Seas*, 83.

¹⁴ H C Alexander & J K MacLean, *Charles M. Alexander. A Romance of Song and Soul-Winning* (London: Marshall Bros, nd), 48. See too J Edwin Orr, *The Flaming Tongue. The Impact of Twentieth Century Revivals* (Chicago: Moody, 1973), 108ff. This is not to say that MacNeil's understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer was only experientially based. One of the professors at New College when he was there was George Smeaton whose teaching on *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1882) had a profound effect on Andrew Murray and A B Simpson.

¹⁵ See H MacNeil, *John MacNeil*, 62f.

¹⁶ 'See my 'Dr Donald Stewart MacColl', *Our Yesterdays* (Victorian Baptist Historical Society) vol 8 2000. MacColl's membership might have been, in part, due to his association with Samuel Chapman.

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clerical, and the active membership changed as people moved; it was just that their meeting times usually did not suit laymen.¹⁷ However, the informal group modelled the collegiality, the commitment to evangelism, and the (deeper-life) spirituality of the evangelical network.

Varley was not a member of the Band, probably because it was comprised mainly of ministers. But Varley does not seem to have been involved in the Band's activities, especially the Geelong Convention. His itinerancy might have been a factor. But the theology of the Band, and its focus on evangelism and prayer, coincided with his; Macartney was a member; MacNeil was a fellow itinerant evangelist; and he preached from Samuel Chapman's pulpit. It was not that a new generation of evangelicals had arisen which knew him not. More likely, he found the overwhelmingly clerical Band not to his liking.¹⁸

MacNeil might well have got the idea for the Band from his time as a student in Edinburgh when he was involved with the 'Corstorphine Band' (now a suburb of Edinburgh). In the 1870s the English Evangelical Alliance issued a call to united prayer during the first week of each year. This call was well supported in the Britain and America, seeing fruit in revivals.¹⁹ MacNeil's vision was stimulated by the Band, and he sent a circular to every minister in Victoria inviting them to join the Band in prayer. The result was a Day of Prayer on 3 October 1889 held in the Temperance Hall. MacNeil estimated that 700 attended. The Band's next big event after the Day of Prayer was the Geelong Convention. However before then, some of its members hosted a visit by J Hudson Taylor. This was an occasional visit, he did not come again; but it was seminal, and fitted the evangelicals' perception of the great commission and their role in it.

Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission

Evangelism, ideally, had revival as its outcome. And revival, typically, resulted in foreign missions. In 1865, shortly after the 1858-60 revival, Hudson Taylor founded the China Inland Mission.²⁰ He and CIM captured the imagination of evangelicals around the world. The interest of the Melbourne evangelicals was captured by the visits to Melbourne of two CIMers: the Rev George Nicholl and Mary Reed. Nicholl, an Englishman, had gone to China

¹⁷ A list of the members of the Band is in H MacNeil, *John MacNeil*, 395. Among them was the Methodist stalwart John Watsford who retired that year. The *ADB Online* entry on Watsford incorrectly attributes the organization of the Geelong convention to him, though he did play a leading role. See his *Glorious Gospel Triumphs* (London: Charles H Kelly, 1900); and R Evans, *Evangelism and Revivals in Australia 1880-1914* (Hazelbrook, NSW: Research in Evangelical Revivals, 2005), 85. In an active retirement he continued evangelistic work and promoting missions. He died 24 July 1907 in Kew, a credit to his church.

¹⁸ *Victorian Baptist*, July 1890, 107, published a defensive editorial: 'Henry Varley on the Disintegration of Denominations'.

¹⁹ Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals*, 263.

²⁰ Macartney was inducted to St Mary's, Caulfield, only 3 years later.

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with CIM in 1875. Ten years later Taylor sent him to Australia to aid his recovery from dysentery. Ill-health saw him extend his stay until 1889. He used this time to apprise the local evangelicals of China's needs and the work of CIM. The first to respond was Mary Reed, the oldest daughter of Henry Reed. She went to China in 1888, but had to return in 1889 because of ill health. The timing was fortuitous; the same year H B Macartney and three clerical friends, his curate the Rev C H Parson, the Rev W Lockhart Morton, and the Rev Alfred Bird had been simultaneously and independently thinking about what missions to China might mean for Australian evangelicals, and met to pray about what might be done. This led to an invitation to Taylor to visit Melbourne in 1890.

On 21 May 1890 Macartney received a cablegram from Taylor asking him to form a CIM council in Australia.²¹ The next day, the high-octane Macartney formed an Australian Council in Melbourne. It was soon considering the names of eight potential candidates, and invited Taylor to visit Australia. Taylor arrived in Darwin on 12 August where he spoke at a meeting before sailing to Sydney. There he spoke with representatives of the Church Missionary Society and the Presbyterian and Methodist Mission boards, and ministers and Christian workers.²² Arriving in Melbourne he stayed briefly with Macartney before crossing Bass Strait in September to speak in Launceston and Hobart.²³ Further meetings in Tasmania saw generous donations to the work of CIM and many offering themselves for missionary service. It was a very successful visit and indicative of evangelical eagerness and interest in missions. In October he visited Adelaide and then travelled overland to Melbourne to speak at a great farewell meeting at the Melbourne Town Hall on 27 October.²⁴ The elderly Dean Macartney was in the chair; 3000 were present; and Taylor announced he was praying for 100 workers from Australia before sailing for Sydney on 1 November.

The Melbourne evangelicals had invested much energy into missionary endeavour for decades, not least to the Aborigines and local Chinese.²⁵ Thus, though not a catalyst, Taylor's visit was an important event in the history of Australian missions, for such were part of the evangelistic imperative that drove Macartney *et al.* Under his initiative and leadership,

²¹ Parsons had gone to China with CIM, and had spoken with Taylor.

²² C I Benson, *A Century of Victorian Methodism* (Melbourne: Spectator Pub Co, 1935), 227: 'Under the aegis of the China Inland Mission, during the past 43 years no less than 40 avowed Methodists have served in China, ... Their number includes teachers, nurses, chemists and engineers.'

²³ Interest in Taylor and missions saw 700 at the Launceston meeting, a 'private' meeting with some 80 friends of the governor's wife Lady Teresa Hamilton at Government House, and 500 at a public meeting in Hobart.

²⁴ The diplomatic Taylor, and Montague Beauchamp (one of the Cambridge 7), also spoke at the Temperance Hall two days later in connection with the Church of England Mission to Chinese in Victoria. On 1 November he left for Sydney. See SC, December 1890, 119f, and the Christmas Letter Mission report for 1890.

²⁵ See I Welch, *Pariahs and Outcasts: Christian Missions to the Chinese in Victoria in the Nineteenth Century* (Monash MA, 1980).

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the Australian CIM established itself as the leading interdenominational ('faith') mission in Australia. Taylor's CIM was not the first of such to operate in Melbourne; Macartney's *MAHA* regularly carried reports of others which the Melbourne evangelicals supported as well as their denominational missions. Prominent among them was the London Missionary Society. For example, just before Christmas 1856, the LMS mission ship *John Williams* tied up at Port Melbourne, and 3000 paid 1/- each for the rail trip to see her. The prominent Congregationalist MLC Frederick James Sargood stood in an open railway carriage and led the hymn singing, with Daniel Draper leading the prayers. Support and interest continued. In 1881 the *Southern Cross* reported on the annual general meeting of the Victorian Auxiliary of LMS.²⁶ Of note was the large attendance and the officeholders who were prominent Melbourne citizens and churchmen: the chairman was the Baptist MLC and Mayor of Melbourne, Cornelius Job Ham; the president was the Congregationalist Rev A Gosman; the treasurer was the Brethren businessman David Beath; and the secretary was the Brethren C Nicholls.²⁷

Overseas, CIM and other faith missions were an outcome of or stimulated by revival. In Melbourne, the immediate initiating factors were the 1888 CM, prayer (the Band), and the evangelistic activity of the preceding decades. To Taylor's great satisfaction, on 20 November, eight women and four men sailed from Sydney with him for China. Thereafter, finances and candidates flowed in.²⁸ Also, there was a significant impact on other missions as Taylor spoke with representatives from denominational societies, and encouraged individuals such as Florence Young and Charles Reve who went on to make their own distinctive contributions.²⁹

The resultant increase in missionary candidates highlighted the need for training institutions and inspired the provision of training for missionaries. The challenge was taken up by Dr and Mrs William Warren who in 1891/2 founded Dr and Mrs William Warren's Missionary Training Institute in Kew.³⁰ The training centred on core biblical, doctrinal and historical subjects,

²⁶ SC, 19 February 1881, 1.

²⁷ It is best to refer to LMS as an interdenominational mission (which by as early as 1830 became virtually identified as a Congregational mission), as it organised its financial support carefully and responsibly. The 'faith' missions really belong to the second half of the century.

²⁸ For fuller details see M Loane, *The Story of the China Inland Mission in Australia and New Zealand 1890-1964* (Sydney: CIM/OMF, 1965). See the table on page 21. *MAHA*, September 1890, 76-9, has an editorial on Taylor by Macartney.

²⁹ In 1886, Young began the Queensland Kanaka Mission. This later became the South Seas Evangelical Mission (now Pacific Partners) and Florence, after missionary service in China with CIM, exercised a remarkable, if stern, ministry in the Solomon Islands. Varley, *Henry Varley*, 212. See T Larsen *et al* eds, *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals* (Leicester: IVP, 2003), 756-8.

³⁰ Born 20 November 1852 in Carlow, Ireland, Warren studied at the Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin. After locum work in London he moved to Liverpool where he was also assistant physician to the London Missionary Society. Injury and ill-health led to the 27 year-old migrating to Australia, arriving in Hobson's Bay in 1879. In Melbourne he established himself as a medic and a prominent

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basic medicine and first aid, 'gospel work' and other evangelistic and pastoral activities. The training was 'practical', for service. The Warren's home fulfilled its function until it closed in 1901.³¹ The following year Mr and Mrs James Griffiths opened a new Training Home for Women, which they called Hiawatha(!), at 199 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy to replace the Warren institution. The Griffiths, together with James' brother John, were examples of committed lay evangelicals (in their case, Anglican) who gave generously of their time and substance to both denominational and inter-denominational evangelical causes. Hiawatha was begun to provide training for women missionary candidates of both CIM and CMA. Many of the candidates studied 'without any charge or expense', the Griffiths meeting the costs.³² Their benefactions exemplified the importance of well-off generous evangelicals to evangelical activism, and James and his wife's deaths in a car accident at a railway crossing in 1925 were a great loss to Melbourne evangelicalism.

A great stimulation of revival, and missions, and itself a kind of revival, was the deeper-life movement. Begun in 1874 by Macartney in his Caulfield parish, deeper-life spirituality became part of the Melbourne tradition. This saw a resurgence with a convention planned by the Band and featuring an exuberant Irish evangelist and Keswick missionary.

The Rev George Grubb and the Geelong Convention³³

On 16 March 1891 members of the Band, who had been meeting regularly for prayer for an outpouring of God's Spirit, went for a four-day retreat at 'Como', the home of retired grazier Andrew Rutherford on the shores of Lake Connemara near Geelong.³⁴ There, the Rev Allan Webb suggested they hold a convention in Geelong in September along the lines of the Keswick Convention in England.³⁵ In her biography of her husband, John MacNeil's wife said:

Baptist evangelical. His wife Charlotte, who had a passion for China, was the daughter of Henry Reed, and sister of George Soltau, a Brethren missionary and pastor in Tasmania.

³¹ In December 1896 the Rev John Southey took possession of 161 Grey Street East Melbourne where he provided short training courses for young men who were going out to China, but this did not last long. In 1920 the Rev C H Nash began the Melbourne Bible Institute.

³² *China's Millions*, November 1918. Griffiths, and his older brother James, formed Griffiths Brothers Tea and Coffee, which was later sold to the Robur Tea Company. John Griffiths died on 21 February 1943. He was prominent for many years in connection with the YMCA, the British and Foreign Bible Society, and CMS. He was also first chairman of the Upwey Convention Council. *Keswick Quarterly*, No.70 (May 1943), 17.

³³ I include an account of the Geelong Convention because the meetings were large, enthusiastic and successful; they warmed the hearts of many; and they continued into the next century. While the Convention had a life of its own, it was also an extension of the Melbourne deeper-life movement which had its beginnings in 1874. While not discounting the contribution of the Geelong evangelical leadership, most of the initiators and leaders belonged to the Melbourne network. And the main speaker, the charismatic George Grubb, also spoke in Melbourne.

³⁴ Their number included the 71 year-old John Watsford.

³⁵ See my 'The Deeper Life Movement in Victoria 1880-1914', *Our Yesterdays* vol 10, 2002, 53-78. Webb was undoubtedly well aware of, and approved of, Macartney's conferences. *The Geelong*

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The ministers who formed what had come to be known as "The Band" had increased in number, until it comprised thirty or forty members from all denominations. The subject of the Higher Life had begun to excite interest. The ministers themselves had been finding out 'deeper depths' and 'higher heights' and it was now felt that a Convention, on the lines of the famous Convention at Keswick, would give the much needed opportunity of setting forth the doctrine of Sanctification by Faith. Rev. George Grubb was then in Australia and it was resolved to ask him to act as chairman.³⁶

George Grubb, who made two visits to Australia (1890 and 1891), was an engaging, enthusiastic and emotional Irishman from Tipperary. He was a gifted evangelist and deeper-life preacher whose ministry found a wide acceptance.³⁷ He was appointed by the Keswick Convention to be its itinerant missionary; that is, to spread the word of Keswick deeper-life spirituality. Needless to say, he also understood his brief to include evangelism. During his first tour he visited Melbourne and was persuaded to stay for a fortnight's mission by Macartney. This was successful, and during his second tour he made an even more successful campaign to Melbourne and Victorian country centres in May-September 1891. This campaign is particularly interesting in that almost every meeting was held in an Anglican church,³⁸ including a crowded service in St Paul's cathedral on 30 August where it had the blessing of Macartney's father, the elderly dean of the diocese. This echoed the Anglican dominance of Keswick in England and the openness of many Melbourne evangelical Anglican churches at the time to Keswick teaching and spirituality. Moreover, Grubb's mission also received official patronage. The only two Anglican bishops in Victoria at the time - Field Flowers Goe of Melbourne and Samuel Thornton of Ballarat were the sponsors;

Advertiser, 19 September 1891, says that Geelong was chosen because of its central position and the 'facilities it offered for accommodating a great number of visitors who have attended the assemblages from Melbourne and all parts of the colony, as well as from the adjacent colonies of Tasmania, New Zealand and South Australia.' This might be true. However one would have imagined that Melbourne was equally central and offered even more facilities for accommodation, as well as a much larger population (401 378) to draw on.

³⁶ MacNeil, *John MacNeil*, 220. Though the Rev E Harris, *Southern Baptist Supplement* 30 April 1902, iv, wrote: 'It was at Mr Webb's suggestion that the place of meeting became Geelong, where, we think, the Convention will find its permanent home.' 'deeper depth' and 'higher heights'. These expressions are instances of the evangelical use of language: they reflect the influence of Romantic emotionalism; they express a kind of perfectionism, a yearning for 'something more' than mere orthodoxy; and they are part of the evangelical 'in-house' universe of discourse. As such they are also shibboleth-like, 'boundary-markers' for the insider.

³⁷ J Pollock, *The Keswick Story: The Authorised History of the Keswick Convention* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), 90, describes him thus:

His views were black and white, he dismissed all culture as worldly, he could be intolerant to a degree; yet such was the breadth of his influence that the extreme high church Bishop of Cape Town had him cross the oceans to conduct a mission in cathedral and diocese, while the Salvation Army counted him almost one of themselves.

³⁸ The itinerary is in E C Millard, *The Same Lord: An Account of the Mission Tour of the Rev. George C. Grubb, M.A., in Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand from April 3rd to July 7th* (London: E. Marlborough and Co., 1893), 48. As well as a number of Melbourne parishes, he held meetings at the YMCA, and at Ballarat, Bairnsdale and Geelong.

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indeed, four of the Grubb party stayed with Goe at Bishops Court. The bishop commented to the Church Assembly:

I may not pass unnoticed the remarkable mission conducted in Melbourne and other places in the Colony by the Rev.G.C.Grubb and his associates ... It was a phenomenon to witness the crowds who thronged the cathedral evening by evening to hear the gospel simply and earnestly proclaimed ... Mr Grubb is a preacher of no common order ... I could wish that all my young clergy and candidates for holy orders to hear this preacher ..³⁹

The campaign concluded on 9 September with a packed thanksgiving service at the Exhibition Building after the Melbourne Town Hall proved inadequate for the numbers.

Grubb's mission was the high point of something that had been brewing for some time. While the Geelong Convention was not the first convention in Victoria, it was more avowedly interdenominational and more ambitious than those initiated by Macartney, and which may be regarded as preliminary. Its success was due to the preparatory work of the earlier conventions, the Band, and the presence of an overseas 'name'. Grubb wrote an open letter of explanation expressing the basic Keswick themes including reference to *The hastening of our Lord's Second Advent by the evangelisation of the world will also be spoken of, 'for this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then the end shall come'*.⁴⁰ (emphasis added; note the premillennial urgency)

The Geelong meetings differed from the other Grubb meetings in that they were not primarily evangelistic; they were not held on Anglican premises; and the speakers included Baptist, Congregationalist, Presbyterian and Methodist clergy as well as Grubb.⁴¹ They were held 15-

³⁹ Goe's address to the Church Assembly in October; *Argus* 27 October 1891, 9. Goe's appreciation was echoed in the *Church of England Messenger's* editorial, 2 October 1891, 172-3, which, while noting disquiet among some Anglicans, roundly and fulsomely endorsed Grubb's mission. However Grubb was more of a brilliant meteor than an abiding star. He later left Keswick auspices, and the Anglican Church, to work as an independent evangelist, dying in 1940 aged 84. His type of charismatic evangelist was infectious and enthusiastic, but of limited life-span. The *Messenger*, 1 May 1897, 62, reported that Grubb was 're-baptised' on 24 September by the 'Rev F B Meyer in Baptist Chapel in Westminster Bridge Road, in the presence of some fifty or sixty friends'. The report concludes: 'Mr.Grubb is a man of so emotional a temperament that with him the soundest logical conclusions would stand no chance against a sudden wave of enthusiasm and passion.'

⁴⁰ Millard, *The Same Lord*, 159.

⁴¹ A Deane, *The Contribution of the New Evangelical Movements of the late Nineteenth Century to Evangelical Enterprise in Australia, 1870-1920* (Univ. of Sydney MA, 1983), 154, comments: 'It was the Methodists who gave the strongest lead to the holiness emphasis in Australia. They initiated ... the Geelong Convention ...' The Methodists were certainly involved, but this overstates the case as far as the Geelong Convention is concerned. The Presbyterian MacNeil was the leader of the Band; the importance of the Anglican Macartney has been noted; Canon George Goodman of Christ Church, Geelong, played an important role, as did the Baptist Webb; and there were more Baptist speakers than from any other denomination. For the attitude and contribution of Baptists to the movement see

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17 September in the Mechanics Institute hall in Ryrie Street with people from all denominations attending. And they were very popular. The hall was crowded with 1200 present, and overflow crowds met in the Presbyterian Church next door and listened to other speakers. The addresses were published under the title *Reports of Addresses at the Christian Convention Geelong, September 1891*.

The convention also, inevitably, sparked missionary interest. Two events at the final meeting underline this. At the *MISSIONARY MEETING*, after some missionaries had spoken of their work, Grubb gave a missionary 'call': he invited to stand those who were prepared to go wherever God might direct them. Many did so: more particularly, 50 offered themselves to CMS. It was this, and Grubb's subsequent work in Sydney, which gave added inspiration and enthusiasm to CMS supporters in Victoria and New South Wales.⁴²

The other event involved Grubb, as he gave his appeal, being given a piece of paper on which a lady had promised £2 to CIM. When this was announced others followed suit. Millard describes this as a spontaneous offering - it was not a collection he said, no collection plates were used – and the result was that over £1000 was given to missions.⁴³ Millard's piety got the better of him here. The *Geelong Advertiser* of 19 September says that Grubb announced that it was a custom of Keswick for a retiring offering to be taken. However, this incident, which was reported in the daily newspapers, indicates something of the sense of enthusiasm and commitment present.⁴⁴

The convention continued into the 1980s, though almost as an extension of the Upwey/Belgrave Heights Convention, which was begun in 1917-8. But it never managed to fulfil the hopes of its first organisers of becoming the Keswick of Australia. Was Geelong the right place for such a convention? It was a sizeable town having a population of 24 210 in 1891. The leading Anglican evangelical C H Nash succeeded Canon G Goodman as vicar of

my 'The Deeper Life Movement in Victoria 1880-1914': *Our Yesterdays* (Victorian Baptist Historical Society), June 2002.

⁴² See K Cole, *A History of the Church Missionary Society of Australia* (Melbourne: Church Missionary Historical Publications, 1971); *Sharing in Mission. The Centenary History of the Victorian Branch of the Church Missionary Society, 1892-1992* (Bendigo: Keith Cole Publications, 1992). See too chapter 3 of S Piggitt, *Evangelical Christianity in Australia. Spirit, Word, World* (Melbourne: Oxford Univ Press, 1996). W J Lawton, *That Better Time to Be. Utopian Attitudes to Society Among Sydney Anglicans 1885 to 1914* (Kensington, NSW: Univ of New South Wales Press, 1990), 94-102, argues that Grubb's impact among Sydney Evangelicals was not as great as in Melbourne. This might have been because deeper-life spirituality was more accepted in the southern capital.

⁴³ This parallels what happened at Keswick in 1888. See Pollock, *The Keswick Story*, 84ff.

⁴⁴ On the first anniversary of the formation of the Australian branch of CIM, SC June 1891, 81, reported that Grubb had arrived from Colombo on the *Victoria* with 6 workers including one lady and a Tamil evangelist. A year later, 22 workers had gone out with CIM, and '£2078-12-8 contributed without personal solicitation'. See too E Stock, *A History of the Church Missionary Society* vol 3 (London: CMS, 1899), 674-5. The Geelong amount probably also indicates something of the class of those who attended. Keswick congregations were comprised mainly of middle-class folk. See C Price and I Randall, *Transforming Keswick* (Carlisle: OM Publishing, 2000), 72f. It is likely that Victorian Keswicks were similarly mainly middle-class.

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Christ Church, Geelong, for a short time in 1907; had he stayed longer he could well have provided the leadership and scholarship it needed to prosper.⁴⁵ And the local Baptists were solidly behind it. Webb provided able and energetic leadership, but he died in 1902. Before then though, as co-secretary of the convention, a speaker, and editor of the *Victorian Baptist*, he rhapsodised:

The Geelong Convention - our first Australian "Keswick" [! – he seems to have overlooked Macartney's 1874 meetings] - is now a matter of history. Its results will reach the distant parts of the earth, and India, China, and Africa, will rejoice that it was held. The first suggestion of such a gathering was a thought from God himself, [!] and the selection of Geelong as the most convenient and suitable place for holding it, has been amply justified. It proved to be sufficiently distant from the metropolis to secure quiet, and yet to possess the means of accommodation equal to the housing of thousands of visitors, who, it is said, sought the benefits of the Convention.

As Baptists we cannot fail to be interested in it, for although the Convention is a purely all-denominational gathering, when the list of speakers is looked at, it is seen that the majority of them were Baptists. This was not because any particular favour was shown to any particular sect, *but the Baptists have been for some time past, most willing to attest the reality and importance of the experiences of what is known as the "Higher Life"*. (emphasis added)⁴⁶

Webb and his colleagues were eager for revival. He continued:

Those who attended the [Geelong] Convention, with hardly any exceptions, attest to great blessing received. Pentecost seemed to have returned to the Church. Tongues were loosened and fire-tipped, holy exhilaration was visible in hundreds of faces. The spirit of liberality was quickened to an extraordinary degree, whilst love made all distinctions void.

Our hope is that the impression made upon the outside world will be kindred with that of Pentecost, and that whilst the Church is so manifestly quickened, the Lord will add

⁴⁵ Certainly he was interested. The *Messenger*, 1 November 1907, 347, reported:

Geelong was crowded with visitors from all parts to attend the seventeenth Christian Convention for the Deepening of Spiritual Life. The Convention commenced on Monday, 21st October, and continued until the Friday. [Among those present were] Canon Jones (Sydney), Canon Nash, and the Revs. W.T.C. Storrs, A.C. Kellaway, H.S. Begbie ... A friend having defrayed the entire cost of the Convention, the offerings will be devoted entirely to Foreign Missionary work.

The number of Anglican clergy present at the meetings is noteworthy.

⁴⁶ *Victorian Baptist*, October 1891. In ecumenical spirit Webb added: 'Next year, happily this preponderance of our Denomination will disappear, for many amongst the other evangelical bodies are apprehending the truths which lie at the basis of this teaching, and will be prepared to take part in its proceedings.'

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daily to it saved persons. One thing we would recommend, viz., missions on a smaller scale to different neighbours with a view to carrying on the teaching of the Convention to those who could not attend it. No surer method of promoting a general revival could be found than to have a mission to teaching believers the glorious possibilities of their calling. ...⁴⁷

However, if we wish to reckon the local Keswicks as a form of revival, one looks in vain for their impact on society. The very nature of Keswick theology and spirituality encouraged introversion and individualism. The passion of the preachers and their preaching fostered a hothouse kind of religion unsuited to either cool reflection on the problems of society and the problematic status of the church in that increasingly secularised society, or embracing the rough and tumble of a political theology and public life. The same time that the Geelong Convention was in full swing, with many offering themselves for overseas missionary service, the great depression was laying waste to the economy and lives of Victorians. But none of the speakers said anything about that. They spoke about holy living, rather than offering a prophetic critique of systemic evil.⁴⁸ This echoes what American historian T L Smith termed 'the great reversal', as evangelicals withdrew from the public square.⁴⁹

As well as in Melbourne and Geelong, conventions were held at country centres such as Castlemaine, Bendigo, Ballarat and Warrnambool.⁵⁰ Even tiny Inverloch in South Gippsland had its own convention, begun in 1911 by a Miss M L Simpson, organising secretary of the Mission to Lepers. The chairman was a well-known Anglican evangelical, the Rev C W T Rogers (familiarily known as 'Hundredweight Rogers'). The main venue in Melbourne though was St Matthew's, Prahran, whose conventions were respectfully reported by the *Victorian Churchman*.⁵¹ St Matthew's seems to have replaced St Mary's, Caulfield, as the preferred

⁴⁷ *Victorian Baptist*, October 1891.

⁴⁸ Keswick in England also focused on individual sins. Price & Randall, *Transforming Keswick*, 127ff, point out that speakers at Keswick made no attempt to discuss sanctity in relation to social questions; this was in part a reflection on the social conservatism of the (middle and upper-middle class) attendees. However, mention should be made of the Baptist F B Meyer who managed to combine impeccable deeper-life credentials with an outstanding record in addressing social problems. But he was an exception.

⁴⁹ It was left to the Lausanne Conference in 1974, under the careful leadership of the English evangelical statesman John Stott, to 'reverse the great reversal' by endorsing the social implications of the gospel.

⁵⁰ For example, in March 1896, following a mission by MacNeil, there was a 'United Christian Convention for the Deepening of Spiritual Life at St John's Church Warrnambool'. The speakers included Macartney, MacNeil, W Y Blackwell (Wesleyan), and Webb. SC, 6 March 1896.

⁵¹ See eg VC, 11 May 1894, 115, for details of Macartney's address at a Prahran convention. Later that year the VC, 28 September 1894, 229, referred to the Geelong Convention, adding: 'The Prahran Convention which proved so marked a success could, we believe, be repeated with equal success in our large inland and seaside towns.' Macartney returned in 1903 to speak at an Anglican deeper-life meeting at 9-11 June at St Matthews. The theme was 'Holiness in Common Life', and the other speakers included evangelical Anglicans W C Sadlier (later first bishop of Nelson, New Zealand), C H

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Anglican venue, probably because Macartney was in America and England in 1877-9 and 1893-4, and moved to England in 1898 to become Home Secretary of the Bible Society. The speakers were usually local leadership among the clergy, though sometimes an overseas 'name' was the featured speaker. For example, on 6 October 1905 the VC advertised that 'At the invitation of the Church Missionary Association of Victoria, the Rev Barclay Fowell Buxton, MA, has come from England to hold Conventions for the Deepening of the Spiritual Life in various parts of Australia.'

Excursus: the continuation of the deeper-life movement

The Melbourne deeper-life movement continued into the twentieth century. Between the beginning of the decline of fortunes of the Geelong Convention and the beginning of the Upwey (later Belgrave Heights) Convention in 1917-8, (and as foreshadowing the latter) a series of local conventions were held at different places in Melbourne. These local conventions began as a result of the work and leadership of H P Smith and the Melbourne Gospel Crusade. Hervey Perceval Smith (always known as 'H P Smith') was the secretary and manager of the Federal Coffee Palace in Collins Street.⁵² He was converted during the 1902 Torrey-Alexander campaign in Melbourne and thereafter devoted his energy and business ability to evangelistic and evangelical causes. Meetings for prayer and bible study were held weekly in the Federal, and it was from these meetings that the Melbourne Gospel Crusade was founded. The MGC soon outgrew the meeting rooms of the Federal and held its meetings in the Assembly Hall in Collins Street and then the Protestant Hall in Exhibition Street.⁵³

The main aim of the MGC was evangelistic, but it was never only that. The meetings also focused on exposition of the Bible, missions, and the Christian life. In short we can see here emphases typical of Keswick conventions. One suspects that Smith was influenced by the Geelong Convention from his time on the *Geelong Advertiser* in the 1890s. The MGC meetings were not specifically deeper-life meetings, but towards the end of World War I a decision was made which had profound consequences for the deeper-life movement in Victoria, and beyond.

Nash (founding principal of Melbourne Bible Institute), D Berry and W T C Storrs. *Messenger*, 1 Jun 1903, 69.

⁵² See the biographical sketch in the *KQ* no 89 (February 1948), 18-21, which also includes an account of the beginning of the Upwey convention; and *SMITH, HERVEY PERCEVAL, Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography* (Sydney: Evangelical History Association, 1994), 344. The 'Coffee Palace' movement had religious overtones, reflecting the prohibitionist stance of many evangelicals at the end of the nineteenth century.

⁵³ The meetings were held weekly with a monthly children's evangelistic meeting. There were also open air meetings, and a 'gospel van' was purchased for work in country areas. There were regular reports in *KQ*.

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It had been the custom of several friends of the Melbourne Gospel Crusade to meet together for fellowship and prayer during the holiday season, and in course of time Upwey was selected as a convenient place for such a gathering. Several of such seasons had been spent at Eltham [1909-12], and then for the sake of some of the young folk the seaside was chosen – Black Rock for two years [1913-14], and Beaumaris [1915] for one. After this smaller and more private gatherings were at Vermont for two years [1916-17], and then at Christmas, 1918, came Upwey [only weeks after the end of World War I].⁵⁴

The Upwey, later Belgrave Heights, Convention was of considerable significance for Melbourne evangelicals. It was the main public expression of their deeper-life spirituality.⁵⁵ It was also something of a protest movement. As with their colleagues in the northern hemisphere, they embraced the Keswick message in response to an increasingly secular culture, a culture that seemingly dispensed with the need to be too serious about God. More importantly, it was a response to the perception that the church did not seem to take the Lord too seriously either. For evangelicals enamoured of Keswick were serious about their faith, and meetings were a response to the perceived torpor of a spiritually and evangelistically languid church. And it was a revival movement, a vibrant expression of evangelical vitality and seriousness. As well as deeper-life spirituality, it focused on prayer, evangelism, missions, in the context of a lively fellowship-network. However this is to take us beyond our time frame.

Local evangelists and leaders

The latter part of our era was dominated by two great evangelistic events: the 1888 Centennial Mission and the 1902 Torrey-Alexander Campaign. The importance of these occasions was dependent on a number of evangelicals without whom they would not have occurred. As well as the Presbyterians MacNeil, and W Lockhart Morton, they included the Anglicans Macartney, Field Flowers Goe and Digby Berry; the Methodists E H Sugden and A R Edgar, the Congregationalist L D Bevan, and the independent Varley.

⁵⁴ KQ, vol 1, no 2 (May 1926), 9. For the period following World War I see my 'The Upwey Convention and C H Nash', *Lucas: An Evangelical History Review* no 16 (December 1993).

⁵⁵ Evangelical newspapers such as the SC and VC carried reports of conventions, though not so much the denominational newspapers. Before his death in 1902, Webb made sure that the conventions were reported in the *Southern Baptist*, and that articles endorsing deeper-life spirituality were included, eg, 'Dr A J Gordon and Mr George Mueller as examples of the Life of Faith', *SB* 15 March 1900, 70f; F B Meyer on 'Hindrances to the Victorious Life', March 1891, 44f. In the twentieth century *The Keswick Quarterly* 1926-1951 dutifully reported the addresses of the Upwey/Belgrave Heights speakers, news of evangelism, missions and missionaries, and included articles on pertinent theological and spiritual topics.

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Hussey Burgh Macartney and CMA/CMS. In 1889 about 40 evangelical clergy, including Macartney, and laymen held a 'Missionary Breakfast' in Sydney with the aim of enabling the Australian church to recruit and send out missionaries without having to go through CMS in London.⁵⁶ This was at once an expression of independence, initiative, and drive; the Australians did not want to wait for leadership from 'home'. And so on 9 September 1892, under the chairmanship of Bishop F F Goe, the Church Missionary Association of Victoria was formed (CMSVic merged with CMA in 1897.) This body was the forerunner of the current (Australian) CMS.⁵⁷

Macartney's role in this was three-fold: he was the leading member of the network of evangelical Anglicans who initiated the venture; he raised £2000 annually by own efforts - a remarkable achievement, especially considering the economic depression in the early 1890s; and his support of women's missionary work, in particular, the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society. (Zenana was a women's mission to women in India and China, focusing on education for underprivileged women and literacy for their children.) There were a number of such societies begun in the nineteenth century, the most significant being the Zenana and Bible Missionary Mission. Initiated in 1832 by Bishop Reginald Heber and constituted in 1852, it became the Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship (now Interserve).⁵⁸ ZBMM had a close connection with the Anglicans until 1880 when 'It was then deemed advisable that a strictly Church of England Society should be formed in the connection with the C.M.S., with the result that now in 1890 the old society is as strong as the original, and that the C.E.Z.M.S has become a most powerful organisation'.⁵⁹ In 1896 Zenana missionaries became missionaries of CMA (and then CMS Australia).⁶⁰ Like a number of late nineteenth-century

⁵⁶ See Cole, *Sharing in Mission*, 13ff.

⁵⁷ For details about CMA/CMS see Cole, *A History of the Church Missionary Society of Australia*. Stock, *History of CMS* vol 2, 408, vol 3, 673, refers to Macartney's efforts on behalf of missions in South India. He notes that CMS missionary G M Gordon, who came to Australia from India because of health, was

received by the Rev H.B. Macartney of Caulfield; that then and there he started a little juvenile missionary society; and that from that tiny seed, ... has sprung the fruitful tree of Mr Macartney's labours for Indian Missions, from which again have sprung – in part at least – the Colonial Church Missionary Associations .. and further noted 'the remarkable work done by the Rev. H.B. Macartney of Melbourne in aid of the Society's Missions in South India. ...

⁵⁸ There was also the Chinese Zenana Mission, 'one of the most honoured and sought after in the world'. Macartney gave 'A very eloquent address' at a memorial service at St Paul's Cathedral for the martyrdom of two Chinese sisters. *Messenger*, 1 September 1896, 115.

⁵⁹ *MAHA*, August 1890 53f. Macartney continued: 'In 1887 it had an income of over £26,000 a year, and 42 stations; 90 missionaries in home connection, 48 assistants in local connection, and 350 Bible-women and native teachers – a staff in all of 488, not including accepted candidates in training for the work.' Stock, *History of CMS*, vol 3, 184, noted especially Macartney's support of Zenana work, adding: 'After twenty years, the funds passing through Mr Macartney's hands in aid of the CMS and C.E.Z.M.S. Missions amounted to £1400 a year.' See too vol 3, 568-9.

⁶⁰ See J West, 'The Role of the Woman Missionary from 1880 to 1914', *Lucas* nos 21 & 22, June and December 1996, 31-60.

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clergy, Macartney ardently supported women in this dimension of missions, and led in the forming of an Auxiliary of the CEZMS, the parent body of which was in London.

In February 1898, a Macartney Memorial Committee held a testimonial to allow friends and supporters to honour him for his three tenacious decades as a leader in the evangelical cause in Melbourne, and to farewell him as he travelled to London to take up the position of Home Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society.⁶¹ His time with the Society though was very short, and the BFBS archive reference to him cryptic. 'We have very little information on this gentleman. He joined the society as Home Secretary in 1899 "after a half century in Australia". He resigned 30 June 1900 "in consequence of sore family afflictions". We have no correspondence.'⁶²

There is a gap in Macartney's story until 1904, during which he toured South America with the Rev Charles Inwood, speaking in English-speaking churches on behalf of Keswick.⁶³ 1905 saw him as chaplain to the expatriate community in Nichtheroy, a residential suburb of Rio de Janeiro, for six months. While there he was interviewed by the South American Missionary Society before sailing back to England. In August 1906, he and Inwood sailed from Southampton for the River Plate as a deputation from the Keswick Council in response to an invitation from Bishop E F Every to take part in the a deeper-life conference in Buenos Aires, visiting Rio de Janeiro on the way. (It was eleven years since George Grubb and his party had visited there on behalf of Keswick.)

After the Buenos Aires conference Macartney was invited by the SAMS to become British Chaplain at St Paul's, Sao Paulo. His tenure there lasted from November 1905 to May 1908, during which he faithfully continued his style of ministry, focusing on evangelism,⁶⁴ deeper-life spirituality, and pastoral visiting, becoming well-known to the English residents. In the Easter just before he left, Bishop Every was present to officially farewell him, and to hear the parishioners express their desire to the bishop that SAMS should be freed from its responsibility to pay half the chaplain's stipend so that it might be used elsewhere: an eloquent comment of appreciation of his ministry.

Macartney sailed for England and called at SAMS UK office on 25 August 1908 to give a personal account of his time in Sao Paulo before sailing for Melbourne. On the way he

⁶¹ *Messenger*, 1 March 1898, 36.

⁶² *Email*, 24 March 1999, from I A Roderick, Senior Information Officer/Archivist of the BFBS. For details of Macartney's call see *MAHA*, January-March 1898, 193f.

⁶³ Price & Randall, *Transforming Keswick*, 112. Inwood was a peripatetic Ulster Methodist evangelist and Keswick speaker.

⁶⁴ He spoke at the Santos Seamen's Mission and for the Santos Evangelistic Mission. (Santos is a bay-side municipality of Sao Paulo.)

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stopped at Colombo, intending to visit North India and speaking at a deeper-life conference at Darjeeling, and visiting missions in southern India. He spoke over three days at Darjeeling, but it was a strain. He was only 68, but had never been robust in health and, like his friend MacNeil, had burnt himself out for Christ. He died on 19 October, still in harness. When they heard of his death, the parishioners of St Paul's, Sao Paulo, placed a plaque on the church wall, something not usually done, and an indication of their respect and love for him, even though his time there was short.

Even before Macartney left for overseas, there was disquiet in evangelical ranks. The founding of the *Victorian Churchman* in 1890 dates the beginning of strong publicly-voiced opinion in the evangelical camp against the general direction of the Diocese – and this during the episcopacy of the evangelical Goe. Although there was confidence about the strength of evangelical parishes and agencies, there was a loss of confidence in the ability of the

Diocese to safeguard doctrinal orthodoxy and promote evangelical priorities. It seems clear that Goe did not or could not arrest that trend which had gathered momentum under Moorhouse. Thus evangelical enterprise was left to individuals such as Macartney, or the pugnacious Digby Berry.

Digby Marsh Berry. In 1884 the hand of the Anglican evangelicals was strengthened with the arrival of Digby Marsh Berry. Born in 1848, Berry studied at Magdalen College, Oxford before being ordained deacon (1872) and priested (1873). Then followed parish and academic posts in England, and missionary work in Mauritius before he came to Melbourne. Here the able, energetic and contentious Berry quickly gained the respect of his fellow evangelicals. He served in a number of parishes, was appointed Goe's domestic chaplain and a canon of the cathedral, was active in missions, especially the CMA, and served briefly as assistant to W Lockhart Morton in the latter's Angas Missionary Training College in Adelaide. Returning to Melbourne, he resigned from the diocese in 1899 because Goe knowingly ordained an Anglo-Catholic candidate. Thereafter, under the auspices of the Evangelical Church

To the Glory of God
and
In loving memory of

The Revd Hussey Burgh Macartney, M.A.
British Chaplain at Sao Paulo, November
1905 to May 1908

Died at Darjeeling - North India, 19th
October, 1908

He walked with God and was not, for God
took him.

Erected by the worshippers in this church.

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Association, he was a 'general lecturer' until 1907.⁶⁵ He then accepted an offer from the Church of England Association to an incumbency in Johannesburg, and a lecturer to that association.⁶⁶ There he was embroiled in churchmanship issues that rent the Church of England in South Africa. He died at sea in 1922 on the way back to Melbourne.

Berry was a controversialist rather than an evangelist. Churchmanship issues dogged the diocese, and his disputatious involvement limited his wider effectiveness. Colleagues such as Macartney were just as evangelical, just as premillennial, just as concerned about the drift of the diocese, but channelled their energy into evangelism and mission. Nevertheless, his influence was lasting, and not without value. Senior Sydney clergyman L M Abbott notes:

At Holy Trinity, Melbourne, three pairs of brothers were inspired by Berry's ministry, with far reaching results. They were Eustace Wade, later principal at Ridley College, and Arthur Wade, later Acting Principal at Moore College, at a crucial time pending T C Hammond's arrival; Charles and Arthur Young, notable evangelical clergy in Melbourne; Brooking Hannah, ordained CIM missionary for 60 years, and colleague of H W K Mowll in Western China, and Horace J Hannah notable Melbourne banker, layman and close supporter of C H Nash. H J Hannah married Berry's daughter Catherine F F Berry in 1901 and the home they established in Heidelberg became D M Berry's base and an enduring centre of his influence.⁶⁷

Mention should also be made of the brothers H T and J D Langley (the first two bishops of the Diocese of Bendigo), who were comfortable working outside of institutional church boundaries with organisations such as ESV and CMA, and with the deeper-life movement.

The Methodists E H Sugden and A R Edgar

The most outstanding Methodists of the 1890s were the Rev A R Edgar and the Rev Dr E H Sugden. Both were evangelical; both had distinguished ministerial careers; both endorsed and engaged in evangelism, though neither was a full-time evangelist like California Taylor or Matthew Burnett; both had a breadth of mind; both held fast to the Methodist social conscience tradition. And both were associated with two institutions which caused some Methodist evangelicals to sniff the air with suspicion.

⁶⁵ See *Messenger*, 3 May 1907, 131, for his farewell by the ECA. In the 1890s he wrote a series of studies in the *Churchman* on apocalyptic passages in Revelation in typical, uncompromising premillennial style.

⁶⁶ *Messenger*, 8 March 1907, 67.

⁶⁷ *ADEB*, 40.

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Edward Holdsworth Sugden (1854-1935) was born in 1854 at Ecclesfield, Yorkshire, a son of the manse. After studies at Owens College, Manchester (BA 1872, BSc 1876) he studied for the ministry at Headingly Theological College, Leeds. He then served as minister of Great Horton parish in Bradford where he soon established a reputation as an evangelist and apologetic preacher, and as an educated and cultured man. Thus in 1887 he was invited to become the founding master of Queen's College of the University of Melbourne, the Methodist training college, which opened its doors on 14 March 1888 with 18 students. He held office for 40 years (1888-1928) and made an outstanding contribution to the Methodist church, to the university, and to the intellectual and religious life of Melbourne.⁶⁸

Some of his fellow churchmen though were wary. They worried that by combining their theological institution with a university college, the religious zeal of their theological students might be dissipated by secular learning.⁶⁹ This did not happen (then), for Sugden comfortably combined the evangelical zeal of his Wesleyan tradition with intellectual humanism and social concern. His personality, scholarship and urbanity fitted the upward social mobility of many Methodists, and under his leadership Queens grew to become the most influential Methodist college in Australia.⁷⁰ Sugden did not limit himself to Queens. Not long after he arrived he began a Sunday evening 'People's Service' in Wesley Church. This soon became a centre for evangelism and social welfare, and, at Sugden's urging, led to the founding the Wesley Central Mission in 1893.⁷¹

Alexander Robert Edgar was born in 1850 in County Tipperary, Ireland. He arrived in Melbourne with his family as a five-year-old. He was born and brought up Anglican, but in his teens found the Methodists more to his liking and made his spiritual home among them. After a variety of jobs, and experience as a lay preacher, he was accepted as an ordination candidate and sent to the Methodist Provisional Training Institution which was attached to Wesley College. He spent two years there, and then served parishes at Kangaroo Flat and Inglewood, 'during which time seventeen new churches were built',⁷² presumably as a result of his leadership. He was ordained in 1878, then served parishes in country Victoria and Melbourne. After a successful three years (1890-3) at the Yarra Street church in Geelong,

⁶⁸ R Howe ed, *The Master: the Life and Work of Edward H Sugden* (Melbourne: Uniting Academic Press, 2009).

⁶⁹ Sugden 'was remarkably free from the legalism which afflicted many evangelicals ... [and embodied] a rare form of liberalism and evangelicalism.' *ADEB*, 360. Allan Webb had no time for that kind of evangelicalism, and their disagreements were ventilated in both their papers (Sugden was editor of the *Methodist Spectator*.) See eg *VB* April 1891, 63 and July 1892, 91.

⁷⁰ Though it was a university residential college, not a theological college.

⁷¹ 'Sugden was a liberal in the British political sense and brought to Melbourne the spirit which had made the Nonconformist conscience so influential in British politics.' 'E H Sugden', *ADB Online*: See too R Howe & S Swain, *The Challenge of the City: the Centenary History of Wesley Central Mission 1893-1993* (South Melbourne: Hyland House, 1993).

⁷² 'A R Edgar', *ADB Online*.

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Edgar was called to Wesley Church in Lonsdale Street. It was 30 years since Draper's distinguished tenure, and the church was still the 'cathedral' of Victorian Methodism.

But it would be no sinecure. The depression had laid waste to Melbourne, and the socially mobile Methodists who had graduated to the middle classes had fled to the suburbs. The church was surrounded by the struggling working classes and unemployed, and strategically placed to address the economic, material and psychological needs of such. Thus in 1893 the Conference established the Central Methodist Mission, which was based in the Lonsdale Street church.

A tall broad-shouldered man with a magnetic personality, Edgar was a dynamic preacher and persuasive evangelist. His organizing ability and sympathetic understanding of and sincere activism in social problems extended his influence. Asked why he helped the undeserving, he replied, 'I spend my life in giving men another chance'.⁷³

Edgar wasted no time in immersing himself in the work and led a deputation from the bootmakers and tailors' trades to see the premier, J B Patterson, to protest against 'sweating' and conditions in the industry.⁷⁴ A few weeks later, on 23 April, as part of the social rather than evangelistic, outreach, Pleasant Sunday Afternoons were introduced. These were 'services' at which a visiting speaker addressed all kinds of relevant issues. These PSAs were frequently crowded and provided a platform for the public voice of Edgar and the invited speakers. It was said that 'services at Wesley were ritualistic in the morning, socialistic in the afternoon and evangelistic at night'. No one doubted Edgar's evangelistic credentials and ability, and he saw Christianity as a leaven, not a radical fringe. But some, such as W H Fitchett, were wary.⁷⁵ Temperance evangelism was kosher, but this kind of social justice evangelism roused suspicions.

Thus at the end of the century the Melbourne Methodists were well served by two outstanding men. They were roughly the same age; Sugden was four years younger. Edgar came to Victoria as a small child; Sugden when he was a mature 34. Sugden had a better education and, as master of Queens, extended his influence throughout the university and the city. Before coming to Wesley Church, Edgar spent his ministry in country and suburban

⁷³ 'A R Edgar', *ADB Online*.

⁷⁴ One wonders what words were spoken at the meeting, and what impact they had on Edgar's beginning the Wesley PSAs. (The Anglican) Patterson did not distinguish himself in efforts to aid the disadvantaged. See references to him in M Cannon, *The Land Boomers* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1972).

⁷⁵ The visit of English evangelist Gipsy Smith in 1894 (the church was full 3 hours before the service) did not allay all fears.

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parishes. Both were evangelical, and enjoyed reputations as evangelistic preachers. Both were associated with flagship institutions which embodied other of Wesley's concerns, education and the underprivileged. It is important to note that the focus was on social justice, not the social gospel as it was then being discussed and formulated in America. That is, they were concerned with the social dimensions of the gospel, not simply re-expressing the gospel in terms of social concern.⁷⁶ Rather, they intuitively operated with a 'Christ the transformer of culture' model. Nevertheless, there was reservation. People still remembered California Taylor and Matthew Burnett.

*The Presbyterian Rev W Lockhart Morton*⁷⁷ (1851-1928) grew up in the gold rush and post gold rush boom years of colonial Victoria. After studies at the Presbyterian Theological Hall of Ormond College and ordination, Morton served in country parishes before he was called to Ebenezer Presbyterian Church, Ballarat. It was at there that he developed those emphases of style and focus that characterised the rest of his ministry, namely: pastoral and rescue work, evangelism, and missions. His time at Ballarat saw him endorse and host visits by evangelists John MacNeil, Mrs Margaret Hampson, the Irish evangelist Henry Grattan Guinness, and George Müller. In 1889, the year after the CM, the 37-year-old Morton was inducted into the Malvern parish. He fitted naturally and easily into the evangelical network. Another member of the network was John MacNeil, who began as minister at Abbotsford the same year.

Morton soon busied himself with the usual round of parish activities and, as in Ballarat, rescue work. When Morton began his ministry at Malvern, Macartney had been at St Mary's, Caulfield, for 20 years. Regardless of denominational differences, the enthusiastic Irishman and the enthusiastic Scot naturally gravitated together. Despite their different heritages they had much in common: both were leaders; both had drive and a passion for the gospel; and, most importantly, both were initiators. It was to be a crucial friendship for Morton, and for the evangelical movement, as the 11-year younger man enjoyed the companionship, shared a vision, and learned from the man whose role he would follow as a leading facilitator of evangelical missions in Australia.

Hudson Taylor's visit to Melbourne also inspired the provision of training for missionaries. The enthusiastic Morton offered his services as a missionary, but Taylor advised him to stay home and train others for the mission field. Taylor had done the same with the evangelist

⁷⁶ In New York, the contemporary W Rauschenbusch (1861-1918) was spelling out his understanding of the social gospel in the light of appalling working and living conditions there.

⁷⁷ A fuller narrative of Morton's life is in my 'Faith Missions, Personality, and Leadership: W Lockhart Morton and Angas College', *Lucas* nos 27 & 28, June and December 2000, 64-89, and my chapter on Morton in R Ward ed, *Presbyterian Leaders in the Twentieth Century* (Wantirna, R Ward, forthcoming).

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Henry Grattan Guinness who in 1872 founded a missionary training institute in Stepney Green, London, foreshadowing the rise of the bible college movement.⁷⁸ But before Morton could respond, the challenge was taken up by the Baptists Dr and Mrs William Warren who founded Dr and Mrs William Warren's Missionary Training Institute in Kew in 1891. It seemed that his ministry would remain focused on parish work, rescue work, and evangelistic activities. But not in Melbourne. At the invitation of John Howard Angas, a son of George Fife Angas, and like his father a wealthy evangelical businessman and philanthropist, to engage in rescue work in Adelaide. Remembering Taylor's advice, he soon coupled this with preparing missionary candidates. Morton's time in (Ballarat and) Melbourne was not long but he made significant contributions to the evangelical cause in rescue work, evangelism, and missions.

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Llewelyn David Bevan

*The Congregationalist Llewelyn David Bevan (1842-1918).*⁷⁹ The Melbourne Congregationalists were fortunate with their leading ministers. In 1876, after ten busy years, Anketell Henderson resigned as minister of Collins Street Independent Church. He was succeeded by Thomas Jones (1877-80), Samuel Hebditch (1880-81), and Daniel Jones Hamer (1882-6), whose tenures were generally distinguished by evangelical earnestness, pastoral concern, and good preaching.⁸⁰ Following Hamer's resignation, the parish council, keen to continue the evangelical tradition, and the high ministerial standards and the prominent profile of the church, invited the Rev Dr Llewelyn David Bevan to the pulpit. Born in 1842 at

Llanelly, Carmarthen, Wales, Bevan was a son of the manse, with prominent nonconformist ministers on both sides of his family. He enjoyed a cultured home environment before studying at the University of London (graduating LLB with honours 1865). He intended to practice law but was converted through Henry Grattan Guinness. Following ordination in 1865 he assisted the prominent Congregationalist minister Dr Thomas Binney, and was then minister at Tottenham Court Chapel (1869-75). In 1874 he spent two months at the Central Church, Brooklyn, New York. The Americans were impressed, and in 1876 the eloquent

⁷⁸ Across the Atlantic, the Nyack Missionary Training Institute (the first bible college in America) was founded in 1882 by the Rev A B Simpson, and in 1889 the Bible Institute of the Chicago Evangelization Society (later Moody Bible Institute - 1900).

⁷⁹ See L D Bevan, *The Life and Reminiscences of Llewelyn David Bevan* (Melbourne: Wyatt & Wyatt, 1920).

⁸⁰ Hamer was the grandfather of Sir Rupert Hamer, former Premier of Victoria.

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Welsh preacher accepted an invitation from Brick Presbyterian Church in New York. In 1882 he returned to London as minister of the Highbury Quadrant (Congregational) Church. However, the health of family led him to accept a call from the Collins Street Church.

On 6 November 1886, the 46-year-old Bevan and his family arrived on the *Valetta*, to be met by about 200 members of the church.⁸¹ They had gained a minister in the learned dissenting tradition, an outstanding preacher with an international reputation, and they had high expectations. However Bevan was not just a silver-tongued Welshman. During his time in London, he had been influenced by the Christian Socialist Movement. He developed a deep concern for education and the welfare of workers – he was a councillor of the Working Men's College, founded in 1854 by F D Maurice, and had been urged to stand for parliament. He spoke at social crusades, and, with no sense of incongruity, also preached at revival meetings. A liberal evangelical, he eschewed fundamentalism, but not evangelism.

During his 23 Melbourne years he continued his wide-ranging, thoughtful and distinguished ministry, playing a leading role in church and society, educational and social reform, and in the intellectual life of the city. He made an impressive and significant contribution.⁸² But he had not lost his first love. His preaching was unqualifiedly evangelical. He was a member of the ESV committee, and was actively involved in evangelistic work. In his breadth of sympathies he may be compared to his Methodist colleague E H Sugden.

But in spite of Bevan's Intellectual ability, leadership, energy, evangelical theology, and faithfulness to the gospel, the nonconformist preaching tradition, missions, and able Congregational laymen, the denomination as a whole did not revive. Continuing problems proved too much a handicap. With exceptions, critical biblical studies and increasing theological liberalism dampened evangelistic fire. Continuing factionalism, especially over state aid hampered unity and harmony, thoughts of outreach, and voluntarism. The fortunes of the denomination were also handicapped by its traditional weakness in size: 'Some commentators have likened Congregationalism to a small business which cannot attain the critical size required to ensure its survival and prosperity.'⁸³ Thus Congregational evangelism was largely scuppered. Apart from Bevan there was only one other local Congregationalist evangelist involved in the 1902 Torrey-Alexander Mission. The Baptists also lacked a critical

⁸¹ *Australian Christian World*, 22 October 1886, 472-3, contained a long editorial, which noted his London congregation's farewell from London. The 12 November 1886, 522; and 19 November 1886, 539, editions, warmly described his welcome to Melbourne and the expectations of the church.

⁸² He represented the Congregational Union when speaking at a meeting at the Trades Hall Council, and appealed for aid for the London Dockers in their 1889 strike. He was a tireless advocate for Federation.

⁸³ C Wood and M Askew, *St Michael's Church formerly the Collins Street Independent Church, Melbourne* (Melbourne: Hyland House, 1992), 4.

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mass that hindered growth. But as a denomination they were more intentional about evangelism; they had 12 evangelists in the 1902 Torrey-Alexander Mission.

In 1910 Bevan became principal of Parkin (Congregational) College in Adelaide. He died in 1918.

The ever-independent Henry Varley. The 1890s was one of the most eventful periods in the nation's history, in many respects a watershed. But, on the eve of Federation, all was not well.

Melbourne's financial woes so tarnished its reputation that it became a catchcry in debate that prolonged moves towards Federation. In November 1893, the *Bulletin* claimed that Federation was at that time unthinkable because Victoria would 'taint the continent with Victoria's foulness' and would mean 'taking over the bulk of Victoria's stink'. The *Bulletin* suggested: 'Victoria should be declared an infected province until its moral character had been renovated and its reputation restored ...' ⁸⁴

Henry Varley felt this keenly, and his son recorded a meeting with the mayor in February 1890:

"Ah, well Mr. Varley," said the Mayor one day, when my father was telling him of the wickedness he had met with, which was winked at by the police, "Ah well, we are not worse off than Paris." Probably true. But my father could not see any extenuation of the evils of which he complained. He saw all around him the hardening greed of gold, the fevered pursuit of pleasure, the besotted worship of Bacchus. ... And he felt he had come to Melbourne that he might throw his whole strength into the battle against the forces of darkness and destruction. It was a debt he owed to the city of his adoption, no less than to the Lord who sent him there. ⁸⁵

The brothels of Little Lonsdale Street, within walking distance of Parliament House, were a scandal, but the madams and their girls had friends in high places. Their clients included politicians, senior police and (allegedly) magistrates. Thus, when Varley and the upright

⁸⁴ Bob Bottom, *Inside Victoria. A Chronicle of Scandal* (Seaford, Vic: Pan Macmillan, 1991), 2. See too K Dunstan, *Wowzers. Being an account of the prudery exhibited by certain outstanding men and women in such matters as drinking, smoking, prostitution, censorship, and gambling* (Melbourne: Cassell, 1968).

⁸⁵ H Varley, *Henry Varley's Life Story* (London: Alfred Holness, nd), 144. The mayor at that time was Matthew Lang, a Presbyterian who deserted Scots Church for Charles Strong's Australian Church. E Wilson, *Email*, 24 October 2011, points out that Varley 'attacked what might be called the infrastructure of gambling, prostitution etc- not just blaming the girls, but also men, pimps, big business and landlords, politicians who turned a blind eye ..'

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guardians of public virtue targeted the most notorious madam, Caroline Hodgson - 'Madame Brussels', the charges against her were dismissed in court in August 1888 and May 1889. In the latter case the chief magistrate was the mayor. Incensed, Varley published *The War between Heaven & Hell in Melbourne, Being a Graphic and Interesting Sketch of the Recent Crusade against Sin and Social Wickedness in the City* in which he attacked Melbourne magistrates for allowing Hodgson to escape conviction.⁸⁶

Varley also inveighed against gambling and the turf industry, holding religious services at mid-week track meetings and a meeting in the Town Hall on Cup Day. He wrote two pamphlets against gambling, *The Impeachment of Gambling*, and *The Bookmaker; or, Turf Secrets Revealed*. Writing on the way the gambling culture has transformed Victoria, journalist Keith Dunstan referred approvingly to Varley:

Maybe our best hell-raiser was Henry Varley. He launched the Australian Anti-Gambling Association and it had its headquarters at 191 Collins Street. He described gambling as "dishonest and vicious, one of the most degrading and deadly vices of the present day ... an evil which is blighting the youth and manhood of Australia." ...He used to have meetings at the Melbourne Town Hall and asked those present to sign the anti-gambling pledge. ... [Dunstan continues] Our preachers don't have the same passion any more. ... The Henry Varleys have all gone. There are few around to rail against sin with such fervour. ... The change in Melbourne in less than half a century is almost beyond belief.⁸⁷

In 1891 Varley sailed back to England to engage in evangelism, to see old friends, and to see Henry Junior who was living at Cheltenham with his children.⁸⁸ He had been away just over three years. His stay in Australia had given him relief from his bronchial trouble, and he preached with power to crowded audiences in different places. But his euphoria was dampened by news from Melbourne that on 18 August 1892 his daughter Minnie had died in childbirth. He returned to Melbourne to be with the family, and then in December returned again to England for three months of evangelistic campaigning.

While in England he heeded a Macedonian call from D L Moody to come to Chicago. There a great World's Columbian Exhibition was held in 1893 to celebrate the four hundredth

⁸⁶ G Davison, D Dunstan and C McConville eds, *The Outcasts of Melbourne. Essays in Social History* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1985), 49-50; *Truth*, 8 December 1906, 5; and *Argus*, 28 May 1893.

⁸⁷ *Herald-Sun*, 11 September 1993, 31.

⁸⁸ On the way he spent two days with his old friend C H Spurgeon at the latter's holiday home in Mentone where he was recovering from illness. It was a poignant time; they were not to meet again, Spurgeon dying a few weeks later on 31 January 1892.

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anniversary of Columbus' discovery of the new world, and Moody had planned a great campaign to preach the gospel to the thousands who attended.⁸⁹ He could not do the work alone and so invited a number of evangelists to help him, including Varley. After the Chicago effort Varley held a three-week mission in New York before returning to London by the end of the year. He did not return immediately to Melbourne but spent most of 1894 in missions in Great Britain, especially Glasgow and Dublin, eventually sailing south in mid-November. Varley arrived back in Melbourne in the beginning of 1895. He planned a series of missions in the metropolitan area, beginning in the Hawthorn Town Hall. However the weather became too hot for him and he cancelled them, deciding instead to fulfil a long held desire to visit the west coast of America. After visiting Samoa and Hawaii on the way, he arrived at San Francisco on 14 March and took part in a successful YMCA sponsored campaign, leaving at the end of August for Melbourne.

The beginning of 1896 saw Varley in Sydney for a campaign. By March he was back in Melbourne preaching and lecturing in Hawthorn and other suburbs. The same month he also initiated a new venture: he began, edited, and largely wrote *The Search Light*, a monthly journal which ran from June-December of that year. On page one of the first edition he wrote: 'The purpose of this new Australian [!] monthly is suggested in its title'. It contained news and comment about church matters, but Varley also let his mind range over a variety of social issues: political comment, capital and labour, Melbourne's immorality, the contagious diseases act in New Zealand, the Victorian boom, and criticism of the *Age* and *Argus*. He had done this sort of thing before in his sermons, addresses, and writings. The *Search Light* though was an attempt to present a sustained, timely, responsible critique of the things that bothered an evangelical. The fire was still there, but there was also a certain mellowing; he did not rail the way he previously did. In all of this Varley was being true to his evangelical heritage, a heritage which did not completely privatise faith but which saw the public square as something to be claimed for Christ.⁹⁰

But Varley's attention span was too short: he did not have the temperament to write and edit a paper. Besides, England called, and he sailed for home.⁹¹ He came back again in 1904-5

⁸⁹ Moody's vision was exacerbated by the 'Parliament of Religions' held as part of the exhibition. This was a presentation of all the great religions of the world. Such an inclusivist approach did not sit well with Moody or Varley.

⁹⁰ His friend and admirer F B Meyer did the same. Meyer is usually remembered as a Keswick devotional speaker and writer, but he was vigorously involved with social issues. See I M Randall, 'The Social Gospel: A Case Study', *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal. Evangelicals and Society in Britain 1780-1980* (ed J Wolffe, London: SPCK, 1995) 155-74. Meyer's sense of social justice was probably influenced by Varley's interest in social matters, and he spoke warmly of Varley after the latter's death.

⁹¹ Varley, *Henry Varley's Life Story*, 216, records: 'He told me that he did not take kindly to the thought of being buried in Australia; it was "dear old England" where he desired to lay his bones'.

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for a brief final visit, but this barely caused a ripple; he was 69 and the torch had passed on to other evangelists. Torrey and Alexander had sparked a revival in 1902, and Alexander was to come back in 1907 and then in 1909 and 1912 with Wilbur Chapman. Varley's itinerancy and unaffiliated status lessened his abiding impact on Melbourne.⁹²

The 1902 Torrey-Alexander mission⁹³

Melbourne's colonial years culminated with Federation when the colonies formed the newly minted Commonwealth of Australia. Fittingly, this was the beginning of the new century. Just as they had with the 1888 Centennial Mission, the evangelicals aimed to mark the occasion with an appropriate evangelistic effort. James Balfour had twice invited D L Moody to visit Australia, but Moody declined each time. The Evangelisation Society of Victoria tried again in 1899, presenting Moody with a petition containing 15 831 signatures. But Moody died on 22 December of that year. Nothing daunted, the evangelical leadership tried again. They were determined to find that catalyst who would kindle the fires of revival in Melbourne; and so, in 1902, the ESA sent two Baptists, Dr W Warren and G P Barber, to England to find a 'Spirit-filled man' to do the job.⁹⁴ They did not find the man they wanted and returned to Australia via America so that Barber could visit a son who was studying at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.

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Reuben Archer Torrey

There they discovered that a prayer meeting for world-wide revival had been held every Saturday night for two years. They were impressed by R A Torrey, the President of Moody, and invited him to come to Australia. This is an important point: they did not invite Torrey because he was an American or because of his reputation. Rather, it was the kind of evangelicalism he represented; it was the teaching rather than the man that determined their choice. After some hesitation Torrey agreed and asked C M Alexander to accompany him as song leader. On

⁹² His influence continued in the persons of his son Henry Jr, a Baptist pastor in England, and his other son Frank, an evangelist in Melbourne, and his daughters Effie and Kathleen, who also called Melbourne home, and were missionaries in Africa.

⁹³ For more details see my 'Revivalism in Melbourne from Federation to World War 1: The Torrey-Alexander-Chapman Crusades', *Reviving Australia. Essays on the History and Experience of Revivalism in Australian Christianity* (ed M Hutchinson, E Campion & S Piggan, Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1994), 143-69. For a fuller account see G Treloar, 'Revival and Revivalism Down Under: The 1902 Torrey-Alexander-Geil Evangelistic Campaign in Australia' (forthcoming).

⁹⁴ Barber, who accompanied D Beath to England in 1888 to invite George Clarke, was a business man who was active in the YMCA as well as ESA. In 1902 he hosted Charles M Alexander, Torrey's song-leader, in his Essendon home.

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the way to Australia they held missions in Japan and China before landing in Sydney where they conducted a four-week mission before heading to Melbourne, arriving on 2 April for a four-week campaign. They found the local evangelicals united and waiting, and prepared.

A spirit of prayer has been characteristic of every revival, and this was certainly the experience in Melbourne.⁹⁵ It was, after all, part of the Melbourne tradition throughout the preceding decades: the notable evangelists were known as men, and women, of prayer; prayer 'unions' were commonplace; speakers customarily emphasised the role and need of prayer; and there was never any doubt that prayer was the essential ingredient for any preparation for revival. For example, the Band did not pray alone. Its concerns were shared by others, and home prayer meetings sprang up during the 1890s.

Before the Mission started seven successive prayer meetings were held in as many Christian homes as possible. The result was that many weeks before the Mission 2,000 cottage prayer meetings were held, attended by nearly 15,000 people; and on the Saturday night before the Mission commenced 40,000 people were waiting on God for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁶

To which Warren added:

30 of which Mrs Warren started as the nucleus of preparation for the 'revival in Australia', and which grew to two thousand one hundred when Messrs. Torrey and Alexander arrived in Melbourne, April 1902. These meetings formed a leading feature in this latest and blessed widespread and spreading revival. ... [which] has continued for eighteen years [*sic*] every Saturday afternoon for two hours praying for the *Great*

⁹⁵ E L Blumhofer, 'Transatlantic Currents in North Atlantic Pentecostalism', in M A Noll, D W Bebbington & G A Rawlyk eds, *Evangelicalism. Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond* (Oxford: Oxford Univ Press, 1994), 353, points out:

In 1902, with his new song leader Charles Alexander, Torrey presided over revival meetings in Australia that caught the attention of much of the Protestant world. Australia was the first stop on a dramatic, three year world tour that Torrey was fond of linking to three prior years of Saturday night prayer meetings at Chicago's Moody Memorial Church. In fact he was one of a large group of evangelicals who had signed a covenant to pray for revival. ... By 1905, they claimed some 100,000 converts on what they billed as "a revival journey" ... entirely unprecedented in the history of the Christian Church. ... And it is all the more remarkable when it is considered that it came about suddenly, and entirely in answer to prayer.

It should be added, Melbourne was not a detour or a backwater. Not only was it part of a world-wide movement, one has the impression that the initiative of ESA in inviting Torrey to come to Australia was the catalyst which led to his (and Alexander's and Chapman's) world-wide ministry. The overseas churches received reports of the Melbourne revival with eagerness.

⁹⁶ J Lyall, *Recent Great Revival in Australia and New Zealand* (Colombo: Ferguson, 1903), 19f. J A Packer in W Edgar Geil, *Ocean and Isle* (Melbourne: Pater, 1902), 264, quotes W H Fitchett: 'There are 214 churches joined in the mission; the local committees number 70; there are 2,000 personal workers and 2,500 choir members; no less than 117,000 people attended the 16,000 home prayer-meetings which formed the prelude to the mission.'

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Revival which has now come [emphasis added]. These men have continued 'praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit', and frequently spending whole nights in 'waiting', like their master.⁹⁷

This is impressive considering that the population of Melbourne was just under half a million at the time, and is indicative of the strength, unity and commitment of the evangelicals. The Americans did not come to an unprepared church: growth factors were already present.

Nor did the evangelicals only pray. All the evangelical churches and associations worked together in an impressive display of unity and organisation. A committee of 70 was formed with six sub-committees dealing with finance, tents and halls, music, advertising, speakers and prayer meetings. The mission was to be a simultaneous one: that is, as well as the main meetings in the city featuring Torrey and Alexander, there would also be meetings held at 50 centres throughout the suburbs. Apart from the Americans, the local evangelists comprised 9 Anglican (6 of whom had a Sydney background.⁹⁸), 9 Presbyterian, 13 Methodist (indicative of continuing Methodist revivalistic enthusiasm), 12 Baptist (the Baptists, who comprised 1-2% of the population, were greatly over-represented,), 2 Congregationalists, one Brethren and one Salvation Army. The organisers took care to hold the meetings on neutral ground. Thirty large tents were obtained and large halls hired for meetings. Every house in each district where meetings were to be held was visited twice beforehand and the people who lived there invited to the meetings. The Melbourne Town Hall, which had held a number of evangelistic rallies before, proved inadequate to hold the daily crowds and the meetings were moved to the Exhibition Building.

At the end of the campaign, some 8500 conversions were recorded before the Americans moved on to successfully preach in country centres, and then sailed to Britain where, like Moody and Sankey before, they successfully preached the gospel to waiting and expectant churches. For the Melbourne experience was heralded overseas as 'the great Australian revival': the fame of revival is the flame of revival. In his chapter on the Torrey-Alexander London Mission, the English journalist W T Stead wrote:

It began at the uttermost ends of the earth. It was in response to a call from Australia that Dr. Torrey and Mr. Alexander began the Mission, the end of which no one can

⁹⁷ W Warren, 'The Genesis of the Australian Revival', *Missionary Review of the World* (March 1903), 201. As far as I can judge, this prayer movement for revival began with the Band, although Warren might well be referring to an earlier beginning. See too J Edwin Orr, *The Flaming Tongue. The Impact of Twentieth Century Revivals* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1973), 108; and Lyall, *Recent Great Revival*, 19f.

⁹⁸ Professor Ken Cable, *Correspondence*, 16 May 1994, kindly supplied me with biographical data on the Anglicans, adding: 'The Sydney Evangelical impact on Victoria at this stage is plain.'

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foresee. That the Albert Hall in London has been secured in order that religious services may be held in it twice every day for two months on end is primarily due to the fact that, some years before the close of the century, while Dwight L. Moody still lived, it entered into the hearts of the members of the Victorian Evangelization Society to get up a requisition, which was signed by thousands of Christian men and women in all parts of the Colonies, begging Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey to come over to the Antipodes and help them.⁹⁹

The Torrey-Alexander publicists also claim credit for the Welsh revival, and J Edwin Orr sees them all as part of the same movement. However G Treloar, *The Disruption of Evangelicalism* (Leicester: IVP, forthcoming) argues that the Torrey-Alexander phenomenon and the 1904-5 Welsh revival arose independently, although both fed on the ongoing vogue for revivalism. Certainly the evangelistic activism of the evangelical men of Melbourne was a vital part of a world-wide jigsaw. And whatever they had in common with their overseas (and interstate) colleagues, the Melbourne network was independent, and had its own initiative, vigour, and tradition. The 1902 campaign was another outcome of the evangelical prayers, deeper-life and other conventions, and evangelism of colonial Melbourne. And that was not the end of it; for the next year saw another climax.

Evangelism to young people and students

Generally speaking, the targets of evangelism may be viewed under four headings: the upper and middle (and educated) classes, the working classes, women, and young people.¹⁰⁰ Regarding the latter, most churches had organisations that catered for their young people. Such organisations were educational: they aimed at deepening the faith of the members by increasing their biblical knowledge, and providing a theological framework for their spirituality. They were social: they aimed at providing a healthy environment in which to interact with others of their age group. And they were pastoral: they fostered psychological competence and confidence. In those churches that were avowedly evangelical there was also an evangelistic dimension: one was not born a Christian, one became a Christian (hence, conversionism).¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ W T Stead, *The Revival of 1905* (London: W T Stead, 1905), 67. Reports of the Melbourne revival reached the outstanding Indian social reformer and evangelist Pandita Ramabai. J Edwin Orr, *Evangelical Awakenings in Southern Asia* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1975), 145, wrote: 'Burdened by India's need for revival, in 1903 she became interested in the movement for prayer in Australia that preceded the Torrey-Alexander campaigns there; so she sent her daughter to enlist the prayers of Australians.'

¹⁰⁰ And non-Anglo-Saxons of course.

¹⁰¹ There was a class aspect to this. 'In a strange transposition, the Sunday Schools and juvenile temperance organizations, focused in Britain on the working class, became, in Melbourne, markers of respectability, a safe social meeting place for children of the middle class.' A Brown-May & S Swain eds, *The Encyclopedia of Melbourne* (Melbourne: Cambridge Univ Press, 2005), 129. However, many

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The organisations that expedited these aims included Sunday Schools, bible study and 'improvement' groups, and religious instruction in schools. The Young Men's Christian Association was founded in 1853 to facilitate intellectual and moral improvement in young men.¹⁰² Perhaps not surprisingly, it soon foundered because of the gold rush unrest until it was revived in 1870. A regular feature of its activities was an evangelistic service every Saturday night. Leading evangelicals such as James Moore Griffith, Cornelius Job Ham and G P Barber were actively involved.¹⁰³ Its female equivalent, the Young Women's Christian Association, was begun in 1882. In 1889 Christian Endeavour began in the Malvern Road Congregational Church with 13 foundation members. The next year, Victorian CE was incorporated with 12 societies, 560 members and representing five denominations. The organisation continued to grow apace: in 1891 there were 85 societies and 4000 members, and in 1892, when the founder Dr F E Clarke visited from America, there were 205 societies and 8000 members. The Boys' Brigade was founded in St Mark's Anglican Church, Fitzroy, 1890-1, and soon spread to other churches. The Anglican equivalent, the Church of England Boys' Society was later founded in 1913 on the initiative of C W T Rogers. For evangelicals, the CEBS acronym also meant, first of all, Christ, Every Boy's Saviour! These movements were examples of the evangelicals' emphasis on youth, on the importance of education (enthusiasm was not enough), on the practical aspects of Christian discipleship, on voluntarism, enterprise and vigour, and on their ability to mobilise lay people.

Of particular and equal interest were the missions targeting university and college students. In 1884 the Melbourne University Christian Alliance was formed, and in May 1888 George Clarke gave his second address of the Centennial Mission to a large group of students in the Assembly Hall. Their response seems to have been enthusiastic; but it does not seem to have been lasting. The greater response had to wait for visits by an American Methodist layman.

In 1886 a bible conference targeting students was held at evangelist D L Moody's Mt Hermon School at Northfield, Massachusetts. In 1888 the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions was formally established. Its motto was 'the evangelization of the world in this generation'. One of the key members was John R Mott (Methodist) who became an outstanding mission statesman, though he deliberately used to refer to himself as 'an

churches also focused evangelistic efforts on working-class children who did not normally have contact with church.

¹⁰² J T Massey, *The YMCA in Australia. A History* (Melbourne: F.W.Cheshire, 1950).

¹⁰³ Ham was an active temperance worker and president of the YMCA. In the Baptist Church, he served on the Home Mission Committee in 1871, was president of the Union in 1884-85, and one of the first trustees of its fund.

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evangelist'.¹⁰⁴ In June 1896 Mott, accompanied by the Rev Charles H Yateman of New York,

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John R Mott

visited Melbourne where he spoke at a student convention held at Wyselaskie Hall, Ormond College. Mott's interests were, first of all, overseas missions and students. He suggested this meeting, which was then organised by the Melbourne University Christian Union. 'Its objects were to help form an Australasian Union and become a component part of the W.S.C.F. (World Student Christian Fellowship), to promote Christian life throughout the universities and colleges, and to discuss methods of work among students.'¹⁰⁵

Mott was also a pioneer of the modern ecumenical movement, for that movement grew out of the late nineteenth-century missionary movement. Engel says of the 1896 meeting:

From this time forward there was a body of men and women students who experienced the reality of being an ecumenical, intercollegiate, international, inter-racial Christian movement which had as its motto *Ut Omnes Unum Sint* 'that they all may be one' ... In the succeeding years it inspired many students to live by this vision and some of them to offer their lives in overseas missionary service.... There is little doubt that no other body contributed as much to the development of ecumenical leadership, experience and enthusiasm as did the Australian Student Christian Movement.

It seems the conference met a need, for when Mott returned to Australia in 1903 he was

struck by the change. He wrote in a letter: 'I well remember that seven years ago I discovered but one Bible class for students in all Australasia, and it had only nine members. Last year there were 845 students in Bible classes'. Where there had been only five rather weak societies, there were now 'Christian organisations in forty-five institutions, including all the universities and university colleges except the one in Tasmania ...'¹⁰⁶

The theme of the 1903 conference, held 10-12 April, was 'Australasia and the World's Evangelization'. Basic to Mott's message was (1) evangelical passion, (2) ecumenism, (3) an

¹⁰⁴ For the record of Mott's Australian visits see C H Hopkins, *John R Mott, 1865-1955. A Biography* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979).

¹⁰⁵ F Engel, *Australian Christians in Conflict and Unity* (Melbourne: Joint Board of Christian Education, 1984), 119.

¹⁰⁶ Engel, *Australian Christians in Conflict and Unity*, 133.

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emphasis on a disciplined devotional life which was part of personal discipleship to Jesus Christ, (4) a stress on individual bible study, (5) students were responsible to use their abilities in service for their Lord, and (6) the call to overseas missions. He was fond of quoting William Carey: 'Attempt great things for God. Expect great things from God'. Mott wrote:

It would be difficult to overstate the significance of this forward missionary movement judging by the impression it has made on the leaders of the church throughout Australasia. ... No other land in Christendom is so favorably situated for sending out missionary influence as Australia and New Zealand. They hold the key to the Pacific Island World. They look into the very doors of the two greatest mission fields of the world – China and India – which have in them three fourths of the unevangelized people of the earth.¹⁰⁷

His impressions were echoed by Dr Alexander Leeper, Master of Trinity College, who described Mott's visit, and the subsequent founding of the Student Christian Movement, as '.. events second to none in importance in their bearing upon the life of our students'.¹⁰⁸ A few years later, in January 1910, an SCM conference was attended by 116 students, 41 of whom committed themselves to overseas missions. The same year the climactic, and seminal, 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference was held.

Mott's first visit did not paint a rosy picture. The success of his second visit though suggests the students had benefited from his first visit and his suggestion. The very successful Torrey-Alexander evangelistic mission the previous year would not have been without effect.¹⁰⁹ Also, it benefited from the prayers and activity of the Melbourne evangelicals during the half-century before World War I, not least George Clarke's impact on Melbourne University students during the 1888 CM.

* * * *

Like the other decades of the colonial era, 1890-1903 saw a continuation of Melbourne's evangelistic tradition, a tradition characterised by the industry of some outstanding local and overseas evangelists and leaders. Evangelism was precious to the above-mentioned who did

¹⁰⁷ *Report Letter No 3*, J R Mott Archives, Day Missions Library of the Yale Divinity School Library. Hopkins, *J.R.Mott*, 272 says: 'Mott calculated that the 664 delegates from the sixty-one institutions made these events [at Melbourne and Christchurch] "proportionally the largest student conferences ever held in the world".'

¹⁰⁸ Engel, *Australian Christians in Conflict and Unity*, 137.

¹⁰⁹ By this time, Macartney was in England working for the Bible Society, but the Melbourne revival was very much the result of the preparation and work of him and his compeers in the preceding decades. See especially his urgent editorial in *MAHA* February 1891, 20-2, urging his readers to prayer for a world-wide awakening, quoting another author on *The Characteristics of a Genuine Revival, and The Definite Results of the Revival of 1859-60*.

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not shirk from or discount it, and delighted to see its outcomes. It was undergirded by prayer and deeper-life spirituality. It continued to have a significant impact on overseas missions. It gave spice to Protestant church-life. The evangelical leadership enjoyed an ecumenical fellowship, being bound by their common experience, spirituality and agenda. Their denominational loyalty saw those churches enjoy growth as well as interdenominational bodies such as ESV and CIM. The 1902 Torrey-Alexander campaign and the Mott mission to students at Melbourne University were a fitting climax to the colonial era. But, more than that, they were a continuation of Melbourne's evangelistic tradition, and a preparation for the tragic watershed of World War I, and whatever lay beyond.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

In August 2006 the Australian Christian Heritage National Forum conference was held in Parliament House, Canberra. The aim of the conference was to dispel the myth that Christianity has been of marginal significance in Australia's history, to inform those who are unaware of Australia's Christian heritage, and to remind those who might have forgotten or overlooked their tradition.¹ This thesis is a small contribution to the ongoing project of discerning, describing and evaluating Australia's Christian heritage. It argues that evangelism during Melbourne's colonial era was a vital and influential force; it powerfully influenced the Protestant churches; it was part of a world-wide jigsaw; and its emphasis on (evangelistic) activism, initiative, and leadership echoed overseas expressions of evangelistic endeavour. In what follows I refer briefly to the religious culture of Melbourne; this was the milieu of the evangelical movement, forming the common beliefs, and the moral and ethical framework of the subject of this thesis.² Then follows sections on the evangelical movement, the leading evangelists of the era, their methods, and their motivations which 'explain' their initiative, endeavour, and leadership,

The Religious Dimension of Melbourne

The underlying theme of my thesis is that Christianity was of fundamental importance in nineteenth-century Melbourne.³ The presence, activities and achievements of the churches were everywhere. Individual churchmen, lay and ordained, invested their time and substance in religious and good causes. Organisations, religious, educational, and charitable were part of the Christian civilisation of colonial Melbourne. Christianity still shaped the way people thought and (should have) behaved. It was regarded as being indispensable to civic discipline and respectability. Apart from a few radicals and (admittedly influential) liberals, few doubted that Christianity and civilisation were coterminous. Successive governments were generous in the various forms of state aid given to the churches. The church leaders were men of ability and stature. The churches were mostly filled on Sundays and the

¹ Stuart Piggin (ed.), *Shaping the Good Society in Australia: Papers read at the First Australia's Christian Heritage National Forum, Parliament House, Canberra, 6th-7th August 2006*, (Macquarie University: ACHNF, 2006).

² A fuller treatment of the evangelical movement would also take into account its response to other forms of belief - the science and religion controversy, biblical criticism and doctrine, religion and free thought - its considerable role in social welfare, culture, the life of the mind, and the civilisation of the city.

³ A theme not well explored yet, and which invites comparison with Sydney and the other capital cities.

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sermons of the main city preachers were respectfully reported in Monday's secular newspapers.

The churches generally reflected those of 'home'. The mainline churches – Church of England, Roman Catholic, and Presbyterian were prominent, and the branches of Methodism (the Wesleyan Methodists, the Bible Christians, the United Methodist Free Church, and the Primitive Methodists⁴ – they united in 1902 to become the Methodist Church) had long shrugged off their sectarian temper and became mainstream. The smaller sectarian churches – Baptist, Church of Christ, Brethren – because their numbers were fewer to begin with and, in the case of some, their refusal to accept state aid, limited their presence and growth. However, the Baptists displayed greater vitality, and grew with their city, often to have an influence belying their fewer numbers. There were also other, unorthodox, minority groups: Spiritualists, Unitarians, Swedenborgians, Theosophists, and, from 1885, Charles Strong's Australian Church.⁵

Sectarian rivalry was not absent from early Melbourne. The main, contentious, difference was between Catholics and Protestants. As early as 1843 there was a violent demonstration in Elizabeth Street over the election of a Protestant candidate to the Legislative Council. But whatever the sectarian differences, it was a *Christian* pluralism, and a long way from the religious pluralism and postmodernism of the late twentieth century that has fragmented Melbourne culture. The Church of England might not be legally established, but no one doubted that Christianity was, *de facto*, the 'natural' religion of the colony. During these years, as well as building houses of worship, the churches busily took their place in the public square. Melbourne's civilisation was a Christian civilisation in which, as such, the churches thought it their right to engage in public discourse on contentious issues of belief, morals and ethics.⁶

Thus, from the beginning, the churches were part of the tapestry and texture of colonial Melbourne, and the social, intellectual and political history of the city is unimaginable without them. In short, Christianity was fundamental to the city's culture and society as well as to the individual lives of Melbournians. Even the few infidels knew that the God they did not believe in was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ The Methodist New Connexion had only two congregations, which were absorbed into other Methodist groups in the 1880s.

⁵ And in Spring Street, Geelong, there was a Christian Israelite Church, whose freestone Sanctuary was built in December 1850. It was known as the Beardies and Bonnets' church.

⁶ As R J Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square. Religion and Democracy in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 144, puts it: 'Religion is incorrigibly interventionist. Judeo-Christian religion with all its universalistic claims to truth relates to the totality of things. Christ is Lord of all or he is Lord not at all ...' This was certainly the way the Melbourne evangelicals thought.

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The Evangelical Men of Melbourne

Melbourne was a Protestant city, in which, though it cannot be neatly quantified, the evangelicals were prominent. As well as evangelism, their activism were prominent throughout the era initiating and running church organisations such as the Boys Brigade, Children's Special Service Ministry (CSSM), Christian Endeavour, the Church Army, the Evangelisation Society of Victoria (Australia), Gospel Van ministries, Australian Gospel Tent Campaigners, Australian Inland Gospel Campaigners, Scripture Union, Victorian Police Mission, YMCA and YWCA, the Victorian Evangelical Alliance, the Melbourne City Mission, Melbourne and Suburban Bible Women, Missions to Seamen, the deeper-life movement, and the occasions when people worked together on a local level. The extent of this movement created something of an atmosphere, and the activism flavoured the churches. But the evangelicals' dominance was not complete; they never managed to capture their denominations. Thus they were more notable as a sub-culture. But, as long as it did not turn inwards and become ghetto-like or introspective, a sub-culture of strength. In some respects, Melbourne evangelicalism may be recognised as counter-cultural. By its nature, it embodied something of a protest against the culture, confronting secularism, and the perceived torpidity of the church at large. But, even more, given evangelical presence and contribution to Melbourne society – for example, benevolent and charitable institutions, education, politics, *et al* - the movement may be thought of as the soul of the city.

The evangelicals were vital, earnest, confident in their identity. This was probably most obvious in the Methodist churches. In colonial days they displayed the élan and revival fervour that was characteristic of their tradition, and saw a number of revivals. And even if some Protestant churches could not be called evangelical they were still generally true to their Reformation heritage, and the evangelical theology and message was generally acceptable. The evangelical movement was not 'official'; it was akin to Lucien Febvre's 'religious history'. That is, we see at work a grass-roots movement: a movement which was ecumenical, which eschewed separatism, and was widespread, single-minded, and forceful. Nor was it marginal; just as society then was largely Christian in its thinking and values, so evangelicalism was expressive of the majority of Protestantism in colonial Melbourne. The evangelicals were more comfortable with cooperation rather than union. Nor were they dominated by an individual. Rather, the movement was a network of individuals bound together by ties of friendship and a shared theology, experience, and agenda.

The message of (most of) the evangelicals was not 'come ye apart'; rather they aimed at recalling both church and society to their Judeo-Christian (and Reformation) heritage. Their voice was a powerful one and politicians listened. But, a movement of spiritual athletes

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cannot dominate a democratic and increasingly pluralist society. Thus, from the perspective of a century later, there was a negative side to those evangelicals of which they were probably not aware. They tended to be somewhat rigid over issues such as Sabbatarianism and temperance, and they were not always charitable to their Catholic *confrères*. In this they were men of their time.

The leadership also reflected this in that all the major denominations were represented, with none dominating. This was characteristic of Melbourne, and different to the state of affairs in Sydney. There the diocese dominated, especially when Bishop Frederic Barker was at the helm and bent on laying firm evangelical foundations. Even when the more accommodating Bishops Barry and Saumarez Smith lived in Bishops court, the stern evangelical clergy were busy building and defending Fortress Sydney. South of the Murray, Perry was too busy establishing his diocese, often with less than adequate clergy, for the Church of England to achieve the dominance it did in Sydney. And, despite Perry's evangelicalism, evangelicals in Melbourne diocese never achieved the dominance their counterparts in Sydney did. So the leadership in Melbourne 'naturally' fell to this informal group of zealous friends from the different churches. It is important to add that much of the Melbourne leadership was lay. Many of the leaders were clergy - of the Band - and they were respected as such, but they did not dominate. Indeed one has the impression that, because of the harmonious relationships, a kind of consensus model of leadership operated. This too was an important characteristic of Melbourne. As might be expected, the lay leadership was drawn from the business and mercantile elite, and the middle classes. Members of parliament were also represented.

The Melbourne evangelical leadership were also men of vision. At the end of the Centennial Mission, the Rev A J Campbell wrote '... we must look at the CM as the first only of a series that are to go through this century with ever-growing volume and gathering force, until they sweep over the land like a great river, and cover it with the knowledge of the Lord.'⁷ It was these men who the following year formed the Band, invited the charismatic Keswick missionary, the Rev George Grubb, who energised the deeper-life movement, and then at the start of the new millennium, invited the Americans Reuben A Torrey and Charles M Alexander to Melbourne to lead a great evangelistic campaign.

The Evangelists

The churches understood themselves as guardians and preservers of their civilisation. The evangelists were more like the prophets of Israel, who spoke from the edges of society; they

⁷ *Southern Cross*, 28 December 1888, 1031.

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were in Israel but not of it. Thus they could speak a word of prophetic critique, reminding the people of God of the event (the Exodus) and the teaching (Deuteronomy) that formed them, and calling them to return to God. So too the evangelists reminded their wayward hearers of the great formative event (the cross – crucicentrism) of both church and society, and to repent (conversionism). The overseas evangelists – the flamboyant California Taylor, the earnest and gentlemanly George Clarke, the erratic George Grubb,⁸ the scholarly R A Torrey – did well, and were lauded. But the local evangelists, because of their numbers, length of their ministries, and competence, were more significant; and no decade in the colonial era lacked for energetic evangelists. In summary, the main ones of the era were:

Methodists. The Rev Joseph Orton and Henry Reed brought Methodism to the nascent colony. Their main successors were the Revs Daniel Draper, William ‘California’ Taylor, Matthew Burnett, and John ‘Father’ Watsford. There were many other lesser-known and unknown pastors and laymen and women who with their faith, enthusiasm and evangelism made Methodism flourish in the southern capital. Both the evangelical movement and evangelism in Melbourne are unthinkable without them.

Anglicans. Bishop Charles Perry was mostly tied up with church duties, but preached an evangelical message and encouraged evangelism. Perry was disappointed with his successor, the gifted but liberal James Moorhouse. He would have been happier with Melbourne’s third bishop, Field Flowers Goe who encouraged evangelism.

Hussey Burgh Macartney was exceptional, and bears comparison with Perry and Moorhouse as the outstanding Anglican of the colonial era. He was unequivocally a Church of England evangelical, true to his patrimony, his *alma mater*, and the bishop who ordained him. He also happily made common cause with evangelicals of other denominations. The *Victorian Churchman* (13 Nov 1908, 486) declared him to be ‘Practically, the father of missions in Victoria, his pioneer work in India and China prepared the way for the planting of the Church Missionary Association in this place.’ He also deserves an honoured and special place in the story of Australia’s role in the (interdenominational) faith missions. He was not a missionary hero like William Carey; he did not found a missionary organisation like Hudson Taylor; he was not a missionary statesman like Henry Venn; and he was not an administrator like Eugene Stock. He is best thought of as a facilitator: he informed; he supported individuals and organisations; he encouraged people to pray and to give; he promoted; he raised

⁸ Grubb was more of a brilliant meteor than an abiding star. He and was later to leave Keswick auspices, and the Anglican Church, to work as an independent evangelist, dying in 1940 aged 84. His type of charismatic evangelist was infectious and enthusiastic, but of limited life-span.

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finance;⁹ he planned; a man of vision, he inspired; he played a leading role in establishing a 'culture of missions' among the Melbourne evangelicals. In all of this, Macartney and his *Missionary at Home and Abroad* paralleled the American minister and missionary spokesman A T Pierson and his *Missionary Review of the World*. The layman Dr John Singleton equalled Macartney in energy, but focused his efforts on rescue work, temperance and evangelism. Like Macartney, he was outstanding. And there were others, such as the Rev Septimus Lloyd Chase, a Cambridge evangelical like his bishop, a loyal churchman, a missions enthusiast, and friend of the Moravians. His contribution deserves more recognition.¹⁰

Presbyterians. The Presbyterian Church, thoughtful of its status as a national church in Scotland, was a church of power and influence. Many of Melbourne's most influential businessmen were Presbyterian, and many parliamentarians worshipped in Scots Church. With exceptions, it was more conscious of its Reformation and Calvinist heritage than being evangelical or evangelistic. But there were a number who had been influenced by Methodist-type spirituality and evangelicalism. The Rev Duncan McEachran was a faithful and influential parish minister, a mentor to John MacNeil and others, and an active member of the evangelical network and supporter of evangelism. The energetic, pious MacNeil was probably the outstanding Presbyterian evangelist, in spite of dying young. Dr John McNeil, the well-known Scottish evangelist, visited in the twilight years of his career, but made no lasting impact. The Rev W Lockhart Morton is best remembered for his parish and rescue work, and training missionaries, but at different times he engaged in evangelistic missions. He did not stay long in Melbourne, moving to Adelaide where he ran Angas College. Mention should also be made of the nine Presbyterians evangelists who were part of the Torrey-Alexander campaign.

Baptists. The best known included Dr D S MacColl, the only lay member of the Band and indefatigable member and supporter of evangelical and evangelistic endeavours. The Rev S Chapman, pastor of the Collins Street Church (1877-99) was the leading Baptist, a supporter of CIM, a member of the Band, shared in founding the Geelong Convention, and preached 'with evangelistic passion'. The Rev A Webb, pastor of the Aberdeen Street Church in Geelong and editor of the *Victorian Baptist*, died on his knees in prayer in 1902 during the Torrey-Alexander campaign, of which he was one of the local evangelists. The historian of Australian Baptists, Ken Manley, points out: 'The strong emphasis on evangelism by

⁹ When he moved to England he was active trying to raise money for the jubilee of the diocese: cf *Messenger* 1 November 1897 supplement, 2: 'That prince of beggars [emphasis added], Hussey Burgh Macartney, is at present pleading our cause with old Australian friends in England'.

¹⁰ See R Kenny, *The Lamb Enters the Dreaming. Nathael Pepper and the Ruptured World* (North Carlton: Scribe, 2007).

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Australian Baptists during this period was unceasing'.¹¹ At the end of the era, the Rev S P Carey was appointed minister of the Collins Street Church in 1900 where he exercised an influential pastoral and evangelistic ministry. He also was one of the local evangelists who took part in the Torrey-Alexander campaign.

Independents. (ie not Congregationalists) Henry Varley was the outstanding independent evangelist. His significance is due to the length of his stays in Melbourne, which made him as much a local as an itinerant. But his itinerancy emphasised the connection between Australia and Britain. A good deal of work has been done on transatlantic revivalism, but not so much on how Australia fitted into the world-wide evangelical movement. From 1870 onwards there was a steady stream of evangelists from overseas who came to work the colonial circuit. H R Jackson comments: 'The sheer number of overseas revivalists who toured between the 1870s and World War I suggests they were providing what large numbers of colonial Protestants wanted. The big crowds which some of them attracted confirm this.'¹² Varley was the most significant of them. His style of evangelism, and his independence, tapped into a strong English separatist tradition going back to the Lollards and the radical Reformation. In the nineteenth century new expressions of this tradition arose (eg the Brethren and the Salvation Army), and to which Varley generally belongs. Like his friend Spurgeon he was most successful with lower-middle and working-classes. W L McLoughlin reckons him as being in the old folk tradition; as coming from lower class background, whose style and methods closely resembled the Salvation Army, and who consciously directed their efforts to reaching urban poor.

The real fame of these men came after 1875 through their association with Moody. They were important because they represented the continuation of the pure form of primitive itinerancy which has never died out. At times, however, it has almost been absorbed into the more professional branch of the calling.¹³

¹¹ K Manley, *From Woolloomooloo to Eternity: A History of Australian Baptists vol 1: Growing an Australian Church (1831-1914)* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 119.

¹² H R Jackson, *Churches and People in Australia and New Zealand 1860-1930* (Wellington: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 58. See too chapter 3 'Waves of Revival' in W Phillips, *"Defending a Christian Country". Church and Society in New South Wales in the 1880s and after* (St Lucia: Univ of Queensland Press, 1981).

¹³ W L McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism. Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York: Ronald Press, 1959), 159-60. Cf J Kent, *Holding the Fort. Studies in Victorian Revivalism*. London: Epworth, 1978), 162: '[Moody] attracted larger audiences than any revivalist in England before him by keeping the balance between this dissidence and institutionalism, between the lay and the clerical. He was helped, of course, by the greater tolerance of lay evangelists which had penetrated Anglican evangelicalism since the 1860s.' This lay activism had its counterpart in the nineteenth-century missions movement which saw new kinds of missionaries going out to foreign shores - lay, and of the 'mechanic' class.

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He quotes a Unitarian journal which described him (Varley) as speaking in an 'emphatic, rough and ready manner calculated to impress people whose minds were not over-sensitive'.

Varley was a separatist, like Spurgeon though unlike Moody, who was more ecumenical both by temperament and policy. He happily worked with others at different times, and made noises about Christian unity, but was essentially nondenominational. He was driven by pragmatism rather than a genuine ecumenical spirit such as characterised the leading Melbourne evangelicals. He was adamantly lay, again like Spurgeon and Moody. He was militantly conservative, like Spurgeon but unlike Moody who was equally conservative but warm-hearted and irenic. He was itinerant. Some of this was the influence of examples such as Whitefield and Wesley in the previous century and the likes of Finney and Moody in his own time, and due to his restless personality. Also, as an itinerant, he was accountable to no one; this was a matter of personality as much as ecclesiology. His background and appeal were populist.¹⁴

Women evangelists. Culturally, nineteenth-century Melbourne was a patriarchal society. Nevertheless, in various ways, women played decisive roles, not least in evangelical activism. The increasing emancipation of women in church and Christian organisations – it should not be exaggerated of course – was the religious expression of the increasingly pressing social/cultural issue, the 'woman question'. It was part of first wave feminism and was closely linked to the suffrage movement, which it predated by almost a decade. For example, as well as his partnership with Mrs Hester Hornbrook in the founding of the Melbourne City Mission, Dr John Singleton actively supported Dr Constance Stone, the first female doctor in Melbourne. The evangelist Bessie Lee toured slums, refuges and gaols with him in the 1880s. The Melbourne City Mission recognised the value of Christian women and endorsed their presence and work on committees, organised visiting, tract distribution, practical help to the disadvantaged, and temperance, cf the formation of the Melbourne and Suburban Bible Women in 1864. Emulating J Hudson Taylor's endorsement and support of (especially single) women in missions, H B Macartney publicised the work of such women in his missionary magazine, *The Missionary at Home and Abroad*, making mention especially of the Church of England Zenana Mission. Mesdames Margaret Hampson and Emilia Baeyertz were notable not only for their gender but also their competence as evangelists. To them should be added many unnamed and unsung Bible women, Sunday School teachers, and ministers' wives.

Their methods

¹⁴ See my Henry Varley Down Under Part 2, *Lucas* nos 33-34 June & December 203, 110-48.

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The methods of the evangelists were varied, pragmatic, effective, and similar to those of their overseas compeers. Pre-eminent was *preaching*. The high Victorian era was the age of the pulpiteer. The great preachers were among the great personalities of the day, and people flocked to hear them; sermon tasting was almost a national sport in England.¹⁵ The preachers were not all of one type. Some were biblical expositors; some were teachers of doctrine; some were apologists; some focussed on individual ethical and moral issues; and some with prophetic earnestness and mien addressed the issues of social righteousness. In their different ways they confronted what they perceived were the pressing needs of the age, viz to encourage or recall their hearers to traditional standards of belief and behaviour. They appealed to the Bible, tradition and doctrine, religious experience, the emotions, grace in nature, and grace in the Bible. They held their hearers with their eloquence, wit (especially irony – J H Newman), humour, conviction, imagination, and, sometimes, saintliness.

The message of evangelists though was more limited. It centred on the individual and the need for individual righteousness. The common themes were: the fallen-ness of man and a negative attitude towards a culture and society perceived as drifting from its Judeo-Christian moorings. Simplified to the three 'r's: ruined by sin; redeemed by Christ; regeneration by the Holy Spirit,¹⁶ the appropriate response was individual repentance and conversion. Not that this was a totally privatised faith. Many evangelists as a matter of course addressed (what evangelicals considered to be) the outstanding ills of the day: 'social purity' (ie prostitution and sexual immorality), temperance, and gambling. Other social ills and evils such as unemployment, bad working conditions, and systemic evil tended to be avoided by most (apart from exceptions such as E H Sugden, A R Edgar, L D Bevan *et al*); revivalism was more important than social criticism.

In their preaching there was clarity, forthrightness, (a certain type of) biblicism, and a certain fluency, all of which found a ready audience among those who appreciated their cultural and theological populism. But clarity and forcefulness are not enough. In comparison with the great pulpiteers of the century, one misses a sense of imagination, the use of wit or irony, an appreciation of grace in nature, and a sense of the numinous. And when the evangelist was in a prophetic mood, addressing ethical and moral issues, one misses an appreciation of the complexities and subtleties of the human condition. Defiance is no substitute for winsomeness.

¹⁵ See chapter x 'The Power of the Pulpit' in H Davies, *Worship and Theology in England. IV From Newman to Martineau 1850-1900* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 282ff.

¹⁶ In the words of Varley's son Frank he, Varley, stood for 'the tripartite faith once for all delivered to the saints: Ruin by the Fall, Redemption by the Blood of Christ, Regeneration by the Holy Ghost.' SC, 19 April 1912, 494. For a fuller description of Varley's preaching see my 'Henry Varley Down Under' *Lucas* no 30 December 2001, nos 33-34, 34-68; June and October 2003, 107-48.

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The venues. Conscious of the renewed attention to urban revival in England in the 1850s, the American style revival services, and the American evangelists in England, the Melbourne evangelists were pragmatic with regard to the venues they used. Most spoke in a variety of churches (all evangelical of course), invited by the pastors. Convenient halls were regularly used, eg the Melbourne Town Hall, the Assembly Hall, and church and temperance halls. Tents were used in various suburbs to reach 'the poorer classes of this city'. The most notable being the Melbourne Gospel Tent, purchased by the United Evangelistic Association at the end of the 1870s. Enthusiastic Seventh Day Adventists also held well-attended evangelistic meetings in large tents in country areas as well. Henry Varley held evangelistic rallies in the Theatre Royal, and even preached at a race meeting on the Flemington Race Course. Perry famously preached from a tree stump on the goldfields, and the likes of Burnett and Salvation Army were not shy about proclaiming the gospel in the open air and to men in their places of work.

Conventions. Some of these were designated as 'Christian conventions' and were intended primarily as occasions of teaching believers. Others were 'prophetic', teaching and underlining the premillennial context of evangelism. Others were deeper-life conventions, whose message focused on personal revival, and whose outcome included evangelism and missions.

Evangelistic (revivalist) missions. The largest and most significant were the 1888 Centennial Mission and the 1902 Torrey-Alexander mission. But the era saw many smaller ones in Melbourne and suburbs and country Victoria. They were not a rare phenomenon.

Prayer. Prayer is also a major theme of this thesis. Fundamental to evangelical spirituality, it was always 'there', part of the evangelical's foundation and *modus vivendi*, and essential for growth and revival. It was a common characteristic of all the evangelists mentioned; they were known as men (and women) of prayer. As with the great awakening of the eighteenth century, prayer was the context and the preparation for these revivals. The growth of prayer groups, prayer meetings, and prayer unions (societies) was notable and impressive. Macartney played a leading role in this over a number of years. The Band was one of the ecumenical prayer movements in Melbourne in the 1880s and 1890s which prepared for the 1902 revival. As part of this, Mrs William Warren organised cottage prayer meetings all over Melbourne. This was not a local phenomenon; there were evangelical 'concerts of prayer' around the world

It was the same with the maverick Varley. Reports of his activities in Melbourne consistently refer to the prayer meetings he led or took part in. And 'every Saturday evening at home [he]

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set aside an hour for prayer in behalf of loved-fellow-servants in Christ - Mr. Spurgeon at the head of the list - passing on from land to land, until with one name after another, at last he had almost encircled the globe with a belt of prayer.'¹⁷ No less than Moody was impressed:

Varley had become an evangelist and a Plymouth Brother, preaching at a mission hall with such force that his 'assembly' numbered several hundred. 'I visited that man to find the secret of his success. At home he prayed for the meeting. After supper we took a fly, and as we were rattling along the rough stone streets of London he said, "Now, brother, let us have prayer for that meeting",' and knelt on the swaying floor of the fly, among wisps of straw. Moody had never tried praying aloud on the floor of a carriage: 'rattling through the streets wasn't exactly a comfortable place to pray', ... and knew that prayer was Varley's secret.¹⁸

In the late nineteenth century there was a good deal of populist idealism in evangelical circles. People looked for ideal types or heroes, both to admire and aspire to. In tandem with this was a pietistic understanding of prayer and the idea of God as one who is there to (miraculously) answer prayer. A whole folk literature, with its own universe of discourse, developed. The idea was that, through earnest and intense prayer, God would provide all the Christian's (missionary's) needs. Hudson Taylor was the pioneer and exemplar, and George Müller was the great publicist for the Christian life being a heroic 'living by faith'.

'*Intelligence*'. The gospel was also proclaimed in ink. The denominational newspapers carried reports of evangelists and their efforts, but their main focus of course was on church life. Of more particular interest was Macartney's *MAHA*, the Brethren *Willing Work*, and Fitchett's *Southern Cross*. Varley also did not limit himself to the spoken word. He had a ready pen and published a large number of tracts, all on 'topical' subjects, and a number of his studies and sermons were published in sympathetic journals like *Willing Work*. Like his preaching, his written work was populist and ephemeral; the publication of *The Search Light* in 1896 was an attempt to address the public square, though only through an in-house readership.

The organisations. The Melbourne City Mission and the UEA/ESV were outstanding, but there were many others; see list of those referred to in the *MAHA* (page 108), and those initiated by and associated with Dr Singleton (page 72). Such organisations were expressions of, and attempts to institutionalise, evangelical activism and voluntarism.

¹⁷ *Willing Work*, 11 April 1879, 148.

¹⁸ J Pollock, *Moody Without Sankey. A New Biographical Portrait* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963), 68f.

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Their Motivations

The evangelist did not simply preach the gospel as a matter of course. He/she was inspired to do so.¹⁹ This inspiration was often expressed in religious shorthand – ‘the Lord called me to preach’. More mundanely, it included the following factors. *Biblicism*. As evangelicals, the evangelists could not ignore the imperative force of the great commission (Mt 28¹⁹⁻²⁰).

Conversion. Whether understood as an event or a process, conversion is usually thought of in an individual or privatised way. It also embraced the social dimension and is fundamental to the evangelical attitude to culture. In his *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1951),²⁰ H R Niebuhr examined the enduring problem of the relationship of the church to culture. In it he suggested five ‘models’: Christ against culture, the Christ of culture, Christ above culture, Christ the transformer of culture, and Christ and culture in paradox. The evangelical men of colonial Melbourne operated with a combination of Niebuhr’s paradigms which, for them, fostered their activism. But most of all they, intuitively, operated with the Christ the transformer of culture type, which argues that sin has distorted culture and that grace is needed to restore society completely to Christ – business, the arts, the professions, and family life. Nothing is outside the purview of the Kingdom of God. This type thus argues for a cultural engagement with the aim of changing things for the better. Every opportunity should be used to improve, transform, and convert. This notion fitted the centrality of conversionism in their thinking, of evangelism and voluntarism, of their spirituality as they strove for holiness, and, for some, their sect-type ecclesiology.

Ecumenism. The nature of evangelicalism as a protest movement against (the state of and the ideological exclusivity of) the mainline churches and society not infrequently meant that the evangelical who was loyal to his church lived with a tension. For most though, this tension was balanced by the evangelicals’ shared experience, spirituality, and theology. This grass-roots ecumenism was unofficial, widespread, and stimulated the evangelicals’ common agenda and organisations.

(Proto-) fundamentalism. All of this took place against the background of a climate of crisis. In the decades under discussion, society became increasingly secular; traditional values and beliefs were perceived as having been lost or repudiated. It seemed that existing patterns of normality were breaking down. This note of crisis became an increasing preoccupation with evangelicals. More and more they saw themselves as being marginalised. A climate of crisis

¹⁹ B Mansfield, ‘Lucien Febvre and the Study of Religious History’ *Journal of Religious History* vol 1 (1961), 104, notes that Febvre aimed ‘to go below the externals and search out the - admittedly imprecise and yet powerful - desires and aspirations of men’.

²⁰ Strictly speaking, the title should have been *The Church and Culture*. More recently, see D A Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

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can provide an ethos in which creativity flourishes as a culture or society or church tries to cope positively with change. Most Protestants then were conservative theologically; indeed they might be described as proto-fundamentalist.²¹ Fundamentalism, whether understood broadly or delimited as the later fundamentalist movement, was a protest movement, with militancy one of its defining characteristics. Thus the activism of its spokesmen (evangelists, and pastors who preached an evangelistic message) was motivated by the urgency of the need to respond to the cultural climate. Some added separatism to the mix; (most) of the others were more irenic (Burnett, Clarke), though without sacrificing a sense of urgency. Nearly all added *premillennialism*, which also shaped their understanding of the gospel and provoked their enthusiasm.

Spirituality. The activist strain in evangelical piety has made them concentrate their energies on mission, at home and abroad, social righteousness, and individual piety. However, the Melbourne evangelists also operated with a spirituality they shared with their overseas compatriots, a spirituality based on the Reformation heritage of justification by faith, Pietism, and, especially, the eighteenth-century Wesleyan holiness movement filtered through the (Romanticism influenced) contemporary deeper-life movement. Part of the tapestry and texture of Melbourne evangelicalism, the movement was a potent expression of Melbourne evangelicalism, and might be reckoned a kind of revival. Indeed, Melbourne evangelical spirituality was then so vital that it might have been the product of ongoing revival, which evangelicalism has been able to generate in other places as often as it would have liked. Why revivals have to cease and end so quickly was one of the questions which most interested evangelicals. It seems hard to credit, but the evidence suggests that Melbourne in the latter half of the nineteenth century might be a place where the historian might look for the ingredients of ongoing revival. But that must be the subject for further research.

What were the main characteristics of *this* revival tradition then? As one might expect, the deeper-life movement shared the basic characteristics of nineteenth-century revivals. By its very nature, revival appeals to the emotional nature of individuals as well as to their intellectual and rational nature. It holds that vital Christianity begins with a response of the whole being to the gospel's call to repentance and spiritual rebirth by faith in Christ. And, in its way, so did deeper-life teaching, claiming a kind of Christian primitivism: the 'something more' it emphasised was simply an appropriation of what scripture promised. Moreover, the

²¹ C Skinner, *Lamplighter and Son* (Nashville: Broadman, 1984), 193-222, argues that we might properly think of Spurgeon as a proto-fundamentalist. He points out that Spurgeon was a mentor to the American pastor A C Dixon, his successor at the Metropolitan Tabernacle and one of the leaders of the fundamentalist movement. On page 208 he says: 'In a large measure The Fundamentals was a result of the vision and drive of its major editor, a Southern Baptist, and pastor of Moody Church, Chicago, and later of Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle – Dr A C Dixon.' And Spurgeon was influenced by Varley.

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Keswick message might emphasise resting in Jesus, but evangelical activism belied such words. There was no simply waiting on God and not doing anything. Also, far from fostering separatist impulse, those evangelicals who attended deeper-life meetings strengthened their churches by returning to them renewed, encouraged, and empowered for service.²² That is how Macartney (and the Band) understood the conventions. They preached the fullness of the Spirit *for service*.²³

In particular, the Keswick deeper-life message and program had a profound impact on missions, even though it did not emphasise missions in the early years. This was because the early Keswick trustees were cautious: the primary reason for Keswick was to encourage the deeper (higher) Christian life and they did not want anything to detract from this. But they soon found that missionary enthusiasm flowed from the emphasis on consecration.²⁴ Bebbington points out: 'The adherents of Keswick were turning in on a shared but private experience. They were accepting that Evangelicalism, which had come so near to dominating the national culture at mid-century, was on the way to becoming an introverted subculture.'²⁵ However, this should be balanced by the centrifugal dimension of the deeper-life movement; a movement that also sent evangelicals outward in mission to the world at home and abroad.

Personality.

While their theology, spirituality and agenda were pretty much the same, the evangelists mentioned above had different personalities, abilities, and styles. They were not clones. By definition an evangelist is an activist, not a diffident person. There is a driven-ness about him/her. Among those referred to in the previous chapters, the following personality traits are noticeable, and contributed to their motivation. They were men (and women) of enthusiasm. It is impossible to imagine the likes of Macartney and Singleton being merely casual or benign about any cause they embraced. Most were, to some degree, charismatic (in the Weberian sense); though not so much Clarke, or Müller, or the clerical authority figures Perry and Draper. They had personal qualities that attracted others to them. Some of this was due to the degree they exemplified deeper-lifer spirituality. Some were naturally autocratic, and

²² Is this the same today? Not so much. Contemporary evangelicals (/charismatics: the terms seem to be pretty much interchangeable) are frequently characterised by a juvenile spirituality, a spirituality that is intensely individualistic, focuses on feeling right, and has retreated from the grand scheme of things.

²³ The later deeper-life convention at Upwey/Belgrave Heights studiously avoided using the expression 'baptism in the Spirit' as this had been appropriated by the Pentecostals. The Melbourne evangelicals preferred the expression 'fullness of the Spirit', and emphasised the Spirit's endowment being for service, not personal satisfaction.

²⁴ A B Simpson, the founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, found the same thing. When asked about mission, he said that he only preached a Christ-centred life, and that mission followed naturally from this focus on sanctification.

²⁵ D Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain. A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1989), 180.

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militancy came naturally to them; Varley and Morton most of all. Many people were attracted to and found such qualities motivating. To some degree all possessed leadership qualities. Perry and Draper, by virtue of their status, were the most obvious. However, it is noteworthy that the leadership qualities of Macartney and the others, (ordained and lay) whether inspirational, organisational, or facilitating, were consensual. No one person dominated. This was a major characteristic of Melbourne evangelicalism. Finally, some evangelists, by nature, have short shelf-lives. They burst on the scene, make their contribution, and move on - eg Taylor and Grubb, and Hampson and Baeyertz. They are sprinters. On the other hand, the likes of Burnett and Macartney, and Varley, make their contribution over a longer time frame. Some of this has to do with their energy levels, their 'batteries'. This aspect of their personality influenced their motivation.

* * * *

Geoffrey Blainey summed up the colonial era:

From the late 1850s to perhaps the 1890s the churches in Victoria increased their influence to a remarkable degree. This was the age of the pulpit. Only in South Australia was its influence comparable to that in Victoria. The evidence is strong that Christianity in Victoria was now more influential than in the British Isles. Perhaps two of every three Victorians over the age of fifteen went to church with some regularity. If the children who went to Sunday School are added, the churches probably had close contact with at least four of every five Victorians old enough to sit still.²⁶

Some of this was due to colonial Melbourne's essentially Christian civilisation; some to immigrants from 'home' bringing their religious faith with them. But most was due to the multi-faceted evangelism of the evangelical men of Melbourne. This evangelism was part of a world-wide movement, and impacted missions and churches as well as individuals. It was activist: the evangelists, and evangelical leaders, were enthusiasts, voluntarists, and visionaries. It had initiative, and drive: the preaching of the gospel was supported by newspapers, deeper-life and other conferences, and carefully planned and run campaigns. It had leadership: the evangelical leaders, many of who belonged to the mercantile, business and political elite, even if they were not evangelists themselves, identified with and supported the evangelism that was so much a part of colonial Melbourne.

²⁶ G Blainey, *Our Side of the Country. The Story of Victoria* (Hawthorn: Methuen Haynes, 1984), 113. See too G Serle, *The Rush to be Rich. A History of the Colony of Victoria 1883-1889* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ Press, 1971), 9.

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