Singularly engaged: How and why unmarried, Protestant Christian women in Australia engaged in activism outside the church in the late nineteenth to mid twentieth century

Karen Merle Pack, B.A., M.Teach. (Hons), M.Div.

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Department of History and Archaeology
Macquarie University

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Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

(Signed)_____ Date: 23 June 2022

Karen Merle Pack

For Mum, who never left anyone on the margins.

(Enid) Merle Pack

31 October 1941 – 14 May 2022

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Abstract

This thesis examines how and why unmarried, Protestant Christian women in Australia engaged in social activism outside the church in the late nineteenth to mid twentieth century. The thesis focuses on the relationship between faith and gender to ask why religious – and particularly evangelical – histories have ignored the agency and activism of unmarried women. The ideology of 'separate spheres' that emerged from the Great Awakening and the evangelical reformers of the eighteenth century profoundly shaped relationships between the sexes in the Victorian era. This ideology, with its understanding that men were ideally suited to the public, political world, and women to the private, domestic sphere, curtailed women's freedom legally, politically and socially. Although the notion of separate spheres no longer holds sway in Australian society, this thesis argues that its effects can still be felt in religious historiography, which recognises women only when they act in specific roles that can be understood within a maternalist paradigm. Feminist scholars from Mary Beard to Tanya Evans have demonstrated the importance of biography for bringing to light the lives of women who have previously been ignored or marginalised in historical accounts. Therefore, this thesis uses a biographical approach based on case studies of two unmarried, Christian women involved in social activism from the late nineteenth to mid twentieth century: animal rights activist Frances Deborah Levvy (1831-1924) and internationalist Ada Constance Duncan (1896-1970). Both women were involved in activism that helped shape Australian society, and were recognised by their contemporaries as public intellectuals and women of sincere Christian faith. The particular focus of this thesis is how and why they engaged in activism outside the church, and why they remain unrecognised in religious history despite the significance of their work and the depth of their faith.

What emerges through an examination of the lives of Levvy and Duncan is a picture of two women who did all that was required of them to fit the gendered expectations of their time, yet

have been erased from religious histories that continue to ignore women acting outside of specific roles and contexts. The ideology of separate spheres continues to effect evangelical culture – and through it, evangelical histories – in the form of contemporary 'complementarian' and 'male headship' understandings of marriage and gender roles, which privilege patriarchal, heteronormative leadership. This functions as a lens through which historical Australian Christian women are viewed, and has implications for the exclusion of others who do not fit this narrow paradigm – including Indigenous Australians, LBGTQ+ people, and people of colour. More biographical studies are needed to bring to light those who have previously been erased through attempts to fit women and minorities into an existing patriarchal narrative. Such an approach will centre groups that have previously been erased and allow them to speak on their own terms.

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Since beginning my PhD journey my life has changed in ways I did not foresee and could not have imagined. I left the denomination in which I was ordained and resigned from working for an international mission organisation. I came out as gay after decades of being closeted to myself as much as anyone else, and was fired for becoming engaged to my partner. In the midst of marrying Bronte and helping to found a new, inclusive faith community in Sydney, there was also personal tragedy that culminated in the death of my mother only weeks ago. Through all of this, Tanya and Marion have kept me on track, believing that I could actually do this. I am grateful, too, for the wider circle of support I have found at Macquarie. For Associate Professor Clare Monagle, who helped identify the right supervisors and had helpful conversations with me at key points in the journey. For Abbie Hartman – a true friend who is not only an outstanding academic but also pastoral support and cheer leader for HDR students in the History Department. We are all so grateful.

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List of Illustrations

Abbreviations

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission
ACC	Australian Christian Churches (formerly Assemblies of God in Australia)
ACL	Australian Christian Lobby
AIM	Australian Inland Mission
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ANCUN	Australian National Committee for United Nations
AOG	Assemblies of God in Australia
APS	Animals' Protection Society (NSW)
ASCM	Australian Student Christian Movement
BCOF	British Commonwealth Occupation Forces
BMHJ	*Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of NSW*
BSIA	Bureau of Social and International Affairs
CLC	Christian Life Centre
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CSPKA	Church Society for Promotion of Kindness to Animals
CWA	Country Women's Association
DPs	Displaced Persons
ICW	International Council of Women
IPC	International Peace Campaign
IPR	Institute of Pacific Relations
IRO	International Refugee Organisation
LNU	League of Nations Union
NCW	National Council of Women
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MLC	Member of the Legislative Council
MU	Mothers' Union
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NCW	National Council of Women

NLA	National Library of Australia
NSW	New South Wales
PCNSW	Presbyterian Church of NSW
PROV	Public Record Office Victoria
PWMU	Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
SUWG	Sydney University Women Graduates' Association
UN	United Nations
UNAC	United Nations Appeal for Children
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
USA	United States of America
VIREC	Victorian International Refugee Emergency Committee
WCC	World Council of Churches
WCTU	Woman's Christian Temperance Union
WHO	World Health Organisation
WSCF	World Student Christian Federation
WSPCA	Women's Branch of the (Royal) Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals NSW
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

Introduction

Written out of the story

'There are other means, besides bulldozing and vandalism, with which to obliterate history. One is simply for books and records to be laid aside for so long that their very existence is forgotten.'[1]

As a girl growing up in The Salvation Army in Australia in the 1970s and 1980s, I was presented with many examples of women who were 'heroes of the faith'. For me, the foremost of these was Catherine Mumford Booth (1829-1890), co-founder of The Salvation Army. Long before she met her husband, William Booth, and began the movement for which she would become renowned, Catherine Booth was a spirited campaigner against social injustice. As a young girl, she watched her father succumb to alcoholism, leading her to become an outspoken supporter of the temperance movement on the total abstinence side. She was adamantly in favour of the full ordination of women, and in 1859 wrote a pamphlet entitled *Female Ministry: Woman's Right to Preach the Gospel*, where she argued her case convincingly, using scripture, reason, and tradition.[2] The pamphlet circulated widely throughout Britain and is still cited today. Throughout my teenage years, the international leader of The Salvation Army was General Eva Burrows (1929-2015), an unmarried woman who was an officer for forty years, including serving two decades in Zimbabwe (at the time known as Rhodesia), where she promoted the education of girls and women. In addition to this, my mother was also a Salvation Army Officer, having been ordained when she was still single. As an unmarried officer my mother, Merle, had been in charge of several churches by herself, and was teaching at the School for Officer Training when she met my father. Her closest friend was another unmarried officer who, during the 1980s and 1990s ran a drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility for women on the central coast of New South Wales (NSW), and later a women's and children's refuge in the inner west of Sydney. In other words, I

[1] Iain H. Murray, *Australian Christian Life from 1788: An Introduction and an Anthology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1988), 333.
[2] Catherine Booth, *Female Teaching or, the Rev. A. A. Rees versus Mrs. Palmer, Being A Reply To A Pamphlet By The Above Gentleman On The Sunderland Revival*, 1st ed. (London: G.J. Stevenson, 1859).

grew up in an environment that recognised the capacity of women to lead – and have authority over men – in faith contexts. More specifically, I saw unmarried women have a profound impact on the lives of others, as they engaged in social justice and pastoral work motivated by, and in the name of, their Christian faith. It was my hope that I would follow in their footsteps.

In my late teens, I left The Salvation Army to join Hills Christian Life Centre (CLC), a Pentecostal church with an evangelical bent in the north-western suburbs of Sydney. Hills CLC was part of the Assemblies of God (AOG), a denomination that also accepted women in leadership and allowed them to preach.[3] Very quickly I was moved into leadership. In 2001 the church was renamed 'Hillsong Church', to bring it into alignment with its global music label, but by that time I had been asked to join the leadership team of another AOG church.[4] Eventually I was ordained as a minister in the Assemblies of God and served as a pastor in western Sydney. Barry Chant, scholar of Australian Pentecostalism, notes the predominance of women in the early days of the movement, claiming that by 1930 women had founded and led over half the Pentecostal churches in Australia.[5] Yet in the 1990s there was a noticeable pressure to conform to gender norms, particularly to be married and have children. I did neither of those things. The doctrine of male 'headship' was also taught, such that there was a dissonance between the apparent promotion of women in leadership, and the clear expectation that they would submit to their husbands. In my time at Hills CLC, there were three high profile unmarried women in leadership, each of whom were gifted speakers and strong leaders. I vividly remember the

[3] In 2007 the denomination was renamed Australian Christian Churches. 'ACC | About Us', Australian Christian Churches, accessed 24 May 2022, https://www.acc.org.au/about-us/.
[4] Tanya Riches and Tom Wagner, 'The Evolution of Hillsong Music: From Australian Pentecostal Congregation into Global Brand', *Australian Journal of Communication* 39, no. 1 (n.d.): 21. Hillsong church split from the AOG/ACC in 2018 to become an independent movement. Nonetheless, the Hillsong website cites the 'close relationship' between ACC and Hillsong, and directs people to the ACC website for its statement of beliefs and constitution. 'About Hillsong Church | Church', Hillsong Church, accessed 24 May 2022, https://hillsong.com/about/.
[5] Barry Mostyn Chant, 'The Spirit of Pentecost Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia, 1870-1939', Australasian Digital Theses Program (Macquarie Park, NSW, Macquarie University, 2000), 39, http://hdl.handle.net/1959.14/174469.

celebrations of 'answered prayer' when each of them announced their engagements.[6] Similarly, I remembered fervent prayers being offered during services when (married) women struggled to get pregnant. To date there has never been a woman elected as national leader of AOG/ACC, and it is very rare for a woman to be elected to the National Executive.[7] There is currently one (married) woman on the Global Board of Hillsong Church, Tolu Badders, who was appointed in 2020.[8] Marion Maddox, scholar of politics and religion, has examined the 'framework of heteronormativity' at Hillsong Church (formerly Hills CLC), noting that it 'emphasizes gender complementarity, with men's and women's roles sharply differentiated according to standard gender stereotypes.'[9]

During my time as a leader and pastor in various Australian Evangelical and Pentecostal churches, I grew increasingly unsettled with the heteronormative framework and the expectation that women should be married and have children. It was not uncommon for unmarried or divorced women, or single mothers, to approach me for pastoral support due to their emotional and psychological distress. Often, they would express a sense of having failed, or been overlooked or abandoned by God. When asked why they believed that to be true, they would invariably cite their unmarried state. For this reason, my doctoral journey initially began within the field of pastoral theology, with the intention to explore the experience of single women in Australian churches. I hoped to recover a theological framework, centred on the concept of covenant friendship, that would restore dignity to the women I encountered and help them to find belonging and close community in their unmarried state.[10] During that time, however, I had two important realisations. The first was that it was difficult to begin a conversation about the

[6] All three remain prominent leaders associated with Hillsong. They are Donna Crouch, Christine Caine, and Lucinda Dooley.
[7] 'ACC | About Us'.
[8] 'Board | Church', Hillsong Church, accessed 24 May 2022, https://hillsong.com/leadership/board/.
[9] Marion Maddox, '"Rise up Warrior Princess Daughters": Is Evangelical Women's Submission a Mere Fairy Tale?', *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 29, no. 1 (2013): 14.
[10] Cf. Karen M. Pack, 'Mateship – a Holy Alliance: Rediscovering Covenant Friendship in the Contemporary Australian Church', *Zadok Perspectives*, no. 133 (Summer 2016): 13–16.

inherent 'good' of friendship and singleness when the church was so entirely focussed on marriage and family. The second was that there was very little knowledge of the lives and ministries of unmarried women in the Australian church, and even less awareness of women of faith working outside the church. Women were being celebrated by their churches only when they conformed to narrow gender paradigms, and they were not being taught about the long tradition of female activists and public intellectuals who had helped to shape Australian society. It was these twin realisations that led me to instead pursue a doctorate in history, researching the lives of unmarried women engaged in social justice activism outside the institutional church, yet motivated by their faith.

This thesis examines the interrelationship between gender and religion through case studies of unmarried women (a group traditionally marginalised within Australian Protestant churches and historiography) from the late nineteenth to mid twentieth century. Biography and thematic analysis will be employed to explore how two unmarried Christian women exercised their agency in ways that both resisted and embodied the ideology of separate spheres in their quest to build a more just Australian society. The focal question this thesis asks is why Australian religious histories have largely ignored the agency and activism of unmarried women outside of the institutional church, even when their activism was motivated by faith. Why do Protestant and Evangelical histories of Australia give the impression of women contributing to the *spiritual* rather than *intellectual* life of the nation? Such histories depict women as active in charitable and philanthropic work; they are brave nurses, missionaries and even preachers. They are compassionate, nurturing and maternal. Yet women are absent from rational, intellectual discourse on what is best for the colony. This thesis seeks to question previous assumptions about the contributions of unmarried Protestant Christian women in Australia and demonstrate their crucial role in the social and religious changes that took place from the late nineteenth to mid twentieth century.

The Ideology of Separate Spheres

In seeking to understand the dynamics at work within Victorian culture, historians have long identified the existence of an ideology of 'separate spheres' which profoundly shaped relationships between the sexes and their understanding of masculine and feminine ideals. Within this patriarchal framework, the woman's role was understood to be domestic and dependent, the man's public and privileged. Female freedom was severely limited legally, politically and socially. This ideology emerged in part from the religious 'Great Awakening' of the eighteenth century, but was largely a consequence of the campaign for the reform of manners and morals waged by Wilberforce, More and other members of the Clapham sect.[11] Catherine Hall has traced the role of evangelical reformers in deliberately cultivating the Victorian ideal of the bourgeois family as an remedy to what they saw as the increasing licentiousness and depravity of the society around them. Reform could only be achieved if religion assumed a central place in the daily, domestic life of the British people, acting as an antidote to debauchery. The Clapham sect believed that only the embrace of *real* religion – not merely the practice of outward forms – would transform British society.[12] Such transformation must begin with the home and women would have a central role.

Evangelical reformers held a different understanding of the place of women than that which had been articulated by Mary Wollstonecraft in her *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). Where Wollstonecraft argued for the fundamental equality of men and women and the need to extend to women the same rights enjoyed by men, evangelical reformers maintained the spiritual equality of men and women, but understood the two sexes to have different natures, fitting them for different roles in society. Specifically, men were naturally suited to the public sphere of business and politics. In contrast, woman's frailty and sensitivity fitted her for her role as the

[11] Catherine Hall, 'The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology', in *Fit Work for Women*, ed. Sandra Burman (London: Routledge, 1979), 15–21.
[12] Cf. Hall, 'The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology', 18.

'Angel in the House', cultivating the spiritual and moral life of the family and creating a domestic refuge to which the (male) head of the house could retreat at the end of the day. Accordingly, gender historian Joan Wallach Scott describes the public sphere of men and the private sphere of women as 'sharply differentiated' both spatially and psychologically.[13] Men inhabited 'the polis and the market' as a 'realm of reason and purposive action', while women were granted home and church as the locus of 'an interior realm of affect and spiritual belief'.[14] Scott argues that the strict division of labour mandated by separate spheres ideology was central to the 'religious/secular divide', and therefore critical in the emergence of the nation state. She writes,

> Woman's role was to fill the void left by competitive individualism, to offer the moral glue that could cement individuals together in a national enterprise. Sexuality figured on both sides of the equation: women's morality must tame men's aggression; men's reason must bring women's passion under control.[15]

Thus, Scott describes the pious woman as a 'counterpart to the reasoning male citizen'.[16]

In 1987 historians Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall published their classic study of the impact of evangelical reform on the creation of 'separate spheres' ideology in their book *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780–1850*. Davidoff and Hall traced shifts in middle-class thinking and social relations through a detailed analysis of local communities and particular individuals. Their central argument is that the division of public and private life into separate spheres became 'the common-sense of the middle class' from 1780–1850.[17] They argue that in this period a distinct middle-class identity emerged, with gendered forms delineating ideal masculine and feminine roles. This led to a valuing of male rationality that restricted the expression of emotion, while women experienced 'social and sexual subordination' even while

[13] Joan Wallach Scott, *Sex and Secularism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2018), 31.
[14] Scott, *Sex and Secularism*, 31.
[15] Scott, *Sex and Secularism*, 32.
[16] Scott, *Sex and Secularism*, 32.
[17] Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780–1850*, rev. ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), xxx.

being told they enjoyed spiritual equality.[18] Davidoff and Hall argue that women were 'locked into domesticity' by the expectation that they remain pure and provide a spiritual haven to which men could retreat within the home. They identify a growing sense of apprehension about what might happen if women attained sexual and intellectual independence, and name marriage as 'both symbol and institution of women's containment.'[19] Elsewhere Hall has argued that this ultimately led to working wives and mothers being seen as unnatural, and working-class women being seen as unfit wives and mothers. This in turn reinforced the belief that the sexual division of labour was ordained by nature, which decreed women should be wives and mothers before all else.[20]

The ideology of separate spheres (and belief in the sexual division of labour) did not mean that women were unable to venture outside the home, but that when they did so the appropriateness of their activity would be evaluated based on whether it could be understood as an expression of their maternal, nurturing nature. Women's religious endeavours outside the home could thus be understood as an extension of their domestic sphere, allowing them to nurture the moral and religious sensibility of the society around them, just as they did with their own children within the home. It was understood that the proper nurture of children's character would prove to be the foundation of long-term social reform.[21] Missionary and philanthropic work outside of the home was consequently accepted to the extent that it saw women acting in accordance with their nature, in a maternal and nurturing way. Davidoff and Hall note a discrepancy in the normally similar views of Hannah More and William Wilberforce, with More asserting that 'charity is the calling of a lady; the care of the poor is her profession,' while Wilberforce was anxious that 'for ladies to meet, to go from house to house stirring up petitions – these appear to me proceedings

[18] Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 451.
[19] Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 451.
[20] Hall, 'The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology', 31.
[21] Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 335, 343.

unsuited to the female character as delineated in Scripture.'[22] In each case, the measure of the appropriateness of women's religious activity outside the home was the degree to which it conformed to her innate femininity, as revealed by faith and scripture.

The gendering of religious work saw women's roles understood in terms of their natural occupation as wives and mothers. While this often lent a nobility to their philanthropic work, the correlate was a diminished view of unmarried women. Stephanie Coontz has noted that the word *spinster* was originally an honorific for a woman who spun yarn. Over time, however, it took on a negative connotation as the natural consequence of the increasing 'reverence accorded to wives'.[23] In the Epilogue of their ground-breaking study Davidoff and Hall conclude,

> Evangelical categorizations of the proper spheres of men and women provided the basis for many subsequent formulations and shaped the common sense of the nineteenth-century social world. Men were to be active in the world as citizens and entrepreneurs, women were to be dependent, as wives and mothers.[24]

In more than thirty years since *Family Fortunes* was first published, the work has undergone significant critique. Nonetheless, religious historian Sarah Williams acknowledges that 'the construction of gender, and specific patterns of social structural change' given by Davidoff and Hall has had enduring impact.[25]

Embodying religious belief

The pervasiveness of separate spheres ideology not only regulated the domestic and social relations of women, but their experience of embodiment. In her social history of English women, Susie Steinbach observed three pivotal shifts in understanding over the course of the 'long nineteenth century'. Firstly, a change in the understanding of human sexual nature, with a

[22] Hannah More and William Wilberforce, both cited in Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 429.
[23] Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, a History: How Love Conquered Marriage* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 147.
[24] Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 450.
[25] Sarah C. Williams, 'Is There a Bible in the House? Gender, Religion and Family Culture', in *Women, Gender and Religious Cultures in Britain, 1800-1940*, ed. Sue Morgan and Jacqueline de Vries (London: Routledge, 2010), 15.

greater comprehension of the biological differences between men and women. Steinbeck notes that this 'two-bodies' paradigm became associated with 'the idea that women were happiest and most powerful following their biological destiny to be mothers, and many women derived satisfaction and empowerment from this idea.'[26] Secondly, Steinbach argues that there was a 're-evaluation of the relationship between women and desire.'[27] This rethinking led to a belief that respectable women were passionless women, having sex for the sake of procreation or marital harmony but certainly not from desire. In fact, she asserts,

> Motherhood and desire came to be seen as incompatible. Women . . . were politically and rhetorically reduced to, and defined by, their bodies as reproductive, not desiring. The effect was to render women passive vessels who satisfied men's desire and bore children because it was their destiny.[28]

The third key shift that Steinbach notes was a 'narrowing of the scope of normal sexual behaviour so that any activities outside of penetrative heterosexuality were seen as unnatural.' This resulted in a lowering of the average age at marriage, increasing rates of premarital pregnancy and soaring 'bastardy rates', a situation which left many women vulnerable and unsupported.[29]

Hence it is evident, as Scott has argued, that the 'idealized norms' of separate spheres ideology excluded a plethora of women who did not conform to societal expectation, whether through choice, circumstance or economic necessity. It also excluded men 'who, for various reasons (race, dependency, lack of property), were deemed not to fit the category of the rational, abstract individual.'[30] It was, however, particularly precarious for women who were not seen to conform to the ideals of Victorian family life. This led to a flowering of philanthropy as middle-class women sought to better the lives of their working-class sisters. One such example was the

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[26] Susie Steinbach, *Women in England 1760-1914: A Social History* (London: Phoenix, 2005), 113.
[27] Steinbach, *Women in England*, 113.
[28] Steinbach, *Women in England*, 114.
[29] Steinbach, *Women in England*, 115.
[30] Scott, *Sex and Secularism*, 32.

Mothers' Union, founded by Mary Sumner in England in 1876 as a result of her 'strong desire to help women in the raising of their children and the use of prayer and Bible in their home life.'[31] Sue Anderson-Faithful has observed that in Sumner's understanding, 'women's desirable attributes accrued around domestic roles and religious sensibility.'[32]

Victorian Feminism

Some women, however, began to chafe at their contracted sphere. They saw the disparity between the legal and political rights of men and women not as ordained by Nature, but as emblematic of the domestic, sexual and social oppression of women. Nancy Cott has identified three 'core beliefs' at the heart of Victorian feminism which emerged: a staunch opposition to a hierarchical view of the sexes; a conviction that women's inferiority was socially constructed rather than divinely ordained; and an understanding that the female was both a biological sex and a social category.[33] Victorian ideals of gender roles and separate spheres were thus necessarily challenged by feminists, who began to encroach on the traditionally male domain of politics. As feminist historian Barbara Caine has argued,

> The apparent demographic imbalance between men and women, the disinclination of either sex to marry, the problems faced by single women needing to support themselves, the inequities of marriage laws, the moral consequences of patriarchal marriages and families, the sexual double standard were all subjects of extensive discussion before a women's movement emerged and hence became a part of the framework in which Victorian feminism developed.[34]

Influenced by the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill, women such as Millicent Fawcett 'saw all the arguments put forward to support the extensions of manhood suffrage in

[31] Avis Matheson, *A History of the Mothers' Union in Australia* (Toowoomba, Qld: Mothers' Union in Australia, Australia Council, 1992), 9.
[32] Sue Anderson-Faithful, 'Aspects of Agency: Change and Constraint in the Activism of Mary Sumner, Founder of the Anglican Mothers' Union', *Women's History Review* 28, no. 6 (19 September 2019), 838.
[33] Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 3. Cf. Barbara Caine, *Victorian Feminists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 6.
[34] Caine, Victorian Feminists, 15.

1867 and 1884 as applying equally to women.'[35] Nonetheless, even while envisioning a role for women in the political sphere, the discussion of the problems faced by women centred on their experience as wives, as marriage continued to be viewed as normative for women.[36]

Public and private spheres in Australia

In the late Victorian era, the colonies of Australia were dependent on Britain for their intellectual and religious heritage. This was despite the very different demographic situation of Australia, where there was a disproportionately small number of women compared to men within the European population.[37] Thus the same understanding of the public sphere of men and the private sphere of women tended to dominate debates about women's roles. Predominantly, men were seen to inhabit a public world of rational debate and political engagement, while women inhabited a domestic sphere that could extend outside the home through charitable work and philanthropy.

In speaking of the role played by women in the churches in Australia, historians who write from a Protestant framework (such as J.D. Bollen, Roger Thompson and Stuart Piggin) have tended to praise the evangelical faith for the dignity and benefits it conferred on women by promoting their participation in religious life and work. Religious historian J.D. Bollen aimed at lauding the contribution of Protestant churches in Australia to the work of social reform. Bollen argues that because they understood 'women to be "one with men" in Christ, churchmen were forceful advocates of political equality.'[38] Nonetheless, women are rarely mentioned throughout Bollen's book; only three women are specifically named and each one only once. Mrs C.E. Clark and Mrs

[35] Caine, Victorian Feminists, 33.
[36] Caine, Victorian Feminists, 35.
[37] Peter McDonald, Lado Ruzicka, and Patricia Pyne, 'Marriage, Fertility and Mortality', in *Australians: Historical Statistics*, ed. Wray Vamplew (Sydney: Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, 1987), 42.
[38] J.D. Bollen, *Protestantism and Social Reform in New South Wales 1890-1910* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1972), 107.

J.H. Wise are named for their involvement with the New South Wales Alliance in attempting to elect (male) parliamentarians with a temperance platform.[39] Rose Scott (who never married) is named as the secretary of the Womanhood Suffrage Committee, which, Bollen asserts, was valued by Protestant Churches in order to secure 'the female vote for the sake of moral reform'.[40] The vital work of Scott, who has been hailed as 'One of the most important figures of her time' for her tireless efforts towards social reform,[41] is nowhere acknowledged. Similarly, Bollen acknowledges the 'philanthropic projects' of William Booth, without acknowledging his wife and the co-founder of The Salvation Army, Catherine Mumford Booth.[42] The emphasis on social reform which came to characterise The Salvation Army was a personal priority of Catherine's. While William's life mission was evangelism, he came to see social ministry as a necessary adjunct, largely due to the influence of his wife. From a young age Catherine was filled with compassion for the 'wretched' of the earth and fired with a sense of social justice.[43] Similarly, the egalitarian policies of The Salvation Army and their determination to ordain women as equal to men can be directly attributed to Catherine Booth, 'taking her husband with her, in spite of his earlier reluctance to extend this privilege to women.'[44]

In the closing pages of their first volume on the diverse benefits brought to Australia by evangelical Christians, notable evangelical historians Stuart Piggin and Robert Linder summarise the positive contributions their particular brand of Christianity conferred on women. Piggin and Linder claim that 'evangelicals made a decided, if ambivalent, contribution to the liberation and

[39] Bollen, *Protestantism and Social Reform*, 142, 149.
[40] Bollen, *Protestantism and Social Reform*, 107.
[41] National Foundation for Australian Women and The University of Melbourne, 'Scott, Rose - Woman - The Australian Women's Register', Document (National Foundation for Australian Women), accessed 7 May 2020, https://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE0776b.htm.
[42] Bollen, *Protestantism and Social Reform*, 39.
[43] Frederick St George de Lautour Booth Tucker, *The Life of Catherine Booth, the Mother of the Salvation Army*, vol. 1 (London: The Salvation Army International Headquarters, 1912), 18.
[44] Norman H. Murdoch, *Origins of the Salvation Army* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 3–4.

uplift of women', mainly through nurturing 'stable families'.[45] This was enabled by 'promoting the cult of domesticity which idealised marriage and family life', even while evangelicalism gave increased opportunities for women to be engaged outside the home, challenging misogyny and supporting women's rights.[46] In discussing feminism and social reform, Piggin argues that support was 'instinctively' given to separate spheres ideology by Christian feminists who 'were able to make the female sphere more potent in social change.'[47] Although Piggin acknowledges that not all evangelicals embraced separate spheres ideology, his language and phrasing reinforce the concept that there was a specifically female sphere, and a male sphere upon which women might trespass. This is made explicit when he states that there were some who 'practised the invasion of the male sphere by females, not so much to take it over as to achieve the feminisation and therefore improvement of public space.'[48] By this he appears to mean the actions of women engaged in social reform through organisations such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the Anglican Mothers' Union. While Piggin and Linder are determined to acknowledge the contribution of Christian women, their praise is infused with gendered language suggestive that the role women had to play was predominantly domestic and nurturing, and overlaid with a sense that incursions into public space were forays into the realm of men. They note, for example, that Christian feminists 'shared in male roles if evangelism and progress required it' and that they were 'drawn into' social activism 'in the interests of improving the lot of the local community and the spiritual vitality of home and family'.[49] While they name women preachers (including unmarried women such as Jessie Ackerman) and celebrate the work of missionary women, the language of Piggin and Linder suggests that women held authority only due to 'the absence of men' who would have exercised power 'had they been present'.[50]

[45] Stuart Piggin and Robert D. Linder, *The Fountain of Public Prosperity: Evangelical Christians in Australian History 1740-1914* (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2018), 580–81.
[46] Piggin and Linder, *Fountain of Public Prosperity*, 581.
[47] Piggin and Linder, *Fountain of Public Prosperity*, 360.
[48] Piggin and Linder, *Fountain of Public Prosperity*, 360.
[49] Piggin and Linder, *Fountain of Public Prosperity*, 360–61.
[50] Piggin and Linder, *Fountain of Public Prosperity*, 360.

In his earlier volume, *Evangelical Christianity in Australia: Spirit, Word and World*, Piggin had stressed the vital contribution of evangelical women to missionary societies in the period 1870-1913, noting that women often outnumbered men by two to one.[51] Piggin states that from 1892-1931, '70 per cent of the 247 missionaries that went out with the CMS were women, and 66 per cent of those were single.'[52] On the strength of these statistics, he makes the claim that 'foreign missions may be thought of as the first feminist movement.'[53] He does not extrapolate on what he means by such a claim. Unlike Bollen, Piggin does name and celebrate particular women. He tells the stories of unmarried missionaries Retta Jane Long (1878-1956) and Florence Selina Harriet Young (1856-1940) with unabashed admiration for their faith and courage.[54]

This celebration of female missionaries makes the contrast with what follows even more stark, as Piggin explains how evangelical Christians in the same period (1870-1913) engaged in vigorous debates in an effort to defend the Bible against 'Ritualism, Darwinism and Liberalism'.[55] Throughout this section, not one woman is named or even mentioned. The same pattern is evident in other religious histories of Australia. In Michael Hogan's thorough discussions of the public religious debates of the 1890s, he quotes male clergy and laity extensively; but he does not quote women.[56] Similarly Roger Thompson, in his discussion of the political allegiances of Christians, gives examples of laity and clergy across denominational lines, but does not cite women.[57] He does, however, include a discussion of women's suffrage, noting that male Protestants tended to be supportive of the cause. This is clarified by the explanation that support of woman's suffrage was an attempt to secure women voters who, it was believed, would

[51] Stuart Piggin, *Evangelical Christianity in Australia: Spirit, Word and World* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996), 66.
[52] Piggin, *Evangelical Christianity in Australia*, 72–73. CMS is the Church Missionary Society (Anglican).
[53] Piggin, *Evangelical Christianity in Australia*, 66.
[54] Piggin, *Evangelical Christianity in Australia*, 67, 69–70.
[55] Piggin, *Evangelical Christianity in Australia*, 74–78.
[56] Michael Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand: Religion in Australian History* (Ringwood, Vic: Penguin Books, 1987), 131–169.
[57] Roger C. Thompson, *Religion in Australia: A History*, 2nd ed (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2002), 35–39.

support campaigns for moral reform.[58] After exploring the connections between the WCTU and suffrage campaigns, Thompson observes that one benefit of the temperance movement was that it 'gave women experience in public-speaking, organisation of meetings, lobbying politicians and publishing literature.'[59] Yet there were myriad women already engaged in preaching, social activism, writing of pamphlets and political campaigning – not only in the late nineteenth century but for centuries (even millenia) prior.[60]

The failure to acknowledge the crucial contribution of women in the religious debates in late nineteenth-century Australia should not be attributed to chauvinism on the part of these historians. Piggin shares the stories of female evangelists, preachers, and missionaries at every opportunity, seeking to champion women. Janet Lancaster is hailed as the founder of Australian Pentecostalism (despite being described as having irrational and absurd beliefs). Women are lauded for their missions to Aboriginal settlements and Piggin devotes a chapter to the debate about women's ordination in the 1930s, mentioning women on both sides of the debate. Similarly, while Thompson is limited in the number of women referred to by name (his index names six women and one hundred men), he shows sympathy for the experience of women in the church, is critical of the 'dominant male culture', and expresses his personal disappointment over the treatment of women, highlighting the situation of a single woman minister who was 'deliberately replaced' with a married man.[61]

Nevertheless, women disappear from the page when the subject turns to more rational or intellectual debates. In Thompson's chapter on 'Social Justice and Moral Order, 1890-1914', only

[58] Thompson, *Religion in Australia*, 40.
[59] Thompson, *Religion in Australia*, 41.
[60] Cf. Vickery, who argues that the growth of 'female committee work' in the nineteenth century was not an innovation but an expansion of an already common practice. Amanda Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *The Historical Journal* 36, no. 2 (1993): 400.
[61] Thompson, *Religion in Australia*, 132.

one woman is named; Alice Henry is identified as having been attracted to the preaching of Charles Strong. In recounting debates about moral reform, birth-control, Social Darwinism and indigenous peoples, Thompson mentions women's groups such as the Anglican Deaconesses and the WCTU without ever quoting a woman. The only individuals specifically quoted or mentioned as having a voice are men. However unintentional, this gives the impression that women were not actively involved in these debates.

No woman is named in Piggin's sections on liberalism or sectarianism (except to be named as wife of so and so), but in the section on revivalism he relates Mrs Barker's longing for revival and mentions Emilia Baeyertz and Margaret Hampson in a list of visiting evangelists. Piggin traces the debates about ritualism, Darwinism and liberalism in some detail, quoting clergy and laymen on both sides. No women are cited; they reappear when the Anglican Mothers' Union (MU) is credited with elevating evangelical standards around divorce.[62] This does not appear to be in anyway intentional on Piggin's part and is possibly a result of the available sources. In total, the index of his 1996 book names seventy-two women (far higher than comparable religious histories of Australia) compared to four hundred and seventy-four men.

This pattern is repeated time and time again in the works of Australian religious historians. In 1987 Michael Hogan described the second half of the nineteenth century as a period when the foundations of 'conventional religion' were under attack due to challenges from Darwinism and higher criticism. He labels this a 'dilemma between fundamentalism and enlightenment.'[63] Hogan suggests that the sectarian squabbles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century need more recognition in Australian history because they were a formative influence in social and

[62] Piggin, *Evangelical Christianity in Australia*, 81. The Mothers' Union initially allowed divorced women to join if they were the 'innocent party', but in 1920 all divorced women were excluded regardless, a ruling that remained until 1974.
[63] Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand*, 156.

political institutions. Women, however, are absent from the discussion, which thereby comes across as a debate between male clergy and laity – Protestant versus Catholic. More recently Hugh Jackson's *Australians and the Christian God: An Historical Study* (2013) and Wayne Hudson's *Australian Religious Thought* (2016) show the same tendency for analysis of intellectual religious debates about marriage reform, public education or the relationship between Science and the Bible to be presented as debates between male clergy and laity.

Overall, this creates an impression of women contributing to the spiritual rather than the intellectual life of the colony, playing into the notion of separate spheres. Women are active in charitable and philanthropic work; they are brave nurses, missionaries and even preachers. They are compassionate, nurturing and maternal. But women are absent from rational, intellectual discourse on what is best for the colony.

This absence should not be understood as an oversight by male historians. The same phenomenon is evident in Meredith Lake's excellent work *The Bible in Australia: A Cultural History* (2018). In the fifth chapter, Lake uses Bessie Harrison Lee as an example of someone engaged in social action because of her faith and Bible reading, which 'nourished a posture of transformative engagement towards the society around her.'[64] Lake argues that, 'For Lee, among many others, the Bible anchored a vision for wider society.'[65] Elizabeth Hassall is mentioned as travelling with her husband to the opening of the Orphan House, and two women notable as 'the two first ladies in rank in the colony' are mentioned as being on the management committee of the Orphan House – Governor King's wife Anna and Lieutenant Governor Patterson's wife Elizabeth.[66] Lake notes that the key concerns of Christian social activism in the early nineteenth

[64] Meredith Lake, *The Bible in Australia: A Cultural History*, First edition (Sydney NSW: NewSouth Publishing, 2018), 137.
[65] Lake, *The Bible in Australia*, 138.
[66] Lake, *The Bible in Australia*, 140–1.

century were 'female sexuality, the moral instruction of Children, and transforming the poor into useful workers.'[67] Interestingly, Lake states that 'Clergy and Christian businessmen were outdone only by churchgoing women in the practical work of colonial charity.'[68] The women she specifically mentions were all married, leaving the impression that social activism was a respectable pursuit for wives. Like Bollen, Thompson, and Piggin before her, no women are mentioned in Lake's discussion of the press or debates about public education.[69]

In chapter six, where Lake outlines changing views of biblical interpretation, she refers to novelist Henry Handel Richardson, *nom de plume* of Ethel Florence Richardson, who wrote in the early twentieth century. While Richardson's novel *The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney* engages with the debate about the role and authority of the Bible, particularly in the face of advances in scientific knowledge, it is only the male title character who explores these questions, while his wife frets that it is not right to question such things. In the discussion that follows, Lake traces the extent of the debate about the moral authority of the Bible throughout Australia, noting that it is evident in popular entertainment and newspaper discussions, and was engaging for both clergy and lay people. Yet no women are mentioned, except for Mrs Bessie Harrison Lee, who was 'apparently untouched by the religious issues that others found so captivating.'[70] Once again, biblical criticism appeared to be men's work, while philanthropy and social reform was appropriate for married women. In spite of this, Lake informs us that in the late nineteenth century women and girls made up two thirds of the subscribers to Scripture Union Bible reading notes and 'were becoming the popular custodians of the devotional Bible.'[71] This serves to reinforce the idea that men's engagement with the Bible was intellectual and rational, while women's was emotional and social. This is underscored by Justice Higinbotham's observation

[67] Lake, *The Bible in Australia*, 141.
[68] Lake, *The Bible in Australia*, 144.
[69] Lake, *The Bible in Australia*, 147–159.
[70] Lake, *The Bible in Australia*, 181.
[71] Lake, *The Bible in Australia*, 189.

that 'adult laymen . . . think that the teaching of Christ's ministers . . . may possibly be of use to women and children, but it has nothing to do with them.'[72]

My point is not to suggest that Lake (or Piggin or Thompson) would agree with Higinbotham's assessment, but to point out that to date there has been a dearth of research on Australian women's rational, rigorous engagement with biblical criticism and the relationship between science and faith, and no research (that I have as yet found) on unmarried women engaging with these ideas.

Writing the History of Twentieth Century Australian Christianity

The pattern of women being underrepresented in Australian religious histories (especially in matters of doctrine or public policy) does not change as key issues and conflicts of the twentieth century are addressed. In his chapter on 'Christian Conservatism', Thompson names one woman for every ten men named.[73] For example, Janet Strong is named as the wife of Charles Strong.[74] Another woman, Bridget Partridge, is described as having fled the convent at which she was a nun, and subsequently having her sanity debated by various men, mostly clergy.[75] Thompson is alert to the contributions to Australian society made by the Australian Student Christian Movement (ASCM) and the Young Woman's Christian Association (YWCA). Accordingly, he quotes Dr Georgina Sweet, National President of YWCA, speaking at a rally organised by the Australian Council of Women.[76] Yet when he discusses the contribution of ASCM members to a critical national conversation about capitalism and social justice in the 1930s, Thompson names only men. He does not make mention of the women involved with ASCM and YWCA who were

[72] From Higinbotham's 1883 lecture, 'Science and Religion', cited in Lake, *The Bible in Australia*, 185.
[73] Thompson, *Religion in Australia*, 57–90.
[74] Thompson, *Religion in Australia*, 58.
[75] Thompson, *Religion in Australia*, 66.
[76] Thompson, *Religion in Australia*, 71.

at the forefront of these discussions.[77] A similar pattern is seen in the chapter covering attempts to preserve a Christian Australia from 1939-60. Seventy-four men are named, and only two women (Senator Enid Lyons and Edith Mountain, headmistress of Melbourne Church of England Grammar School).[78] In their chapter on 'Theological Warfare Between the Wars', Piggin and Linder focus on the ways in which evangelical men 'defend[ed] the faith' against liberalism, modernism and rationalism.[79] Seven women are mentioned in this chapter (that is otherwise dominated by the opinions of, and debates between, men); it is worth noting the manner in which they are cited. Katherine Angus is named as the 'wealthy American-born, chronically-ill spouse' of Dr Samuel Angus.[80] Florence Young, founder of the South Sea Evangelical Mission, is recorded as having attended a meeting at which she did not speak.[81] The other five women are named in association with the doctrine of 'sinless perfection', which the authors appear to view as heretical, and four of the five are described as being involved with a 'commune' that held this belief. One woman, Del Agnew, is described as 'high priestess' of the 'cult'.[82] There is no indication that women contributed intelligently or constructively to theological and political debates.

Significantly, there is a break in the pattern when one examines the work of feminist religious historian Hilary Carey. Carey's *Believing in Australia* does name more men than women, with a ratio of one woman to every three men named. Yet Carey stands alone in including a chapter on 'Women and the feminisation of religious culture, 1900-1945'. Unlike works by male historians, Carey's chapter centres the voices of women in telling their own story. It is Carey's goal to

[77] Thompson, *Religion in Australia*, 74. The exception is the quotation of Dr Sweet, as described above. The involvement of women (particularly Constance Duncan) in this discussion will be considered in detail in chapters 5 and 6.
[78] Thompson, *Religion in Australia*, 91–115.
[79] The phrase, 'defend the faith' occurs four times in this chapter. Stuart Piggin and Robert D. Linder, *Attending to the National Soul: Evangelical Christians in Australian History, 1914-2014* (Melbourne, Vic.: Monash University Publishing, 2020), 121, 132, 135, 150.
[80] Piggin and Linder, *Attending to the National Soul*, 122.
[81] Piggin and Linder, *Attending to the National Soul*, 146.
[82] Piggin and Linder, *Attending to the National Soul*, 147–50.

explore the 'long series of liberating movements' that brought Australian women 'from the private to the public sphere'.[83] As such, she includes women involved in political agitation, such as Frances Willard (1839-1898), founder of the WCTU, and Felicia Hopkins (1841-1933), who campaigned for better treatment of migrants and founded the Rockhampton YWCA.[84] Carey also specifically cites unmarried Catholic women with professional careers who were politically engaged through the Catholic Women's Social Guild. These include Dr Mary Glowrey (1887-1957), Anna Brennan (1879-1962; only the second woman admitted to the bar in Victoria) and educationalist Julia Flynn (1878-1947).[85] A subsection of the chapter details the contribution of clergy wives. Where other religious histories name them only as wives to clergy and mothers of their children, Carey acknowledges these women as co-workers and 'foot soldiers' engaged in real, strenuous work in which their husbands and churches relied on them.[86] It is crucial that Carey does not merely nod to the influence of women's organisations, but names key women and explicates their specific actions in working for social justice in Australia. It is of the utmost significance that the only 'big picture' historian to centre women in their own narrative this way, is herself a woman.

[83] Hilary M. Carey, *Believing in Australia: A Cultural History of Religions* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1997), 139.
[84] Carey, *Believing in Australia*, 121–22.
[85] Carey, *Believing in Australia*, 122.
[86] Carey, *Believing in Australia*, 131–35.

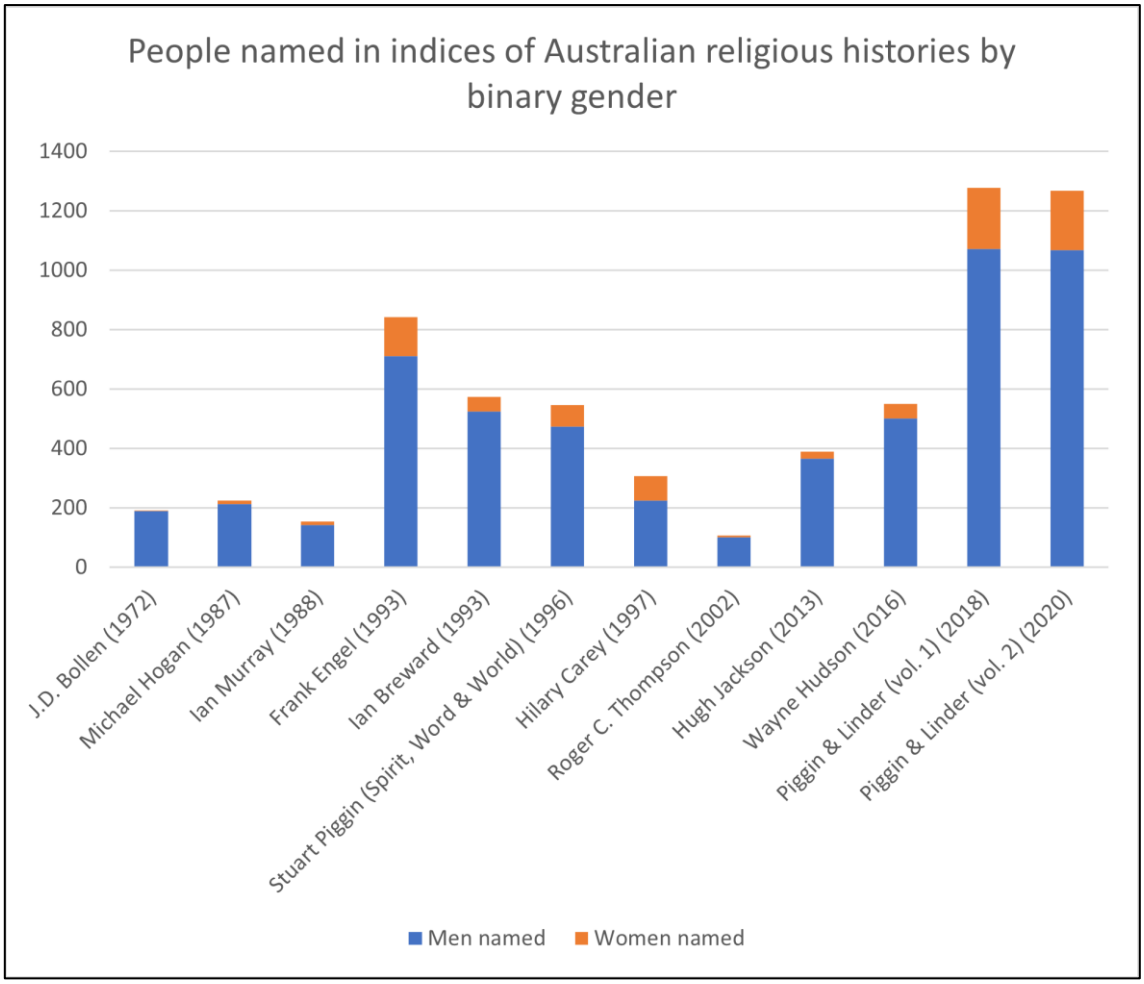

Figure 1: Stacked column graph of people named in indices of individual Australian religious histories by binary gender.

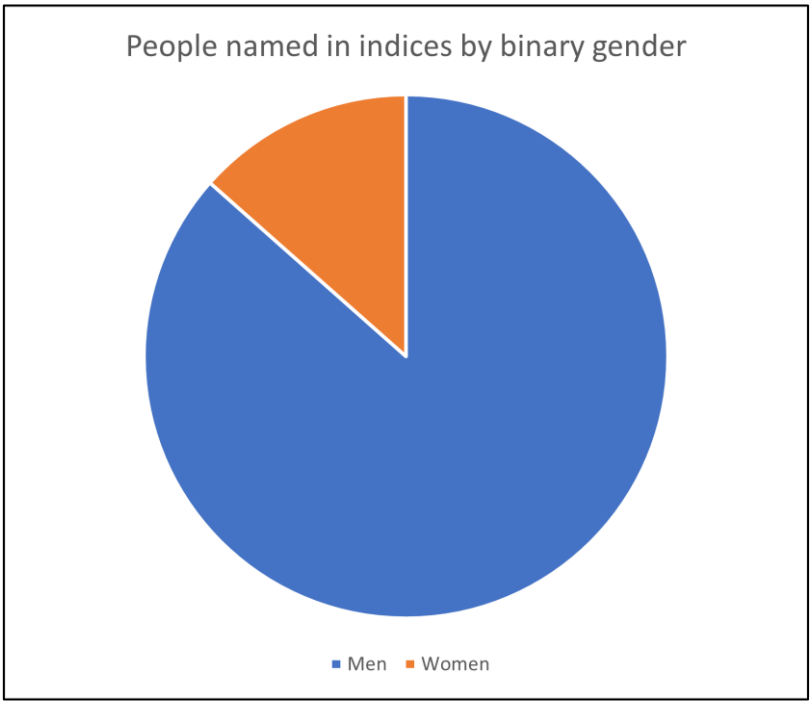

Figure 2: Pie graph of people named in indices of combined Australian religious histories by binary gender.

Responding to the marginalisation of Protestant women in Australia

The marginalisation of women in Protestant churches has not escaped the notice of feminist historians. Anne O'Brien has argued that 'The views of churchmen are well represented in the historical record. The views of women are more difficult, though not impossible, to trace.'[87] In the period 1890-1914, O'Brien notes the rising fears that a 'feminised church' would discourage male involvement.[88] When women did engage in work that Churchmen 'would rather men did', clergy had to make the 'ideological adjustments necessary to accept women.'[89] Consequently, the 'work that women did for the church can be seen as a natural extension of their traditional role in the home as nurturer and spiritual guardian.'[90]

Thus, Kingston laments the situation of 'women who had failed to marry and whose families had no use for them', whose only refuge was the convent.[91] Nonetheless, she contended that unmarried Catholic women fared better than their Protestant sisters.

> [W]hereas the Catholic Church has provided and maintained a place, even a highly honoured place, for the celibate, the notion of the 'old maid' has thrived in the ruthless environment of Protestantism. As they had no room for all other forms of weak, inefficient or erring humanity by the end of the nineteenth century, the Protestant churches offered no spiritual or physical solace to the poor spinster. (Wealthy ones, who might be deemed successful under the rules of capitalism, were recognised so long as they donated fonts or communion tables.)[92]

The marginalisation of unmarried women by Protestant Christianity is all the more remarkable given their contribution to philanthropy and social reform, motivated by faith. Kingston's critique would seem to be overly harsh when one considers the admiration accorded to unmarried women missionaries, or those who took up nursing in the Nightingale tradition. Yet

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[87] Anne Philomena O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers: Women and Religion in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005), 34.
[88] O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers*, 35. Cf. Piggin and Linder, *Fountain of Public Prosperity*, 360.
[89] O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers*, 39.
[90] O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers*, 39.
[91] Beverley Kingston, 'Faith and Fetes: Women and History of the Churches in Australia', in *Women, Faith & Fetes: Essays in the History of Women and the Church in Australia*, ed. Sabine Willis (Melbourne: Dove Communications in association with the Australian Council of Churches (New South Wales), Commission on Status of Women, 1977), 24.
[92] Kingston, 'Faith and Fetes', 25.

when one begins to look for unmarried Protestant women working outside of these church sanctioned roles, one struggles to find sustained investigations by religious historians. In contrast, Shurlee Swain suggests that feminist historiography has 'tended to focus on women prominent in the areas of suffrage and social reform, most of whom, unable to reconcile their developing feminism with the teachings of traditional Evangelical Christianity, severed their connection with mainstream denominations.'[93] Such a narrow lens, Swain contends, does not take into account the many women who 'remained within their churches, contained and controlled, yet still, in their own ways, contesting the boundaries of their sphere.'[94] In the study that follows, Swain examines 'the renegotiation of women's place' specifically as it relates to debates over women's right to preach. But what of women such as Frances Levvy or Constance Duncan, who never fought for the right to preach, yet combined social activism and faith as unmarried women, connected to church communities yet engaged primarily in work outside the congregation or parish? These women laboured for social reform, motivated by faith, at times seeming to chafe against the confines of their sphere and at other times reinforcing the boundaries.

This blind spot in Australian church history is exacerbated by the absence of 'integrated scholarly' work on women, religion and domestic life.[95] Sarah Williams asserts that 'gender, spirituality and the home form a powerful thematic triumvirate', yet laments that 'the study of modern religion, the study of gender, and the study of the family remain discrete and at times dichotomised areas of enquiry'.[96]

[93] Shurlee Swain, 'In These Days of Female Evangelists and Hallelujah Lasses: Women Preachers and the Redefinition of Gender Roles in the Churches in Late Nineteenth-Century Australia', *Journal of Religious History* 26, no. 1 (2002): 65–66.
[94] Swain, 'In These Days', 66.
[95] Williams, 'Is there a Bible in the house?', 11.
[96] Williams, 'Is there a Bible in the house?', 11.

In the introduction to the third edition of *Family Fortunes*, Hall acknowledges that the notion of 'separate spheres' or public versus private spaces does not immutably fix their meanings in time or space but shows the 'mobility of such divisions'.[97] Vickery, in her critique of *Family Fortunes* in 1993, laboured to demonstrate that the concept of separate spheres was not a novel invention arising in 1780-1850, but a dynamic evident across times and cultures.[98] Vickery cites Marlene Legates to contend that 'chastity and obedience were ancient pre-requisites of the ideal woman' and that representations of woman had long vacillated between Eve (as temptress of man) and Madonna (as his redeemer).[99] The 'domestic ideology' of the nineteenth century, then, was 'far from revolutionary' and the 'explanatory power' attributed to the separation of public and private is overstated.[100]

Vickery argues that merely citing pamphlets and sermons from the time period should not automatically be taken as descriptive of the contemporary situation of separate spheres. Rather, one should allow that this may have been a reaction against the increasing encroachment of women into public life, and an attempt to put them back in their place. 'In short, the broadcasting of the language of separate spheres looks like a conservative response to an unprecedented expansion in the opportunities, ambitions and experiences of late Georgian and Victorian women.'[101]

In a similar vein, Anne O'Brien asserts that in an Australian context 'there has been no sustained analysis of how women might have interpreted what churchmen told them about the conduct of their lives, of how their religious beliefs shaped their experiences of home and family.'[102] There

[97] Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780–1850*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2019), xvi.
[98] Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres?', 407–8.
[99] Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres?', 408; cf. O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers*, 38–39.
[100] Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres?', 408.
[101] Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres?', 400.
[102] O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers*, 34.

has been even less deliberate investigation into how unmarried Protestant women personally engaged in the religious debates of the late nineteenth and twentieth century, how they enacted their faith through social activism outside of the institutional church, and the ways in which they were constrained by gender expectations even as their reforming zeal took them further and further from their domestic sphere. This thesis seeks to investigate gendered assumptions embedded in Protestant and Evangelical histories of Australia, demonstrating the vital contributions of unmarried Christian women in Australia and their crucial role in the social and religious changes that took place from the late nineteenth to mid twentieth century.

The critical role of biographical case studies

This thesis seeks to examine the complex interplay of gender, religion and agency using biographical case studies to understand and analyse the activism of unmarried, protestant women working for social justice outside the institutional church.

In the mid twentieth century, feminist historian Mary Beard confronted tightly held beliefs about women's role in society. She was concerned by the persistent tendency to view only male lives as having national significance. Beard cited Margaret Mead's research to demonstrate that 'sex manifestations of behaviour are reflections of culture patterns.'[103] With some irony, Beard recounted General Douglas Macarthur's post World War Two push to give Japanese women the vote so that they would instil 'the wisdom of the home' and restore a moral 'plumb line' in the political arena.[104] She went on to cite specific instances of the revolutionary consequences of women's political involvement, particularly in promoting the imperial ambitions of the USSR. Both women and men, Beard contended, are 'bent on shaping societies in the images of their

[103] Mary R. Beard, 'Woman's Role in Society', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 251 (1947): 1.
[104] Beard, 'Woman's Role in Society', 4.

emotional and mental characters.' Far from being constrained to a domestic or secondary role, women have been 'a dynamic element, both necessary and potent, in every society throughout human time.'[105] Yet this can only be more fully understood as the stories of *particular* women are brought to light. Biographical case studies of individual women are crucial, as they enable us to glimpse the profound and diverse social, political and religious contributions by which women have shaped societies.

In Amanda Vickery's critique of the ideology of separate spheres, she concludes by arguing that to accurately represent the breadth of women's experience, historians must pay close attention to the evidence produced by women's own manuscripts.[106] Vickery argues the need for case studies to explore 'the economic roles, social lives, institutional opportunities and personal preoccupations' of women as the only way to 'establish with any precision the extent to which women accepted, negotiated, contested or simply ignored, the much quoted precepts of proper female behaviour in past time.'[107] Similarly, Barbara Caine has argued that biographies of women who were *not* leading major campaigns – those who were not 'women worthies' perhaps – are needed to understand the situation of women in greater breadth. Understanding how 'particular women took up particular campaigns' will allow us to understand their unique motivations within the context of 'a wider set of ideas and objectives'.[108] She contends that detailed analysis of individual lives brings awareness of the complexity and diversity of feminist approaches within a given time period. It also allows us to understand a woman as operating within a network of relationships and obligations. She concludes that this approach will be more beneficial than constructing 'heroic accounts of great and unusual women'.[109]

[105] Beard, 'Woman's Role in Society', 9.
[106] Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres?', 413.
[107] Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres?', 414.
[108] Barbara Caine, 'Feminist Biography and Feminist History', *Women's History Review* 3, no. 2 (1994): 258.
[109] Caine, 'Feminist Biography and Feminist History', 259.

The need for case studies of women who have until now been largely overlooked in the historical record is echoed by Miriam Dixson,[110] Susie Steinbach[111] and Anne O'Brien.[112] O'Brien cautions, however, that when studying women motivated by their faith feminist historians must pay close attention to their Christian backgrounds and understand their ideas in the context of their religious devotion.[113] This is underscored by Sarah Williams, who asserts that it is 'the centralisation of belief in its diverse and multiple forms that will best help integrate the thematic triumvirate of gender, religion and the family.'[114] These multiple forms include 'narrated belief', 'enacted belief' (that is, religious behaviour) and 'embodied belief' (devotional practice or popular practice in the home).

Religious historian Sue Anderson-Faithful has demonstrated the efficacy of utilising a case study approach while attending closely to the religious motivation of her subjects through her study of Mary Sumner, founder of the Anglican Mothers' Union.[115] Anderson-Faithful combines close examination of the life and activism of Sumner, with an analytic framework that allows her to demonstrate that Sumner was at once both constrained by her religious ideology, and an empowered agent of change. In examining the lives of unmarried Protestant women engaged in social activism in Australia, the same complex interplay of social and religious expectation and personal reformist praxis will likely be evident. More recently, Marian Lorrison's doctoral thesis utilised a case study approach to explore how major legislative and political changes related to divorce in Australian society impacted the intimate, personal lives of individual women. This allowed her to examine 'how gender shaped [her] subjects lives', while simultaneously

[110] Miriam Dixson, *The Real Matilda: Woman and Identity in Australia – 1788 to the Present*, 4th edition (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1999), 78–81.
[111] Steinbach, *Women in England*, 4.
[112] O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers*, 77.
[113] O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers*, 79.
[114] Williams, 'Is There a Bible in the House?', 28.
[115] Anderson-Faithful, 'Aspects of Agency', 835–852.

highlighting 'the role of agency and resistance in their circumstances'.[116] In a similar approach, I will seek to examine how broad concepts of gender roles and the ideology of sperate spheres were enacted in the particular lives of individual women working towards a more kind and just Australia, motivated by their Christian faith. This will allow me to bridge the gap between religious histories of Australia that seek to understand how faith was applied to issues of morality and social justice, and the complete absence of women's voices in these debates. This will be achieved by using the public writing and speeches of unmarried Protestant women whose voices have thus far not been heard because they were not speaking and writing with clerical, judicial or parliamentary authority within male dominated fields.

It is now seventy-five years since Beard made her argument, yet gaps in our knowledge due to the elevation of certain stories (those which are white, male, cisgender) at the expense of others (women, people of colour, queer people) persist. In her forthcoming review of Volume 19 of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, feminist public historian Tanya Evans argues that historically the genre of biography has 'venerated the public lives of white, straight men deemed to have made significant contributions to the success of their nation.'[117] In the late twentieth century, however, the emergence of new paradigms for interpreting history saw a broadening of the stories that were told by historians. This led to increased knowledge 'about the lives of women, black, mixed-race, poor, and queer individuals previously neglected by the historical record.'[118] Nonetheless, Evans's research in collaboration with family historians has revealed that 'national history' is overwhelmingly perceived as 'male and political', and as less engaging than 'social history – with its focus on women, the ordinary, the poor, and the everyday'.[119] Yet there is a

[116] Marian J. Lorrison, '"The More Things Change": Gender Relations and Married Life Across a Time of Transformation' (Doctor of Philosophy, Sydney, Australia, Macquarie University, 2020), 32.
[117] Tanya Evans, '"Biography and Life-Writing Can Re-Make the Nation": Review of Australian Dictionary of Biography Volume 19:1991-1996 A-Z', *AHS*, n.d., 3.
[118] Evans cites, as examples, 'new cultural, social, and post-colonial history, and the [partial] democratization of history'. Evans, 'Biography and Life-Writing', 3–4.
[119] Evans, 'Biography and Life-Writing', 5.

hunger to know more about the lives of those who have previously been neglected through the privileging of heteronormativity and the imposition of a maternalist paradigm in which women are expected to marry and bear children. In this article, Evans writes primarily through the lens of her research with family historians, advocating for the proliferation of biographies and life-writing as a means 'to challenge past inequalities, social exclusion and to argue for change in our contemporary worlds.'[120] Throughout the New Testament the metaphor most frequently employed in regard to the church is that of a 'family of believers' or 'household of faith'.[121] In the family tree of the Christian faith, certain members have historically, persistently been elevated over others. As I have shown above, the lives and leadership of men (especially white, cisgender men) have been cited and discussed, while the lives of women – and particularly unmarried and childless women – have been ignored. Of particular importance to this thesis is Evans's claim that 'When women's lives are marginalized in these ways people more easily ignore them and *devalue women in the present*.'[122] My concern is that the ongoing erasure of women from our religious histories facilitates and enables the devaluing of women in contemporary churches.

This thesis seeks to address the gap in scholarship that perpetuates the erasure of women from Australian religious histories, and to understand more fully the reasons behind their exclusion. I will consider the extent to which women were constrained by internalised patriarchal or devotional paradigms, even as their public actions may have challenged these same understandings. In this way we may be able to understand whether the absence of unmarried women in religious histories to date is the result of their own lack of engagement in public debate, a deliberate silencing or glossing over by their contemporaries, or evidence of the continued functional priority of separate spheres ideology in Protestant Christianity in Australia even after it had faded from secular society.

[120] Evans, 'Biography and Life-Writing', 23.
[121] See, for example, John 1:12; Ephesians 2:19-22, 3:14-15; Galatians 6:10.
[122] Evans, 'Biography and Life-Writing', 5. Emphasis added.

How might we begin to address the gap in scholarship by which the voices of unmarried Protestant women have been silent in Australia's formative religious debates and their lives largely ignored through an elevation of marriage and motherhood as ideal expressions of feminine piety? Through detailed case studies of unmarried Christian women; case studies in which they are allowed once more to speak publicly, utilising their own writings and speeches.

Case Studies and Sources

Each of the women chosen for study died unmarried and childless. In the past, this has discouraged close examination of their lives and work due to the difficulty of accessing their personal records, and the lack of acknowledgment in traditional religious histories. This thesis will examine the motivations, agency, activism and legacy of each woman through constructing their biographies. This will facilitate careful study of their engagement in the public sphere through their own publications and interactions with the media of the day. As detailed below, these records have been preserved in journals held by various state and national libraries, archives and repositories, correspondence with newspapers and articles (by and about them) digitised in Trove, and feminist publications such as *The Dawn*.

Frances Deborah Levvy (1831-1924)

Frances Levvy was daughter of Barnett Levey, the first Jewish Free Settler in Australia. Levvy converted to Christianity and became a devoted Anglican. She was a pioneer of animal protection, responsible for many of the humane laws enacted in NSW, an ardent supporter of public schools and a campaigner for female suffrage. Her personal papers (such as diaries and letters) have not been uncovered. For nearly forty years, from 1886 to 1923, Levvy edited and published the monthly *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of NSW*. In addition to this, she was a tireless correspondent with Animal Protection advocates across the English-speaking world, and

a regular contributor to public debate in Australia through letters to the Editor in multiple newspapers and magazines throughout the Australian colonies.

Early editions of Levvy's *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal* (*BMHJ*) are missing, but the State Library of NSW holds physical copies of most editions from 1895 to the final edition in 1923.[123] In the course of my research, I have photographed and digitised these journals. Trove contains already digitised records of hundreds of newspaper articles written by or about Levvy from the time she began her public work in the mid-1880s until her death in 1924. Records of her international correspondence are recorded in the *BMHJ* and newspaper articles that profiled Levvy.

Ada Constance Duncan (1896-1970)

After graduating from the University of Melbourne, Constance Duncan became a missionary to Korea and Japan with the Young Woman's Christian Association (YWCA). Her involvement with the Australian Student Christian Movement (ASCM) and related international bodies enabled her to build a network of connections that saw her become a highly respected foreign policy advisor, particularly in the lead up to World War Two. Throughout the 1930s she was Secretary of the Victorian Branch of the League of Nations Union (LNU) and the Bureau of Social and International Affairs. During the war she worked with the Victorian International Refugee Emergency Committee (VIREC) and the Department of Health. In 1940, Duncan was instrumental in the rescue of Jewish refugees aboard the *Dunera*, and in the campaign for their resettlement. After the war Duncan worked with United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and the World Council of Churches in refugee resettlement. From the 1950s she lived with her partner, Australian composer Margaret Sutherland.

[123] Frances Levvy, ed., 'Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales Issued by the Woman's Society Prevention of Cruelty to Animals NSW', 38 vols, (Sydney, NSW, 1887-1923), Q179.3/B, Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW, https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/74VMbL7gpkkA.

Like Levvy, Duncan's personal papers have proved elusive. However, Duncan also wrote publicly in newspapers and journals, in addition to a career on ABC radio and at least one television appearance. As in the case of Levvy, Trove has allowed me to access hundreds of newspaper articles by and about Duncan from the 1920s to the 1960s. Correspondence by and relating to Duncan is held in the National Library of Australia (NLA), particularly the archives of the ASCM, the Brookes Papers and Eggleston Papers (relating to the League of Nations Union, the Institute of Pacific Relations, the Bureau of Social and International Affairs) and the papers of Margaret Sutherland. Sutherland's biographer, Jillian Graham, shared some of Sutherland's personal papers and photographs held in the private collection of Tony Bunney. Additionally, employment records and correspondence are located in the National Archives of Australia (NAA) in Canberra and Sydney, particularly in the records of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, and the papers of Sir Ian Clunies Ross. The University of Melbourne Archives holds records of her work in the YWCA archives and the papers of Sir William Harrison Moore. Finally, the Public Records Office of Victoria holds copies of the inquest into Duncan's death and her will.[124]

[124] 'Records of the Australian Student Christian Movement', manuscript (2003 1895), MS 980, National Library of Australia; Herbert Brookes and Ivy Brookes, 'Papers of Herbert and Ivy Brookes', manuscript (1970 1869), MS 1924, National Library of Australia; F. W. Eggleston, 'Papers of Frederic William Eggleston', manuscript (54 1911), MS 423, National Library of Australia; M. Sutherland, 'Papers of Margaret Sutherland', manuscript (1967 1894), MS 2967, National Library of Australia; 'Correspondence between Constance Duncan (Melbourne) and Courtney, 1941 to 1945, (File 49-54), (from Collections Held by the Fawcett Library / Courtney Papers / Correspondence (I))' (Unpublished, 1941), https://trove.nla.gov.au/version/261157993; 'Applications for Positions by Miss Constance Duncan' (Sydney, NSW: Commonwealth Office of Education, September 1949), Series A1361 34/1/12 Part 482, National Archives of Australia; Constance Duncan, 'Letter to Dr Ian Clunies Ross, CSIRO', 22 July 1949, ICR 21/7, National Archives of Australia; Australian Broadcasting Commission, 'Duncan, Constance [Australian Broadcasting Commission] [Box 12]' (1948), NAA C1737 Box 12, National Archives of Australia; 'Miss A Constance Duncan - Passport Renewal [Box 46]' (item, Sydney, 1946), SP42/2, C1946/570, National Archives of Australia; 'Young Women's Christian Association of Australia 1894-1984' (1895-1984), 1984.0066, 1985.0048, 1987.0074, University of Melbourne Archives; William Harrison Moore, 'Records of Sir William Harrison Moore 1867-1935' (1935 1867), 1963.0001, University of Melbourne Archives; '1970/3368 Ada Constance Duncan: Body Card' (Melbourne, Vic., 1970), VPRS 24/P0002, 1971/1315, Public Record Office of Victoria, https://prov.vic.gov.au/archive/D2C379EB-F1C8-11E9-AE98-335F8A0E332C; '1971/1315 Ada Constance Duncan: Inquest' (Melbourne, Vic., 1971), VPRS 24/P0002, 1971/1315, Public Record Office of Victoria, https://prov.vic.gov.au/archive/D2C379EB-F1C8-11E9-AE98-335F8A0E332C; 'Ada Constance Duncan: Will', 721/052, Public Record Office of Victoria, accessed 1 October 2021, https://prov.vic.gov.au/archive/426F7D4E-F5D6-11E9-AE98-33AF63AFF2D2; 'Ada Constance Duncan: Grant of Probate' (Melbourne, Vic.), 721/052, Public Record Office of Victoria, accessed 1 October 2021, https://prov.vic.gov.au/archive/BF405BA3-F267-11E9-AE98-6145D3B6E3BA.

In the first three chapters of this thesis, I offer a biography of Frances Levvy focussing on her animal protection work (chapter one), followed by an analysis of key themes that emerge from her work – gender roles (chapter two), biblical interpretation, and embedded racism (chapter three). In chapters four through six, I give a detailed biography of Constance Duncan integrated with an analysis of key themes and ideas as they emerge. I have taken this approach because of the breadth of Duncan's career which spanned multiple organisations and causes. Chapter four covers Duncan's early career with ASCM and YWCA, up to her return from Japan in 1932. Chapter five covers her work in the lead up to World War Two. Chapter three traces her work during the war and post-war period, until her death in 1970.

In chapter seven I bring together key themes that serve as intersections between the lives of Levvy and Duncan, and discuss the reasons for their erasure from Australian religious histories. Finally, in the concluding chapter, I consider the interrelationship between religion, politics and historiography. I conclude with the possible implications for the writing of religious history in Australia of recovering the stories of Levvy and Duncan – and others who have been relegated to the margins – and suggest a possible way forward.

1
A Propaganda of Kindness: Frances Deborah Levvy (1831-1924)

'The horse ambulance, which attracted so much attention at the opening of the Convalescent Home for Horses at Long Bay, is a tribute to the untiring efforts in the cause of suffering animals of Miss Frances Levvy, who for years has devoted her time to a propaganda of kindness.'[1]

Introduction

Frances Deborah Levvy (1831-1924) rose to become one of the most esteemed women in NSW despite having a notorious father and being unjustly tainted by a corruption scandal. She neither married nor had children, but her influence endured for over forty years. Levvy founded the Bands of Mercy (NSW) with her sister, Emma, and later co-founded the Women's Branch of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals NSW (WSPCA).[2] She also edited and produced the monthly *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales* (*BMHJ*) from 1887-1923. Levvy was a trailblazer for the humane treatment of animals, successfully lobbying for changes to legislation and practice that would protect animals, whether they be working horses or domestic pets.

Like many women in her circle, Levvy was involved in overlapping social causes including temperance and women's suffrage. Her writings demonstrate a critical engagement with gender roles and expectations, a keen understanding of the intersections of faith and reason, and a willingness to employ contemporary tools of biblical higher criticism to exhort others to put their faith into action. She found her passion, however, in promoting the rights of animals. In this, Levvy understood her vocation as a necessary expression of her Christian faith.

[1] 'Women's News', *The Sunday Times*, 11 September 1921, 14.
[2] In June 1896 the 'Royal' prefix was dropped from the name in circumstances that will be described below. For consistency, I have used the abbreviation WSPCA throughout this thesis, to refer to the woman's branch of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals co-founded by Levvy.

Levvy was renowned for her devotion to 'dumb animals' and her determination to cultivate kindness towards them. She received coverage, both sympathetic and hostile, in local and national papers; her correspondents spanned the globe and she was quoted by sister organisations in Britain, Europe and America. Yet Levvy's name has been all but forgotten. In this sense, she is typical of the unmarried women of her time who chose neither to become a nun nor a deaconess, nor to enter a vocation of nursing or teaching. On her passing, she faded from the public consciousness.

This was not, however, immediately the case; in the weeks after Levvy's death, 'letters to the Editor' began appearing in the Sydney papers discussing 'the most fitting [way] for her name to be perpetuated.'[3] Correspondents included W.E. Acocks, President of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Sir Joseph Carruthers, a former Premier of NSW. In her honour, a memorial was established in the form of an annual essay competition involving all the public schools of NSW, testament to the significance of her contribution towards a humane society.[4]

How is it that a woman who laboured so effectively, so steadfastly, for so long on behalf of vulnerable people and animals – explicitly stating that she did so motivated and sustained by her Christian faith – has been ignored by successive generations of religious historians in Australia? This is especially confronting when one considers her significant contribution to the religious and social challenges of her day.

[3] W.E. Acocks, 'Late Miss Frances Levvy', *The Daily Telegraph*, 6 December 1924, sec. To the Editor, 6.
[4] Acocks, 'Late Miss Frances Levvy', 6; J.H. Carruthers, 'The Late Miss Frances Levvy', *The Daily Telegraph*, 9 December 1924, sec. To the Editor, 10.

Archival sources

As far as I can determine Levvy's personal papers and records have been lost. Her name is unfamiliar outside a small circle of academics with a niche knowledge of the origins of the animal protection movement in Sydney. Even the spelling and order of her name is uncertain.[5] Nonetheless, she has left a sizable archival footprint through her involvement with the WSPCA and Bands of Mercy, through newspaper reporting of her humane work and the various other philanthropic causes to which she contributed, her copious letters to newspaper editors, and through her own writing in the *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales* (*BMHJ*). The historical significance of this journal cannot be overstated. Despite being described as 'the only extensive autobiographical statement of an Australian animal protectionist', *BMHJ* has never been the subject of sustained historical analysis.[6] The main sources I have used, therefore, are the extant copies of the *BMHJ* held by the State Library of NSW and the Trove database curated by the National Library of Australia.[7] Other historians and academics have utilised the archives of the Animals' Protection Society (APS; the precursor to the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals NSW), which was run exclusively by men and had a paternalistic relationship with the WSPCA. Historian Jennifer MacCulloch, for example, in her doctoral thesis *Creatures of Culture: The Animal Protection and Preservation Movements in Sydney, 1880-1930*, relied heavily on APS minutes and annual reports, and newspaper articles written by or about men focussed on the work of the APS inspectors. While MacCulloch made a valuable contribution to our

[5] Levvy's birth certificate and record of baptism suggest that she was christened Deborah Frances Levey, but all other records show her name as Frances D. Levey (until she adopted an alternative spelling of her surname). See 'Deborah F. Levey Birth Record' (Australia, Birth Index, 1788-1922 - Ancestry.com.au), accessed 25 January 2019; 'Deborah Frances Levey Baptism Record' (Australia, Births and Baptisms, 1792-1981 - Ancestry.com.au), accessed 27 January 2019, https://search.ancestry.com.au/cgi-bin/sse.dll?_phsrc=6g5378937&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true&indiv=1&db=fs1australiabirthsandbaptisms&gsfn=Frances%20Debora&gsln=Levey&gsln_x=1&cp=0&msbdy=1837&msbdm=11&msbdd=14&new=1&rank=1&redir=false&uidh=6g5&gss=angs-d&pcat=34&fh=0&h=445818&recoff=&ml_rpos=1.

[6] Jennifer MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture: The Animal Protection and Preservation Movements in Sydney, 1880-1930', Doctor of Philosophy (Sydney, NSW: University of Sydney, 1993), 96.

[7] Frances Levvy, ed., 'Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales Issued by the Woman's Society Prevention of Cruelty to Animals NSW' (Sydney, NSW, 1895-1923), Q179.3/B, Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW, https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/74VMbL7gpkkA; National Library of Australia, 'Trove', https://trove.nla.gov.au/.

understanding of animal protection and preservation movements in Sydney, and included excerpts from *BMHJ* in her discussion of the work of women in these movements, the reliance on sources by and about men has inevitably skewed the perspective towards their viewpoint.[8] MacCulloch argues that gender provides a useful analytical framework for understanding animal protection in NSW. However, she contends that the increasing participation of women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries 'entirely feminised' animal protection and thus 'completed the movement's decline'.[9] In adopting this stance, MacCulloch has accepted the language and ideology of separate spheres, and thus reinforced gender stereotypes, rather than recognising how women such as Levvy were understood (by the male leaders of the APS) to be transgressing the masculine domain. Political scientist Peter Chen's *Animal Welfare in Australia: Politics and Policy* focusses on the development of public policy in Australia towards the humane treatment of animals, but in his chapter tracing the history of animal protection in Australia he makes no mention of the women's movements whatsoever.[10] Furthermore, MacCulloch herself admonished historians whose 'largely uncritical reading of the most accessible of historical records' (that is, the minutes and publications of the APS) has 'highlighted the public activities of men while obscuring those of women.'[11] As a counterpoint to these works, therefore, and to balance the loss of Levvy's personal papers and records, I focus on contemporary writings by and about Levvy in surviving issues of *BMHJ* and the press.

[8] *BMHJ* was cited numerous times by MacCulloch in her examination of the role of women in animal protection. However, she has a more deliberate and sustained focus on other sources, particularly the records of the male dominated Animal's Protection Society NSW.
[9] MacCulloch, *Creatures of Culture*, 79. The gendered understanding of animal protection work in NSW will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.
[10] Peter John Chen, *Animal Welfare in Australia: Politics and Policy* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2016), 3–20. In his timeline of animal welfare policy in Appendix E, Chen does note the formation of the Band of Mercy movement in Australia, using as a date the timeframe in which Levvy formed the first Bands in NSW. But Levvy is not named as founder and the Women's branches receive no mention at all, despite their successful lobbying for legislative change in NSW. See Chen, *Animal Welfare in Australia*, 338–341.
[11] MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 79.

In what follows, I provide a brief biographical overview of Levvy's life with an emphasis on her work with WSPCA and Bands of Mercy, before proceeding in the following two chapters to a thematic examination of the strands that emerge from her agency and activism. That is, her embodiment of (and at times, resistance to) contemporary gender roles; the implications of her work as a public (female) interpreter of scripture; and the complexity of her attitude to other races and religions.

Biography of Frances Deborah Levvy (1831-1924)

Frances Deborah Levvy was born on 14 November 1831, the youngest child of Barnett and Sarah Levey.[12] Barnett Levey (c1797-1837), a watchmaker of considerable skill, had arrived in NSW in December 1821, on board the *John Bull*. The first male Jewish free settler in the colony, he had come to join his brother Solomon, who had been transported for theft in 1815, but was by this time a thriving emancipist.[13] On 25 June 1825, Barnett Levey married Sarah Emma Wilson (1804-1873), the stepdaughter of an 'apostate Jew'.[14] The ceremony took place in St. John's Anglican Church, Parramatta. Historian Helen Bersten notes that at this time, Rev Samuel Marsden was seeking to entrench the status of the Church of England as 'the only legitimate church' in the colony.[15] Thus, Marsden continued the practice begun by Rev Richard Johnson of refusing to recognise as legitimate any children born to parents who had not been married in an Anglican church. The couple had three children prior to Frances' birth – Emma Rebecca (1826-1885), Barnett Francis (1827-1907) and Jacob Philip (1829-1909). When Levvy was born the family was living in George St, Penrith. Nonetheless, on 11 December 1831, her parents took

[12] The order and spelling of Levvy's name varies throughout the earliest sources but is standardised after the death of her parents. For consistency throughout this thesis, when referring to Frances Levvy, I have adopted the order and spelling she herself used and preferred. When speaking of family members (particularly her parents) I have used the Jewish spelling – Levey – that they themselves used.
[13] W. D. Rubinstein, *Jews in the Sixth Continent* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 63–65.
[14] John S. Levi and G. F. J. Bergman, *Australian Genesis: Jewish Convicts and Settlers, 1788-1860*, 2nd ed. (Carlton South, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2002), 123. I am grateful to staff and volunteers from Australian Jewish Historical Society for their assistance in locating resources related to the Levey family.
[15] Helen Bersten, 'Sydney, Australia's Early Jewish Community', *Western States Jewish History* 50, no. 3 (2018): 106.

her to St Philip's Anglican Church in Sydney to be baptised.[16] While Barnett Levey continued to identify as a Jew, all four of his children were raised Anglican.[17]

Little is known of the first half of Levvy's life, except that her father was renowned for his attempts to enliven the Sydney social scene. After several failed property ventures, Levey for a time established himself as a jeweller and watchmaker; but his real passion was for the stage.[18] Realising a dream when he was granted the first theatre licence in Australia in 1832, Levey would become known as the 'Father of Australian theatre'.[19] In addition to theatre and watches, he dabbled in banking, auctioneering, vegetable selling, the issuing of bank notes, and commercial property investment, all ventures which would prove short lived.[20] A series of unfortunate choices saw Levey fall out of favour with Governor Darling and stumble into financial difficulty. When he died on 2nd October 1837, he was a shattered man and an alcoholic, whose total estate amounted to less than £500.[21] On his death, Levey was buried in the Jewish section of Devonshire cemetery; his records are held by the Australian Jewish Historical Society.[22]

Newspaper accounts from the time express regret at the impact of Levey's poor investments upon his bereaved wife and children.[23] For some time, Sarah Levey attempted to continue to run the theatre herself, until in 1838 she sold it to Joseph Wyatt.[24] Sadly, this did not alleviate the family's financial troubles. Some of the theatre musicians and performers successfully sued Sarah

[16] 'Deborah Frances Levey Baptism Record' (Australia, Births and Baptisms, 1792-1981 - Ancestry.com.au).
[17] Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, 123.
[18] G. F. J. Bergman, *Barnett Levey (1797-1837)* (Blue Mountains, NSW: Blue Mountains Historical Society, 1964), 9.
[19] A.W. Hyman, 'Barnett Levey: The Father of the Theatre in Australia', *Australian Jewish Historical Society* 1, no. 7 (1942): 223–35.
[20] Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, 111–12.
[21] 'Domestic Intelligence', *Sydney Times*, 21 October 1837, 3; Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, 111–12. Her father's alcoholism may have given Levvy a personal motivation for her later participation in the Church of England temperance Society (CETS); 'General Meetings: Church of England Temperance Society', *The Daily Telegraph*, 17 January 1890, 6.
[22] Barnett Levey's grave was later moved to Pioneer Park, Botany.
[23] 'Domestic Intelligence', 3.
[24] Suzanne Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Sydney: Collins, 1988), 46.

Levey for unpaid wages (even though they now worked for Wyatt), because they had initially been contracted by her.[25] While Levvy's other siblings eventually married and moved out of the family home, Frances stayed to look after her mother.

Over time, Levvy's financial situation improved and by October 1867 was sufficiently healthy that she made a loan of £100 to a solicitor by the name of Arthur John Robey. Levvy was close friends with Robey and his wife and was staying with them in their home when she sought Robey's advice and subsequently deposited the money with him. Accounts from the time demonstrate that Levvy considered this to be an investment whereby she would receive a return of ten per cent per annum.[26] Regretfully, it was later revealed that Robey was 'an uncertified insolvent' at the time of the transaction; the affidavit of insolvency had been issued by the Supreme Court of NSW on 22nd May 1867 (and he was again declared insolvent on 3rd February 1871).[27] Distressed by these events and failing to receive the expected return on her investment, Levvy begged for the return of her funds, but was denied. Subsequently, in 1873, Levvy unsuccessfully sued Robey for misconduct, seeking that he be struck off the rolls (as an attorney). She was forced to pay costs when the charges were dismissed.[28] Sir Alfred Stephen, the Supreme Court Judge who ruled on the case, portrayed Levvy as a pitiful figure who, as close friend of both Robey and his wife, had sought his financial advice and then 'repented' of having made the investment when 'she found she could not got on without it, and therefore begged for a return.' Judge Stephen concluded that there was,

> . . . no reason why the attorney should be distrusted any more than the applicant; and although [Robey] might have been insolvent at the time, it did not follow that he could not have believed that with a little assistance and ordinary diligence he might soon be in a position to repay the advance.[29]

[25] 'News of the Day', *Sydney Monitor*, 14 May 1838, 3; 'In Banco', *Sydney Monitor*, 13 July 1838, 2.
[26] 'Law: Supreme Court', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 September 1873, 6.
[27] 'Arthur John Robey Insolvency Record' (Newcastle, NSW, 23 May 1867), NRS-13654-1-[2/9247]-8336, State Archives and Records NSW; 'Law: Supreme Court', 6.
[28] 'Law: Supreme Court', 6.
[29] 'Law: Supreme Court', 6.

Thus Robey, despite having been shown to have made a series of poor financial decisions which left him indebted to others, was depicted as only needing time before he would find himself flourishing, whereas Levvy was cast as anxious, emotional and dependent on male wisdom. The experience of both Levvy and her mother demonstrate the challenges preventing women at the time from receiving a fair hearing in court, due to overwhelming male bias. In her extensive analysis of colonial courts (particularly as they relate to divorce and the agency of women), feminist historian Marian Lorrison has demonstrated 'the patriarchal bent which persisted within public opinion and legal attitudes' in Australia during this period.[30] Recently, Lorrison has described the 'melodramatic drama' of colonial courts in Australia, revealing how women were required to enact 'idealised gender roles' in the hope of receiving a favourable outcome.[31] In such a context, it is not hard to see how Levvy's attempt to seek advice from a trusted male friend could be recast as feminine naïveté. It would not be the first time that Levvy would find herself so characterized in a legal context, as she would discover after devoting herself to public philanthropy and the cause of animal protection.

Just two months after her failed legal action, Levvy's mother died suddenly at home. Significantly, Mrs Levey left all her worldly goods and chattels to her youngest daughter, including the house on Lower Fort Street, Dawes Point, where Levvy continued to live after the loss of her mother.[32] The Leveys' eldest daughter, Emma, had married Dr George Thomas Clarke in 1847 and was prospering in Penrith, while the eldest son, Barnett, had become a teacher, married (in 1869 to Esther Ward) and started a family. Little is known of the younger son, Jacob, although it is possible that he followed in the steps of his father, becoming a

[30] Marian J. Lorrison, "'The More Things Change:" Gender Relations and Married Life Across a Time of Transformation' (Doctor of Philosophy, Sydney, NSW, Macquarie University, 2020), 10.
[31] Marian Lorrison, "'Going Her Own Road": The Tortured Path to Economic Independence in Late Colonial New South Wales', *Journal of Family History*, 9 February 2022, 4; cf. Victoria Bates, "'Under Cross-Examination She Fainted": Sexual Crime and Swooning in the Victorian Courtroom', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 21, no. 4 (1 December 2016): 457.
[32] 'Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction', *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 28 November 1873, 3323.

watchmaker.[33] Frances Levvy was the only child to remain both unmarried and without a means of supporting herself. Less than a year after the death of their mother Emma's husband died and she moved from Penrith to Sydney, most probably to be closer to Levvy. Two things are significant about the death of Levvy's mother. Firstly, from this time, the spelling and order of Levvy's name remained consistent for the duration of her life. Historian Suzanne Rutland has described the prejudice and religious opposition faced by Jewish people in the early decades of the colony, and the blatant attempts to ensure that Anglicanism would be the unchallenged religion of NSW.[34] While all the Levey children were baptised and raised in the Church of England, it was Frances Levvy who most enthusiastically embraced the Anglican faith, which would in turn shape her sense of identity and vocation. It is likely, therefore, that Levvy adapted the spelling of her surname to distance herself from her father and his faith.[35] Secondly, it was only after the death of both parents and her sister's move to Sydney that Levvy – now in her forties, freed from the responsibility of caring for her parents and with independent income due to her inheritance – began to enter public life. Yet Levvy's full devotion to a life of animal activism would not happen for a further six years.

A life's work begins

It was at the 1879 Exhibition and the Art Society's Exhibition of 1880 that Levvy came to public attention.[36] Complimented for her watercolour paintings depicting nature and animals, she began to be mentioned in the social pages. However, the work for which she became renowned began

[33] Jacob Levy is listed as the maker of a watch reported stolen in Sydney in 1886. 'Watches and Jewellery Etc. Reported Stolen', *New South Wales Police Gazette and Weekly Record of Crime*, 3 March 1886, 64.
[34] Suzanne Rutland, *The Jews in Australia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 13–14.
[35] Jewish forms include Levey, Levy and Levi, but not a spelling with a double v. In contrast to his sister, Barnett Francis Levey maintained the connection with his father and namesake. He never altered the spelling of his name, despite having Anglican rites at both his wedding and funeral, and was buried in the Church of England Cemetery at Rookwood. 'Marriage Notice - Barnett Francis Levey', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 April 1869, 1; 'Death Notice - Barnett Francis Levey', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 October 1907, 26.
[36] *Sydney International Exhibition 1879 Official Catalogue of the New South Wales Court* (Sydney: Thomas Richards Government Printer, 1880), 147, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-408182908; 'The Art Society's Exhibition', *The Daily Telegraph*, 16 December 1880, 3.

at a meeting of the Animals' Protection Society of NSW (APS).[37] Founded in July 1873 and modelled on the British Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), the APS aimed to supress cruelty to animals largely through a network of inspectors who issued fines and reported acts of cruelty. Jennifer MacCulloch, historian of animal protection movements in Australia, has described this inspectorate as a 'private police force', which claimed to have an educational intent while functioning as primarily punitive.[38] Furthermore, the RSPCA and the APS were initially both classist and sexist. Historian and ethicist Chien-hui Li has related the formation of animal protection movements in Britain to policing the 'morals and manners' of the lower classes by the upper classes.[39] These guardians of 'respectable society' believed that only those who were socially inferior would practice cruelty to animals. The men of the RSPCA thus understood their patronising moralism to be a part of their Christian duty. In the Australian colonies the same pattern would be repeated. An article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* announcing the intention of a group of 'gentlemen' to form a society to prevent cruelty to animals attributed the need for such a group to 'the prevalence of cruelty to animals amongst a certain class of persons' – that is to say, the lower classes – which had provoked the 'indignation and disgust' of 'educated and humane' men.[40] The committee and membership of the new society was exclusively male, made up of some of the most prominent citizens of the colony.[41] His Excellency Sir Hercules Robinson, Governor of NSW was patron and Sir Alfred Stephen was

[37] This society was founded in July 1873 as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, before changing its name to the Animals' Protection Society (APS) in 1878. It reverted to the original title in 1918, and was given the Royal Warrant in 1923, becoming the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals NSW. It was only in May 1980 that the eight Australian societies formerly became one national society. For greater clarity, I have used the abbreviation 'APS' throughout this thesis to refer to the male dominated society in NSW, as that it the name by which it was known for most of Levvy's career. 'Animals Protection Society', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 September 1878, 8; 'Our History', RSPCA Australia, accessed 27 September 2018, https://www.rspca.org.au/what-we-do/about-us/our-history. Contra. MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 42 n. 79, where it is asserted that the initial name change took place in 1879.

[38] MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 33–34.

[39] Chien-hui Li, 'A Union of Christianity, Humanity, and Philanthropy: The Christian Tradition and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Nineteenth-Century England', *Society & Animals* 8, no. 3 (2000): 267–268. The mention of 'morals and manners' is a reference to the reforming programme of Wilberforce and early evangelicals, to whom Li links the origins of the animal protection movements.

[40] 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 July 1873, 4.

[41] MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 108.

the first president.[42] The involvement and inclusion of women was limited; they were not admitted to full membership of APS until after the First World War, and even then they were relied upon primarily for fundraising.

The cause of kindness to animals drew Levvy out of her home and into the social world of Sydney; her involvement would transform her life and become her legacy. In January 1884, Levvy presented 24 watercolour drawings to the APS, to mark the announcement of her intention to establish a Band of Mercy, similar to those founded in 1875 by Catherine Smithies in Britain.[43] In 1882 the British Bands of Mercy were brought under the umbrella of the RSPCA. The stated aim of the Bands of Mercy was to cultivate in children kindness towards 'dumb creatures', with the hope that they would grow into men and women who practised and promoted humane treatment of animals. All children who joined one of the Bands pledged 'to protect all animals from ill treatment. When I am compelled to take the life of any creature, I will spare all needless pain.'[44] The first Band of Mercy (NSW) meeting was held on 7 January 1884, hosted by Levvy in the house of her (now widowed) sister, Emma Clarke.[45] Fifteen children attended the first meeting, twice that the second, and by December of that year thirty-one Bands of Mercy had been founded, with over two-thousand members.[46] When Emma died in November 1885, Levvy was devastated by her death, yet undeterred in her work.

Levvy initially funded the Bands and *BMHJ* herself, but as the movement grew rapidly this became unsustainable. In 1897 she admitted that 'the expenses and difficulties [of editing and

[42] 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', 11 July 1873, 4.
[43] 'News of the Day', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 January 1884, 5; Li, 'A Union of Christianity, Humanity, and Philanthropy', 275.
[44] Frances Levvy, 'The Bands of Mercy in N.S.W.', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 December 1886, 14.
[45] Emma's husband, Dr George Clarke, had died in July 1874, after which she moved from Penrith to a house in Cambridge Terrace, Sydney.
[46] Levvy, 'Bands of Mercy in N.S.W.', 14.

distributing the magazine] are perhaps heavier than our friends may imagine.'[47] To enable her to continue, Levvy successfully applied to Sir Joseph Carruthers, then Minister for Public Instruction, who agreed to subsidise her work. Additional assistance – both practical and financial – came from private donors in England, including Mrs Florence Horatia Suckling, who had started her own mercy work when she was only fifteen years old.[48]

Marilyn Lake has described the 'maternalist mission' of feminists in the first of five phases of Australian feminism (1880s-1890s).[49] During this time, emphasis was primarily focused on protecting women and children, driven by an essentialist understanding that women had been endowed (by God) with an innate nurturing love that fitted them to care for the weak and vulnerable. The Bands of Mercy were one expression of this 'civic motherhood'.[50] Not only were they focussed on inculcating kindness in children and thereby nurturing good citizens, but care for vulnerable animals could also be understood within a maternalist paradigm. Unmarried women such as Levvy were expected to compensate for their lack of marriage and motherhood through self-sacrificing service, first to their family and thence the community.[51] It is thus no coincidence that Levvy's public activism began only after the death of both parents provided her

[47] Frances Levvy, ed., 'Mrs Florence Horatia Suckling', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 23 July 1897, 76.
[48] 'The Animal's Friend: The Band of Mercy', *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 January 1906; Levvy, 'Mrs Florence Horatia Suckling', 75–76. In this article Levvy mentions other women to whom she was indebted, including 'a generous noble-hearted English friend who refuses to let her honoured name be known.'
[49] Marilyn Lake, 'A History of Feminism in Australia', in *Australian Feminism: A Companion*, ed. Barbara Caine (Melbourne, Vic.: Oxford University Press, 1998), 133.
[50] Marian Quartly and Judith Smart, *Respectable Radicals: A History of the National Council of Women Australia, 1896-2006*, Australian History (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing in conjunction with the National Council of Women of Australia, 2015), 56; cf. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780–1850*, Revised (London: Routledge, 2002), 450. The gender paradigms and separate spheres ideology which undergird this understanding will be discussed in detail in chapter 2.
[51] Cf. Anne Philomena O'Brien, God's Willing Workers: Women and Religion in Australia (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005), 45. Kingston has suggested that the combination of abundant natural resources and sectarian disputes had reduced the roles available to Australian women to work and serve in the church, and lessened the need for philanthropy. This in turn left them 'looking around for some activity through which they could demonstrate their faith'. While this would help explain the enthusiasm with which women such as Levvy took up the cause of animal protection, it does not explain the blossoming of philanthropic causes during the 1880s and 90s. Beverley Kingston, 'Faith and Fetes: Women and History of the Churches in Australia', in *Women, Faith & Fetes: Essays in the History of Women and the Church in Australia*, ed. Sabine Willis (Melbourne: Dove Communications in association with the Australian Council of Churches (New South Wales), Commission on Status of Women, 1977), 26.

with an opportunity to express her care and her faith outside the home. Furthermore, Levvy's work with the Bands of Mercy fit a theological framework which called Christians to exercise their dominion over the animal creation in a benign and merciful fashion.[52]

It is not known what prompted Levvy's specific interest in animal protection, although much has been written about the movement's close links to evangelical reform and its attraction to women wanting to exercise their influence outside the home.[53] MacCulloch has described the recasting of women's involvement in animal protection as a surrogate for motherhood. In this schema, certain animals – domestic pets and horses – were more worthy of care than others because they were more easily 'positioned as baby substitutes.'[54] British historian Frank Prochaska, discussing the argument that women were ideally fitted to compassionate and self-sacrificing work, cites William Landel's claim in 1859 that spinsters should 'feel themselves married to every creature of the race', such must be their commitment to charity and moral reformation.[55] Historian James Turner contended that animals served as a proxy, allowing the middle class to assuage their guilt towards the poor in a way that did not undermine the social structures supporting their privilege.[56] Another view explained women's involvement in animal protection, and particularly in the anti-vivisection movement, as a 'coded critique of masculinity'. In this paradigm, women who were powerless against male abusers found a socially acceptable place in which 'to displace

[52] Cf. Li, 'A Union of Christianity, Humanity, and Philanthropy', 273. The theological reasoning that underpinned Levvy's work will be discussed in chapter 3.
[53] MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 91–93; Chen, *Animal Welfare in Australia*, 12; O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers*, 64–65; Shurlee Swain, 'A Long History of Faith-Based Welfare in Australia: Origins and Impact', *Journal of Religious History* 41, no. 1 (2017): 81–83; Anthea Hyslop, 'Christian Temperance and Social Reform: The Women's Christian Temperance Union of Victoria, 1887-1912', in *Women, Faith & Fetes: Essays in the History of Women and the Church in Australia*, ed. Sabine Willis (Melbourne: Dove Communications in association with the Australian Council of Churches (New South Wales), Commission on Status of Women, 1977), 49; F. K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1980), 6–8.
[54] MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 46.
[55] William Landels, *Woman's Sphere and Work, Considered in the Light of Scripture* (London, UK: James Nisbet and co., 1859), 144; cited in F. K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1980), 6.
[56] James Crewdson Turner, 'Kindness to Animals: The Animal-Protection Movement in England and America during the Nineteenth Century' (Doctor of Philosophy, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, 1975), 53–59. MacCulloch summarised this position by arguing that animal protection movements 'provided an anodyne which did not threaten the basis of [middle class] wealth and power. 'Creatures of Culture', 21.

anxieties about certain male behaviours towards themselves and children onto animals.'[57] This view is discussed by feminist historian Diane Donald, who has examined the antivivisection protests of feminists such as Frances Power Cobbe in the late nineteenth century. When Cobbe used diagrams by physiologist Elie de Cyon as illustrations in her protest tracts, Cyon responded by decrying Cobbe as an unattractive and sexually frustrated spinster whose 'tenderness, despised by man, has flung itself at the feet of cats and parrots.'[58] Donald has warned that stereotyping female concern in this way was a deliberate device used by the male scientific community to discredit their opponents.[59] Nonetheless, there is merit in recognising the link between the late Victorian growth of women's interest in preventing cruelty to animals, and the growth of 'cruelty' as 'an emerging nineteenth century legal concept', particularly in marriage and divorce law.[60] In NSW, the launch of the Bands of Mercy and the Women's branch of the RSPCA were coterminous with a decade in which legislative changes that had a profound impact on the public and private lives of women were being debated and enacted.[61] Thus there is a parallel between an increasing awareness of the need for greater protections for women, and the growth of women's organisations campaigning against cruelty in other forms. In light of this, Donald cautions us not to accept too readily explanations for the growth of the animal protection movement that minimise concern for animals, and instead disproportionately focus on 'victimisation of the lower classes'. Rather, she urges historians to recognise the increasing agitation of nineteenth century reformers at 'the intractability of cruel behaviour *at every level of society*.'[62] Feminist literary scholar Coral Lansbury contended that 'it was not the plight of the animals which stirred them to

[57] MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 84, 88.
[58] Cited in Diana Donald, *Women Against Cruelty: Protection of Animals in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, Gender in History (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2020), 191.
[59] Donald, *Women Against Cruelty*, 191.
[60] MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 88.
[61] Cf. Lorrison, 'The More Things Change', 7. Most pertinent was the public debate around divorce law, which led to a recognition of impact of cruelty and abuse within marriage and resulted in the passage of the *Divorce Amendment and Extension Act* (1892). The *Married Women's Property Act* (1879) and the *Public Instruction Act* (1880) also paved the way for greater freedom and equality for women.
[62] Donald, *Women Against Cruelty*, 4. Emphasis added.

such anger, but their own.'[63] A more nuanced understanding must recognise that *both* concerns are at play – a very real concern for the treatment of animals coupled with a growing awareness of the prevalence of cruelty in all its forms. It is not difficult to imagine how such motivations – whether conscious or not – may have stirred Levvy, who had a volatile, alcoholic father, and had been a victim of the patriarchal boys' club that was the colonial justice system. Powerless to protect herself or recover what had been taken from her, Levvy was moved to compassionate action on behalf of 'dumb creatures' and sought to educate young boys and girls to act with kindness in all their doings. In this sense, Levvy's activism gave her an agency she had been denied by the courts.

From the time Levvy began her 'mercy work', she invested all her resources into this calling, using her own funds until they expired, at which time she successfully applied to the Minister for Public Instruction, J.H. Carruthers, for the work to be subsidised.[64] Initially, Levvy sought to affiliate the Bands of Mercy with the APS. They declined, likely because they viewed the Bands as a 'womanly' endeavour related to the education and nurture of children, that was disconnected from their more masculine concerns of prosecuting acts of cruelty.[65] Consequently, Levvy wrote to John Colam, secretary of the RSPCA in Britain, seeking affiliation with that body. This was granted, with Colam forwarding the official British pledge cards and medals (both of which had 'received the approval of the Queen and the many [RSPCA] patrons in England'), for Levvy to

[63] Coral Lansbury, *The Old Brown Dog: Women, Workers and Vivisection in Edwardian England* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 128. Langford wrote of anti-vivisectionist Anna Kingsford, 'Her anguish became a passionate hatred for the men she termed devils, and her struggle against them was not simply a contest of ideas but a passionate duel.' *The Old Brown Dog*, 93.

[64] These funds were possibly from the estates of her mother and sister; Frances was granted probate for both. 'Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction', 28 November 1873; 'Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction', *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 11 December 1885; 'The Animal's Friend: The Band of Mercy', *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 January 1906, 3. Carruthers later served as Premier of NSW (1904-1907), and publicly endorsed an enduring memorial for Levvy after her death. Carruthers, 'The Late Miss Frances Levvy', 10.

[65] Cf. Paul F. Cooper, 'Women's Branch of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Philanthropists and Philanthropy* (blog), 20 September 2016, https://colonialgivers.com/2016/09/21/womens-branch-of-the-society-for-the-prevention-of-cruelty-to-animals/.

use in her mercy work.[66] Levvy later reflected on the challenges of the early days: 'The work proceeded, but with great difficulty; for the first six months the members had neither medals, cards, nor literature.'[67] The shipment from Colam was received eagerly and quickly bought by members desiring to display their identification with the cause. Levvy sent for more, and Colam forwarded a further 2000 cards and 2000 medals. By December 1886, only two years into the work, there were over 2000 members in 31 Bands of Mercy in NSW, with more seeking to be established and affiliated. Despite the reluctance of the APS to take responsibility for the bands, Levvy wrote that Mr J. Sidney, secretary of the APS, gave practical advice and support, and Mr B.O. Meeks (a highly respected veterinary surgeon who held prominent roles in several of the Australian colonies), personally formed a Band of Mercy for grooms working with horses, and agreed to be a consulting vet to the Bands.[68] Although the stated purpose of the Bands was nurturing kindness towards animals in children, adults (both men and women) also began to join as parents accompanied their children to meetings and found themselves inspired to take up the cause. Increasingly, more and more middle-class women sought to join Levvy in her work. Consequently, in December 1886, Levvy co-founded the Women's Branch of the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals NSW (WSPCA) and was appointed honorary treasurer. Initially, Mr J. Sidney was honorary secretary of the WSPCA. However, in May 1891 Sidney resigned from the role and was replaced by Levvy, following concerns that holding both the paid secretary role with APS and the honorary role with the (unaffiliated) WSPCA was creating confusion.[69]

[66] 'The Bands of Mercy of N.S.W.', *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 25 December 1886, 13; 'Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 May 1896, 6.
[67] 'The Bands of Mercy of N.S.W.', 13.
[68] 'The Bands of Mercy of N.S.W.', 13; 'Cumberland Disease', *The Tasmanian*, 28 June 1890, 16.
[69] 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Daily Telegraph*, 4 May 1891, 5.

One of the main aims of the WSPCA was to be a centralised network overseeing the Bands and facilitating the distribution of literature, medals and cards.[70] There was no cost to join the Bands, which did not follow a subscription model, although there was a small charge for cards and medals in order to cover costs. The WSPCA, however, did receive subscriptions to cover their work, as was the pattern with the women's auxiliary committees formed in conjunction with the London RSPCA.[71] Bands of Mercy were self-supporting and self-governing but could seek aid from Levvy or the WSPCA at any time. They also gained practical inspiration, advice and assistance from the *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of NSW* (*BMHJ*), which Levvy edited from 1887 to 1923, writing many of the articles herself.

Bands of Mercy had also been formed independently in Newcastle by Mrs Marie Ellis, at almost the same time or just after the first Bands formed in Sydney by Levvy. These were also brought into relationship with the WSPCA at the time of its founding.[72] Initially, there seemed to be unity and cordiality between the two founders, with Levvy as 'Metropolitan Secretary' and Ellis as 'Newcastle Secretary'. Ellis was elected to the committee of WSPCA in January 1887 and told them of her work in the Newcastle district, where 'upwards of 1846 children had promised to be kind to animals, and to avoid all unnecessary cruelty in taking life.'[73] Newspaper reports from the time, however, suggest that within months cracks may have developed in this alliance. In July 1887, Levvy announced at the monthly meeting of WSPCA that the first issue of *BMHJ* was ready and was being distributed among the public schools of NSW. In August 1887 Levvy wrote to the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* to correct a 'grave misapprehension' relating to the

[70] This was a further imitation of the parent bodies in Britain; the ladies' committee of the RSPCA had undertaken formal oversight of the British Bands of Mercy in 1883. Cf. MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 113.
[71] 'News of the Day', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 March 1887, 14; Donald, *Women Against Cruelty*, 100.
[72] Levvy stated that the two women began their work 'almost simultaneously in Sydney and Newcastle.' Frances Levvy, ed., 'Mrs Florence Horatia Suckling', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 23 July 1897, 75–76; 'Women's Work Among Animals', *The Daily Telegraph*, 31 January 1906, 13. Cooper, however, claims that Ellis did not begin her work until 1886. Paul F. Cooper, 'Ellis and Levvy: The Relationship of Marie Ellis and Frances Levvy', *Philanthropists and Philanthropy* (blog), 20 September 2016, https://colonialgivers.com/ellis-and-levvy/.
[73] This was a reference to the pledge undertaken by all Band of Mercy members. 'Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 7 January 1887, 7.

pledge cards distributed to members of the Bands.[74] A week earlier, Ellis had officially affiliated her Bands of Mercy with the WSPCA, presenting at that time the card she had been distributing to her members. Levvy sought to clarify that while Ellis's work was 'noble' and her card 'suitable for young members', it should not be confused with the 'National Card' authorised by the committee in March 1887, which carried the stamp of the RSPCA. At the same time, Levvy reminded readers that any rule change (such as, it may be inferred, authorising another pledge card), must be properly declared so that a motion could be discussed and carried by the WSPCA.[75] Whether there had been a genuine understanding that Levvy was now addressing, or whether there was a degree of territoriality occurring between the two women is not altogether clear. In November 1887, however, Ellis sent the WSPCA a copy of 'a new humane journal she intended to publish and circulate among the schools.'[76] In December, Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* reported that Mrs Ellis wrote to the APS requesting her magazine, the 'Band of Mercy Advocate', be 'distributed monthly with other papers disseminated by [APS] among the public schools'.[77] This would put it in direct competition with Levvy's *BMHJ*. Just two weeks later the WSPCA received a letter from Mr J.C. Ellis (MLA, Member for Newcastle and husband of Marie Ellis), informing them that he had formed a Band of Mercy in Islington, where he lived, and had distributed three thousand copies of 'the first issue of the "Band of Mercy Advocate".'[78] Soon, *Band of Mercy Advocate* was being published 'under the auspices of the Animal Protection Society', bearing the seal of that society and the imprimatur of its chairman, Edmund Fosbery.[79] Yet it would seem that publication was somewhat sporadic; the first edition of Volume 4 for 1890 was only published in November. By 1891, publication had ceased.[80] In June 1897, Levvy would declare in *BMHJ* that, although both women had started a magazine in conjunction with their

[74] Frances Levvy, 'Bands of Mercy', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 August 1887, 4.
[75] Levvy, 'Bands of Mercy', 4.
[76] 'News of the Day', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 November 1887, 13.
[77] 'General News', *Daily Telegraph*, 10 December 1887, 5.
[78] 'General News', *Daily Telegraph*, 24 December 1887, 5.
[79] See for example, Marie Ellis, ed. 'Front Matter', *Band of Mercy Advocate*, 24 March 1891, 3.
[80] Marie Ellis and Animal's Protection Society NSW, eds., *Band of Mercy Advocate*, 4 vols (Ashfield, NSW: G. Watson, 1887).

work, 'Mrs Ellis gracefully withdrew her magazine in deference to that of the metropolis, which had been the first to appear.'[81] Despite the apparent rift, Ellis and the Bands she affiliated continued to be recognised at the annual gatherings of the WSPCA, where she was spoken of with esteem and admiration.[82] In 1896 Levvy was still referring to Ellis as a co-labourer in the work, and Ellis remained on the committee of WSPCA until at least 1902.[83]

Figure 3: 'The Forgotten Prisoner', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of NSW*, 22 September 1899, cover illustration.

Levvy's work with children stemmed from a conviction that they were not depraved by nature but lacked training in habits of kindness and humanity. The front page of an 1899 issue of *BMHJ* depicted a young girl cradling a dead bird.[84] It was captioned, 'The Forgotten Prisoner. Starved to Death'. This foreshadowed an article in the next issue which called out the practice of

[81] Levvy, 'Mrs Florence Horatia Suckling', 76.
[82] See, for example, 'The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals: Children's Gathering at the Centenary Hall', *The Daily Telegraph*, 16 December 1889, 3.
[83] Frances Levvy, 'Women's Branch Animals Protection Society', *Sunday Times*, 7 June 1896, sec. To the Editor, 12; 'Woman's Column', *Newsletter: An Australian Paper for Australian People*, 4 October 1902, 13.
[84] 'The Forgotten Prisoner - Starved to Death', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 22 September 1899, cover.

applauding children for whipping toy horses when riding them, and giving caged birds to children who would forget to feed them. For this Levvy blamed mothers and nurses, who should not give pets to children, whose 'nature . . . unfits them to be the sole caretakers of any creature that can suffer by their neglect; neglect not from cruelty but from natural heedlessness.'[85] She wholeheartedly believed that through education and inspiration, children could develop habits of kindness and mercy which would in turn bring about societal change. Thus, in 1897 she would look forward to,

> . . . the steady growth of our principles among young people, who in the course of a few years will be the men and women of New South Wales, and who will – we may fairly hope – help *us* with their youth and energy, until the time comes for us to resign our work into their willing hands.[86]

Levvy's strategy was to begin with the young, inculcating kindness in children with hope that the generations would improve over time. As a journalist from the *Sunday Sun* would write, 'The Public schools are therefore the seed plots of her system. . . . [Q]uickening the sensibilities of the young may have the effect of making impossible in the next generation many youthful practices now indulged in without qualm.'[87] To this Levvy would surely have said, 'Amen!'

In addition to publishing *BMHJ*, visiting schools and nurturing the Bands of Mercy, a key pillar of the WSPCA agenda was an annual essay competition open to all students and student-teachers in NSW schools. Following the example of the parent society in London, the purpose of the competition was to encourage children and young people to engage with humane issues and to think critically about how principles of animal protection should be applied in everyday life. Diana Donald has described how the essay competition grew out of the educational activities of the RSPCA ladies' committee in London.[88] The goal was to pique the interest of

[85] Frances Levvy, 'The Growth of Cruelty', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 16 October 1899, 112.
[86] Frances Levvy, '1897', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 15 January 1897, 2. Emphasis original.
[87] 'Inherent Savagery', *The Sunday Sun*, 9 February 1908, 9.
[88] Donald, *Women Against Cruelty*, 114.

teachers, making them allies in the humane education of children. It was also an incentive to join the Bands, as membership was required for entry into the competition, and handsome books were given as prizes. MacCulloch notes that the APS began running an annual essay competition from the outset, but in the first year received only 14 entries.[89] MacCulloch suggested that the WSPCA did not hold its first essay competition until 1890,[90] but contemporary accounts demonstrate that within months of first gathering, the committee began to discuss holding an annual essay competition of their own, using money collected from subscriptions to offer prizes as incentives.[91] This was realized in mid-1887, with the prizes awarded to winners in October of that year. The following year, students were asked to compose an essay on 'The characteristics and proper treatment of domestic animals', with three separate judging categories for students aged 13, 14 and pupil-teachers.[92] The success of the competition was such that a prize-giving ceremony was held during the Exhibition of Women's Industries, with awards and medals distributed by Lady Carrington, wife of Lord Charles Carrington, Governor of NSW.[93] From that time, the essay competition would grow to become one the most significant undertakings of the WSPCA, with an annual prize-giving held in a packed Sydney Town Hall.

While *BMHJ* was initially aimed at children, Levvy expanded the scope to include articles appealing to older children and their parents when she realised they were also imbibing the content.[94] Additionally, the journal was circulated among those who worked directly with animals, including 'cabmen, draymen, grooms, coachmen, farm servants, domestics, butchers, drovers . . .'[95] A highly intelligent woman and gifted communicator, Levvy was able to integrate

[89] MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 128.
[90] MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 128.
[91] 'News of the Day', 19 March 1887, 14; 'News of the Day', 19 November 1887, 13.
[92] 'The Portfolio', *Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 27 October 1888, 5.
[93] 'Exhibition of Women's Industries', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 October 1888, 4.
[94] Frances Levvy, 'Ourselves', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 15 March 1897, 28; Frances Levvy, 'To-Day (for the Seniors)', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 25 January 1902, 6; Frances Levvy, 'Gleanings from the Ages: For Our Senior Readers', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 20 February 1904, 23.
[95] 'The R.S.P.C.A.', *Evening News*, 19 May 1896, 3.

her vast knowledge into compelling arguments on behalf of those who could not speak for themselves – not only the 'dumb animals', but homeless children, drought victims in Australia, famine victims overseas, and all those excluded from corridors of power.

Levvy's decision to commit herself to the cause of animal protection was described by one journalist as a relinquishing of 'society life, in which she was a very popular figure', yet the 'mercy work' drew her more and more into the most influential circles in the colony.[96] In February 1887 Levvy was invited to attend the first reception held by the new Lady Mayoress, Mrs A.J. Riley, alongside dignitaries such as the premier, Sir Henry Parkes, and Mr G.H. Reid (Premier of NSW from 1894-1899).[97] For many years, the patron of the WSPCA was the wife of the NSW Governor. Such patrons included Countess Carrington (1885-1890), the Countess of Jersey (1891-1893), Lady Duff (1893-1895), Viscountess Hampden (1895-1899) and Lady Rawson (1902-1909).[98] Similarly, it was customary for Sydney's Mayoress to be president of the WSPCA, and for church and state dignitaries to attend the annual prize-giving at the Sydney Town Hall.[99] In May 1897 a charity ball was held in the Paddington Town Hall to raise money for the WSPCA, under the patronage of Governor Hampden and Lady Hampden, and Chief Justice Sir Frederick Darley and Lady Darley; the list of attendees constituted a 'who's who' of Sydney society at the time.[100] Furthermore, throughout her career Levvy's work was endorsed by each successive Minister for Public Instruction, beginning with Sir Arthur Renwick (1886-1887) and James Inglis (1887-1889), who gave 'full permission and approval' for Levvy to visit all NSW public schools, to educate children and establish Bands of Mercy.[101]

[96] 'Woman's Column', 13.
[97] 'Humming Bee', 'The Mayoress's First Reception', *Daily Telegraph*, 10 February 1887, 4.
[98] 'Woman's Column', 13. Lord Beauchamp, Governor of NSW from 1899-1901, did not marry until 1902.
[99] See, for example, the accounts in 'Woman's Column', 13; 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Annual Meeting of the Woman's Society', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 November 1902, 5.
[100] 'Charity Ball', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 May 1897, 6; 'Social Gossip', *Australian Star*, 10 April 1897, 9.
[101] 'Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', 7 January 1887, 7; 'Inherent Savagery', 9.

In 1893 the highly respected Sydney veterinary surgeon John Behan offered his services to the WSPCA, expressing a willingness to dispense free advice and medicines for the animals of those who could not afford it. The society eagerly accepted and appointed him an honorary inspector.[102] A month later Mr E. Crosbie followed suit, and within a year inspectors Keen and King had been added to their number.[103] The appointment of an inspector to report on cases of cruelty and abuse had been one of the first acts of the APS at its inception, and listing the number of cautions given and convictions obtained was a central concern of APS meetings.[104] One of the distinctions frequently made about involvement in animal protection movements was between masculine concerns of prosecuting cruelty and extending public facilities, and feminine concerns of education and philanthropy. In the 1980s Prochaska wrote extensively on the role of women as fundraisers and educators in philanthropic organisations in nineteenth century England, while Judith Godden (in her doctoral thesis) cited the prevailing belief that in nineteenth century philanthropy men were the decision makers and providers of infrastructure, while women 'lacking expertise in public society and town planning, fell back on philanthropic and educational solutions.'[105] These authors are referenced by MacCulloch when she notes that the work of inspectors was a 'masculine' activity, while the WSPCA undertook more 'womanly' pursuits of educating the young.[106] In reality, the work of the WSPCA defies such simple characterisation, and they gladly incorporated the work of the honorary inspectors as an essential component of their work. From this time, the monthly WSPCA meetings included a report of the number of cautions given and convictions secured by their inspectors, which was reproduced

[102] 'R.S.P.C.A., Woman's Branch', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 July 1893, 7.
[103] 'General Meetings', *Daily Telegraph*, 26 August 1893, 5; 'Royal Society - Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Australian Star*, 2 October 1894, 2.
[104] 'Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 25 October 1873, 543.
[105] Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England*, 21–72; Judith Godden, 'Philanthropy and the Woman's Sphere, Sydney, 1870-circa 1900' (Sydney, NSW, Macquarie University, 1983), 219.
[106] MacCulloch does, however, note that when defending the work of inspectors, animal protectionists would speak of their 'educational purpose', while detractors accused them of being deliberately punitive. MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 33, 44.

in the *BMHJ*.[107] In addition to this, they noted the free advice that had been offered and the medicines dispensed by Behan at his own cost. Over time, the diligence of WSPCA and APS inspectors saw an improvement in the number of instances and extent of cruelty in Sydney, but they were not without their critics. As early as 1874, the *Empire* newspaper received a complaint that prosecutions brought by APS inspectors were unfair, given they were adjudicated by magistrates who themselves belonged to the society.[108] For the most part, however, the services of the inspectors were lauded for their impact on reducing acts of cruelty towards animals.

Despite Levvy's efforts to maintain the highest standards of integrity in the work of WSPCA and its inspectors, a scandal erupted in April 1896 when Inspector Behan was accused of accepting bribes to overlook offenses.[109] Rumours of 'vexatious prosecutions' and corrupt dealings had begun to surface in February, prompting Levvy to publish a statement in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in which she explained that the inspectors were all men of independent means and drew no salary from their work for the WSPCA. Their expenses were covered by the society, but only up to the level of the fines paid in; beyond this they bore the cost themselves.[110] At the WSPCA meeting a few days later (accounts of which were always published in the Sydney papers), the inspectors were asked about the accusations. The inspectors gave an account of their actions which satisfied the committee, who then 'commended [the inspectors] for their energy and requested [that they] be careful not to prosecute needlessly.'[111] Nevertheless, within a short space of time, the crisis deepened; in April both Behan and Crosbie were charged in separate

[107] See, for example, 'General Meetings', 5; 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Daily Telegraph*, 4 September 1894, 2; Frances Levvy, ed., 'Woman's Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 15 January 1897, 2–3.
[108] 'Sufferer', 'Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Empire*, 13 August 1874, 3. Others complained that APS inspectors ignored cases of cruelty where their intervention was most needed; cf. 'Animals' Protection Society', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 December 1883, 5.
[109] 'Charge of False Pretences: A Humane Society's Inspector', *The Daily Telegraph*, 29 April 1896, 3.
[110] Frances Levvy, 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals - The Fines', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 February 1896, 10.
[111] 'Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 February 1896, 7.

instances.[112] At Behan's hearing Levvy was called as a witness. She defended the WSPCA and its inspectors, stating that she had examined the accounts of Behan, there were no discrepancies in his accounts, and she was unaware of any irregularities until he was charged.[113] At his trial in June, Behan was found guilty and the WSPCA was reprimanded for a 'loose system of issuing summonses'.[114]

In the wake of the scandal, there were those who took the opportunity to launch attacks on Levvy and the WSPCA. *The Bathurst Free Press* published an article entitled, 'Dogs First, Please!', in which they eviscerated the 'high-class ladies of Sydney' for caring more about stray dogs than destitute children.

> The little children who shiver and pine in the effort to live in these days of adversity widespread and deep can 'take their chance' — but the dogs, the darling dogs who have no parents to look after them and prevent them from wandering into quarters where food is scarce or bad, and where their morals may be corrupted—these must be attended to at once![115]

Such a diatribe was unwarranted, given Levvy's concern for the welfare of all children. Since at least 1893 Levvy had collected funds via the Bands of Mercy to donate to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to *Children*, specifically to provide cots for an infants' home.[116] In August 1897 she gave an impassioned defence of public schools, contending that education should be offered not on the basis of means nor the status of one's parents, but 'according to the amount of intelligence with which the Creator has endowed them' – regardless of social class.[117]

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[112] 'Charge of False Pretences', 3; 'Charge Against a SPCA Inspector', *Daily Telegraph*, 9 April 1896, 2; 'Another Inspector Charged', *Australian Star*, 7 May 1896, 2.
[113] 'Charge of False Pretences', 3; 'Alleged False Pretences: A Humane Society's Inspector', *The Australian Star*, 1 May 1896, 2.
[114] 'A False Pretences Defrauder', *Age*, 4 June 1896, 5; 'False Pretences', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 2 May 1896. The trial received national coverage, which was more widely publicised than those of Crosbie.
[115] 'Dogs First, Please!', *Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal*, 18 May 1896, 2.
[116] 'General Meetings', *Daily Telegraph*, 27 February 1893, 3.
[117] Frances Levvy, 'Our Boys and Girls', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 14 September 1897, 102.

Unpleasant as such attacks might be, of greater concern were the targeted campaigns of J. Horbury Hunt who sought not merely to strip the society of its 'Royal' prefix, but to claim it had been using the title fraudulently. Hunt alleged that the WSPCA – known at that time as the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Woman's branch – had no right to use the title. In the Sydney papers, Hunt published correspondence between himself and John Colam (secretary of the British RSPCA) in which Hunt pronounced that 'there is no branch outside England and Wales of the society of which Mr. Colam is secretary, and that no such society except the English one has a right to use the word "Royal".'[118] Levvy responded, offering to show the evidence of affiliation and their reason for using the title – including her original correspondence with Colam. Subsequently, the *Daily Telegraph*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Evening News* all published Levvy's refutations alongside Hunt's accusations.[119] The *Evening News* gave additional commentary in which they described the 'voluminous documentary evidence' shown to them by Levvy, 'in the shape of correspondence between the English society and the woman's branch in New South Wales. There were also exhibited duplicates of bank drafts made payable to the English secretary, John Colam' as payment for official RSPCA medals, cards and literature.[120] It was further proven that Colam had frequently corresponded with Levvy and published some of her articles in *Animal World* (the journal of the British RSPCA), without ever correcting or objecting to her use of 'Royal' in the title of the WSPCA.[121] In effect, Levvy's supporters in the press had defended her against Hunt's accusations.

In addition to the conflicting accounts from Colam, Hunt's record is also enlightening. John Horbury Hunt (1838-1904) was renowned in the colony as a gifted architect, had been a

[118] 'Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 May 1896, 6; 'The R.S.P.C.A.', *Evening News*, 19 May 1896, 3.
[119] 'The R.S.P.C.A.', *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 May 1896, 6; 'Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', 6; 'The R.S.P.C.A.', 19 May 1896, 3.
[120] 'The R.S.P.C.A.', 19 May 1896, 3.
[121] 'Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', 6; 'The R.S.P.C.A.', 19 May 1896, 3.

founding member of the Institute of Architects NSW and was its president from 1889-1895. An energetic member of APS, Hunt was described by his biographer as having 'a lack of love for his fellows balanced by an inordinate love of animals.'[122] In April 1896, only a month before publishing his correspondence with Colam, Hunt had referred to the '*Royal* Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (woman's branch)' in a letter to the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*.[123] In the letter, Hunt objected to the unwomanly work of administering a lethal chamber for dogs, but made no objection to the title of the society. In the years since its inception, several of Hunt's APS colleagues had attended, supported and given rousing speeches at WSPCA meetings, again with no sign of unease with the use of the 'Royal' prefix.[124] In addition to this, Hunt was no stranger to causing a disturbance at the male society. In 1895 he held the APS committee to ransom, having confiscated the society's books and records in an attempt to force his will in a dispute about the payment of one of the APS inspectors. The melodrama stretched over a period of months, complete with veiled threats (those who voted against Hunt 'would find themselves in a very unpleasant situation'), daring his opponents to prosecute him, and finally staging a coup in which the APS was newly incorporated, with Hunt's faction in charge.[125] Ultimately, Levvy's excellent documentation and correspondence (perhaps combined with Hunt's reputation for being regularly entangled in needless disputes) meant she could disprove the charges against herself and the WSPCA. Nonetheless from this time on the use of 'Royal' in the title was discontinued. Henceforth they were known as WSPCA, but the work continued to

[122] J. M. Freeland, 'Hunt, John Horbury (1838–1904)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 18 vols (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University), accessed 25 March 2022, https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hunt-john-horbury-3822.
[123] J. Horbury Hunt, 'Ball in Aid of a Dogs' Home and Lethal Chamber', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 April 1896, sec. To the Editor of the Herald, 7. Emphasis added.
[124] These included Mr J. Sidney (Secretary of APS) and Mr P.N. Trebeck, who in the late 1880s frequently chaired both APS and WSPCA meetings. See, for example, 'Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Evening News*, 16 December 1889. Additionally, in records of their meetings APS referred to the woman's branch as the 'Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals'. Cf. 'Animals Protection Society', *Australian Star*, 5 March 1894, 3.
[125] 'Animals' Protection Society: The Dispute Still Unsettled', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 February 1895, 8; 'The Animals' Protection Society: A Row in the Committee', *Truth*, 3 February 1895, 5; 'Animals' Protection Society', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 April 1895, 3. Prior to this, Hunt had caused a schism in the Institute of Architects. Freeland, 'Hunt, John Horbury (1838–1904)'.

grow. In September 1897 Levvy informed her readers that there were 446 Bands of Mercy in NSW schools with over 26,000 members.[126] Furthermore, it is evident that Levvy's personal cachet was undiminished. In August she was invited to be a part of the first meeting of the National Council of Women (NCW), in recognition of her work with WSPCA having national importance.[127] In September she accepted the invitation of Maybanke Wolstenholme to join a demonstration in favour of womanhood suffrage.[128] When the WSPCA annual meeting was held at the end of the year, Hon. J. Garrard (Minister for Public Instruction) presided, Hon. A.J. Gould (Minister for Justice) and Sir Arthur Renwick (MLC) gave addresses, and Viscountess Hamden distributed prizes.[129] Though the public scandals may have taken a significant personal toll, it is evident that Levvy's professional reputation was undamaged and her influence continued to grow.

This network of colleagues and co-workers was a key contributor to Levvy's longevity and success. In addition to those who supported her mercy work, Levvy read widely across a range of fields and corresponded with an array of friends and experts throughout the world. An 1898 article on 'Fossils' gave an overview of recent archaeological discoveries outlined in the *Lancet* (a scientific and medical magazine) and was followed by an article admiring Hindu attitudes to animals, with reference to the Hindu scriptures. In 1899 she reviewed the work of English anthropologist Harold Fielding, who wrote extensively about Burma and Buddhism, having served there for many years in the colonial government.[130] In July 1902 Levvy wrote of the work of Mrs Adlam, who was advocating for the humane treatment of animals in North Africa, having established a refuge for dogs and horses in Monaco, and an animal infirmary in Cairo.[131] In 1903,

[126] Levvy, 'Our Boys and Girls', 102.
[127] 'The National Council of Women: First Meeting of the Council', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 August 1896, 7.
[128] 'Womanhood Suffrage', *The Daily Telegraph*, 12 September 1896, 5.
[129] Frances Levvy, ed., 'The "Woman's" Society', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 15 February 1897, 14–15.
[130] Frances Levvy, ed., 'In Burmah', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 23 February 1899, 21.
[131] Frances Levvy, ed., 'General News', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 21 July 1902, 74.

Levvy reported receiving a packet from Miss Georgiana Kendall, Vice-President of the American Humane Education society. Levvy wrote that, '. . . it is gratifying to know that in New York and in Philadelphia, the Mercy work of New South Wales is attracting attention and approval.'[132] The following year Levvy wrote an obituary for Frances Power Cobbe, praising her work in animal protection, her ground-breaking work in journalism and her successful campaigns for the 'Married Woman's Property Act' and 'Matrimonial Causes Act'.[133] Other warm memorials were written for Miss Emily Wilson of Leipzig and Miss Maria Mitchell.[134] Her letters were published in the *Woman's Voice* (edited by Wolstenholme), and the *BMHJ* was advertised in the *Dawn* (edited by Louisa Lawson under the pseudonym Dora Falconer).[135] When she was interviewed in 1906 by the *Daily Telegraph*, the reporter was struck by the breadth and volume of international communication Levvy received.

> Amidst a perfectly bewildering mass of foreign correspondence, this friend of animals picks out communication from and to Italy, India, Paris, England, Spain (where humanity displays itself by trying to put down the bull fight), every quarter of the globe it would seem is represented.[136]

In addition to all this, she found time to be a contributor to, or member of, multiple societies and causes, including Boys Brigade, Church of England Temperance Society, the London Society (which aimed to promote Christianity among the Jewish people), Girls Friendly Society, The Fresh Air League, Women's Literary Society, and Womanhood Suffrage Citizen Committee.[137] In a remarkable coup for the Bands of Mercy and WSPCA, Levvy was also instrumental in the

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[132] Frances Levvy, 'Woman's Relief Corps, Washington (America)', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 11 February 1903, 15.
[133] Frances Levvy, ed., 'In Memoriam – Frances Power Cobbe', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 21 June 1904, 62.
[134] Frances Levvy, ed., 'In Memoriam – Emily Grace Lockhart Wilson', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 21 June 1904, 62; Frances Levvy, ed., 'In Memoriam – Maria Elizabeth Mitchell', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 22 August 1902, 87.
[135] See, for example, Frances Levvy, 'To the Editor Woman's Voice', *The Woman's Voice* 1, no. 9 (1 December 1894): 117; Frances Levvy, 'To the Editor Woman's Voice', *The Woman's Voice* 2, no. 26 (27 July 1895): 302; 'Advertising', *The Dawn: A Journal for Australian Women*, 1 May 1889, 28.
[136] 'The Animal's Friend: The Band of Mercy', *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 January 1906, 3.
[137] 'The Boys' Brigade', *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 March 1889, 5; 'Church of England Temperance Society', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 January 1890, 3; 'Girls' Friendly Society: Sale of Work', *The Australian Star*, 17 October 1891, 1; 'Social', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 May 1894, 5; 'Social', *The Daily Telegraph*, 31 August 1895, 10; 'Womanhood Suffrage', 5.

founding of the Church Society for Promotion of Kindness to Animals (CSPKA) in 1903, with the primate of the Anglican Church in Australia as patron.[138] In doing so she forged an alliance that the male dominated APS had long striven, without success, to achieve.

Not content only to write letters and articles, Levvy visited hundreds of schools promoting the cause. In 1899, at the age of sixty-seven, Levvy gave sixty public addresses throughout the year.[139] By 1902 the Woman's Column in one of the Sydney papers announced that the WSPCA had 'assumed such dimensions that it has the distinction of being the largest in the State, comprising 18,000 members, and has for president Mrs. Hughes, Mayoress of Sydney, and a large committee of influential women.'[140] In August 1905, aged seventy-three, Levvy delivered sixteen addresses at public schools in the same month.[141] She petitioned members of parliament and prominent philanthropists on behalf of children and animals, and was thus successful in providing drinking troughs for horses and dogs, shelters for stray animals, humane methods for euthanising stray dogs, homes for retired working horses, benevolent treatment of circus animals, and more.[142] The lethal chamber for dogs had been a long and difficult struggle to realise. *BMHJ* had first published a letter from the Public Works Department announcing that a chamber at Belmore Police Barracks was completed and ready for use in June 1897.[143] Yet it was not until March 1903 that Levvy was able to announce that it had finally been opened for use.[144]

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[138] Frances Levvy, 'The Church Society for Promotion of Kindness to Animals (NSW)', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 11 February 1903, 14.
[139] 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals - Annual Meeting of the Women's Society - Presentation of Prizes', *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 November 1899, 3.
[140] 'Woman's Column', 13.
[141] 'News', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 September 1905, 6.
[142] See, for example, Frances Levvy, 'The Dog's Shelter', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 18 February 1895, 14; 'Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals - Woman's Branch', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 May 1895, 6; 'Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Daily Telegraph*, 4 May 1895, 3; 'Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.', *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 7 December 1895, 1171; 'Woman's Society', *The Star*, 7 May 1910, 13; Frances Levvy, 'Wild Animals at the Circus', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 May 1911, sec. Letters to the editor, 5; 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals - A Humane Institute: What Is Done by the Women's Society', *The Daily Telegraph*, 4 January 1912, 15; 'Home for Horses Opened at Little Bay: SPCA Sanctuary', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 September 1921, 8; 'Red-Letter Day', *The Sun*, 2 September 1921, 4.
[143] Frances Levvy, ed., 'The Lethal Chamber', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 16 June 1897, 62.
[144] Frances Levvy, ed., 'The Lethal Chamber', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 16 March 1903, 26.

This had only been achieved after Levvy and Miss Suamarez Smith, daughter of the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, had personally 'waited on the Mayor . . . to ascertain when the Lethal Chamber for merciful death to diseased and homeless dogs would be in use.'[145]

In spite of her achievements, Levvy never courted the limelight for herself, and showed humility when praise was heaped upon her. The donation of the Sydney Horse Ambulance in July 1903 was attributed to Levvy by Lord Mayor Thomas Hughes, which was understandable given Levvy had been attempting to raise funds for the project since early 1897.[146] Levvy declined to be credited, asserting that the cost of £50 was donated by an anonymous friend.[147] Two years later Levvy would disclose that the money had been gifted in her honour for the purpose of purchasing the ambulance, by close friend Mrs Matilda Harris.[148] Eighteen years later, the gift of a *motorised* ambulance for horses garnered the attention of society and media alike, with *The Sunday Times* still extolling the virtues of Miss Levvy – while being careful not to say she made the donation:

> The horse ambulance, which attracted so much attention at the opening of the Convalescent Home for Horses at Long Bay, is a tribute to the untiring efforts in the cause of suffering animals of Miss Frances Levvy, who for years has devoted her time to a propaganda of kindness.[149]

Once again, adamant that she not be credited with this generosity, Levvy issued corrections to the papers stating that the horse ambulance was the gift of the Women's SPCA, not of herself personally.[150] This is not to say that Levvy scorned publicity, but rather that she attempted to ensure the attention was directed at the cause to which she was devoted.

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[145] Frances Levvy, 'Woman's Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NSW)', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 21 July 1902, 74.
[146] 'Sydney Horse Ambulance', *The Australian Star*, 30 July 1903, 6; 'Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals - Woman's Branch', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 March 1897, 5.
[147] Frances Levvy, 'Dedication of the Ambulance for Injured Horses', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 17 August 1903, 86; 'An Ambulance for Horses', *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 July 1903, 3.
[148] Frances Levvy, 'Tom - A Distinguished Public Servant', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 20 July 1905, 81.
[149] 'Women's News', 14.
[150] 'Red-Letter Day', 4.

Another example of Levvy's eagerness to partner with others and ensure they received due appreciation is evident in her alliance with Superintendent Edward, head of the Department of Police Traffic. In December 1901, WSPCA dispensed with the use of honorary inspectors – who had obtained more than 600 convictions for cruelty to animals during their time of service – as they had become unnecessary due to the new Police division.[151] Rather than abandon this work, Levvy built a strong working relationship with Superintendent Edwards, who promised to investigate all claims of cruelty forwarded to him by Levvy. Publicly, Levvy lauded the work of Edwards and his staff of seventy constables at every opportunity. She also continued to publish the number of convictions for cruelty in *BMHJ* and the monthly reports of WSPCA meetings. In this way, she threw the weight of her reputation and vast network behind the work of the Police Traffic division.

MacCulloch has drawn a distinction between animal preservation movements, which sought to engender esteem and affection for animals (especially those indigenous to Australia), and protection movements which sought to curb cruelty and unwarranted brutality (particularly in the slaughter of animals). While animal protection emerged from evangelical Christianity, with an emphasis on moral reform and links to temperance and Sabbatarian movements, animal preservation grew out of scientific organisations that emerged in late Victorian Britain.[152] Animal protection thus focused on moral reform (primarily of the working class) as a means to change behaviour. In contrast, animal preservation concentrated on tempering the loss of natural habitats to prevent the decline of animal and plant species, particularly indigenous species.[153] Central to MacCulloch's thesis is the idea that these were separate and discrete movements,

[151] Frances Levvy, 'Annual Report 1902', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 15 December 1902, 136.
[152] MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 5; cf. Donald, *Women Against Cruelty*, 5.
[153] Animal preservation movements are sometimes seen as the forebears of the conservation movements that arose in the mid-twentieth century. See MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 175.

despite the tendency of the public to conflate the two. She situates APS, WSPCA and Bands of Mercy all firmly within the protectionist camp. Yet Levvy's activism cannot be so neatly divided.

Targets of Levvy's humane campaigns defy all attempts at neat categorisation. I have noted above that animal protection movements were largely paternalistic and masculinist, arising from the desire of the 'respectable' classes to curb the behaviour of their social inferiors. Cruelty was often depicted as fundamentally working-class and uncivilised. Therefore, efforts were largely focussed on the treatment of working animals and those which were farmed for food. This is evident in Levvy's protracted campaigns for humane methods of disposing of stray dogs, improved transportation of stock and cattle by railway and better treatment of working horses, especially those which pulled omnibuses up steep Sydney streets. Each edition of *BMHJ* included an account of how many cautions and fines had been issued for cruelty or neglect of working horses. In February 1895, the report noted owners who were targeted for working horses which were lame or unhealthy, forcing exhausted horses to draw omnibuses, driving cab horses 'furiously', unnecessary use of whips and over-driving.[154] However, Levvy also targeted *the passengers* who through their own thoughtlessness and distraction missed their stop, and thus required the horses to needlessly stop again.[155] Furthermore, when the owners of Sydney's working horses appealed to the WSPCA for help, Levvy petitioned the Mayor on their behalf, highlighting 'the great suffering inflicted on horses by falling on the wet blocked road-ways and to request that those streets might not be flushed during the winter months, after a certain hour.'[156]

[154] Frances Levvy, ed., 'Inspector's Report', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 18 February 1895, 14.
[155] Frances Levvy, 'Kindness to Horses: Action by the WSPCA', *Australian Star*, 25 March 1897, 7.
[156] 'SPCA - Woman's Branch' (SMH 18 May 1895), 6.

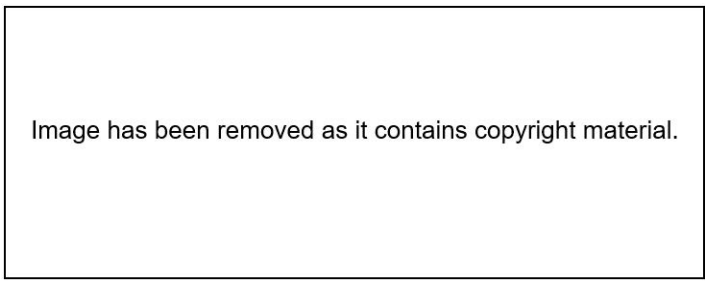

Figure 4: 'The Horse's Entreaties', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of NSW*, 22 September 1902.

Additionally, Levvy's campaigns targeted the cruelty of upper- and middle-class sporting pursuits such as pigeon shooting, coursing, and whipping of horses when driving.[157] Those who engaged in such pursuits she condemned as 'utterly cruel, utterly bad.'[158] In October 1902, *BMHJ* ran an article entitled, 'Wanted, Good Shots'. In it, Levvy goaded 'crack shots' to give up pigeon shooting for sport in order to 'air their courage and skill in the hawk-infested parts of the country.'[159] The goal in encouraging this was to protect sheep and lambs attacked by eagle-hawks in Molong, NSW.

> Surely these leisurely gentlemen who can afford to spend so much time to shoot the harmless gentle pigeons for £50 matches, &c, can spare the

[157] See, for example Frances Levvy, 'Coursing and Cruelty', *The Daily Telegraph*, 8 April 1903, sec. Letters to the editor, 5; Frances Levvy, 'Pigeon Matches and Coursing', *The Daily Telegraph*, 9 September 1903, sec. Letters to the editor, 4; Frances Levvy, 'Cruelty to Animals', *Evening News*, 4 September 1905, 3; Frances Levvy, 'Coursing, a Cruel Sport', *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 December 1906, sec. Letters to the editor, 13.
[158] Frances Levvy, ed., 'The Pigeon Match', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 21 July 1902, 77.
[159] Frances Levvy, ed., 'Wanted, Good Shots', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 21 October 1902, 110.

> time to visit this hawk-infested place; and since betting gives a keener zest to their pleasure, the prize can be for the most successful sportsmen . . .[160]

The concern was not the shooting of birds *per se* but shooting the wrong birds – the 'harmless' and 'gentle' – versus shooting the right birds – predators threatening the livelihood of farmers. The habits of fashionable ladies who wore feathered hats, kid gloves, and furs were not spared criticism.[161] Despite otherwise evincing a deep love for the royal family, not even King Edward VII was spared Levvy's disgust, when it was reported that 108,000 ermines were to be killed to furnish his coronation robe.[162] Levvy also promoted love for, and preservation of, Australia's native flora and fauna – something which MacCulloch attributes to animal preservation movements.[163] Yet Levvy did so with pragmatism and an awareness of economic realities. In 1903, when speaking out against the culling of native Australian animals, Levvy ceded that, 'wild animals must decrease or the sheep and cattle would disappear.' The tragedy was not so much the culling as, 'the waste of life and wholesale neglect of the value of the skins of the slaughtered creatures.'[164] These skins could instead have brought revenue to Australia, as could 'the eucalypti [that] are being actually destroyed while in Europe and America it is highly prized not only for the oil distilled from the leaves, but for the health-giving property of the trees.'[165] Even while forging new paths for humane treatment in New South Wales, Levvy remained a product of her time, calling for the humane slaughter of animals, not the abandonment of animal products.

In the first decade of the twentieth century – twenty years into Levvy's animal activism – the cumulative effects of her tireless campaign were remarked upon. In 1906, Sydney's *Daily Telegraph*

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[160] Levvy, 'Good shots', 110.
[161] Justine, 'Fashion and Fancies', *Wellington Times*, 7 April 1904, sec. Our Sydney Ladies' letter, 2.The article directed people to Levvy for more information. Women's fashions will be discussed in greater detail when I address the gendered nature both of Levvy's work and attacks against her.
[162] Levvy, 'General News', 76.
[163] MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 2.
[164] Frances Levvy, 'What Australia Casts Away', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 16 March 1903, 30.
[165] Levvy, 'What Australia Casts Away', 30.

ran a story on Levvy entitled, 'The Animal's Friend.' The article began, 'The name of Miss Frances Levvy has become a household word in Sydney by reason of her love of the animal kingdom.'[166] In 1908, Levvy (now seventy-five years old) reflected on the changes she had witnessed over the last two decades, rejoicing that, 'It is hardly ever now that one sees a sore-backed, lame miserable horse in the streets.' Yet once again, she insisted on sharing credit with others, particularly 'Mr Edward and his traffic police' with whom she had cultivated a strong partnership in the aftermath of the Behan affair.[167] Yet the impact of Levvy's personal activism was not lost on the journalist, who declared:

> The moving spirit of [the WSPCA and Bands of Mercy NSW] was Miss Frances Levvy, then considerably known for her devotion to the welfare of dumb animals, but later on quite celebrated throughout New South Wales for persevering ardour in that class of social work. A quarter of a century's continuous labour in a good cause stands to her good credit.[168]

Workers and cab drivers also recognised the impact of Levvy and the mercy workers, noting that fewer horses were now being withdrawn from service, because fewer ill or mistreated horses were making it to work.[169] Levvy was succeeding in preventing cruelty to animals before it occurred.

In addition to this, Levvy was continuing to facilitate the annual essay competition. By 1906 this had grown so successful that concerns were raised about the enormous cost – both financially and in terms of the strain it placed on Levvy.[170] Nonetheless, the competition went ahead and 800 books were awarded in a prize-giving that took over two hours. A report in the *Daily Telegraph* admired the 'immense amount of work' Levvy undertook, noting that:

> Her time since the middle of September has been taken up with reading and judging the essays sent in, choosing the prizes, and writing names in 800 books, in itself no small task. The thanks of all the humane people in the community are due to Miss Levvy for her self-imposed and most

[166] 'The Animal's Friend: The Band of Mercy', 3.
[167] 'Inherent Savagery', 9. Edward was Superintendent of Traffic Police in Sydney.
[168] 'Inherent Savagery', 9.
[169] 'Inherent Savagery', 9.
[170] 'Women's Work Among Animals', 13.

> necessary work of instilling right feelings in the minds of school children. But the prize-giving has become now such a large affair that a lightening of the labor might be managed on future occasions. . .[171]

While the WSPCA and Bands of Mercy were continuing to have an impact on students in NSW, it was clear that Levvy was bearing much of the burden herself, despite being supported by a bevy of society ladies. In 1908 the essay competition saw 700 prizes distributed, but a decision was made not to hold an award ceremony. Instead, prizes were sent to schools to be distributed by the persons chosen by the head teachers.[172] A further step was taken in 1912, when the competition became biennial due to 'the funds of the committee [being] so heavily taxed.' Nonetheless, 817 prizes were awarded that year.[173]

By March 1910, Levvy was a seasoned campaigner for animal rights and a tireless leader of a movement which had grown to over four hundred Bands of Mercy with a membership of approximately 70,000.[174] Still, newspapers lauded her 'indefatigable' exertions 'on behalf of the 'bus horse in particular, and every suffering, overworked, underfed horse in general.'[175] Still, she waged campaigns against cruelty in letters to the editor and in the pages of *BMHJ*.[176] Although her physical strength was waning, Levvy pressed on with her campaigns. During the Great War (1914-1918) Levvy turned her attention to ensuring that horses serving at war were adequately cared for and supplied, publishing instructions for her members on how to crochet wither pads to protect the backs of the horses.[177] In her typical style of networking and cooperation, she promoted the 'Blue Cross' animal charity rather than retain credit for herself.[178] While she continued to edit and publish *BMHJ*, Levvy included articles about the heroics of (and care for)

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[171] 'In the Throng', *The Daily Telegraph*, 22 November 1906, sec. For Women, 13.
[172] 'In the Throng', *The Daily Telegraph*, 4 December 1908, sec. For Women, 3.
[173] 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals - A Humane Institute: What Is Done by the Women's Society', 15.
[174] Frances Levvy, 'To the Editor', *The Daily Telegraph*, 15 March 1910, 3.
[175] 'Woman's Society', 13.
[176] See, for example, Frances Levvy, 'Bird Destruction', *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 July 1910, 21; Frances Levvy, 'A Cruel Practice', *The Daily Telegraph*, 18 November 1910, sec. To the Editor, 15; Frances Levvy, 'Barbaric Amusement', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 25 October 1909, 3.
[177] Frances Levvy, 'Horses in The War', *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 21 May 1915, 2.
[178] Levvy, 'Horses in the War', 2.

animals serving on the Front.[179] Right throughout the war, and for five years beyond that, Levvy collated, edited and distributed *BMHJ*. Finally, in August 1923, at the age of ninety-two, Levvy made the difficult decision to cease publication. By this time she was bedridden, blind and partially deaf.[180] The final issue followed the pattern of the previous thirty-six years, goading her readers to kindness and decrying acts of cruelty. The only evidence of its being the last issue was a brief paragraph headed simply, 'Farewell'.[181]

The following year, on 29 November 1924, Levvy died at her home in Waverley. In her will, Levvy requested that her funeral be 'as simple as is consistent with the respect due to me and that a simple headstone be placed over my grave with only my name, the date of my death and the words "The Friend of Animals".'[182] Reflecting her enduring love for her family, Levvy further directed that oil paintings of her mother, her sister Emma, and Emma's husband Dr Clarke be removed from their frames and placed in her coffin.

In the weeks following her death, tributes flowed into major Sydney newspapers, and an essay competition was commissioned in her memory. Yet within a short span of time, Levvy's memory faded from public consciousness, despite her decades of philanthropic campaigning. The following chapter will examine more closely Levvy's embodiment of (and at times, resistance to) contemporary gender roles; the implications of her work as a public (female) interpreter of scripture; and the complexity of her attitude to other races and religions.

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[179] Frances Levvy, ed., 'Australian Light Horses', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 29 May 1916, 8; Frances Levvy, ed., 'Tales of Heroism of Animals under Fire of German Guns', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 28 December 1918, 10; Frances Levvy, ed., 'Magnificent, Silent Heroism, and Its Contrast', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 28 March1918, 6.
[180] Jennifer MacCulloch, 'Levvy, Frances Deborah (1831–1924)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, n.d.), http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/levvy-frances-deborah-13044/text23587.
[181] Frances Levvy, 'Farewell', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales* 38, no. 10 (31 August 1923): 2.
[182] 'Will of Frances Deborah Levvy' (Waverley NSW, 15 August 1924), 1.

2
Gendered Mercy

'If our good ladies will just direct all their spare time, means, and zeal in the way of teaching the young to be kind to all dumb creatures, then they will therein find a wide and healthy field of operation in work for which the Creator specially designed them.'[1]

Introduction

For nearly forty years – from 1884 until 1923, just a year before her death – Frances Levvy was a leading light in the movement for prevention of cruelty to animals and the nurture of kindness and mercy in children. While it was to the WSPCA and the Bands of Mercy that she truly devoted herself, Levvy was involved in a large philanthropic network and engaged with a variety of causes. An examination of her activism demonstrates the power of Levvy's personal agency as she engaged with contemporary debates – social, political and religious – through her advocacy and philanthropy. Levvy wrote prolifically on the nature of womanhood and appropriate education for girls, and the manner in which scripture should be interpreted and applied to issues of public morality or concern. She was also eager to deliberate on other races and religions. While her remarks are often laudatory, there is an underlying colonialism and paternalism to Levvy's views that defies simplistic analysis.

Philanthropy as it was enacted in the Australian colonies was based on the British model. It was inherently individualistic and (for some, at least) self-serving. Feminist historian of philanthropy and welfare Shurlee Swain describes how 'the rich were expected to reach out to the poor, giving money and time to alleviate need.'[2] There was a sense in which, by doing so, the rich were also alleviating their own guilt; structural change was out of the question, but charity was a staple of

[1] J. Horbury Hunt, 'Ball in Aid of a Dogs' Home and Lethal Chamber', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 April 1896, sec. To the Editor of the Herald, 7.
[2] Shurlee Swain, 'Women and Philanthropy in Colonial and Post-Colonial Australia', *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 7, no. 4 (1996): 429.

British Christian practice.[3] In line with such attitudes, most philanthropy aimed at improving the conditions of the working class through changing their behaviour and encouraging self-improvement. Levvy's animal protection activism reinforced this through focussing on education to mould character and change behaviour. But it diverged in taking aim at the practices of the upper classes – what was worn by fashionable ladies; what was harmed by the sport of idle men. In this, Levvy challenges the dominant narrative that animal protection movements were split along gender lines.

In the late nineteenth century, the role of women within society was expanding and evolving. In some situations, women sought to challenge existing conceptions of femininity, while in others they looked to appropriate and re-purpose traditional roles in new ways. This meant that debates around the role of women tended to be expressed within a maternalist paradigm.[4] More and more middle-class women were finding meaningful occupation outside the home, particularly in voluntary philanthropic work.[5] In Australia, women made up the majority of those engaged in philanthropy and social reform, and in mission work both local and international.[6] Significantly, the appropriateness of that work was adjudged by how well it could be interpreted as an extension of women's work within the home.[7] O'Brien argues that clergy saw female sexuality as dangerous, to be moderated and controlled via marriage and motherhood.[8] Nonetheless, the dearth of men in the church left a vacuum filled by women. Inevitably, this resulted in a tension

[3] Cf. Chien-hui Li, 'A Union of Christianity, Humanity, and Philanthropy: The Christian Tradition and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Nineteenth-Century England', Society & Animals 8, no. 3 (2000): 268; Swain, 'Women and Philanthropy', 429.
[4] Marilyn Lake, 'A History of Feminism in Australia', in *Australian Feminism: A Companion*, ed. Barbara Caine (Melbourne, Vic.: Oxford University Press, 1998), 133. In the first article of the first edition of *The Dawn*, the power of women was located in their maternal, nurturing role. Dora Falconer, ed., 'About Ourselves', *The Dawn: A Journal for Australian Women* 1, no. 1 (15 May 1888): 4; Anne Philomena O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers: Women and Religion in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005), 41; Miriam Dixson, *The Real Matilda: Woman and Identity in Australia – 1788 to the Present*, 4th edition (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1999), 66.
[5] Tanya Evans, *Fractured Families: Life on the Margins in Colonial New South Wales* (Sydney, NSW: UNSW Press, 2015), 191.
[6] O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers*, 38–39; Stuart Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World: Evangelical Christianity in Australia*, Revised (Brunswick East, Victoria: Acorn Press, 2012), 66.
[7] Cf. Introduction, 5–8.
[8] O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers*, 38.

between the need for women to enact the caring, welfare mission of the church, and the need for clergy to reinforce (and thereby protect) patriarchal leadership structures in church and home.[9] Women of faith, such as Levvy, became active in work outside of the home in ways that their social and religious sensibilities held to be consistent with their gender. Yet they did not leave the status quo unchallenged. Rather, their actions necessitated a re-visioning of the role of Christian women seeking to do good outside the walls of the church. Consequently, the increasing engagement of women in the public sphere was largely sanctioned if it could be interpreted as embodying traditional feminine virtues.[10]

The work of (re)interpretation was one for which Levvy was well fitted. Despite the scarcity of women intellectuals represented in Australian religious historiography, the nineteenth century saw a flowering of female Bible interpreters.[11] Such women were often writing and speaking to justify their philanthropic work and their project of moral reformation.[12] Levvy toed a line whereby she undertook activism fuelled by a sense of the urgency and the righteousness of her cause, while acting within carefully constructed gender roles. Swain has enumerated how Christian women preachers negotiated the tensions between ideological and theological constraints, and their boundary pushing actions.[13] The same can be said of female philanthropists. Any examination of Levvy's activism must attend carefully not only to *what* was said and done, but *how* and *why*. As feminist historian Susie Steinbach has asserted, we must balance documentation (of the lives of women) with analysis of their ideology, assigning 'equal weight to the power of language as to the importance of experience.'[14]

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[9] Shurlee Swain, 'In These Days of Female Evangelists and Hallelujah Lasses: Women Preachers and the Redefinition of Gender Roles in the Churches in Late Nineteenth-Century Australia', *Journal of Religious History* 26, no. 1 (2002): 67; O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers*, 39.
[10] O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers*, 41–45.
[11] Cf. Introduction, 15–21.
[12] Christiana de Groot and Marion Ann Taylor, eds., *Recovering Nineteenth-Century Women Interpreters of the Bible* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 6.
[13] Swain, 'In These Days', 66.
[14] Susie Steinbach, *Women in England 1760-1914: A Social History* (London: Phoenix, 2005), 3–4.

What emerges from a study of Levvy's life work is a picture of the complex, dynamic interplay of ideology and conviction. In what follows, I examine Levvy's activism, attending carefully to her language and experience (what she did, wrote and implied) under the key themes of gender roles, biblical interpretation, and embedded racism.

Gendering Kindness

The moral formation of children had long been imbued with Christian significance.[15] Catherine Smithies, founder of the Bands of Mercy in Britain was reported to have said on her deathbed that teaching children kindness to animals was 'preparing the way for the gospel of Christ.'[16] It was further understood that such work was fitting and natural for women.[17] Thus the stated aim of the Bands of Mercy NSW was to form the characters of children through cultivating kindness towards all 'dumb' creatures. Every member of the Bands pledged themselves '. . . to protect all animals from ill-treatment with all my power. When I am compelled to take the life of any creature I will spare all needless pain.'[18]

While Levvy desired to see all her 'Mercy boys and girls' develop moral virtues, her language and instruction was often differentiated along gender lines. Levvy distinguished between boys, who should be trained to be 'just, manly men' and girls who ought to become 'tender, womanly women.'[19] One surprising example of this is in the questions set for the annual essay competition run by WSPCA and open to all Band of Mercy members. Initially, there was one question judged in three age categories. In 1888, for example, the topic set to which all entrants had to respond was 'The Characteristics and Proper Treatment of Domesticated Animals,' with entrants 'divided

[15] Meredith Lake, *The Bible in Australia: A Cultural History*, First edition (Sydney NSW: NewSouth Publishing, 2018), 141; Li, 'A Union of Christianity, Humanity, and Philanthropy', 271.
[16] Li, 'A Union of Christianity, Humanity, and Philanthropy', 275.
[17] Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780–1850*, Revised (London: Routledge, 2002), 335, 343. Cf. Introduction, 7–8.
[18] Frances Levvy, 'The Bands of Mercy in N.S.W.', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 December 1886, 14.
[19] Frances Levvy, "Coursing and Cruelty", The Daily Telegraph, 8 April 1903, sec. To the Editor, 5.

into three classes — pupil teachers and pupils of 14 and of 13 years of age'.[20] By 1899, two additional 'difficult' questions were set specifically for boys: 'Describe the proper treatment of a horse during a long journey, the horse to be in good condition at the end of the journey'; or 'State what you consider to be the most humane method of transit of stock by railway.'[21] By 1902, it was normal to set separate questions only for older boys, with the question about humane transport of stock having become standard. Alternatively, older boys could respond to the question: 'Describe the most humane method of training a colt to Saddle and Harness.'[22] The other questions set for older students and pupil-teachers, including, presumably, any boys who chose not to answer those set specifically for their gender, asked about biblical injunctions concerning humanity to animals, the effect of cruelty to animals on the human character, and whether it was humane for animals to be displayed in travelling shows and exhibits. Thus, boys were being asked to comment on questions that were 'occupying the minds of experienced railway authorities' and politicians (public roles from which women were excluded),[23] while all girls (and boys who so chose) were asked to consider more internal, spiritual questions about the impact of cruelty on one's character and what 'Holy Scripture' had to say on the matter.[24] Different gender expectations were also evident in Levvy's reports of the talks she gave in NSW schools. In speaking to boys such as the members of the 'Captain Cook' Band of Mercy at Forest Lodge Public School, Levvy called on them to give assurances that they would act to protect animals. In speaking to girls from the same school Levvy's advice was distinctly domestic in nature. The girls of the 'Blue Bell' Band of Mercy from Forest Lodge were urged 'to show especial patience and kindness to the little children in their homes'.[25] Likewise, the girls from 'The Rose of Ultimo' were lectured on their home duties, being reminded that 'it was not

[20] 'The Women's Exhibition', *The Daily Telegraph*, 24 October 1888, 6.
[21] Frances Levvy, 'Report, 1899', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 20 December 1899, 134.
[22] Frances Levvy, ed., 'Essay Competition, 1902', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 21 July 1902, 78.
[23] Levvy, 'Report, 1899', 134.
[24] Levvy, 'Essay Competition, 1902', 78.
[25] Frances Levvy, ed., 'News Column', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 21 July 1902, 74.

possible to show real kindness to animals, and be careless of young children, especially the baby at home, who needs so much patience.'[26] Boys from the same school were simply asked to renew their pledge. Reports of these talks also illustrate the differences in naming practices of boys' and girls' bands, but the girls' Bands were not always named after inanimate, beautiful objects from nature; there was a 'Grace Darling' Band in Pyrmont and a 'Frances Levvy' Band in Kelso. Both these women were renowned for their public activity – Levvy in animal protection, and Grace Darling (1815-1842) for risking her life to save survivors stranded by the wreck of the steamship *Forfarshire* in 1838. This is a fitting example of the complexity of gender roles and attitudes in Levvy's praxis. At the same time that Levvy was exhorting girls to be patient and kind *in the home*, those same girls were identifying as heroines women who acted with courage and conviction in the public arena – women like Levvy herself.

Boisterous boys and careless girls

Gender differences were further reinforced in other, subtler ways. In the February 1895 issue of *BMHJ*, two stories are told of children causing suffering to animals. The first, entitled, 'Remember Flick' tells the story of a young girl who, during a game of hide and seek at her cousin's house, locks a pet dog in a summer house so that he won't betray her hiding place. The girl later returns to her own home having forgotten to release the dog. It is two days before she hears that the dog is missing and realises that she has left it imprisoned. Rushing back to her cousin's house, the dog is freed and mercifully nursed back to health. The tale ends with the girl recalling the terror she felt at the suffering caused by her 'carelessness and forgetfulness'.[27] On the next page, Levvy comments on a story that had appeared in the English *Daily News* about two young boys who stole some pigeons, deliberately crippled them and then stoned them to

[26] Levvy, ed., 'News Column', 75.
[27] Frances Levvy, ed., 'Remember Flick', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 18 February 1895, 21.

death.[28] The contrast between these two stories is telling for what they suggest about the differing natures of boys and girls. Girls cause suffering through their *inactivity* and mindlessness; boys cause suffering through their premeditated *action*. Grimshaw et al., in discussing the ways in which the ideology of separate spheres was romanticised among the 'urban middle class', identifies a pattern in which men are commonly portrayed as active defenders. By contrast, women's role was to be moral guardians – a mostly passive, 'spiritual' role.[29]

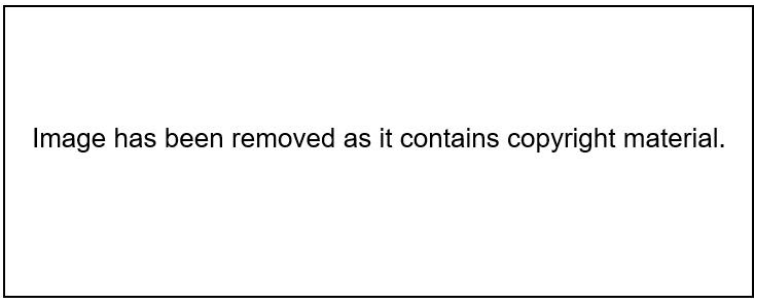

Figure 5: Highlighted excerpt from Frances Levvy, 'The Growth of Cruelty', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of NSW*, 16 October 1899, 112.

[28] Frances Levvy, 'Where Is the Difference?', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 18 February 1895, 22.
[29] Patricia Grimshaw et al., *Creating a Nation* (Ringwood, Vic: McPhee Gribble Publishers, 1994), 117.

This pattern is repeated several times in Levvy's work. In 'The Growth of Cruelty' Levvy critiques the way in which children are 'trained into habits of cruelty'.[30] Although she doesn't speak specifically to 'boys' or 'girls' in this article, the choice of pronouns is illuminating. When describing how a child is encouraged to whip a rocking horse (active behaviour), male pronouns are used to refer to the child. When describing a child who forgets to feed a pet bird (passive or inattentive behaviour), female pronouns are used.

Throughout her thesis, MacCulloch argues that in the realm of animal protection men worked on systemic change and public facilities, while women engaged in philanthropy and education because they were more concerned with promoting kindness than actively preventing cruelty.[31] Yet MacCulloch also acknowledges that historians have largely ignored the public role of women due to an 'uncritical' focus on male-centric historical records (which are more readily accessed than those which focus on female achievements).[32] Furthermore, she accepts that the ideology of separate spheres as expressed in the 'cult of motherhood' was the primary locus of identity, power and motivation for women engaging in animal protection work. MacCulloch issues a caution to 'contemporary feminists [who] may wish to move "beyond" this dichotomous approach.'[33] Instead, she urges us to remember that women engaged in animal protection embraced a belief in biological difference. This was expressed in a conviction that women's inherent moral and spiritual superiority must move them beyond the home to work for the regeneration of society. According to MacCulloch, this ideological and spiritual framework led inextricably to a gendered division of labour: 'Women's "innate" piety, goodness, morality and spirituality made them ideally suited to policing the home and unsuited to policing the streets.'[34]

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[30] Frances Levvy, 'The Growth of Cruelty', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 16 October 1899, 112.
[31] Jennifer MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture: The Animal Protection and Preservation Movements in Sydney, 1880-1930', Doctor of Philosophy (Sydney, NSW: University of Sydney, 1993), 44–46, 79.
[32] MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 79–80.
[33] MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 82.
[34] MacCulloch, 83; cf. Steinbach, *Women in England*, 5.

Thus the APS would prosecute cruelty through the inspectorate, while the WSPCA devoted itself to educating children to be kind and humane to animals.

Other feminist historians reject such a simple delineation. O'Brien suggested that female philanthropists entered an 'intermediate sphere' that straddled public and private worlds and thereby '*modified* the ideology of dedicated motherhood' rather than simply reproducing it.[35] Swain has argued that engagement in welfare work provided women with an opportunity to move '*outside* their accepted sphere', rather than simplistically reproduce their maternal role outside the home.[36] Additionally, Diana Donald has demonstrated that women frequently led the way in animal welfare initiatives that directly confronted, and thereby ameliorated, cruelty.[37] What, then, is the truth of Levvy's animal protection work – was she inhabiting and reproducing strictly gendered understandings of her womanly role? Or did she move outside the realm of philanthropy and education into more 'masculine' concerns of identifying and punishing cruelty?

Much of the laudatory coverage of Levvy's campaigns emphasised her conformity to contemporary gender norms. In 1906, Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* proclaimed:

> The name of Miss Frances Levvy has become a household word in Sydney by reason of her love of the animal kingdom, and the *extremely good and womanly work* which it has been her life task to perform in connection with the spread of her tenets among the school children of our State.[38]

Near the end of her career, the *Sunday Times* applauded Levvy's decades of activism, noting that she had been 'instrumental in keeping up the League (sic) of Mercy which does much good *in a*

[35] O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers*, 41. Emphasis added.
[36] Shurlee Swain, 'A Long History of Faith-Based Welfare in Australia: Origins and Impact', *Journal of Religious History* 41, no. 1 (2017): 85. Emphasis added. See also Swain's discussion of Catherine Helen Spence, who became interested in in social reform because it allowed her 'to "trespass" into the world of men' and 'provided access to the public sphere'. Shurlee Swain, 'Women and Philanthropy', 434.
[37] Diana Donald, *Women Against Cruelty: Protection of Animals in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, Gender in History (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2020), 94–95.
[38] 'The Animal's Friend: The Band of Mercy', *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 January 1906, 3. Emphasis added.

quiet and unostentatious way.'[39] However, not all of Levvy's contemporaries were so enamoured of her work, or convinced she was a model of womanly virtue. In 1896, prior to his campaign to have the WSPCA stripped of their 'Royal' prefix, Horbury Hunt had deplored the notion of the WSPCA having any involvement in a dog's home and lethal chamber (for humanely disposing of strays). In a letter to the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Hunt wrote that it was 'impossible' for members of the 'fair sex' to competently establish and administer such a facility.[40] Hunt finished his epistle by imploring the 'good ladies' to 'just direct all their spare time, means and zeal in the way of teaching the young to be kind to all dumb creatures, . . . [a] work for which the Creator specially designed them.'[41] Such criticism was neither original nor unexpected. Donald describes similar letters written to newspapers in England in the 1860s during the campaign to establish what would become the Battersea Dogs' Home.[42] A month later (in the wake of the corruption scandal involving WSPCA hon. Inspector John Behan), Hunt argued that employing inspectors to investigate instances of animal cruelty was masculine work that should be left to the APS. Hunt specifically accused Levvy of abandoning the role for which she was fitted by nature of her womanhood. While ostensibly praising the Bands of Mercy, Hunt lamented that educating children to be kind to animals had become,

> . . . too tame a work for its originator [Levvy] who therefore neglected her womanly work for the masculine work of the APS . . . There is a wide difference between teaching children and punishing rough hearted men for their cruel acts, one by nature belonging to woman and the other by duty to man.[43]

Thus, Horbury Hunt would agree that the educational work of the Bands of Mercy and WSPCA was fitting, womanly work, while strongly condemning Levvy and the WSPCA whenever they stepped beyond these bounds to actively intervene to prevent cruelty.

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[39] 'Women's News', *The Sunday Times*, 11 September 1921, 14. Emphasis added.
[40] Hunt, 'Dogs' Home and Lethal Chamber', 7.
[41] Hunt, 'Dogs' Home and Lethal Chamber', 7.
[42] Donald, *Women Against Cruelty*, 101–2.
[43] J. Horbury Hunt, 'Animal's Protection Society', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 May 1896, sec. To the Editor of the Herald, 6.

In discussing Second-Wave Feminism's re-evaluation of Victorian and Edwardian feminism, Caine noted that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, 'the relationship between feminist ideas and the activities and the campaigns of women's movements was a more tortuous and complex one than [has] previously been acknowledged.'[44] Caine argued that in writing feminist biographies, historians should consider the expectations and restrictions that constrained women's lives.[45] More recently, in her extensive work on the life of Mary Sumner, founder of the Anglican Mothers' Union (MU), Anderson-Faithful used Bourdieu's schema of 'habitus, field and capital' to examine Sumner's personal and political agency.[46] She notes that while Sumner was an effective agent of change in broadening the horizons of women's engagement in social and political activism, she was nonetheless constrained by her *habitus* – the 'unthinkingly assumed habits of mind that the individual acquires through socialisation within their contextual background.'[47] Sumner is remembered as the founder of the MU, which had a British membership of nearly 400,000 at her death, and today has a worldwide membership of over 4 million women.[48] She challenged gender norms by accepting an invitation to speak from the platform of the 1885 Portsmouth Church Congress at a time when clergy wives were expected to sit demurely, and silently, beside their husbands. The movement Sumner founded gave Anglican women an opportunity to engage in philanthropy and activism and became the authoritative voice 'representing the opinion of Christian mothers, on issues perceived to relate to morality and family life.'[49] The MU allowed women to speak on their own behalf, rather than simply imbibe the views of male clergy. Yet the content of the MU agenda reproduced the ideology of separate spheres, consigning women to the domestic realm. The MU opposed

[44] Barbara Caine, 'Feminist Biography and Feminist History', *Women's History Review* 3, no. 2 (1994): 249. Cf. Steinbach, *Women in England*, 3–4.
[45] Caine, 'Feminist Biography', 251.
[46] Sue Anderson-Faithful, 'Aspects of Agency: Change and Constraint in the Activism of Mary Sumner, Founder of the Anglican Mothers' Union', *Women's History Review* 28, no. 6 (19 September 2019): 835–52.
[47] Anderson-Faithful, 'Aspects of Agency', 837. Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 53.
[48] Anderson-Faithful, 'Aspects of Agency', 836.
[49] Anderson-Faithful, 'Aspects of Agency', 836.

legislative reform that would make divorce easier to attain, and supported patriarchal systems of control. Women were celebrated for being faithful wives and mothers, and demonised for engaging in sexual intimacy outside of wedlock. Sumner herself was celebrated as the ideal embodiment of feminine virtues. Anderson-Faithful contends that Sumner's insistence that women be chaste, submissive and obedient in order to fulfil their divinely mandated work as wives and mothers perpetuated a 'controlling discourse' of femininity.[50] Thus, Sumner is described as possessing 'symbolic capital', predicated on her performance of both gender and religion, that became, 'an essential pillar of [her] personal claim for pedagogic authority.'[51] Consequently, Anderson-Faithful argues that even while organising to see greater protection and dignity for women, Sumner's *habitus* made her complicit in promoting an oppressive, patriarchal understanding of domestic roles.

Employing the paradigm used by Anderson-Faithful in her work on Sumner is a useful tool for analysing the ways Levvy's own *habitus* was formed by her cultural and religious context. Levvy promoted and acquiesced to social constructs of gender even while seeking to reform and remake them. In this she embodied the tension between idolising female domesticity and advocating for a more public and political role for women. In colonial NSW both the popular press and *BMHJ* devoted columns to debate about appropriate roles for women. In January 1890 an article in *The Australian Star* titled 'The Real Rights of Women' opposed the idea of women being equal to men and able to do 'masculine tasks'. In it, the author argued that regardless of 'the clamor of the "Women's Rights" party to be placed on an equality with men, the very laws of nature laugh at such a reasonless demand.'[52] The accusation of engaging in 'masculine tasks' was levelled against Levvy and the WSPCA. It lies at the heart of Horbury Hunt's opposition to

[50] Anderson-Faithful, 'Aspects of Agency', 843.
[51] Anderson-Faithful, 843. 'Capital' describes the attributes possessed or embodied by individuals that allows them to compete for influence and legitimises their authority in given contexts (or fields). Pierre Bourdieu and Loic J. D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 119.
[52] 'The Real Rights of Women', *The Australian Star*, 2 January 1890, 8.

any action taken by WSPCA that went beyond education and nurture. Yet Levvy's own journal reproduced literature that echoed a similar refrain. In 1901, *BMHJ* published a poem called, 'Woman's Rights' that lauded the nurturing, nursing role of woman.[53] The poem honoured the 'right to wake when other's sleep', the 'right to feed and clothe the poor' and the 'right' to bring comfort and emotional sustenance to others (particularly on their death bed), alongside the right to '*meekly* point to Him who died.'[54] The poem closes by stating that such rights are 'all we [women] crave' and will ultimately bring them honour in death.[55] In printing this poem without comment, Levvy appears to give credence and authority to the idea of women as 'the Angel in the House'.

Furthermore, although Levvy was a fierce advocate for the education of girls, her opinion as to what they should be taught reinforced a gender binary that placed women squarely within the domestic sphere. In 1897 Levvy wrote in praise of Public Schools, and particularly 'the system of female education', exclaiming that 'our future women are being trained for every station in life according to their capacity.'[56] Swain has written of the 'sisterhood' that undergirded much female philanthropy, by which working-class and bourgeois women cooperated in a reciprocal relationship through which both benefited.[57] She argues that the sisterhood was flawed because it was predicated upon the desire of the upper classes to 'recreate their working class "sisters" in their own image' while adamantly protecting class distinctions.[58] While Levvy did not herself dispense charity to the working class, the dynamic Swain describes is evident in Levvy's attitude to female education. In the same article (on public education), Levvy goes into detail lauding the

[53] Frances Levvy, ed., 'Woman's Rights', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 21 January 1901, 9. The author and origin of this poem are not given, although it appropriates the style and phrasing of a poem titled, 'The Rights of Women', first published in *The Irish Presbyterian*, 3, no. 25, January 1855, 15. See Andrea Ebel Brozyna, "'The Right to Labour, Love and Pray": The Creation of the Ideal Christian Woman in Ulster Roman Catholic and Protestant Religious Literature, 1850-1914', *Women's History Review* 6, no. 4 (1997): 505–28.
[54] Levvy, ed., 'Woman's Rights', 9. Emphasis added.
[55] Levvy, ed., 'Woman's Rights', 9. Emphasis added.
[56] Frances Levvy, 'Our Boys and Girls', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 14 September 1897, 101.
[57] Swain, 'Women and Philanthropy', 435.
[58] Swain, 'Women and Philanthropy', 435.

training girls receive in cookery and sewing, and speaks admiringly of the Minister for Education, who 'has carefully made his plan that all the girls in the school shall be in this respect eligible for wives.'[59] This is resonant of Swain's recognition that through the sisterly alliance, '[t]he poor woman could be transformed into a good mother through lessons in thrift and economy.' The article immediately following (in *BMHJ*) extols the virtues of the German Empress Augusta Victoria who is 'doing her best to realize the German ideal of a devoted *hausfrau*' and is 'a model housewife, [who] can mend and sew, and knit and darn, and bake and brew as well as any woman in the Empire.'[60] In speaking to the new branch of the WSPCA formed in conjunction with the Mother's Association at Summer Hill, Levvy reinforced the notion that once they became mothers, women should devote themselves to educating their children so that when they had grown up, they could be 'sen[t] forth to the world humane men and gentle women.' In doing so, 'each mother reigned as a queen among her children.'[61] Although Levvy remained unmarried throughout her life, the message of these articles could not be clearer: the purpose of education was to fit girls to be devoted wives and mothers, which was the noblest calling to which they could aspire.

The Sisterhood in Action

Levvy publicly acknowledged the praise she received for the 'educational work' of her societies, and the impact this had on her good standing in the community.[62] It was this work, Levvy believed, that drew a positive response from the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, William Saumarez Smith, when she asked that clergy 'bring the importance of our Society's work before their respective parishioners.'[63] Levvy viewed the Archbishop's approval as a significant and

[59] Levvy, 'Our Boys and Girls', 101–102.
[60] Frances Levvy, 'The German Empress', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 14 September 1897, 102.
[61] Frances Levvy, ed., 'The Mother's Association of the WSPCA, Summer Hill', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 23 July 1897, 74.
[62] Frances Levvy, 'The Welfare of Animals', *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 12 October 1900, sec. To the Editor, 8.
[63] Levvy, 'Welfare of Animals', 8.

welcome sign of progress. But it is likely to have further grated on members of the APS who had in 1897, largely without success, sent out 'hundreds of "special letters" . . . to the clergy of the colony, inviting them to proclaim the "principles of the society" from their various pulpits.'[64] This alliance between Levvy and the Anglican Church was further cemented with the formation in 1901 of the Church Society for Promotion of Kindness to Animals (CSPKA), which MacCulloch attributes largely to Levvy's close personal connection to Anglican clergy in Sydney, primarily through her friendships with clergy wives.[65]

Levvy's networks of philanthropy and activism were not limited to her Sydney Anglican colleagues. She reached across national, denominational and ideological boundaries to create a 'common sisterhood' (to use Swain's phrase), working to relieve systemic cruelty in all its forms. Levvy spoke of her deep appreciation for 'our dear sister Societies around the world', specifically citing correspondence with animal welfare societies in America, England and Switzerland.[66] She admired and emulated the work of Frances Power Cobbe, Unitarian and lesbian, who campaigned vigorously against vivisection and animal cruelty.[67] Closer to home, Levvy formed an alliance with the Presbyterian Mrs James Inglis, a member of the WSPCA committee (and wife of the Minister for Public Instruction, who authorised Levvy's involvement in NSW schools). Levvy also involved herself with feminist causes, campaigning for female suffrage alongside Maybanke Wolstoneholme. The *Daily Telegraph* reported that Levvy enlisted in the Citizen's Committee for Womanhood Suffrage, joining Wolstenholme and other influential political and religious figures.[68] In this, Levvy's sisterhood typified what historian Pauline Nestor has referred to as 'professional friendships' in which 'women encouraged each other as never before in the

[64] F. Montagu Rothery, 'Original Correspondence', *Riverine Grazier*, 23 February 1897, 4.
[65] MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 93.
[66] Frances Levvy, 'Woman's Relief Corps, Washington (America)', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 11 February 1903, 15; Frances Levvy, 'Publications Received', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 17 October 1903, 113.
[67] Frances Levvy, ed., 'In Memoriam – Frances Power Cobbe', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 21 June 1904, 61–62.
[68] 'Womanhood Suffrage', *The Daily Telegraph*, 12 September 1896, 5.

public sphere, nurturing ambition, encouraging independence and fostering artistic aspiration and talent.'[69] MacCulloch has asserted that for women part of the attraction of animal protection specifically was that it was 'overtly respectable' and could be easily combined with involvement in other charitable causes.[70] It must be acknowledged, however, that the respectability of the cause was linked with the way gender roles were performed, as was evident by the criticism received when the WSPCA moved beyond nurture and education into prevention and punishment.

Furthermore, while MacCulloch agrees that the WSPCA attracted women from the highest echelons of colonial NSW society, she asserts that their value to the society 'was derived from the social rank and/or office of their husband and father.'[71] This leads to some confusion, as she acknowledges that Levvy was 'one of the few committee member (sic) who had no real social cachet.'[72] While it is true that Levvy's father was more notorious than elite, and that she remained unmarried throughout her life, it is misleading to infer that she had no social cachet. It is more accurate to recognise that Levvy amassed extensive social capital through her performance of maternal nurture towards animals and children in the critical fields of philanthropy and religion. This in turn allowed her to trespass on more 'masculine' aspects of animal protection, such as employing inspectors to root out and punish cruelty, establishing and administering a dog's home and lethal chamber, and personally lobbying politicians. In each of these pursuits, Levvy argued (in contradiction to men such as Horbury Hunt) that women's engagement in these activities was in fact a fitting expression of nurture, compassion, and justice.[73] In response to

[69] Nestor describes these as something of an innovation in the 'Victorian lexicon of female friendship'. Pauline Nestor, 'Female Friendships in Mid-Victorian England: New Patterns and Possibilities', *Literature & History* 17, no. 1 (2008): 36.
[70] MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 91.
[71] MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 91.
[72] MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture', 92.
[73] Levvy made this argument primarily through her exposition of the Bible, which will be discussed in detail in chapter 3.

Levvy's example and passion, at every turn women were eager to partner with her in the quest to engender social change, acting on and in the public sphere.

In a further demonstration of sisterhood, Levvy corresponded with (and *BMHJ* was advertised in) publications such as *The Dawn* (published by Louisa Lawson under the *nom de plume* Dora Falconer), and *Woman's Voice* (published by Maybanke Wolstenholme). Both publications were vociferous and adamant that NSW laws must be changed to give greater protection and freedom to women, and to curb the effects of male violence.[74] Like Lawson and Wolstenholme, Levvy wrote extensively on the links between cruelty to animals and cruelty to one's fellow man, and was devastating in her critique of brutish or violent masculinity. In 1899 Levvy deplored the actions of those from Roubaix in the North of France who revelled in the atrocities committed during a staged fight between a lion and a bull.[75] For their brutality, Levvy refuses to call them men and instead labels them 'savages'. Similarly, when describing a wantonly cruel 'prank' played on a 'harmless' old man with intellectual disabilities, Levvy refers to the perpetrators as 'creatures that we refuse to call "men".'[76]

Levvy also tacitly accepted the arguments put forward in *Woman's Voice* regarding marriage law and female sexual freedom. In December 1894 Levvy addressed a letter to the editor of *Woman's Voice*, to dispute comments made in an article in the previous issue. This article, 'From the Casement', had argued strongly that true marriage was characterised not by a lifelong legal bind, but by the 'true affection and suitability' of those 'united in heart and mind.'[77] The author argued that life is less perplexing and more attractive for the single girl than for the married woman, and

[74] See, for example Falconer, ed., 'About Ourselves', 3–4; and M. S. Wolstenholme, ed., 'From the Casement', *The Woman's Voice* 1, no. 8 (17 November 1894): 97–99. Levvy's work was regularly advertised and promoted in both of these journals.
[75] Frances Levvy, ed., 'Wanted - A Missionary', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 22 September 1899, 100.
[76] Levvy, 'The Growth of Cruelty', 112.
[77] Wolstenholme, 'From the Casement', 98.

that marriage laws as they stood imply woman's inferiority.[78] Levvy wrote to contend with the author, yet her argument was *not* with the views expressed about marriage and sexuality. Rather, she took issue with a small section in which the author mocked victims of a shipwreck who were washed away because they 'were praying and not holding onto anything.'[79] Levvy defended the rightness of praying when under duress, referring to her own experience of being run down by a drunk driver, and contending that prayer and action should be partnered together.[80] Despite the time she took to compose a lengthy reply, Levvy at no time denounced or disagreed with the views on sexuality expressed in the rest of the article, seeming to implicitly accept them. Levvy was more explicit in her obituary for Frances Power Cobbe, specifically praising Cobbe for her work on the 'Matrimonial Causes Act' and 'Married Women's Property Act'.[81]

On another occasion, Levvy wrote of her personal encounter with a child and her mother who were on the brink of homelessness and poverty following two abusive marriages.[82] Levvy's disgust at how the woman had been treated was in no way tempered by the fact that her husband was from the upper class. Her only concession was to refuse to name the woman in case it put her in further danger, given that her first husband had been 'a younger brother of a well-known and honoured family among the English nobility, and also among the world's most valued historians.'[83] Social status did not protect men from Levvy's criticism, as was demonstrated in her candid criticism of Edward VII for having a coronation robe made from the skins of 108,000 ermines.[84] Neither nobility nor royalty was an excuse for the cruel or inhumane treatment of animals or people. In fact, Levvy sardonically expressed a hope that when ermines become extinct 'the stately dames and peers of England will maintain their dignity equally well without

[78] Wolstenholme, 'From the Casement', 98.
[79] Wolstenholme, 'From the Casement', 98.
[80] Frances Levvy, 'To the Editor Woman's Voice', *The Woman's Voice* 1, no. 9 (1 December 1894): 117.
[81] Levvy, 'In Memoriam – Frances Power Cobbe', 61.
[82] Frances Levvy, 'Fortune's Freaks', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 21 July 1902, 76.
[83] Levvy, 'Fortune's Freaks', 76.
[84] Frances Levvy, ed., 'General News', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 21 July 1902, 74.

them.'[85] In a short story that Levvy adapted for *BMHJ* in 1897, a male swallow is labelled 'greedy and lazy' for expecting his 'wife' to 'do all the work for him'. The female tidied and cleaned the nest, and provided for their children, while the male swallow went 'to see a friend or two and sleep at the club' – a barbed critique of the languid lives of upper-class husbands.[86] Similarly, the young men attending Eton College (and the men who instructed them) were singled out for their savagery in continuing the 'barbarous pastime' of 'hunting a hare to death', and their flagrant disrespect for those who had called on them to desist. Levvy noted that Eton 'had been traditionally a school for training gentlemen', but the public schools of NSW were proving to be more effective at instilling goodness in young men, as was indicated by the flourishing of the Bands of Mercy.[87]

Nonetheless, in regard to gender, Levvy embodies the tensions of her society. Remaining unmarried throughout her life, she was active in the public life of NSW, but her activism began only after the responsibility of caring for her mother had ceased, and was constrained by gender expectations. Although Levvy wrote the annual reports of the Bands of Mercy and the WSPCA, at the annual committee meetings the reports were read aloud by a man while Levvy remained seated.[88] This was in spite of Levvy being an experienced and confident communicator. Despite the fact that only women served on the committee of the WSPCA, the report of the annual meeting of the society in 1891 makes plain that the meeting was chaired by a man (the Hon. F.B. Suttor, Minister for Public Instruction) and every person who rose to speak was male.[89] This is

[85] Levvy, 'General News', 74.
[86] Frances Levvy, ed., 'The Swallow-Wort', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 23 August 1897, 89.
[87] Frances Levvy, ed., 'The Etonians', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 22 August 1902, 86–87.
[88] Cf. 'Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Evening News*, 16 December 1889, 2; 'Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 7 December 1895, 1171; 'Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 7 December 1895, 36; 'Women's S.P.C.A School Children's Prizes', *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 5 December 1896, 20; 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals - Annual Meeting of the Women's Society - Presentation of Prizes', *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 November 1899, 3; 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Annual Meeting of the Woman's Society', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 November 1902, 5.
[89] 'Meetings - Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 November 1891, 7.

even more astonishing when one notes that it occurred only six months after John Sidney resigned his honorary secretaryship of WSPCA due to concerns that his role in the 'woman's branch' was causing confusion.[90] This suggests that the WSPCA was an attractive and respectable cause with which to be associated, as much for upper class men as for their wives, daughters and sisters. Yet it also implies that tolerating patriarchal paternalism was necessary to maintain the allure of the society. This may be one of the reasons why Levvy (unlike Mary Sumner) did not give public addresses except to children. As in so many of her pursuits, however, she did this prolifically, visiting hundreds of schools each year, addressing thousands of school children, teachers and parents. While her own writing demonstrates an acceptance of women's domestic sphere, Levvy devoted herself to social activism that went far beyond education and moral nurture. She lobbied politicians, religious leaders and newspaper editors to support her public campaigns for the protection of animals, children and Indigenous people; she employed inspectors to prosecute cruelty; and she established and had oversight of a home for stray dogs complete with a gas chamber for their humane disposal. The *Daily Telegraph*, in reporting on the work of the WSPCA, extolled 'Miss Frances Levvy, the energetic and devoted secretary, [who] has always been indefatigable in her efforts to make the society a success.'[91] The qualities lauded in Levvy – whose dogged determination endured for decades – were her gentle, persuasive manner, kindness and nurturing nature. She was 'the right woman in the right place. It [was] so eminently a woman's work she has undertaken, to inculcate kindness and gentleness in the hearts of the children of our city.'[92] Despite Horbury Hunt's frank disgust, Levvy noted approvingly that, 'The only "dog's homes" in New South Wales are worked and supported by women.'[93] Later, during the First World War, when enlisting support for the making of wither pads for horses serving in the war, Levvy assured her readers that, unlike the leather pads made for

[90] 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Daily Telegraph*, 4 May 1891, 5.
[91] 'Social', *The Daily Telegraph*, 26 November 1898, 7.
[92] 'The Animal's Friend', 3.
[93] Frances Levvy, 'To the Editor', *Daily Telegraph*, 15 March 1910, 3.

artillery horses, these wither pads were for saddle horses and thus made from crochet, which is 'entirely women's work.'[94] Therefore, it is apparent that both Levvy and her admirers portrayed her work as an appropriate expression of her feminine nature, a work of nurture and moral instruction reflective of her womanly and maternal instincts. This is consistent with the findings of feminist historian Amanda Vickery, who has demonstrated that women who were depicted as 'the Angel in the House' did not exist merely as 'decorative adornment' in the home, but led more active, vigorous lives than had been assumed. Vickery argues that such women were convinced of their 'strong sense of social responsibility, purpose and commitment to hard work' in a way that cannot be reconciled with notions of passive femininity.[95] Such a statement is an accurate characterisation of Levvy, whose understanding of what constituted womanly virtues was informed by her *habitus* as a middle class Christian woman, yet was unrestrained in the energy and endurance of her public activism in pursuit of ending cruelty in all its forms.

[94] Frances Levvy, 'Horses in The War', *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 21 May 1915, 2.
[95] Amanda Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *The Historical Journal* 36, no. 2 (1993): 389–90.

3
A Reasoned Faith

'In all spheres there is the trumpet call to realise the foundations of our beliefs, and it is typical of the age that the greatest of all questions should be raised, not in the cloister or the quadrangle, but in the columns of the daily press, the only arena of free discussion that mob law has left us.'[1]

Introduction

As much as Levvy was formed and constrained by her gender, she was moulded and made by her faith. Levvy was not only an animal rights campaigner, but an ardent Anglican who saw her work as a necessary expression of her devotion to Jesus Christ. Her greatest philanthropic and humane exertions took place in the period 1890-1914, when evangelical Christians were seeking to influence the moral life of the colony and debating between themselves the best manner in which to respond to the challenges of their time. The foremost of these (according to historians of evangelicalism Piggin and Linder) were, 'secular education, Darwinism and biblical criticism.'[2] As demonstrated in the first chapter, Australian religious historians who have written about the breadth and depth of the public discussion of faith in this period have neglected to include women in the narrative, except in a tokenistic fashion.[3] While debates raged in churches and newspapers, Levvy devoted herself to the work of nurturing the morals of the children of NSW through her Bands of Mercy. Yet it would be a mistake to assume that she was disconnected from intellectual debate about faith and morality, or that she failed to contribute to the conversation. Levvy's prolific writing and speaking were devoted above all else to the promotion of kindness towards all (with an emphasis on the animal creation), and an expectation that mercy must be expressed in concrete action. This she regarded as her life's calling. In the pursuit of her goal to cultivate a more merciful and humane society, Levvy was known to use every tool she had at her disposal. She wrote poems, parables and short stories that were published in *BMHJ*.

[1] Perplexed, 'What Do We Believe?', Daily Telegraph, 8 January 1914, sec. To the Editor, 11.
[2] Stuart Piggin and Robert D. Linder, *The Fountain of Public Prosperity: Evangelical Christians in Australian History 1740-1914* (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2018), 388.
[3] Cf. Introduction, 15–21.

She corresponded with, and was published in, local papers and magazines and the international journals of sister organisations. She composed copious articles and letters to editors addressing instances of cruelty to animals, responding to letters from others, and promoting the work of her society.[4] Yet Levvy also engaged in rigorous debate about the role of the Bible in forming a moral society, the public practice of Christianity, and the relationship between the Bible and scientific knowledge – the very debates that have so preoccupied religious historians.

In 1977, religious historian Walter Phillips claimed that the period 1875-1914 brought an urgency to the task of upholding Christian belief in Australia due to the 'hostile challenges' facing Australian churches.[5] Conflicts arose about the relationship between religion and science, higher criticism and the inspiration of scripture, and the moral authority of the Bible. Phillips depicts these challenges as coming in part from 'cultivated rationalists' such as Justice Higinbotham. More frequently, however, he claims that challenges were mounted by 'less cultivated and more aggressive freethinkers.'[6] These are described as generally having an evangelical Protestant pedigree and an arsenal loaded with the theories of Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Spencer, Mill and others, with which they 'launched broadsides against orthodox religion.'[7]

In opposition to this 'vocal minority' who viewed the Bible as beset with inconsistencies and ethical dilemmas, Phillips identifies a bastion of self-styled defenders of the faith who proclaimed the reasonableness of Christianity.[8] This led a group of (mostly Wesleyan) laity and clergy to form the Christian Defence Association in 1883, before merging with the interdenominational Christian Evidence Society in late 1884. Phillips cites influential men who carried on the cause,

[4] To date, I have found over 140 articles by Levvy, or specifically mentioning her philanthropic activity in Australian newspapers between the 1870s and 1920s. This does not include the thirty-seven years in which she edited *BMHJ*, writing many of the articles herself.
[5] Walter Phillips, 'The Defence of Christian Belief in Australia 1875-1914: The Responses to Evolution and Higher Criticism', *The Joural of Religious History* 9, no. 4 (December 1977): 402.
[6] Phillips, 'Defence of Christian Belief', 402.
[7] Phillips, 'Defence of Christian Belief', 402.
[8] Phillips, 'Defence of Christian Belief', 403.

such as Dr Zachary Barry (Anglican Minister), Dr Roger Bede Vaughan (Catholic Archbishop of Sydney), Bishop Frederic Barker (evangelical Anglican) and Dr Robert Steel (Presbyterian minister). On the opposing side he names (in addition to Higinbotham) Judge Hartley Williams, lay preacher Thomas Walker, and newspaper owner and secularist Joseph Symes. In doing so, Phillips characterises the rift as occurring largely along a clergy-laity divide.[9]

What is striking about Phillips's article is that at no time does he discuss the views of women on either side of the debate. If he was examining only the views of clergy this would be understandable, as no major denomination at the time allowed the ordination of women. Phillips, however, refers to numerous laymen and includes reference to contemporary newspapers, in addition to official church publications and records, without once noting the views or opinions of their female contemporaries.[10] As I have previously demonstrated, the absence of women in Australian religious historiography when discussing intellectual and doctrinal trends is a pattern repeated not only prior to Phillips, but continuing in recent publications.[11] Women are lauded for their matronly ministry in Aboriginal and overseas missions, philanthropy and even (on rare occasions) proclamation of the gospel.[12] Yet their views and voices are lamentably absent from the more 'masculine' intellectual debates.

The absence of women from histories of Bible interpretation is not an antipodean phenomenon. In her ground-breaking essay, feminist historian Gerda Lerner demonstrated a thousand-year-old tradition of female Bible interpreters unrecognised in official religious histories. She notes a

[9] Phillips, 'Defence of Christian Belief', 403-404. Cf. Stuart Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World: Evangelical Christianity in Australia*, Revised (Brunswick East, Victoria: Acorn Press, 2012), 31-32; Michael Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand: Religion in Australian History* (Ringwood, Vic: Penguin Books, 1987), 137–138, 157–158.
[10] Phillips does refer to female historians in his secondary literature; it is in the primary sources that women are entirely absent.
[11] Cf. Introduction, 19–20.
[12] Anne Philomena O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers: Women and Religion in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005), 39; Piggin and Linder, *Fountain of Public Prosperity*, 376–378.

particular flowering of feminist Bible criticism in the nineteenth century.[13] Building on Lerner's work, feminist theologians Christiana de Groot and Marion Ann Taylor have recognised the 'many and multifaceted' reasons why the work of these women has not been recognised, lamenting that 'their writing was ephemeral, and the memory of them was lost.'[14] De Groot and Taylor argue that due to the interplay of separate spheres ideology and the cult of domesticity, women were socialised to believe that the goal of their lives was service to others.[15] Ideally, this was to be expressed through the moral formation of children. Thus, a significant cause of the nineteenth-century proliferation of female Bible interpretation was women taking up the mantle of religious instruction and character formation of young people.[16]

That Australian women were speaking and writing on these issues is demonstrated by the published writings of Frances Levvy. Yet women's ethical and doctrinal writings remain unacknowledged and unexamined by Australian religious historians. In what follows I explore the ethical and doctrinal underpinnings of Levvy's activism using her own writings as evidence, and consider her place in the Australian evangelical landscape from 1880-1914. I outline the rift in conservative Protestantism that saw a growing divide between 'evangelicals' and 'liberals', and seek to contextualise Levvy's writings within that debate. In doing so I hope to further understand how Levvy's gender may have contributed to her erasure from religious historiography.

[13] Gerda Lerner, 'One Thousand Years of Feminist Biblical Criticism', in *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1993), 160.
[14] Christiana de Groot and Marion Ann Taylor, eds., *Recovering Nineteenth-Century Women Interpreters of the Bible* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 1–2.
[15] de Groot and Taylor, *Recovering Nineteenth-Century Women Interpreters of the Bible*, 5.
[16] de Groot and Taylor, *Recovering Nineteenth-Century Women Interpreters of the Bible*, 5.

Defining faith

In her quest to build a more humane society, Levvy worked alongside women and men from across the denominational spectrum. While her unrelenting focus was on animal protection, she participated in a broad array of committees and causes, all of which had the goal of improving the welfare of vulnerable people and creatures. She worked shoulder to shoulder with fellow Anglicans, as well as Baptists, Congregationalists, Catholics, Methodists, Unitarians and secularists. Her explicit goal was to see the ethics of Jesus enacted in society through kindness to dumb animals, and improved welfare for the downtrodden. In arguing her case, Levvy used all the tools she had at her disposal, including biblical exegesis and application, the latest scientific research and examples from other cultures and religions. While this approach gave weight and variety to her arguments, it may be one of the key reasons her life and work has been neglected by evangelical historians, due to its association with theological liberalism.

From 1880-1914, the period encompassing Levvy's greatest industry and drive, the churches in Australia became increasingly divided over doctrinal and ethical challenges. Some evangelicals construed this as destabilising and eroding the integrity of their Christian faith. This in turn led to a growing schism between conservative and liberal evangelicals, with liberals eventually being seen as outside the fold of evangelicalism. As a result, one of the striking features of Protestant and Evangelical histories of Australia is the emphasis on labelling (or categorising) the theological sympathies of those they are discussing as a means to establish opposing sides within debates. This applies not only to broad categories of Catholic or Protestant,[17] clergy or laity,[18] but to particular expressions of 'evangelicalism' and 'liberalism'. This section will consider whether Levvy's modern, ecumenical and inclusive approach, and the resultant difficulty of assigning her to one specific category along the evangelical-liberal divide, may have contributed to her absence

[17] Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand*.
[18] Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*, 31–32; Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand*, 137–138.

from Australian religious histories. To begin, I will explain the key terms of evangelicalism and liberalism.

Evangelicalism is theoretically simple to define. It began as a reforming movement within Protestant Christianity but developed four distinctive emphases identified by religious historian David Bebbington. Firstly, personal religious experience and transformation (*conversionism*). Secondly, devotional and intellectual fidelity to the Bible as the authority for faith and practice (*biblicism*). Thirdly, a commitment to activism in order to foster a society which reflects (perceived) biblical values related to justice and morality (*activism*). Lastly, a focus on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the only way for humans to experience salvation (*crucicentrism*).[19] Implicit in Evangelicalism is an understanding that the death and resurrection of Jesus (often referred to as 'the Atonement' or 'the work of the cross') must be understood as a historical fact that in a miraculous way leads to forgiveness of sin and eternal salvation for those who believe.[20] Throughout Christian history there have been numerous theories of the atonement.[21] One theory, however, known as substitutionary atonement, rose to prominence among evangelicals to such an extent that an acceptance of this specific articulation of salvation became essential to doctrinal orthodoxy.[22] Thus, while evangelicalism began as a movement

[19] David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*, 1st edition (London: Routledge, 1988), 2–3. Bebbington's influential study of evangelicalism in Britain acknowledges that the movement has evolved over time, while insisting that this 'quadrilateral of priorities' has come to be accepted as the defining characteristic of evangelical Christianity. Cf. Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*, vii.

[20] By this I mean that evangelicals believe that 'the Cross' (that is, Jesus' death and resurrection) achieved something actual and definitive, while contending that the precise way in which it happened is a mystery that can never be fully understood. See, for example, J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2001), 51–53.

[21] Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement* (London, UK: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1931). See also J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (London, UK: A. & C. Black, 1958), 377; Frances Young, 'Atonement', in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson, 2nd edition (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), 144–45; Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 340–45.

[22] Sometimes called penal substitutionary atonement because of its legal, forensic language, this theory understands that on the cross Jesus took the place of sinful human beings, becoming their substitute, receiving in himself the full penalty of sin and exhausting God's wrath against human wickedness. In doing so, Jesus made it possible for people to be declared righteous in the sight of God and to enter eternal rest when Christ returns at his second coming to judge the Earth and inaugurate a 'new heaven and new earth'. However, only those people who explicitly confess the lordship of Christ will receive salvation. Cf. J. M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006), 148–55; C. C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to*

which understood personal conversion as leading necessarily and inextricably to a commitment to social reform as an expression of love for God and people, over time it became associated with strict doctrinal orthodoxy and a supreme commitment to the infallibility of the Bible as the word of God.[23]

Liberalism, by contrast, is not readily defined by religious historians, who habitually use the term in a variety of ways depending on the context. Finnish philosopher Olli-Pekka Moisio suggests that liberalism grew from a desire to 'salvage Christianity' by abandoning aspects of theology, doctrine or praxis that were seen as incompatible with modern, rational, scientific thought.[24] Yet 'Liberal theology' has a precise meaning. It refers specifically to ideas and movements that developed in Christianity from the work of nineteenth century German theologians such as Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), Albrecht Ritschl (1822-89) and Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930), and American theologian Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918).[25] Each of these theologians brought a particular emphasis as they responded to the challenges of science and modernism. Schleiermacher and Ritschl sought to demonstrate that religion and science were not incompatible but rested on different types of knowledge and had differing teleologies. Harnack and Rauschenbusch were influential in the development of the Social Gospel, which proclaimed that Christian ethics must have a beneficial, transformative effect upon society through addressing inequality and injustice. Consequently, two key phrases recur throughout evangelical

Understanding Biblical Truth (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 329–33; Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 345–50.

[23] In their most recent volume, Piggin and Linder refer to the establishment of Bible Colleges as bastions of evangelicalism that 'affirmed premillennialism and biblical inerrancy, and inculcated an appetite for fighting for right doctrine, understood as the virgin birth, atoning death, bodily resurrection, second coming and deity of Christ.' Stuart Piggin and Robert D. Linder, *Attending to the National Soul: Evangelical Christians in Australian History, 1914-2014* (Melbourne, Vic.: Monash University Publishing, 2020), 135.

[24] Olli-Pekka Moisio, 'Liberal Theology', in *Encyclopedia of Sciences and Religions*, ed. Anne L. C. Runehov and Lluis Oviedo (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2013), 1161–64. Moisio describes liberal theology as emerging from the eighteenth century in response to Enlightenment philosophy and rationalism. Cf. J.B. Stump, 'Liberal Theology', in *The Routledge Companion to Modern Christian Thought*, ed. Chad Meister and James Beilby (London: Routledge, 2013), 315.

[25] Cf. Stump, 'Liberal Theology', 315–25.

and protestant histories in connection with these two strands of liberalism.[26] The first is the 'social gospel', referring to the conviction that true Christianity must have a positive, reforming impact on human society.[27] While evangelicalism has been historically associated with social reform and philanthropy, the late nineteenth century saw a growing concern amongst some evangelicals that reform activity was distracting Christians from cultivating their inner devotional life and declaring an undiluted gospel message.[28] Throughout Australian religious histories, then, use of the term 'liberalism' correlates closely with determined social action and attempts to redress injustice and inequality.[29]

The second phrase frequently used to explicate liberalism is 'Darwinism and Biblical criticism' – despite liberal theology predating Darwin's *Origin of the Species*.[30] The willingness to accept a Darwinist theory of human origins – integrating modern scientific knowledge with the understanding of one's Christian faith rather than pitting one against the other – became a shibboleth for liberalism. Piggin and Linder note that in the period 1870-1913 some evangelicals 'devoted the best part of their energies' to the urgent task of 'defend[ing] the Bible against biblical criticism, Darwinism, and rationalism.'[31] In his earlier work, Piggin uses the term 'theological liberalism' to classify those who abandon strict biblical literalism for a more contextual and nuanced reading of the Bible, and he identifies this as a major threat to

[26] Used in these contexts, both terms are imbued with a sense that they have tainted or diluted orthodox Christian faith.
[27] Piggin and Linder, *Attending to the National Soul*, 135; Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*, ix, 77, 80, 93; J.D. Bollen, *Protestantism and Social Reform in New South Wales 1890-1910* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1972), 24–25, 42–44; Roger C. Thompson, *Religion in Australia: A History*, 2nd ed (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2002), 16, 24; Piggin and Linder, *Fountain of Public Prosperity*, 377, 475–8.
[28] Bollen asserts that evangelicals 'idealized personal holiness'. *Protestantism and Social Reform*, 9. Cf. Piggin, who notes a shift in focus to personal Bible study and cultivating the inner spiritual life. *Spirit, Word and World*, ix.
[29] Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*, ix, 77, 80, 93; Bollen, *Protestantism and Social Reform*, 9, 25–26, 43.
[30] It is important to note that not all conservative evangelicals were threatened by Darwinism. See, for example, David N. Livingstone, *Darwin's Forgotten Defenders* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 1997). Biblical criticism refers to the use of tools of text criticism to discover the original or primary meaning of the biblical text. It asks questions about authorship, text composition and genuineness. Detractors view this approach as challenging the doctrine of scriptural infallibility and denying the supernatural nature of the Bible as divinely inspired scripture. See J. Orr, 'Criticism, of the Bible', in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, ed. J. Orr et al. (Chicago, Ill.: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915), 749.
[31] Piggin and Linder, *Fountain of Public Prosperity*, 49.

evangelicalism in the first third of the twentieth century.[32] Some conservative evangelicals feared that theological liberalism would lead to a reconsideration of key doctrines. Piggin lists examples given by the famous evangelical preacher Charles Spurgeon, who was alarmed by those who questioned strict literalist definitions of terms such as 'hell' and 'resurrection', asked what it means to be 'saved' by Christ's death and resurrection (atonement theory), were willing to accept Darwinism, and employed the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation.[33]

Hogan points to the alarm of some Protestants at the twin dangers of Darwinism and Biblical criticism, which they regarded as an assault 'on the foundations of conventional religion' leading to a 'dilemma between fundamentalism and enlightenment.'[34] Yet there was within protestant Christianity no unity of opinion. Meredith Lake, in her cultural history *The Bible in Australia*, contrasts the response to Darwin's *Origin of the Species* of Rev W.B. Clarke and W.S. Macleay, whom she describes as the two most eminent scientists in NSW in the mid-1800s. Lake describes Clarke as, 'confident that, in the end, the book of nature and the book of Scripture would reveal one and the same Creator.'[35] For Macleay, however, it provoked enduring 'questions about the Bible, science and humanity.'[36] The responses of Clarke and Macleay are somewhat emblematic of evangelical reactions to Darwinism. Piggin and Linder acknowledge that efforts to summarise a 'distinctively evangelical response' to Darwinism are foiled by the spectrum of views expressed therein.[37] Nonetheless, the authors' concern at the encroachment of liberalism is evident when they write of Congregationalists being 'enticed into' rationalist circles.[38]

[32] Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*, ix, 32–33, 74, 91.
[33] Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*, 75; Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand*, 156.
[34] Hogan, The Sectarian Strand, 156.
[35] Meredith Lake, *The Bible in Australia: A Cultural History*, First edition (Sydney NSW: NewSouth Publishing, 2018), 174.
[36] Lake, *The Bible in Australia*, 174.
[37] Piggin and Linder, *Fountain of Public Prosperity*, 402.
[38] Piggin and Linder, *Fountain of Public* Prosperity, 397.

Biologist and Presbyterian minister Henry Drummond, author of *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, was another prominent example of a Christian who saw no disjunction between science and religion. Like Clarke, he believed that the one God was author of both scientific and religious truth. He taught that, 'The Phenomena of the Spiritual World are in analogy with the Phenomena of the Natural World,' thus the study of the one could only enrich and deepen the other.[39] Hearing of Drummond's visit to Australia in 1890, 'Drs. Steel and Kinross,' and 'Revs. J. Hill, T. B. Tress, and J. Walker' invited him to address student groups in NSW.[40] Drummond stayed with Walker, and was entertained by Levvy's close friends, noted philanthropists John and Ann Goodlet. The Goodlets had previously promoted Drummond's work by donating copies of his books to the YWCA and the Fellowship Associations of the Presbyterian Church of NSW (PCNSW).[41] Over time, some Presbyterians such as Rev John Auld (whom Paul Cooper describes as 'the Goodlet family minister'[42]) and Rev James Cosh moved to accept evolution, while others, such as Rev Robert McGowan, were deeply troubled by what they saw as the threat of biblical criticism and evolutionary teaching.[43] Despite this resistance, Cooper, citing Peter Barnes, views this schism as significant in 'pav[ing] the way for a liberal Protestantism with an outright rejection of the supernatural in the Christian faith.'[44]

The key distinctives of liberal Christianity which caused alarm amongst conservative evangelicals were an embrace of the 'social gospel' (despite the evangelical tradition of social reform), Darwinism and biblical criticism. Such liberalism entailed a more pragmatic, reformist approach which held that 'Christianity should adjust to modern thought, keep up with development in the

[39] Henry Drummond, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, 30th edition (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893), 7–8.
[40] 'News', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 March 1890, 7.
[41] Paul F. Cooper, *More Valuable Than Gold: The Philanthropy of John and Ann Goodlet* (The Ponds, NSW: Eider Books, 2015), 234.
[42] Cooper, *More Valuable Than Gold*, 64.
[43] Cooper, *More Valuable Than Gold*, 236.
[44] Cooper, *More Valuable Than Gold*, 236.

natural and human sciences, and refocus theology on the main problems of human life.'[45] Liberalism could include an understanding that theories of the atonement were 'figures of speech' rather than 'exact definitions',[46] a rejection of supernatural elements within the biblical text, and insistence that Christian ethics should be employed to address social inequality and injustice.[47]

Australian religious historiography evidences a preoccupation with labelling key figures along the liberal-evangelical spectrum. In his chapter on social justice, Thompson contrasts the actions of liberals (and 'liberal minded clergy') with those of conservatives, distinguishing between the few who supported 'new social gospel ideas' with 'the main Protestant emphasis on moral reform.'[48] Breward also describes the 'sharpening of differences between liberals and Evangelicals.'[49] In Piggin and Linder's account of the public good achieved by Australian evangelicals, one is not simply an evangelical; one is an evangelical Calvinist, a conservative evangelical, or a liberal evangelical. It is also clear that some labels are preferable to others. Henry Drummond, for example, is labelled a 'liberal evangelical' and his teaching presented as corrosive to doctrinal orthodoxy.[50] The book is peppered by questions such as, 'Was [Bishop John Francis] Stretch truly an evangelical?'[51]

Interestingly, it is extremely rare for an Australian religious historian to attempt to classify a woman in this way; the labelling almost exclusively applies to men.[52] Overwhelmingly, evangelical women are noted for their philanthropy without being posited along the doctrinal continuum.

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[45] Wayne Hudson, *Australian Religious Thought*, Monash Studies in Australian Society (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2016), 94.
[46] Charles Strong, cited in Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*, 74.
[47] Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World*, 79–80.
[48] Thompson, *Religion in Australia*, 40–47, 55.
[49] Ian Breward, *A History of the Australian Churches* (St. Leonards, N.S.W: Allen & Unwin, 1993), 76.
[50] Piggin and Linder, *Fountain of Public Prosperity*, 401.
[51] Piggin and Linder, *Fountain of Public Prosperity*, 404.
[52] One exception is Mennie Parkes, who is described as an evangelical Calvinist with the implication that she is theologically conservative. Piggin and Linder, *Fountain of Public Prosperity*, 297.

One possible explanation for this is that the ideology of separate spheres remained latent within the historiography such that women's charitable work is understood as a fitting expression of their feminine nature rather than a display of radical liberalism. Conversely, since vigorous intellectual debate lies soundly within the masculine sphere, it is possible that it did not occur to evangelical historians to seek out the voices of women within these debates. Women, therefore, were not labelled as evangelical or liberal, but according to the womanly nature of their work – a seemingly innocuous but far more marginalising categorisation. Levvy made a substantial contribution to contemporary religious debates. She did so in the public sphere, in major newspapers and in *BMHJ* for nearly forty years. It is my contention that Levvy and women like her were excluded from Australian religious histories not because they did not contribute, but because the ideology of separate spheres has so dominated the *habitus* of religious historians that it has not occurred to them to listen for the female voices speaking in the active, public domain of men. Ultimately, the lack of a label which would signify their status as intellectual commentators and exegetes kept women confined to their sphere and erased from Australian religious histories.

Frances Levvy: liberal evangelical activist?

In light of this preoccupation with labels, how should one characterise the Christian faith of Frances Levvy? Should one even try? Levvy displayed a profound reverence for the Bible, employing biblical quotes, allusions, parables and examples to argue the case of humane treatment of animals and kindness to all people. Like a good evangelical, she appeared to believe that 'hell', 'heaven' and 'resurrection' should be understood literally. Yet Levvy also displayed a formidable scientific knowledge, implicitly accepted Darwinism and employed tools of biblical criticism when exegeting the Bible in a manner typical of theological liberals. She passionately insisted that the moral and ethical teachings of Jesus must be lived out in everyday life, not only

for one's own personal devotion and spiritual growth, but for the transformation of society.[53] In what follows, I consider whether Levvy's active faith could (or should) be classified as either evangelical or liberal, and why she has, until now, been omitted from religious histories.

The Bible and Science in conversation

Tensions between 'orthodox' Christian belief and scientific discoveries permeated religious discourse in Australia in the pre-war period.[54] Historians broadly categorise the two sides in these debates as evangelicals and liberals.[55] In her writing, Levvy (a devout Anglican) depicts no such chasm and is resistant to neat categories. That Levvy's faith might be understood as evangelical is suggested by her financial support and promotion of missionary endeavours, her active campaigning in various humane and philanthropic causes, her Christ-centred ethos and her unwavering commitment to the Bible as scripture.[56] One of the strongest demonstrations of her faith may be seen in her articles in *BMHJ*. In these Levvy does not use the Bible to glean proof texts for moral action. Instead, she often gave detailed expositions on biblical themes and foundational doctrines. In her 'Easter Greetings' of 1904, Levvy details her understanding of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, and the Christian hope of divine rest and ultimate restoration.

> There is the remembrance of all the sorrow and pain that filled the memorable Friday of 2,000 years ago, and the cry that comes down the centuries as freshly as when it left the dying Saviour's lips 'IT IS FINISHED.' All the weary work is over – the anguish of the Cross is past and the Divine Rest has come to the over-laden heart that was filled

[53] Other evangelicals contemporary with Levvy, such as members of the Salvation Army, had a similar emphasis. Yet the manner in which Levvy constructed her arguments might be construed as embracing a 'social gospel'. More detail will be given below.
[54] Cf. Phillips, 'Defence of Christian Belief', 405. Despite the claim to historical orthodoxy, it is important to recognise that evangelicalism is also a product of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. See Jonathan Hill, *The History of Christian Thought* (Downers Grove, Ill: Intervarsity Pr, 2003), 246–47; Harriet A. Harris, 'Fundamentalism', in *The Routledge Companion to Modern Christian Thought*, ed. Chad Meister and James Beilby (London: Routledge, 2013), 305–6; Philip C. Almond, *Fundamentalism, Christianity, and Religion*, Sir Robert Madgwick Lecture no. 14 (Armidale, NSW: University of New England, 2002).
[55] Breward, *A History of the Australian Churches*, 94–97; Piggin and Linder, *Fountain of Public Prosperity*, 32–33.
[56] Cf. Bebbington's 'quadrilateral of priorities' that have come to be accepted as the defining characteristics of evangelical Christianity: conversionism, activism, biblicism and crucicentrism. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 2–3.

> with love for every living creature upon the earth – not only for the dear boys and girls – for the patient, earnest men and women who, day by day, are watching and training them to work for the world's future welfare, but for the creatures of His hand that dwell on the earth, in the air and in the waters, for all things wait for His loving mercy. On the Friday, the voice of the cruel judge cried 'Prepare the Cross,' on the sweet Easter morn the cry went forth 'Christ is risen from the dead,' and all earth and heaven rejoices.[57]

Explicit reference to the hope of the resurrection is also made in her eulogy for Queen Victoria, where Levvy writes, 'for her there are no more tears. Her grand spirit has seen the King in His glory'.[58] At other times, Levvy refers to such orthodox doctrines as the Day of Judgement, citing both the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the righteous. In one instance Levvy warns those who are cruel to others (whether human or animal) that they must one day give an account 'before the throne of the Creator'.[59] Elsewhere she tells children to live kind, courteous and merciful lives so that 'at the Great Day that is coming, when we shall stand side by side, before our Father in Heaven' they will themselves receive mercy from God and enter into heaven.[60] In 1901, Levvy wrote, 'We are taught and we believe, that Jesus of Nazareth came into the world expressly for the purpose that His life fulfilled, and that He gave Himself up to suffer for the world, "a willing sacrifice".'[61] In writing this way Levvy seems to embrace an orthodox understanding of key evangelical doctrines.

Nonetheless, while Levvy clearly had a love for the Bible, her approach to interpretation cannot be classified as 'biblicism', in that she does not adhere to literalism. Levvy appeared untroubled by an evolutionary account of human origins and employed scripture and science alongside one another without any sense of incompatibility. In 1901 Levvy wrote of 'the uncountable creatures

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[57] Frances Levvy, 'Easter Greetings', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 20 April 1904, 38.
[58] Frances Levvy, 'Victoria the Good', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 12 February 1901, 14.
[59] Frances Levvy, 'The Growth of Cruelty', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 16 October 1899, 112.
[60] Frances Levvy, 'Just Like You', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 16 June 1900, 62–63.
[61] Frances Levvy, 'The Old Worship', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 10 September 1901, 99. This is an articulation of the theory of substitutionary atonement.

that revelled in the joys of existence before the advent of man upon the earth.'[62] While Genesis 1 portrays humans as last to be created, Levvy's argumentation implies a vast span of time and precludes a belief in a young Earth or a six-day creation. In 'Universal Kinship' (1908), Levvy supported her views with reference to 'the scientists of to-day (sic)' and their research on our atomic makeup, alongside Pythagoras, Plutarch and Buddha.[63] From this point, Levvy moved seamlessly to an argument from the teaching of 'the Saviour' (that is, Jesus Christ), interlinking her reference to Luke 16:21 ('the dogs came and licked his sores') with her knowledge of the antibacterial properties of dog saliva.[64] When making her case against practices which she deemed cruel and inhumane, as in her stringent arguments against vivisection, Levvy quoted the 'most experienced medical anti-vivisectionists'.[65] In 1897 she criticised the inhumane animal experiments of Louis Pasteur, citing evidence from *Animals Friend* (journal of the English Humanitarian League), the *Fortnightly Review* (a prominent English liberal magazine), *Le Paix* (a Paris newspaper) and the *Pall Mall Gazette*.[66] The following year she relayed recent geological and archaeological discoveries of fossils, prehistoric caves, and 'gigantic animals' which she had read about in the *Lancet*, a highly esteemed medical journal published in England.[67] In 1901 she referenced the work of Dr Jacques Loeb, renowned biologist and physiologist, in discussing the effect of salt on cardiovascular health.[68] In 'Gleanings from the Ages' (1904) Levvy admits that Buddha and Pythagoras (both of whom she quotes on other occasions) had 'beliefs that Christians cannot share', before arguing for the intelligence, reason and emotion of animals by quoting Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer,[69] both of whom Phillips associated with the

[62] Frances Levvy, 'Unto You Are They Delivered', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 18 October 1901, 119. Cf. De Groot and Taylor's discussion of the exposition of Genesis 1 by Englishwoman Elizabeth Rundle Charles (1828-1896), in which she asks her readers to consider that the passage was not meant to be read literally and historically; de Groot and Taylor, *Recovering Nineteenth-Century Women Interpreters of the Bible*, 8.
[63] Frances Levvy, 'Universal Kinship', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 23 June 1908, 59.
[64] Levvy, 'Universal Kinship', 59.
[65] Frances Levvy, 'Snake Poison and a Dog', *The Daily Telegraph*, 24 January 1913, 7.
[66] Frances Levvy, ed., 'From England', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 23 July 1897, 78.
[67] Frances Levvy, 'Fossils', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 18 April 1898, 42.
[68] Frances Levvy, 'Salt Is Good', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 16 August 1901, 89.
[69] Frances Levvy, 'Gleanings from the Ages: For Our Senior Readers', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 20 February 1904, 23. In the same article Levvy applauded Seneca, Plutarch, Porphyry, Erasmus, Thomas

'freethinkers' challenging orthodox Christianity.[70] In all of this Levvy demonstrated an appreciation for what an understanding of science could bring to her animal protection work *and* her reading of the Bible, as well as a willingness to engage with and cite writers of whom conservative evangelicals would not approve.

This pattern of argumentation was emulated by those who fell under Levvy's influence. An article about the Band of Mercy work published in the *Daily Telegraph* in 1904 lauded Levvy's devotion to the cause and imitates her style. The author ('Una') cited both the things that 'Darwin has taught us' and the 'Divine commands contained in Holy Scripture', ending the article with an allusion to Romans 8:22 and the hope of resurrection.[71] Throughout the article 'Una' cited eminent naturalist Rev J.G. Wood, Lord Thomas Erskine (who in 1809 introduced a Bill in the House of Lords to prevent cruelty to animals), and Mary Wollstonecraft's 'Rights of Women'. Neither 'Una' nor Levvy (who also quoted her at times) showed any sense of unease in quoting Wollstonecraft, despite her lack of respectability due to a risqué lifestyle. 'Una' also referenced recent legal precedents resulting from the trial of English professors who practiced vivisection and quoted German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer's despair that the rights of animals had been abandoned by 'the moralists of Europe.'[72]

What is evident from this is that Levvy was engaged in rigorous biblical interpretation. In doing so, not only was she reading and reproducing the thoughts of liberal theologians and secular humanists, and harmonising the latest scientific research with her knowledge of the Bible, but she was inspiring other women to follow suit. As I have previously demonstrated, male religious historians rarely (if ever) name women in their lengthy discussions of the intellectual religious

More, Shakespeare, Francis Bacon, Arthur Schopenhauer and Jeremy Bentham for their humanitarian views, and wrote with admiration for Mary Wollstonecraft's 'Rights of Women.'

[70] Phillips, 'Defence of Christian Belief', 402.

[71] Una, 'The Band of Mercy', *Daily Telegraph*, 16 July 1904, 15.

[72] Una, The Band of Mercy', 15.

debates occurring in Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.[73] In spite of her integration of science and biblical criticism, her embrace of Darwinism and her deliberate, unrelenting program of social reform, Levvy is at no time cited as an example of the liberalism which was seen by some as a threat to evangelicalism during this period. She is, in fact, not cited at all. It is my contention that Levvy, and other women like her, are overlooked in Australian historiography not because they did not contribute to the debate. She was in many ways typical of the radical liberals that terrified conservative evangelical clergy. Yet as a woman, her activism and articulation were minimised as quaint womanly activity that neither posed a threat nor contributed to the rational and intellectual arguments taking place within the masculine sphere.

Public Morality and the Bible

As has been discussed, a primary cause of partisanship within the Australian church in the pre-war period was divergent understandings of the correct way in which to interpret scripture, and the role it should play in public morality. The issue at stake was an understanding of how to faithfully apply biblical commands and exhortations (in matters such as sabbath observance, education and divorce), and whether this application was a matter of private conviction, or public legislation. Meredith Lake describes this as a tension between the value of 'freedom of conscience' versus 'enforcing morality through legislation' to engender a more just and civil society.[74] For some evangelicals, a willingness to legislate moral reform according to biblical principles would ensure the blessing of God upon the nation.[75]

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[73] It is left for female historians such as Muriel Porter and Sabine Willis to address the imbalance by exploring the contribution of women in texts dedicated to the legacy of Australian Christian women. Yet neither Porter nor Willis discuss women such as Levvy (or Constance Duncan, who will be the focus of the next chapter), who were motivated by their faith to work outside of the institutionalised church or recognised para-church ministries. See Muriel Porter, *Women in the Church: The Great Ordination Debate in Australia* (Ringwood, Vic: Penguin, 1989); Muriel Porter, ed., *Fabric, Faith and Friendship: Women Changing Church and Society* (Thornbury, Vic: Desbooks, 1997); Sabine Willis, ed., *Women, Faith & Fetes: Essays in the History of Women and the Church in Australia* (Melbourne: Dove Communications in association with the Australian Council of Churches (New South Wales), Commission on Status of Women, 1977).
[74] Lake, *The Bible in Australia*, 202.
[75] Lake, *The Bible in Australia*, 201.

This tension became starkly apparent in bitter debates over divorce laws. Chief Justice Alfred Stephen, who introduced the Divorce Extension Bill and was a member of the Anglican Church, saw the Bill as enacting the ethical teaching of Jesus while demonstrating compassion.[76] He campaigned in the 1880s to allow divorce for reasons other than those understood to be strictly 'biblical' grounds (that is, adultery alone), contending that desertion, crime or cruelty were grounds in their own right.[77] On the other side, Bishop Alfred Barry (Bishop of Sydney from 1884-1889) was vigorous in his opposition, leading to delays in the amendment, which was not passed until 1892. Barry 'thought that exceptional cases of misery should not dictate the law, that any relaxation of it "not only imperilled the sacredness of marriage, but the Christian faith itself".'[78] Hugh Jackson maintains that the Bill was passed '[d]espite the protests of churchmen' and contrary to 'what many Christians continued to believe'.[79] As in the case of debates about science and the Bible, religious historians recounting these disputes about divorce refer to the views of male clergy and laity, overlooking or ignoring the arguments of women. Yet it was concerns about the dangers faced by women married to men who were violent, drunkards or deserters that had prompted calls for the law to change. Publications such as *The Dawn*, published by Louisa Lawson, and *Woman's Voice*, published by Maybanke Wolstenholme, were adamant that laws must be changed to give greater protection and freedom to women.[80] At this time, debates about public morality, temperance and suffrage were bringing more and more women to the fore in public debate. As a consequence, women were becoming experienced in political lobbying, publishing and disseminating literature, public oratory, organising meetings and protests. It also deepened their sense of 'sisterhood', which was discussed earlier.[81] Levvy

[76] Lake, *The Bible in Australia*, 202.
[77] O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers*, 36.
[78] O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers*, 36. Cf. Lake, *The Bible in Australia*, 202; Piggin and Linder, *The Fountain of Public Prosperity*, 369.
[79] Hugh Jackson, *Australians and the Christian God: An Historical Study* (Preston, Vic: Mosaic Press, 2013), 151.
[80] See, for example Dora Falconer, ed., 'About Ourselves', *The Dawn: A Journal for Australian Women* 1, no. 1 (15 May 1888): 3–4; and M. S. Wolstenholme, ed., 'From the Casement', *The Woman's Voice* 1, no. 8 (17 November 1894): 97–99.
[81] Cf. Shurlee Swain, 'Women and Philanthropy in Colonial and Post-Colonial Australia', *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 7, no. 4 (1996): 435; Pauline Nestor, 'Female Friendships in Mid-

had been acquiring and honing these skills – and her membership in the sisterhood – through her work in animal protection. While Levvy did not directly engage with the matter of divorce law in her public writings, she was overtly critical of the kind of cruel and brutish masculinity condemned by those advocating for changes in marriage legislation to protect vulnerable women and children. In the September 1899 issue of *BMHJ*, Levvy condemned an elephant keeper working at Barnum's Circus in Ontario, Canada, who endangered his charges by attempting to load them onto a rail car in front of an oncoming train. Levvy declared that the elder elephant, Jumbo, had more humanity than its keeper, for it sacrificed itself to protect the elephant calf that was with it.[82] In the same volume, in an article entitled, 'Wanted – A Missionary', Levvy denounced the atrocity of men from Roubaix in Northern France who were amused by bull-fighting, and contests between a bull and a lion. Levvy declared that there was a greater need for missionaries to go to France to instruct these men in Christian doctrine so that they may be regenerated, than to go to Africa or India where Christ is not known at all.[83] The men who attended 'this inhuman show' of cruelty are described as savages undeserving of the mercy of God. Furthermore, Levvy praised Frances Power Cobbe for her work ensuring greater protections for women through the 'Married Women's Property Act' and 'Matrimonial Causes Act', and she condemned male cruelty and selfishness in marriage through articles in *BMHJ*.[84]

In other instances, Levvy employed tools of exegesis and text criticism, using scripture to make a case for public morality and stewardship of the animal creation. In 1901, she used an exposition of the Noahic Covenant (Genesis 9) and Mosaic Law to give a contextualised, contemporary application in which she argued that, while God had allowed humans to use the flesh of animals

Victorian England: New Patterns and Possibilities', *Literature & History* 17, no. 1 (2008): 36; de Groot and Taylor, , *Recovering Nineteenth-Century Women Interpreters of the Bible*, 5; Thompson, *Religion in Australia*, 41.

[82] Frances Levvy, ed., 'Poor Jumbo', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 22 September 1899, 100.

[83] Frances Levvy, ed., 'Wanted - A Missionary', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 22 September 1899, 100.

[84] Chapter 2, 89–90.

for food, one should regard the shedding of blood as 'so sacred a thing' that the blood should be buried and no part of the animal wasted. Pointedly, she argued, 'We do not read that, in the stern Mosaic Law, there was any authority to make *sport* of the death of these creatures, or to take pleasure in witnessing their struggles for life.'[85] She contended that the same God who gave the Ten Commandments articulated specific commands 'concerning the creatures of His hand', arguing that humanity is just as accountable for their obedience in the second as in the first. 'Shall the Creator not demand an account for all the miseries that are wilfully inflicted on these innocents?'[86] It was not Levvy's argument that people be forbidden to use animal products or consume the flesh of beasts; rather, she argued that animals, fish and birds had not been created *merely* for the use of humanity.[87] Not content with simply citing a reference, she composed an exposition of Leviticus 22:28, Deuteronomy 22:4 and Genesis 23:5, making further allusion to other passages. Levvy was articulate, consistent and logical in her reasoning, concluding,

> The animals, the birds, and the fishes of the sea are all made subject to man, and whether for food or convenience, it is lawful to use them freely, giving them such treatment as their natures require, and showing mercy to them even in their death; but whether they have been created *solely* for the use of man, is an open question. Think of the millions upon millions that still exist in forests that are almost unpeopled by either black or white humanity! . . . How many millions of fish are swarming in the ocean that never can be used by man? How can all these creatures – beasts, birds and fish – have been created *solely* for the use of human beings who cannot even see them, and certainly cannot use them?[88]

The Bible underpinned her profound sense of calling to a vocation of cultivating kindness to the animal creation, asserting in 1902 that 'There are texts all through the Sacred Scriptures to prove that the welfare of the animal creation is cared for by the Creator.'[89] In the same article, Levvy gave a contemporary application of the Levitical laws to castigate her society for terrible 'crimes done in the name of Commerce'. Citing Matthew 10:29, in which Jesus said that 'not one

[85] Levvy, 'Unto You Are They Delivered', 119.
[86] Levvy, 'Unto You Are They Delivered', 119.
[87] Levvy, 'Unto You Are They Delivered', 119.
[88] Levvy, 'Unto You Are They Delivered', 119. Emphasis original.
[89] Frances Levvy, 'To-Day (for the Seniors)', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 25 January 1902, 6.

[sparrow] will fall to the ground outside of your Father's care,' Levvy wondered, 'what would have been His words of thunder had the women who followed Him, been decked with their torn wings?'[90] These and numerous other examples we do not have space to explore illustrate the proliferation of skilled and articulate biblical exposition and interpretation throughout Levvy's writing.

Colonialism, Racism and Paternalism

At this point, it is necessary to pause in order to recognise the colonialism and paternalism inherent in Levvy's writing. Levvy did not shrink from applauding those of other cultures who demonstrated stewardship of creation and care for animals. Nor was she afraid to highlight their conduct, which she considered to be pointing to Christ, in order to shame Christians into living up to the example of the one they claimed as Lord. In an 1899 article in *BMHJ*, Levvy spoke admiringly of Burmese Buddhists, who 'treat the animals with the toleration of his manhood, and as a father would with little children who are very stupid or troublesome, but who are very lovable. The Burmese look upon Humanity as the highest virtue.'[91] While Levvy's praise of the Burmese is genuine, there is a distinct sense that Australian men should be ashamed that pagans who do not know Christ act with more honour than they. Implicitly, this implies the moral superiority of Christianity over Buddhism. The article then pivots from praise of the Burmese, to confronting Christians who do not act upon the humane implications of their beliefs.

> We may surely add to all these encomiums on the good Burmese, that a Christian who ACTS UP TO the commands of CHRIST will neither torment an animal, under the false name of science, nor hunt it to death for sport; for the Christian man and woman, acting up to the Divine Master's command, will never blend their pleasure or their pride 'with sorrow of the meanest thing that lives.'
> 'BE ye therefore merciful, even as your Father in Heaven is merciful,' is a tremendous command.[92]

[90] Levvy, 'To-Day (for the Seniors)', 6.
[91] Frances Levvy, ed., 'In Burmah', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 23 February 1899, 21.
[92] Levvy, 'In Burmah', 21.

Thus, Levvy pointed to the good and noble stewardship of creation in other cultures and religions, in order to point out the hypocrisy and inaction of professing Christians and thus shame them into action through comparison with those they would regard as less civilised. In another scathing example from 1902 she writes,

> In Asia the Hindu of Calcutta has forbidden the destruction of birds for the use of fashionable women, and are endeavouring, or rather arranging, to do away with the 'sacrifice' of goats and buffaloes which mark the celebration of the worship of certain gods and goddesses, as they now consider such to be a needless destruction of life.
>
> In Europe the slaughter of 40,000,000 of Golden Orioles, Humming Birds, Birds of Paradise, Egrets, Gulls and other seabirds, are yearly offered up to the savage Goddess of Fashion, and her worshippers proudly wear the bodies and feathers of the innocent victims. Europe professes Christianity, yet by the destruction of the mother birds she violates one of the express commands of God.[93]

Kindness to animals was, for Levvy, evidence of true humanity. Therefore, Christians who were less humane than Hindus or Buddhists should question the genuineness of their faith in the Christian God, who she believed to be ruler and creator of all.[94] In 1903 she spoke out against, 'the so-called Christians of this 20th Century!' who allowed animals to be tortured in the name of sport, food or fashion.[95] To Levvy, citizenship in a 'Christian' or 'civilised society' did not guarantee salvation. Instead, all Christians were called to demonstrate their faith by works of mercy toward animals and humanity. Those who did not do so were false adherents. In 1910, to those who justified cruel actions by claiming Christian societies allowed them, she countered,

> 'Christians' are not permitting these cruelties to pass without condemnation, for in all countries they are denounced in all the humane newspapers of the various societies for preventing cruelty, but unhappily all are not followers of the gentle Christ who call themselves by his name.[96]

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[93] Frances Levvy, 'Europe and Asia', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 17 November 1902, 122; cf. Frances Levvy, 'The Merciful Hindu', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 18 April 1898, 42–43.
[94] Cf. Frances Levvy, 'Woman's Relief Corps, Washington (America)', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 11 February 1903, 15; Frances Levvy, ed., 'Inasmuch', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 31 August 1923, 6.
[95] Frances Levvy, 'The Cry of the Creatures', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 17 October 1903, 113.
[96] Frances Levvy, 'A Cruel Practice', *The Daily Telegraph*, 18 November 1910, 15.

Generally speaking, comparisons with other cultures were laudatory of their religion and intending to inspire Australians to greater humanity. But this was not always the case. In other articles Levvy spoke baldly – and condescendingly – of 'savages' from 'heathen nations' such as China, Africa and India, who 'bow down to wood and stone.'[97] In a particularly sickening example, an article in *BMHJ* declared that Chiko, a gorilla exhibited at the Central Park Zoo in New York was 'much more civilized' than African tribesmen because he had been trained to act like a British man – 'he sleeps on a decent mattress, uses knife, fork, and spoon and plate at his meals, and sits up at the table.'[98]

Regardless of her pioneering humane work, and progressive tendencies in some areas, Levvy reflects and embeds the racist, imperialist thought and culture of her time. The same ingrained sense of cultural superiority is evident in Levvy's attitudes to indigenous peoples. *BMHJ* often carried reports of the work of the Aboriginal mission, Yarrabah.[99] These articles praised the progress and success of the workers, particularly the operation of the printing press, farming, boating and teaching, all of which 'prove their great intelligence' and is all the more noteworthy given, 'the workers are nearly all the Native Australians.'[100] Articles such as these guilelessly reinforced colonialism and notions of the Noble Savage. Indigenous, or 'Native,' Australians were commended for their intelligence and grace when they adopted the trappings of European life and dress. Eulogising Maggie, wife of 'John, King of Yarrabah,' who had passed away unexpectedly in January 1910, *BMHJ* recorded that, 'She remained true to her early habits, and was always a "Camp Black" far more than her intelligent husband King John.'[101] The same article implicitly praised King John for his quiet grief, despite the 'camp women' attempting 'to get up a

[97] Levvy, 'Wanted - A Missionary', 100.
[98] Frances Levvy, 'About Monkeys', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 14 September 1897, 100.
[99] Thompson characterised Yarrabah as a particularly 'paternalistic institution'. *Religion in Australia*, 53.
[100] Frances Levvy, ed., 'Yarrabah', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 22 April 1910, 3.
[101] Levvy, 'Yarrabah', 3.

wailing corroboree.'[102] The clear implication is that indigenous culture is inferior to that of the white colonists. It is attitudes such as this that led Thompson to deplore the racism of Australian churches at that time (reflected in Levvy's writing), which were 'imbued with a prejudice that Aboriginal lifestyles were incompatible with the Christian Gospel.'[103] Meredith Lake explains that women who used the Bible to inform and critique their engagement with others, could not escape a culturally embedded theology.[104] For such women, their colonialism collided with their understanding that Christ died for the salvation of all human persons. Thus, Lake argues that 'the impulses of evangelical humanitarianism ran counter to the doctrine of *terra nullius*.'[105] This tension is evident in Levvy, who recognises the inherent humanity and dignity of Aboriginal people, yet views them through the distorted lens of white supremacy.

Conclusion

Levvy did not write academic monographs or Bible commentaries, but she was engaged in the work of public biblical interpretation just as much as those men, cited by religious historians, who used scripture to argue for or against changes to divorce law, secular education, Sabbatarianism or temperance. De Groot and Taylor contend that for too long, female Bible interpreters have been overlooked because they were barred from universities and seminaries, unable to 'engage as equals in learned conversations about biblical studies.' They implore us to 'look beyond the academic commentary on the Bible and include catechetical and devotional writing, moral instruction, poetry, hymns, tracts and commentaries written for the unlearned' so that we can unearth 'a treasury of women's writings'.[106] Levvy is typical of the women described by de Groot and Taylor, whose 'readers include children, young adults, young women, the laity,

[102] Levvy, 'Yarrabah', 3.
[103] Thompson, *Religion in Australia*, 5.
[104] Lake, *The Bible in Australia*, 104.
[105] Lake, *The Bible in Australia*, 105. Both Lake and Thompson also see a correlation between Darwinism, with its articulation of 'survival of the fittest' and a belief in the inferiority of Aboriginal Australians. Lake, *The Bible in Australia*, 67; Thompson, *Religion in Australia*, 53.
[106] de Groot and Taylor, *Recovering Nineteenth-Century Women Interpreters of the Bible*, 10.

those who are unlearned, and the general public.'[107] In *BMHJ* Levvy published her own prose, poetry, expositions and reports utilising biblical quotations, allusions and expositions. To recognise Levvy as a woman engaged in the rigorous work of biblical interpretation is to open the door for other Australian women like her, who have been ignored or erased from religious histories in the erroneous belief that only men undertook such serious work. In recovering her story, it becomes clear that she also reproduced the damaging and dehumanising racism and cultural imperialism embedded in the Christian culture in which she was immersed. At the same time, to tell the story of Levvy's four decades of labour in the cause of animal protection, both embodying and challenging gender roles, motivated by her faith and anchored in a robust, modern understanding of scripture, is to begin to undo two centuries of the erasure of unmarried Christian women in Australia.

[107] de Groot and Taylor, *Recovering Nineteenth-Century Women Interpreters of the Bible*, 10.

4

A Force for Change: Ada Constance Duncan (1896-1970)

'She took to Japan her youth, her University training, her Y.W.C.A. experience, her love of fun, her desire to serve. She brings back to us an understanding of Japanese life, and a carefully acquired knowledge of Japanese history and traditions that is truly inspiring.'[1]

Introduction

Ada Constance Duncan (1896-1970) was a missionary, welfare worker, internationalist, refugee advocate, and architect of social and political reform for women and children. In the inter-war and post-war years Duncan engaged with networks of activists throughout the world. Her work had a significant effect upon Australian policy – foreign and domestic – and left a profound impact on the University sector in Australia. One struggles to find her in the history books.

Duncan began her career as a Travelling Secretary for the Australian Student Christian Movement (ASCM) before spending a decade in Japan (1922-1932) as Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Secretary. In this role she worked tirelessly as an educator and advocated for better conditions for factory workers. As one of the few non-native people at the time to speak fluent Japanese – and with a vast network of contacts through her involvement with the Student Christian Movement – Duncan became a vital conduit for accurate, up-to-date information on events in the Asia Pacific region throughout the 1930s. On her return to Australia Duncan threw herself into involvement with the League of Nations Union (LNU) and the international peace movement. During this time, Duncan's voice became well known in Australia through her speaking engagements and radio programs on the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC), particularly the League of Nations Radio Club. Historian Catherine Fisher laments that Duncan's 'influence would not last beyond the 1930s', when she became 'tainted . . .

[1] 'Japan Comes to Geelong', *Geelong Advertiser*, 17 March 1928, sec. Mainly for Women, 3.

as a communist sympathiser' through connections with avowed socialists.[2] This is a limited assessment of Duncan's life and influence. During and after World War Two, Duncan became involved in refugee advocacy, leading to an influential career with various departments of the United Nations (UN), involvement in social welfare policy formation in Australia, and encouraging an influx of international students that would influence the University sector in Australia for decades to come. Nonetheless, Fisher's assessment is understandable given Duncan's miniscule presence in the published historical record. Despite her long and impressive career being motivated and sustained by her faith, Duncan does not appear in any religious histories of Australia (that I have yet encountered), outside of brief mentions in the histories of specific organisations.[3]

Why is it that Australian religious historians have largely ignored the agency and activism of Constance Duncan, whose influence spanned decades and continents nurturing leaders and developing social policy? Chapters four through six will consider the impact of Duncan's gender, sexuality, and ecumenical faith on her legacy across three distinct periods of her career. This chapter will discuss the early stages of Duncan's career, working first with the Australian Student Christian Movement, and then with the Young Women's Christian Association in Japan. Chapter five will discuss Duncan's career on her return from Japan and in the lead up to World War Two, and chapter six will examine her career during and after the war.

[2] Catherine Fisher, 'World Citizens: Australian Women's Internationalist Broadcasts, 1930–1939', *Women's History Review* 28, no. 4 (2019): 626–44, https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2018.1506554; cf. Hilary Summy, 'From Missionary to Ministerial Adviser: Constance Duncan and Australia-Japan Relations 1922-1947', *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 54, no. 1 (1 March 2008): 40, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8497.2008.00482.x.

[3] Examples include Renate Howe, *A Century of Influence: The Australian Student Christian Movement 1896-1996* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2009); Marian Quartly and Judith Smart, *Respectable Radicals: A History of the National Council of Women Australia, 1896-2006*, Australian History (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing in conjunction with the National Council of Women of Australia, 2015). Duncan is mentioned once, in passing, as Secretary of the Australian branch of the International Peace Campaign, by Frank Engel in *Times of Change: 1918-1978*, vol. 2, Christians in Australia (Melbourne: Joint Board of Christian Education, 1993), 60.

Archival Sources

Like Levvy, and so many other unmarried women of her time, the personal papers of Constance Duncan have been lost. In Duncan's case, this may be attributed not only to remaining unmarried, but also the diversity of her career (which meant her papers were not identified and archived by one particular organisation), her sexuality, and the ignominy of her death in a mental asylum in Kew, Victoria in 1970. Yet, given the extent and significance of her work with prominent national and international organisations, it is striking that *none* of Duncan's own records or papers appear to have survived. Transcripts and recordings of her radio broadcasts were not included in ABC archives. It is worth asking why this is so.

Nonetheless, Duncan has left a historical footprint that allows us to examine her life and legacy. Her words remain scattered through collections in the National Library of Australia (particularly the archives of the ASCM, the Brookes Papers and Eggleston Papers relating to the League of Nations Union, the Institute of Pacific Relations, the Bureau of Social and International Affairs and the papers of Margaret Sutherland), National Archives of Australia, State Libraries of Victoria and NSW, University of Melbourne Archives (particularly the records of Duncan's work with the League of Nations Union, international students, and the YWCA), and the Public Record Office of Victoria (PROV).[4] Importantly, in Trove we also have a record of the many

[4] 'Records of the Australian Student Christian Movement', manuscript (2003 1895), MS 980, National Library of Australia; Herbert Brookes and Ivy Brookes, 'Papers of Herbert and Ivy Brookes', manuscript (1970 1869), MS 1924, National Library of Australia; F. W. Eggleston, 'Papers of Frederic William Eggleston', manuscript (54 1911), MS 423, National Library of Australia; M. Sutherland, 'Papers of Margaret Sutherland', manuscript (1967 1894), MS 2967, National Library of Australia; 'Correspondence between Constance Duncan (Melbourne) and Courtney, 1941 to 1945, (File 49-54), (from Collections Held by the Fawcett Library/Courtney Papers/Correspondence (I))' (Unpublished, 1941), https://trove.nla.gov.au/version/261157993; 'Applications for Positions by Miss Constance Duncan' (Sydney, NSW: Commonwealth Office of Education, September 1949), Series A1361 34/1/12 Part 482, National Archives of Australia; Constance Duncan, 'Letter to Dr Ian Clunies Ross, CSIRO', 22 July 1949, ICR 21/7, National Archives of Australia; Australian Broadcasting Commission, 'Duncan, Constance [Australian Broadcasting Commission] [Box 12]' (1948), NAA C1737 Box 12, National Archives of Australia; 'Miss A Constance Duncan - Passport Renewal [Box 46]' (item, Sydney, 1946), SP42/2, C1946/570, National Archives of Australia; 'Young Women's Christian Association of Australia 1894-1984' (1984 1895), 1984.0066, 1985.0048, 1987.0074, University of Melbourne Archives; William Harrison Moore, 'Records of Sir William Harrison Moore 1867-1935' (1935 1867), 1963.0001, University of Melbourne Archives; '1970/3368 Ada Constance Duncan: Body Card' (Melbourne, Vic., 1970), VPRS 24/P0002, 1971/1315, Public Record Office of Victoria, https://prov.vic.gov.au/archive/D2C379EB-F1C8-11E9-AE98-335F8A0E332C; '1971/1315 Ada Constance

newspaper articles which make reference to Duncan, contain records of her interviews and speeches, or those which she herself wrote. It is the collected bounty of these sources which form the basis of my analysis of Duncan's agency and activism.

Biography of Ada Constance Duncan (1896-1970)

Ada Constance Duncan was born on 26th October 1896 to Andrew William Bartlett Duncan, a successful real estate agent and auctioneer, and his wife Alice Dalby Duncan (nee Bellin). She was born at the family home, 'Ripenleigh' in Canterbury, Victoria, which was also the site of her father's business. The family already had two daughters, Alice Mildred (1889-1974) and Kathleen Mary (1892-1969). They would welcome a son, Frere Bartlett (1903-1975), when Constance was six years old. Of her siblings, Constance was closest to Kathleen, with whom she shared a love of music and involvement with the Young Woman's Christian Association (YWCA). She does not appear to have been particularly close to either Alice, who would marry to become Mrs Oliver Berrie Norman and have a daughter (Gwenyth Mildred Norman, 1920-2007), or Frere, who married Mabel Evelyn MccCormick (1903-1986) and had a daughter (Jennifer Mary Duncan, 1932–2012).[5] Both Constance and Kathleen remained lifelong spinsters. In the 1920s the two sisters would live together in Japan while both of them were working for the YWCA.[6] Duncan also remained close to her parents, who at times travelled to support her work, or accompany her on trips in other states in Australia. Additionally, her father, Andrew Duncan, would cover her expenses for a period of time when Duncan attended the YWCA National

Duncan: Inquest' (Melbourne, Vic., 1971), VPRS 24/P0002, 1971/1315, Public Record Office of Victoria, https://prov.vic.gov.au/archive/D2C379EB-F1C8-11E9-AE98-335F8A0E332C; 'Ada Constance Duncan: Will', 721/052, Public Record Office of Victoria, accessed 1 October 2021, https://prov.vic.gov.au/archive/426F7D4E-F5D6-11E9-AE98-33AF63AFF2D2.

[5] Constance was, however, the only one of her sisters to be a bridesmaid at Frere's wedding to Mabel Evelyn McCormick in 1928. 'Family Notices', *Table Talk*, 3 May 1928, 60.

[6] 'Social Notes: In the News', *Herald*, 28 November 1924, sec. Woman's World, 8.

Training School.[7] It was her father's ill health that would eventually bring Duncan back to Australia after a decade working in Japan.

Constance, or Con as her friends called her,[8] attended school at Carisbrooke Ladies College, and later Hessle College in Camberwell. She excelled in Music, particularly singing and violin, for which she was awarded numerous prizes during her time at school, in addition to prizes for History, Botany and overall excellence.[9] As a fifteen-year-old student Duncan became a 'keen and active' member of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), earning proficiency badges in pursuits as diverse as horticulture and motor cycling; this connection would endure throughout her life and influence her career.[10] Duncan's love of music and involvement with the YWCA were shared with her sister Kathleen, with whom she would remain close throughout her life. After matriculation, Duncan enrolled at the University of Melbourne, graduating in 1917 with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours), and a Master of Arts in 1920.[11] While at the University, her unique manner of advocating for others was evident when, during the Great War, Duncan raised money for the Red Cross by offering other students rides on her motorcycle.[12] While at university, she also became involved with the Australian Student Christian Movement (ASCM).

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[7] Australian Student Christian Movement, 'Executive Committee Minutes' (Melbourne, Vic.: ASCM, 21 May 1920), MS 980, Series 2, items 5-6, box 4, National Library of Australia, 241.
[8] As demonstrated by personal letters from friends. See, for example, letters from Don Banks, Una Bourne, Eileen Lester and 'Nell', Records of Margaret Sutherland, National Library of Australia, MS 2967, [box 1, file 2].
[9] 'School Speech Night: Carisbrooke Ladies' College', *Reporter*, 15 December 1905, 5; 'School Speech Days: Hessle College, Camberwell', *Argus*, 19 December 1910, 9; 'School Speech Days: Hessle College, Camberwell', *Argus*, 21 December 1911, 5.
[10] Over fifteen years later, there were still women who remembered Duncan 'collecting thrift from them in the lunch hour'. 'Japan Comes to Geelong', 3.
[11] 'Degrees Conferred', *Herald*, 17 April 1920, 3.
[12] Ralph Gibson, *One Woman's Life: A Memoir of Dorothy Gibson* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1980), 43; Diane Langmore, 'Duncan, Ada Constance (1896–1970)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, n.d.), http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/duncan-ada-constance-10061.

The Australian Student Christian Movement (ASCM)

Inaugurated in 1896, ASCM was the Australian branch of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), established by WSCF founding secretary John Mott.[13] Historian Renate Howe describes Mott's vision for WSCF to be a movement characterised by both piety, missionary zeal, and inter-denominational cooperation.[14] Howe depicts ASCM as a movement of 'change agents' who sought to transform universities and unify churches, while cultivating 'national and ecumenical awareness' and fostering a 'global perspective'.[15] At the time, churches in Australia were increasingly fractured, divided not only by sectarianism, but the issue of Darwinism and the role of Christian faith in informing public policy and morality.[16] Christian socialism and social gospel theology were popular topics of conversation amongst those who sought to respond to an increasingly urban and industrial society.[17] Stuart Piggin (historian of evangelical Christianity in Australia) argues that this led to a schism within evangelicalism. Liberals saw these intellectual debates as enriching (rather than undermining) their faith, while conservatives were suspicious of 'progressive biblical scholarship' and tended to withdraw from efforts to reform society in favour of focusing on evangelism, prayer and personal holiness.[18] In the midst of this, ASCM was a unifying force, gathering students from across the denominational spectrum.

[13] Initially, the Australian branch was known as the Australasian Student Christian Union (ASCU), with the name change occurring in the interwar period. Renate Howe, *A Century of Influence: The Australian Student Christian Movement 1896-1996* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2009), 20; Renate Howe, 'The Australian Student Christian Movement and Women's Activism in the Asia-Pacific Region, 1890s-1920s', *Australian Feminist Studies* 16, no. 36 (November 2001): 311–23.
[14] Howe, *A Century of Influence*, 25.
[15] Howe, *A Century of Influence*, 24–25. The focus on ecumenism was a deliberate attempt to nurture unity amongst all Christians around core beliefs and ideals, across (and in spite of) denominational lines.
[16] Cf. Stuart Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World: Evangelical Christianity in Australia*, Revised (Brunswick East, Victoria: Acorn Press, 2012), 49–50.
[17] Howe, *A Century of Influence*, 25.
[18] Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World, 50*.

Duncan's involvement with the ASCM blossomed during her time at the University of Melbourne.[19] As an undergraduate Duncan became involved with the Christian Union (as the University of Melbourne branch of the ASCM was known at the time), becoming president of the Women's branch.[20] She was later elected to the Victorian State Council as an Undergraduate Representative.[21] Duncan appears in the records of the ASCM General Committee Minutes in 1918 as a representative of the Victorian State Council, at which time she was elected to the Foreign Service Committee.[22] The completion of Duncan's postgraduate degree coincided with the resignation of Miss Frances Good as ASCM Women's Travelling Secretary (South) and the need to find a replacement. At the time, the Travelling Secretaries were a vital cog in the ASCM, as they met in person with Christian Unions throughout the country, giving guidance on governance, leadership and finance. In addition, they spoke to numerous student groups (both secondary and tertiary), women's organisations and church groups, raising the profile of ASCM and recruiting new members.[23]

In February 1920 Duncan accepted the role of Travelling Secretary, but '[s]he was not . . . prepared to bind herself' to the full two and a half years requested. Eager to have her in the role, 'It was decided that this was all the executive could ask of a prospective secretary and that Miss Duncan be appointed from July 1st for the remainder of 1920 at a salary of £175 per annum.'[24] In preparation for the role, Margaret Holmes suggested that Duncan attend the YWCA National Training School in Sydney in July and August of 1920, with Andrew Duncan, her father, agreeing

[19] The ASCM did have branches in high schools at the time, but I have not yet found a record of Duncan having any connection with ASCM prior to her time as an undergraduate.
[20] 'Miss Constance Duncan, M.A.: A Visitor from Japan', *Sunday Times*, 19 August 1928, sec. The Ladies Section, 2.
[21] 'Victorian State Council Minutes', 20 Nov 1918, Records of the Australian Student Christian Movement, National Library of Australia, MS 980, [box 74, series 13, file 4].
[22] 'Minutes of general committee and executive, 1896-1943', 10 Jan 1918, Records of the Australian Student Christian Movement, National Library of Australia, MS 980, [box 4, series 2, item 5].
[23] For examples see 'Student Christian Movement', *Mail*, 16 October 1920, 14; 'Student Christian Movement', *Mercury*, 12 April 1922, 8.
[24] ASCM Executive Minutes, 9th February 1920, Records of the Australian Student Christian Movement, National Library of Australia, MS 980, [box 4, series 2, item 5].

to pay the expenses.[25] This anecdote is important in signalling the commitment of ASCM – and of the Duncan family – to the training and development of leaders. But it also prefigures the financial challenges that plagued ASCM's appointment of Travelling Secretaries. In fact, a month after the minutes first record her appointment, Duncan's rate of pay is listed at the reduced sum of £130 per annum, with ASCM covering 'maintenance, all expenses incurred in travelling, and all secretarial expenses.'[26]

Records of Duncan's time as Travelling Secretary demonstrate that she cherished a critical, reflective, outward looking faith and sought to cultivate the same in others. In her first year as Travelling Secretary, Duncan told a reporter that her role as a Christian educator was to help students to think critically and give expression to their own opinions. Education is, she said, 'literally a drawing out, not a cramming in' of ideas.[27] During this early period, Duncan's work, while extensive, was limited mainly to work with women and girls. She spoke at public and private schools and universities in her travels throughout Australia. Unlike Levvy, however, accounts of her many engagements did not consign her work to a purely womanly or maternal realm. Duncan was praised not for her womanly virtues, but for her intelligence, her grasp of facts, her gifts of communication and her warm personality.[28]

Our knowledge of Duncan's many speaking engagements from this time comes largely from reports in the women's sections of major newspapers, which first came to prominence in

[25] ASCM Executive Minutes, 21st May 1920, Records of the Australian Student Christian Movement, National Library of Australia, MS 980, [box 4, series 2, item 5]. Margaret Holmes (1886-1981) was a towering figure in the ecumenical movement in Australia in the twentieth century, largely due to her longevity of leadership in the Student Christian Movement both in Australia and abroad. In Australia, she was a long-serving secretary of ASCM, and President of the Women's branch. Described by Frank Engel as, 'the chief executive and quietly all-pervading genius of the ASCM', Holmes was one of the four people to whom Engel dedicated his ecumenical history of Australia, and the only woman. Frank Engel, *Times of Change: 1918-1978*, vol. 2, Christians in Australia (Melbourne: Joint Board of Christian Education, 1993), front matter, 70–72.
[26] ASCM Executive Minutes, 18th March 1920, Records of the Australian Student Christian Movement, National Library of Australia, MS 980, [box 4, series 2, item 5].
[27] 'Student Christian Movement', 16 October 1920, 14.
[28] Franziska, 'Mainly About People.', *Daily News*, 12 November 1921, 6.

Australia in the 1870s. Historian Justine Lloyd has argued that the layout of the women's pages in newspapers and magazines in the early twentieth century demonstrated the dominance of separate spheres ideology and tended to celebrate a certain kind of femininity, in which women were avid consumers of goods related to the domestic sphere. She notes that the first women's pages to appear in the 1870s could hardly be described as high literature, as they consisted mainly of jokes, fashion advice, gossip and advertising for goods such as 'ventilating corsets' and jewellery.[29] This was a persistent trend, even after women's sections began to include more serious content related to politics and international affairs, and is evident when one examines the pages on which Duncan's speaking engagements were most frequently advertised. For example, her address to the Women's Graduate Association in Sydney in 1921 was advertised in the *Daily Telegraph's* 'For Women: In the Throng' section alongside advertisements for 'Instant Possum' (a grain-based beverage that 'avoids the harm' of drinking tea and coffee), 'Royal' eau de cologne toiletries, and 'Plaza Tooth Paste' ('Health and Beauty for the Mouth and Teeth').[30] The following year, Sydney's *The Sun* newspaper announced Duncan's appointment as YWCA secretary for Japan on its 'Social Gossip' page in the midst of advertising clearly directed at women.[31]

[29] Justine Lloyd, 'Women's Pages in Australian Print Media from the 1850s', *Media International Australia* 150, no. 1 (1 February 2014): 61–62.
[30] 'In the Throng', *Daily Telegraph*, 18 May 1921, sec. For Women, 4.
[31] 'Social Gossip', *Sun*, 11 June 1922, 18.

Figure 6: Duncan's appointment as YWCA Secretary for Japan announced on the 'Social Gossip' page of *The Sun*, 11 June 1922.

Yet it would be wrong to regard the women's pages as frivolous nonsense. North American historian Alice Fahs has cautioned us not to dismiss the women's pages too quickly. While she acknowledges the proliferation of advertising and cookery advice, Fahs also notes 'articles clearly focused on women's changing public status at the turn of the century, offering an education

beyond the local confines . . . and certainly beyond fashion and cookery.'[32] The women's pages could be – and were for Duncan – a place where women were exposed to perspectives, experiences and events beyond their own local contexts. In 1922, for example, the 'Women's Column' of Hobart's *Mercury* newspaper reported on Duncan's Tasmanian trip as ASCM Travelling Secretary. The article details Duncan's account of the appalling conditions faced by students in Central Europe, contrasting this with the life of Tasmanian students, and commending the work of English essayist Philip Hamerton.[33] Such content can hardly be described as frippery. Duncan's role as an intermediary, communicating the conditions of starving students in Europe to local Australian audiences, prefigures her later role as an international correspondent while living in Japan, and ultimately her career with the League of Nations Union and United Nations as an Asia-Pacific specialist.

Although Duncan's own words as reported in print media did not evince the spiritual fervour seen in Levvy's *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal*, they expressed a practical, outwardly focussed, and sincere Christian commitment. Together with her family, Duncan joined Canterbury Baptist Church as a child, and remained devoted throughout her life.[34] The organisations with which she engaged and worked in her early career were explicitly Christian and faith based. One of the earliest reports of Duncan's work as a Travelling Secretary with ASCM describes the organisation as seeking to help students at all levels to attain 'the Kingdom of God'.[35] In the same article, Duncan explained that in her work with ASCM she desired to help students nurture

[32] Alice Fahs, *Out on Assignment: Newspaper Women and the Making of Modern Public Space* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 62–3.
[33] Villette, 'University Students', *Mercury*, 19 April 1922, sec. Women's Column, 3.
[34] Her commitment was such that she left a sum of £100 to the church in her will. 'Ada Constance Duncan: Will'.
[35] 'Student Christian Movement', 16 October 1920, 14; 'Kingdom of God' is a term used in the gospels of the New Testament to refer to the way Jesus would rule (in contrast to the religious leaders of his time) and how he expects his followers to live. Cf. Matt 21:28-43; Mark 10; Luke 6:20, 8:1-10; John 3:1-5 and many more. It involved not only mental assent to his teaching and hope for future salvation, but practical care for others, particularly the poor and marginalised, in this life. See George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1993), 60–61, 338–339.

their spiritual natures, which were too often ignored in an education focussed on mental and physical development. She referred to this as 'complet[ing] the triangle' of human development.[36] A key method of cultivating faith used by the ASCM was Bible circles, in which students were encouraged to ask questions and think critically. Duncan suggested that group leaders should not be simple conveyors of information but must encourage students to ask searching questions and to express their own thoughts and ideas.[37] This early articulation of the value of the individual – their thoughts, opinions and particularities – would be a key feature throughout Duncan's life. She advocated for those on the margins of society (such as refugees, overwrought mothers and international students), arguing for their full inclusion into Australian society. She celebrated their unique contributions rather than encouraging them to adhere to societal expectations.[38]

Like Levvy before her, the most powerful exercise of Duncan's agency was in her efforts on behalf of others. During the early period of Duncan's involvement with ASCM, members were grappling with the aims of the movement. In the annual report of the Victoria University College Christian Union in 1917, branch President J.H. Sheat warned against those who would 'band themselves together to preserve that fixed, unalterable truth of which they are the self-appointed guardians', insisting instead that the movement must always be outward looking.[39] This echoed Duncan's own sentiments, expressed during her time as ASCM Travelling Secretary:

> Based on the study of Christ's life . . . the movement is out to see Christian principles dominating the life of the community. The movement is controlled by and its whole spirit is one of youth. We have general meetings, at which addresses are given on all questions of social and economic life – even international relations and the social conditions of our own and other countries are studied. Mistakes may be

[36] 'Student Christian Movement', 16 October 1920, 14. It is worth noting that the blue triangle was the symbol of the YWCA (with whom Duncan would work when she completed her time as travelling secretary for ASCM) and was at times described as representing the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of human experience. See 'Blue Triangle - Its Aims and Objects', *Brisbane Courier*, 12 August 1922, 9.
[37] 'Student Christian Movement', 16 October 1920, 14.
[38] In later life, this would be expressed in Duncan's advocacy on behalf of refugees, her campaigns for the welfare of mothers and children, and her championing of international students.
[39] J.H. Sheat, 'Victoria University College Christian Union: Annual Report 1916-1917' (Melbourne, Vic.: Victoria University College Christian Union, 1917), NLA archives MS980/Series1/Box1/File 2.

> made, but at least the members are thinking for themselves, and they are out to do constructive thinking on all lines.[40]

One practical outworking of this was in Duncan's tireless efforts towards famine relief, in cooperation with the World Student Christian Federation.[41] During 1922, in her travels on behalf of ASCM she made repeated appeals for supporters to 'dig deep' on behalf of Russian famine victims, speaking knowledgably about the conditions on the ground, causes of the crisis, and how relief was being distributed.[42] The following year, Duncan was in Japan when a devastating earthquake struck Tokyo and Yokohama. While she was safe, having been out of the city at the time and away from the epicentre, Duncan wrote firsthand accounts of her experience and conditions on the ground, which were published by the Australian press.[43] When rebuilding began, she helped to energise fundraising efforts and keep the need of Japanese students at the forefront of the consciousness of ASCM.[44]

Duncan's actions in advocating for victims of natural disasters and international students (whose circumstances were more challenging than those faced by their Australian counterparts) were typical of the ASCM approach. Howe describes the work of other Australian women missionaries at this time as similarly focussed on health, education, and broader programmes of social reform.[45] Part of the ethos of ASCM was a commitment to social justice and practical activism, believing that 'religion meant service and dedication to others'. Yet the 1920s saw an even deeper renewal of interest in social justice and social reform, with a focus on 'fighting poverty and racism'.[46] Consequently, at a conference in Parramatta in 1923, ASCM affirmed an inclusive, ecumenical stance in their revamped 'Aims and Basis', even in the face of 'increasing

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[40] 'Student Christian Movement', 12 April 1922, 8.
[41] As described earlier, WSCF was the international federation of which ASCM was the Australian branch
[42] 'Russian Famine Fund', *Daily Telegraph*, 28 April 1922, 4; 'Student Christian Movement', 12 April 1922, 8.
[43] Constance Duncan, 'Women's Column: Stricken Japan', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 October 1923, 5; 'Aid for Japan', *Argus*, 26 September 1923, 21; W. Farmer Whyte, 'Unimaginable: Japan's Disaster', *Daily Telegraph*, 22 November 1923, 5.
[44] 'World Fellowship Fair', *News*, 19 June 1926, 7; 'International Fair', *News*, 22 June 1926, 4.
[45] Howe, *A Century of Influence*, 112.
[46] Howe, *A Century of Influence*, 142, 170.

unrest at the movement's direction among conservative evangelical students.'[47] Ruth Rouse, historian of ecumenical Christianity, has characterised this underlying fault line as a tension between 'two ideals of the path to Christian union. These she labels 'Unity in truth' (with an emphasis on doctrinal correctness and agreement around key tenets of faith) and 'Unity in Christian fellowship' (with an emphasis on cooperating to do the work of the Gospel through social justice and sharing fellowship together on the basis of commonalities).[48] This growing unease is addressed in detail by Piggin and Linder, who claim that in the interwar period 'Australian evangelicalism suffered the most intense internal convulsion in its history, occasioned by the onslaught of modernism.'[49] While they are adamant that evangelicals did not retreat from the public sphere and had much to offer in the reconstruction of the nation, Piggin and Linder admit that during the 1920s 'evangelicals gravitated right and conservative' while (in their eyes) the Australian Labor Party (ALP) swung left, becoming more socialist – and more attractive to Catholics.[50] Piggin and Linder seek to unearth and celebrate the practical and intellectual contribution of Australian evangelicals to nation building, claiming that 'the Protestant churches still dominated the rhythm of life' and in doing so upheld social morality, even while they felt trepidation at changing gender norms and sexual mores.[51] It is clear from their argument that Piggin and Linder view Australian evangelicals as (rightly, in their opinion) moving steadily forward in their commitment to 'Unity in truth'. In comparison, Engel and Howe place ASCM and YWCA firmly within the tradition of 'Unity in fellowship'. They seek to demonstrate the practical, justice-oriented praxis *and* 'the significant contribution to Australian intellectual history' of ecumenical Christians, with Howe highlighting specific ASCM alumni, including Duncan.[52]

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[47] Howe, *A Century of Influence*, 165, 170.
[48] Ruth Rouse, 'Voluntary Movements and the Changing Ecumenical Climate', in *A History of the Ecumenical Movement: 1517-1948*, ed. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986), 325. Rouse is adamant that both strands are needed to achieve true unity.
[49] Stuart Piggin and Robert D. Linder, *Attending to the National Soul: Evangelical Christians in Australian History, 1914-2014* (Melbourne, Vic: Monash University Publishing, 2020), 90.
[50] Piggin and Linder, *Attending to the National Soul*, 91.
[51] They write that the new Ansell condom factory in Melbourne 'unnerv[ed] many an evangelical heart'. Piggin and Linder, *Attending to the National Soul*, 93.
[52] Howe, *A Century of Influence,* 18-19; cf. Engel, *Times of Change*, 6.

Thus, as the schism between evangelical and ecumenical Christians widened, Duncan was to be found firmly on the ecumenical side, along with the majority of her ASCM and YWCA colleagues.[53]

In addition to showing buds of the passions which would become representative of Duncan's life work, her travels with ASCM brought her into contact with notable Australians and significant individuals with whom she would network throughout her life. In Perth, she spoke alongside Rev John Flynn, superintendent of the Australian Inland Mission (AIM), who would go on to found the Royal Flying Doctor Service.[54] In one of her first visits to Sydney Duncan attended the Sydney University Women Graduates' (SUWG) Association, speaking briefly about her work and travels. Present at the event was Eleanor Hinder, who, like Duncan, would later work in Asia, becoming a colleague and ally in Duncan's work with the League of Nations Union (LNU).[55] At the same SUWG event, Duncan promoted the amalgamation and cooperation of disparate women's graduate groups throughout the country, foreshadowing her later work with the LNU and various UN organisations with which she worked post World War Two.[56] Duncan frequently spoke in churches and alongside prominent clergy at conferences and events. On a trip to Perth in 1921 she spoke at the ASCM conference, as well as in Presbyterian, Congregational and Baptist churches alongside Rev John Flynn (AIM), Rev C.L. Riley (Anglican Bishop of Perth), Rev Eric Nye (superintendent of the Freemantle Methodist Mission, and later President of the West Australian Methodist Conference), Rev H. Reeve (Baptist Minister), Rev J.M. Dabb (Presbyterian Minister) and Rev J.R. Blanchard (later Moderator of South Australian Presbyterian Church).[57] In Brisbane she was entertained by His Excellency Sir Matthew Nathan

[53] For the ecumenical origins of ASCM and YWCA see Rouse, 'Voluntary Movements and the Changing Ecumenical Climate', 309–349.
[54] 'Topics of the Day: Congregational Social Evening', *Daily News*, 16 August 1921, 4.
[55] 'Women's Column S.U.W.G. Association', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 May 1921, 7.
[56] 'In the Throng', 4.
[57] 'Presbyterian', *Daily News*, 6 August 1921, 1, 5; 'Topics of the Day: Congregational Social Evening, 4'; 'Christian Student Movement', *Daily News*, 20 August 1921, 4; 'News and Notes', *West Australian*, 14 September 1921, 6.

(Governor of Queensland), and spoke at the Methodist Church, while in Sydney she spoke alongside Dr (later Dame) Constance D'Arcy, and in Hobart she was the keynote speaker at an ASCM Easter conference.[58] In line with the practice of the day, however, she did not take to the pulpit to preach herself, despite being an engaging and articulate communicator.[59]

Duncan had two enduring ambitions, both of which would begin to be realised during her time with ASCM. The first was to coordinate the efforts of various women's graduate groups and women's organisations throughout Australia.[60] The second to work overseas.[61] At this time, the YWCA was seeking women workers for Asia and looked to ASCM for help. This was delegated to the travelling secretaries just as Duncan began her period of service. In 1922, having completed her term as Travelling Secretary, Duncan was seconded to Japan as the first Australian secretary for the YWCA there. Her time in this role would cement her commitment to transnational women's leadership and cooperation, and position her to be one of Australia's foremost Asia-Pacific advisers at the outbreak of war.

World fellowship: Duncan's work in Japan (1922-1932)

Duncan's appointment as YWCA Secretary seconded to Japan was the culmination of a long-held dream. After graduating with her Master of Arts in History and Economics in 1920, Duncan had entered the YWCA National Training School in Sydney, before accepting a two-year term as Travelling Secretary with the ASCM.[62] Duncan was typical of the Australian women putting themselves forward for missionary service at this time, being unmarried, in her late

[58] 'Social and Personal', *Telegraph*, 6 April 1921, 9; 'Social', *Daily Mail*, 6 April 1921, sec. Women's Realm, 4; 'Religious Announcements', *Brisbane Courier*, 9 April 1921, 16; 'Women's Column - S.U.W.G. Association', 7; 'In the Throng', 4; 'Student Christian Movement', 12 April 1922, 8.
[59] Franziska, 'Mainly About People', 6. Interestingly, the biography of Dorothy Gibson (peace activist, Communist and friend of Duncan) claims that on two occasions Gibson spoke from the pulpit when giving an address in church. Gibson, *One Woman's Life*, 40.
[60] 'In the Throng', 4.
[61] 'Social Gossip', 18.
[62] 'Social', *Brisbane Courier*, 17 August 1922, sec. Woman's World, 15; 'University Notes', *Herald*, 24 June 1922. Duncan's M.A. was conferred in 1922, prior to her departure for Japan.

twenties, middle-class, from a rural rather than urban background, with professional qualifications and seeking experience that would be difficult to attain should she stay at home.[63] After an extensive farewell tour in 1922, during which Duncan visited Tasmania, Adelaide, Geelong, Melbourne, Sydney, Newcastle and Brisbane, she departed Australia on 26th August, on board the *Arafura* bound for Japan.[64] Throughout her tour, Duncan had given talks on the life of factory girls in Japan, with whom she hoped to work.[65] On her arrival in Tokyo, she immediately entered into an intensive program of language study which would be the focus of her first two years in Japan. Language proficiency would be critical to building relationships and acquiring cultural understanding, yet Howe notes that it was extremely rare for such training to be provided prior to arriving in the country.[66] In future years, Duncan's language skills would also render her invaluable at international conferences and congresses, where she could converse fluently in Japanese.[67] When not concentrating on her language studies, Duncan devoted herself to learning more about the women and girls with whom she hoped to work. This led her to publish an article on the lives of female Japanese students in late 1923.[68] In doing so, Duncan was continuing to cultivate awareness of conditions in the Asia-Pacific region, which Howe has described as one of the most significant tasks undertaken by missionary women.[69]

Throughout the 1920s, Duncan's activities in Japan were frequently described in women's pages. In Melbourne she featured regularly in 'A Page for Women' in *The Age*, 'Woman's Realm' in *The*

[63] Anne Philomena O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers: Women and Religion in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005), 123; Howe, 'Australian Student Christian Movement and Women's Activism', 312.
[64] 'Social', 17 August 1922, 15.
[65] 'Off to Japan', *Weekly Times*, 12 August 1922, 57; 'Y.W.C.A.', *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 12 August 1922, 14.
[66] Howe, 'Australian Student Christian Movement and Women's Activism', 314.
[67] Constance Duncan, 'Report on Yosemite Conference and Trip to the Far East, July-December 1936', Conference Report (Aboard S.S. Taiping: Bureau of Social and International Affairs, 1 December 1936), MS 1924/35/455, National Library of Australia.
[68] 'Literary Notes', *Southern Cross*, 29 February 1924, 4.
[69] Howe states that these reports were most frequently published in mission bulletins and denominational papers, but Duncan's activities were reported extensively in major metropolitan newspapers, as shall be discussed below. Howe, 'Australian Student Christian Movement and Women's Activism', 318.

Argus and 'Woman's World' in *The Herald*.[70] In other states, Duncan appeared in 'Woman's Interests' in *The West Australian*; 'Woman's World' in *The News* and 'Women's Page' in *The Register* (both in Adelaide); 'For Women' in the *Sydney Morning Herald*; 'Women's Realm' in Brisbane's *Daily Mail*; and 'Women's Column' in *The Mercury* in Tasmania.[71] These are but a few samples from an extensive collection.[72]

In September 1923, while spending her summer vacation in Karuizawa, Duncan experienced her first Japanese earthquake. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported Duncan's firsthand account of the quake and the conditions on the ground. While this was featured in the 'Women's Column', it was given primacy of space in the layout, with surrounding articles being rather less frivolous than those in 'Social Gossip'. The sensation of the tremors, Duncan wrote, was 'like being on a rough sea'.[73] In letters home she expressed her gratitude for the timing of the disaster, when most of the foreign community and almost the entire missionary contingent were out of Tokyo on vacation, resulting in no fatalities of international residents in that city. In Yokohama, where most of the international businesspeople lived and worked, there was far greater suffering. Nonetheless, she wrote to friends back home,

> Had the shock come three or four days later, hundreds of us would have been back in Tokio and Yokohama, and there would have been a large casualty list amongst us. As it was, we were dismantling this house to shut it up on the Monday, and the shock was on the Saturday; we were then going to Tokio for two days, and then to the secretaries' conference at Gotemba, a district that was very badly hit.[74]

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[70] See, for example, 'Current Events: Young Women's Christian Association', *Age*, 10 January 1928, sec. A Page for Women, 7; 'YWCA News', *Argus*, 2 October 1923, sec. Woman's Realm, 12; 'Social Notes: In the News', *Herald*, 28 November 1924, sec. Woman's World, 8.
[71] See, for example, 'Social Notes', *West Australian*, 2 September 1927, sec. Woman's Interests, 9; 'Among Japanese Girls: Work of Miss Constance Duncan - Problem of Education', *News*, 1 July 1926, sec. Woman's World, 6; Constance Duncan, 'Over the Teacups', *Register*, 11 May 1926, sec. Women's Page, 4; 'YWCA Conference', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 January 1928, sec. For Women, 5; 'Social', *Daily Mail*, 6 April 1921, sec. Women's Realm, 4; Villette, 'University Students', *Mercury*, 19 April 1922, sec. Women's Column, 3.
[72] In the period of Duncan's work with ASCM and YWCA, from the 1920s until her return from Japan at the beginning of 1932, I have counted 84 instances of Duncan appearing in women's pages and women's magazines.
[73] Constance Duncan, 'Stricken Japan: Letter from Miss Duncan', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 October 1923, sec. Women's Column, 5.
[74] Duncan, 'Stricken Japan', 5.

In the aftermath of the disaster, Duncan provided a vital information pathway for those wanting news of loved ones and an understanding of the evolving crisis. Duncan did not ignore the plight of ordinary Japanese in her reports. She described in vivid detail the 'dreadful fear of a plot by Korean anarchists and Japanese socialists to burn down the whole of Tokio . . .' and the brutal response of the militia group, the Young Men's Association (not in any way associated with the YMCA), who were using knives and knotted cords to kill any Korean they found on the spot.[75] In stark terms she described the '[r]ows of men stood on tops of trains, and others clung to the buffers between the carriages and on the front of the engine, [who] rode thus for days and nights in their desire to leave the burning city'.[76] Finally, she relayed the actions taken by the Japanese government to restore peace and quiet to the region.[77]

The richness of detail and nuanced understanding of conditions on the ground evident in Duncan's reporting of this situation paved the way for her increasing popularity as an international correspondent. Lloyd has demonstrated how the popularity and proliferation of women's pages in Australia in the 1920s led the editors of some such sections to become 'local celebrities'.[78] It is apparent that the same could occur for a woman such as Duncan, who became a highly respected regular contributor. The experience of the Japanese earthquake proved to be a foretaste of the role Duncan would find herself called upon to fill in coming years and decades – that of giving firsthand accounts of the life of the people of Japan and surrounding nations. In the wake of the earthquake, Duncan once again took to fundraising, writing letters home to Australia detailing the needs of the Japanese people, especially for warm clothes and blankets.[79] On a personal level, she purchased curios to send home, including pictures, jewellery and ivory

[75] Duncan, 'Stricken Japan', 5.
[76] Constance Duncan, cited in Whyte, 'Unimaginable: Japan's Disaster', 5.
[77] Duncan, 'Stricken Japan', 5.
[78] Lloyd, 'Women's Pages', 63.
[79] 'Aid for Japan', 21.

carvings, to be sold to raise money.[80] In seeking to create understanding and cooperation between cultures and nations, Duncan was quite naturally continuing the work she began as Travelling Secretary for the ASCM, when she would give detailed descriptions of the life of students from Central Europe in an effort to arouse pity and raise funds for famine relief.[81]

In 1924 Duncan formally took up her position as a staff member of the YWCA in Kyoto, which had been the ancient capital of Japan. In April she began teaching conversational English classes three hours a week in a government high school. She also spent two hours a week teaching the Bible in English to senior female students at Doshisha College, a private university.[82] This was a natural transition for Duncan, who had been involved with the YWCA herself since she was fifteen years old, and had been working with school and university students during her time with ASCM. In addition to teaching, she helped lead a 'leisure club' for girls who graduated from her high school English class.[83] Here, Duncan aimed to enlarge the experience of the students through studying plays, broadening their cooking repertoire, making silk bags, studying the life of Jesus, and learning about the situation faced by women forced to work in factories.[84] Duncan was concerned at the conditions and long hours worked by girls in factories where there were two twelve-hour shifts per day – 6am to 6pm and 6pm to 6am. In contrast she expressed a sense of relief when touring a factory in which there was 'no night work, a 10-hour day, four holidays a month, and perfectly splendid dormitories and mostly small, reinforced concrete instead of the huge wooden buildings accommodating hundreds of girls.'[85] Later in life, in post war Australia, Duncan would devote herself to improving the lot of working women in her own country. Throughout her time in Japan, Duncan advocated for better conditions for women workers, and

[80] 'YWCA News', 12.
[81] Villette, 'University Students', 3; 'Russian Famine Fund', 4.
[82] 'Miss Constance Duncan', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 May 1928, sec. For Women, 8.
[83] 'Japan Comes to Geelong', 3; Duncan, 'Over the Teacups', 4.
[84] 'Among Japanese Girls, 6.
[85] Duncan, 'Over the Teacups', 4.

was particularly concerned about Korean girls, who came to the factory without any education. They were provided with a Korean teacher so that after finishing a twelve-hour shift, they would be given two hours of schooling.[86] Duncan feared for their safety – and for all factory women working long hours in oppressive conditions – as several times exhausted women had fallen asleep and been caught in the machines.[87] Motivated by basic humanitarian concern, Duncan's activism in this area was also a natural expression of her 'Christian feminist ideals' and enduring commitment to social justice.[88]

Anne O'Brien has demonstrated the highly gendered nature of the work undertaken by female missionaries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Indeed, Duncan's accounts of her work in Japan are evocative of O'Brien's descriptions of Methodist missionary sisters in Asia-Pacific at the turn of the twentieth century training girls in household duties, hygiene, and Christianity.[89] However, Duncan's concern for the physical and socio-economic well-being of Japanese women reflects a broader shift in the missionary movement in the inter-war period. Hilary Summy, historian of peace movements and internationalism in the twentieth century, notes that during the inter-war period 'missionaries' were being replaced by 'foreign secretaries' (such as Duncan). The secretaries had an increasing focus on racial justice, international peace and industrial rights. Summy asserts that for women like Duncan, 'Christianity remained their guiding principle, but they operated on a more secular basis.'[90] Furthermore, Summy argues that Duncan was at the forefront of this shift and was one of the most influential members of the YWCA after the Great War.[91]

[86] 'Among Japanese Girls', 6.
[87] 'Women Factory Workers in Japan', *Herald*, 10 March 1928, 10.
[88] Summy, 'From Missionary to Ministerial Adviser', 29.
[89] O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers*, 133.
[90] Summy, 'From Missionary to Ministerial Adviser', 30.
[91] Summy, 'From Missionary to Ministerial Adviser', 30.

Once again, this depth of information about life in Japan for vulnerable women and girls was reported in the women's pages of major metropolitan newspapers. Media historian Catherine Fisher has written of women journalists in the 1930s utilising broadcast media to 'contribute to public discourse, enact social and political change, help their communities and legitimise themselves as informed and persuasive leaders.'[92] Fisher cites Duncan as an example of a pioneering internationalist broadcaster in the 1930s.[93] Yet it is evident that this was preceded by a decade of Duncan's insightful, informative and engaging political and cultural journalism in print media – overwhelmingly (though not exclusively) in the women's pages of major metropolitan newspapers. Historian Jeannine Baker has lamented the 'marginalisation' of female journalists who were constrained by gendered assumptions about their roles, behaviour and abilities.[94] Both Baker and Lloyd suggest that the unequal representation of women in the Australian media can be attributed in part to separate spheres ideology, and resistance to female journalists who asserted that women could occupy both the domestic and public spheres.[95] Duncan is an example of a woman bridging both spheres – working at this stage of her career mostly with women and girls, but utilising her position to expose the exploitation and oppression of women. She unabashedly sought to occupy the public sphere as a means to advocate for better working conditions for Japanese women, and to inform and educate Australian women about the experiences of women of other cultures. As such, the women's pages were for Duncan a vital tool for political and social activism. Furthermore, while Baker has identified Winifred Moore, women's editor for the Brisbane *Courier* during the 1930s, as an example of a female journalist

[92] Catherine Fisher, 'World Citizens: Australian Women's Internationalist Broadcasts, 1930–1939', *Women's History Review* 28, no. 4 (2019): 630.
[93] Fisher, 'World Citizens', 631–2.
[94] Jeannine Baker, 'Australian Women Journalists and the "Pretence of Equality"', *Labour History*, no. 108 (May 2015): 2–3.
[95] Baker, 'Australian Women Journalists', 10, 16; Lloyd, 'Women's Pages', 61; Justine Lloyd, 'Anything but the News: Defining Women's Programming in Australia, 1935-1950s', in *Gender and Media in the Broadcast Age: Women's Radio Programming at the BBC, CBC, and ABC* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 46, 57, 65, 74.

who showed that women could occupy both 'public and private spheres', it is evident that Duncan was doing this a decade earlier.[96]

Duncan was concerned for the care of girls and women in all aspects of their personhood; she wanted them to have work that was safe and secure, with time to engage their minds and expand their horizons. Her YWCA team ran a charm school which taught skin and hair care, and a course on interior decoration of foreign houses, which an Adelaide newspaper described as 'training housewives'.[97] More accurately, it was training Japanese women in the ways of *foreign* households, given that they were 'instructed in the use of beds, ovens, and so on'.[98] This resonates with historian Jill Dobson's claim that Christian missionaries to Japan in this period saw themselves tasked with 'both spiritual and material salvation'; as such, they should demonstrate that 'the benefits of Western modernity were inseparable from their Christian moorings'.[99] Despite the paternalism of the programme, demand (or perhaps curiosity) was high, with these two courses proving the most popular and successful that the YWCA conducted. Duncan noted that over 100 girls from government schools had asked to view a foreign house, with demand so high that they were regrettably unable to facilitate requests from several schools.[100] Duncan's personal attitude to these courses is ambiguous. There is an edge to her comment (regarding the charm school) that, 'we are not behind the rest of the world when it comes to learning to be more beautiful than we already are. . .'[101] In contrast, when she turns to discussing training in ethics and critical thinking, her enthusiasm is clear. She describes a 'grand week-end conference' where the girls 'loved most of all' the freedom to generate ideas and speak freely.[102] Thus, while acknowledging the deference given to gender norms in her work with

[96] Baker, 'Australian Women Journalists', 10.
[97] 'Among Japanese Girls', 6.
[98] 'Among Japanese Girls', 6.
[99] Jill Dobson, 'Modernisation and Christianity: Australian Missionary Views of Japan: 1912-1939', in *Relationships: Japan and Australia, 1870s-1950s* (Parkville, Vic.: University of Melbourne, 2001), 71.
[100] 'Among Japanese Girls', 6.
[101] 'Among Japanese Girls', 6.
[102] 'Among Japanese Girls', 6.

women and girls, Duncan does not hide her passion for empowering Japanese women. This was likely a natural outcome of coming of age in Australia during what Marilyn Lake has referred to as the 'era of the woman citizen', in which feminists balanced a maternalistic understanding of their role with a desire for greater equity and independence.[103] This led to a greater emphasis on seeking structural change in society, rather than simple efforts at ameliorating poor living conditions.[104] For Duncan, this was expressed in her efforts to improve the conditions in which Japanese women lived and worked, and in allowing them a safe place to question the status quo (and in so doing, imagine a different, better future).

As an educator, Duncan's practice and ethos remained consistent throughout her career. In the ASCM, she had understood her role as helping young people to think critically, drawing out their views rather than chiding them for not thinking the 'right' way.[105] Consistent with this approach, in Japan Duncan led senior high school girls in discussion periods where students could express their hopes and concerns without reprisals.[106] Another key focus for Duncan was getting permission to have religious instruction in schools. Officially, government schools were banned from providing any religious education; unofficially, some principals allowed this to occur in 'club meetings' held after school.[107] Other principals were more stringent, refusing to allow their pupils to be approached in any way by aspiring religious educators. Duncan lamented that such was the case in the government school where she taught English, leading to difficulty in forming any clubs. Private schools were more lenient, sometimes teaching ethics by reading to students

[103] Marilyn Lake, 'A History of Feminism in Australia', in *Australian Feminism: A Companion*, ed. Barbara Caine (Melbourne, Vic.: Oxford University Press, 1998), 132–42; cf. Summy, 'From Missionary to Ministerial Adviser', 30.
[104] This arc of change is also evident in the evolving praxis of the National Council of Women in the interwar period. See Quartly and Smart, *Respectable Radicals*. Howe is critical of historians who do not recognise the impact of missionaries such as Duncan and Eleanor Hinder (YWCA missionary to China) on health, education, and structural change. See *A Century of Influence*, 112.
[105] 'Student Christian Movement', *Adelaide Mail*, 16 October 1920, 14.
[106] According to Duncan, the senior girls believed that 'co-education was the greatest problem in Japan today.' 'Among Japanese Girls', 6.
[107] 'Among Japanese Girls', 6.

from the teachings of great religious leaders, including Buddha and Jesus.[108] One cause for caution on the part of government school principals was a fear that westerners were concerned only with proselytizing students. To counter this, Duncan assured principals that they were not seeking 'to do evangelising work only', and patiently expounded the 'fourfold aims' of the YWCA.[109] These related to the development of the whole person – physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually.[110] The programs run by the Kyoto YWCA catered to each of these aspects. The approach to spiritual development was less direct than programmes aimed at physical, mental and social growth, but it was nonetheless a priority. Duncan expressed optimism that she had 'some opportunity to change the attitude of the girls towards Christianity', and admiration for 'daughters of old Buddhist families' who were courageous enough to 'side with the church'.[111] Summy has argued that in the interwar period missionary work became less driven by religious zeal, and more focussed on structural change.[112] Clearly, however, Duncan's aims were driven not only by humanitarianism or pedagogy, but a genuine commitment to her Christian faith. Furthermore, her focus on working with students reflected the ethos of both ASCM and YWCA, who viewed students – and the missionaries who laboured to reach them – as strategically vital to their vision to see the Kingdom of God established throughout the earth.[113]

At the end of 1927, after experiencing another earthquake,[114] Duncan returned home on furlough, where her skills as an internationalist and cultural ambassador came to the fore. During her time in Australia Duncan returned to old patterns, travelling extensively as she did deputation to raise funds for, and awareness of, the work in Japan. Never afraid of hard work,

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[108] 'Among Japanese Girls', 6.
[109] 'Among Japanese Girls', 6.
[110] 'Girl Citizens' Rally', *Mercury*, 7 March 1928, 8.
[111] 'Among Japanese Girls', 6.
[112] Summy, 'From Missionary to Ministerial Adviser', 30.
[113] Rouse notes that between 1886 (when the first student Christian conference was held in Massachusetts) and 1945, at least 20,500 students presented themselves for missionary service through the Student Volunteer Movement (the missionary arm of the World Student Christian Federation, of which ASCM was a national subsidiary). Rouse, 'Voluntary Movements and the Changing Ecumenical Climate', 328–9.
[114] 'The Woman of the Day', *Daily Telegraph*, 23 May 1928, 20.

she began while still making her way home, managing to attend two YWCA events in Perth when her ship docked there for a few hours during the trip home to Melbourne.[115] She attended countless tea parties, introducing girls and women to the exotic world of oriental culture. At a YWCA Conference at Mt Dandenong in January of 1928, Duncan was said to have 'initiated the delegates into the mysterious functions pertaining to a Japanese tea party.'[116] In her ongoing concern at the living conditions of Japanese factory girls, Duncan used all her ingenuity to raise funds to build a dormitory hostel in Kyoto.[117] She presided at Japanese tea parties wearing a traditional kimono, judging the efforts of Australian girls who attempted to make their own kimonos and awarding prizes to the best.[118] She taught Japanese songs and sold sheet music.[119] Local papers enthused about Duncan's upcoming visits months in advance,[120] and she was lauded for her engaging skills as a speaker and her 'attractive personality'.[121] Furthermore, Duncan was able to relay her firsthand experience of the rise of nationalism in Japan and its expansion into Chinese Territory at a time that saw the proliferation of international groups that were concerned about Australia and its position in the Pacific.[122]

In every city, Duncan lectured on Japanese culture and development, explaining the 'wonderful progress' Japan had made in just seventy-five years, after two-hundred years of isolationism.[123] In doing so, she shed light on Australian-Japanese relations with the aim of bringing greater

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115 'Y.W.C.A. Notes', *Daily News*, 30 August 1927, sec. In the Woman's World, 8; 'Woman's Interests', *West Australian*, 1 July 1927, sec. Social Notes, 9. The Adelaide *News* also noted that Duncan's sister, Miss Kathleen Duncan, who had been teaching music at a university in Japan, accompanied her on the voyage. 'Among Japanese Girls', 6.
116 'Y.W.C.A. Conference', *Age*, 16 January 1928, 8.
117 'Conference of Women', *News*, 27 January 1928, 8.
118 'Y.W.C.A. Board of Directors', *Morning Bulletin*, 23 February 1928, 4; 'Y.W.C.A.', *Morning Bulletin,* 31 March 1928, 5.
119 'Conference of Women', 8; 'Japanese Evening at Corio Club', *Geelong Advertiser*, 22 March 1928, 6.
120 Geelong locals claimed it would be 'one of the events of the year.' 'Y.W.C.A. Board of Directors', 4; 'Y.W.C.A. Forward Movement', *Geelong Advertiser*, 25 February 1928, 3.
121 'Y.W.C.A. Forward Movement', *Geelong Advertiser*, 25 February 1928, sec. Mainly for Women, 3; 'Girl Citizens' Rally', *Mercury*, 7 March 1928, 8; 'Womanhood of Japan', *Age*, 17 March 1928, sec. Woman's Interests, 18; 'Y.W.C.A.', 31 March 1928, 5; Franziska, 'Mainly About People', 6.
122 Summy, 'From Missionary to Ministerial Adviser', 31.
123 'Japan: Address by Miss Constance Duncan', *Advertiser*, 4 April 1928, 11.

understanding between nations.[124] Her talks were frequently illustrated with lantern slides, which allowed her audiences a glimpse of Japanese culture for themselves. Subsequently, she would invite them to consider, together with her, how Australians might achieve genuine fellowship with the people of Japan.[125] As a member of the YWCA, Duncan was a wholehearted supporter of the World Fellowship Movement, which aimed 'to encourage the people to look upon people of other countries of the world in a friendly spirit.'[126] A reporter for Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* wrote in 1928 of Duncan's obvious esteem for Japanese women and girls, and her desire 'to bring about closer fellowship and better understanding with the fascinating people of the Orient'.[127] Not content to titillate audiences with Japanese curios, she sought to engender respect and admiration for the women of Japan. At a gathering in Melbourne she explained that, 'The real aesthetic quality of Japan . . . is not her beautifully carved ivories, her exotic embroideries, her famous pottery, but her women.'[128] Such lavish praise of Japanese culture suggests that Duncan may have been somewhat of an exception to Dobson's categorization of Australian missionaries in this period as viewing Orientals as culturally backward and fundamentally degraded.[129] Duncan spoke with something akin to awe of Japanese women, with 'their spiritual heroism and their tremendous capacity for selfless conduct.'[130] In contrast, her comments held implicit criticism of the unyielding patriarchy of Japanese men, whom she viewed as controlling and oppressive in their treatment of women. In Sydney, she was reported to have told guests at a Society of Women Writers lunch that Japan had no need of Yale locks.

> [A]ll the doors lock on the outside only, so that the women have no option but to stay at home and look after the house and cook the meals. The Japanese man does not approve of gossiping and other feminine diversions, and so takes this effective method of enforcing his wishes.[131]

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[124] Cf. Summy, 'From Missionary to Ministerial Adviser', 31.
[125] 'Japan Comes to Geelong', 3.
[126] 'Young Women's Christian Association', *Advertiser)*, 8 June 1927, 16.
[127] 'The Woman of the Day', 20.
[128] 'Womanhood of Japan', 18.
[129] Dobson, 'Modernisation and Christianity', 75.
[130] 'Womanhood of Japan', 18.
[131] 'Social Gossip', *Daily Advertiser*, 11 June 1928, 6.

In her own work, Duncan aimed to equip Japanese women to lead, placing them in positions of influence on boards and in organisations, not to keep them stifled beneath a paternalistic white leadership.[132] She was proud of the fact that her own branch of the YWCA in Kyoto was 'sufficiently *advanced* to be staffed almost entirely by Japanese women.'[133]

Duncan was direct in addressing people's fears of Japanese militarism. In 1928 she assured audiences that Japan's 'militaristic tendencies' would be short lived – they were, after all a 'natural result' of the Great War – and that a war with Japan was an impossibility, as the nation was reliant on imports of steel and other commodities, having limited primary production.[134] She acknowledged, however, Japan's enduring resentment of the United States, which would continue 'to rankle for some time', and foresaw that the 'Manchurian problem' would ultimately lead to armed conflict in Asia.[135] From this time forward, Duncan would prove to be one of Australia's foremost sources of information on contemporary events in Asia, particularly relations between Japan and Korea, and Japan and China, as the political and military situation unfolded.

At the start of her furlough in 1928, it was said of Duncan that,

> She took to Japan her youth, her University training, her Y.W.C.A. experience, her love of fun, her desire to serve. She brings back to us an understanding of Japanese life, and a carefully acquired knowledge of Japanese history and traditions that is truly inspiring.[136]

Duncan's poise, intellect, and penetrating analysis, combined with her natural affability, had seen her evolve into a highly respected internationalist.[137]

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[132] 'Among Japanese Girls', 6.
[133] 'Women Factory Workers in Japan', 10. Emphasis added. Summy would regard this as another expression of Duncan's 'Christian feminist ideals'. Summy, 'From Missionary to Ministerial Adviser', 29.
[134] 'Japan Address', 11.
[135] 'Japan Address', 11.
[136] 'Japan Comes to Geelong', 3.
[137] Cf. Summy, who contends that Duncan 'was one of the few Australians who made a transition from missionary involvement to active participation in international relations at a high level.' Summy, 'From Missionary to Ministerial Adviser', 29.

Four years later, in 1932, when Duncan again returned home to Australia as a result of her father's illness, she was sought after as a commentator on Asia-Pacific affairs. She wrote and spoke at length on rising tensions between China and Japan, and the consequent risk of war as 'nationalist feeling' ran high in both nations.[138] For the rest of the decade, promoting peace and avoiding international conflict would be Duncan's driving passion. It was natural, therefore, for Duncan to take a pivotal role in the League of Nations Union, and with it the Bureau of Social and International Affairs and the campaign for international peace.

[138] 'Young Women's Christian Association', *Age*, 6 April 1932, 12.

5
A Seat at the Table

'Unless we disarm our minds of both fear and hatred, we are not going to have a warless world, and if we do not have a warless world we will have no world at all'.[1]

Introduction

In 1920 Duncan had graduated from Melbourne University with a Master of Arts in History and Economics, and then spent two years as Travelling Secretary for ASCM. During that time, she travelled extensively, speaking at churches, conferences and student events on the work of the Student Christian Movement in Australia and overseas. It was in this role that Duncan's capacity for raising cultural awareness and advocating for people in crisis began to flower. However, it was during her tenure as Foreign Secretary for YWCA in Japan, that her true skill as a cultural liaison and internationalist developed. By the time Duncan returned home after a decade in Asia, she had established herself as a leading commentator on Asia-Pacific Affairs with firsthand experience of the rise of nationalism in Japan, Korea and China. In the turmoil of the 1930s and the build-up to World War Two, Duncan was the Secretary and mainstay of the League of Nations Union (LNU) Victorian branch, the Bureau of Social and International Affairs (BSIA), and Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR). During and after the war, she worked mainly with the Victorian International Refugee Emergency Committee (VIREC) and the United Nations (UN). This chapter will examine Duncan's career after her return from Japan, focussing on her involvement with peace movements, internationalism and refugee advocacy. Primary materials are drawn from contemporary newspaper accounts, archives from the National Library of Australia (particularly the papers of Herbert Brookes and Frederick Eggleston), the National Archives of Australia, and the LNU archives held by the University of Melbourne.

[1] Constance Duncan, cited in 'Young Women's Christian Association', *Age*, 6 April 1932, 12.

Working for Peace in an Unstable World (1932-1939)

Early in 1932 Duncan returned home from Australia, due to an illness suffered by her father.[2] She had spent nine years in Japan, devoting herself to learning the language and culture in order to serve the people, and her departure was felt as a great loss to the YWCA in Japan.[3] For the rest of the 1930s, until the outbreak of war, Duncan dedicated herself to promoting international peace through collective security, becoming one of the most well-known representatives of the League of Nations Union (LNU) in Australia. She became something of a cultural ambassador for Japan and was highly regarded as a specialist in Asian culture and politics. Yet, despite her obvious love of Japan and its culture, Duncan's speeches betrayed her sense of cultural superiority. This can be attributed, at least in part to her *habitus* as a white Christian woman.[4] O'Brien has asserted that 'Evangelicalism simultaneously told women missionaries they were members of the second sex but belonged to a superior race.'[5] Although Duncan is unlikely to have self-identified as an evangelical, she was brought up in a Baptist church, and imbibed the paradigm which equated whiteness with civilization. Dobson, recognising the tendency of Christian missionaries to conflate 'Western' and 'Christian' values, has argued that the unique case of Japan, with its 'determinedly secular success' in rapid modernisation, 'served to unsettle this equation.'[6] While I do not see in a Duncan a belief that western culture was analogous to Christian life, it is entirely plausible that (like Frances Levvy half a century earlier) she struggled with an innate cultural imperialism that saw adopting western practices as evidence of civilisation and progress.[7]

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[2] 'Girl Citizens Will Tell Camp Tales', *News*, 12 January 1932, sec. Woman's World, 8; 'Minutes of Appreciation - Ada Constance Duncan Biography' (31 July 1972), IH Archives, Series 1 Council, International House Archives, University of Melbourne; Diane Langmore, 'Duncan, Ada Constance (1896–1970)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, n.d.), http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/duncan-ada-constance-10061.
[3] 'Y. W. C. A.', *Morning Bulletin*, 14 May 1932, 11.
[4] See Chapter 2, 83–87. Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 90.
[5] Anne Philomena O'Brien, *God's Willing Workers: Women and Religion in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005), 162.
[6] Jill Dobson, 'Modernisation and Christianity: Australian Missionary Views of Japan: 1912-1939', in *Relationships: Japan and Australia, 1870s-1950s*, ed. Vera Mackie and Paul Jones (Parkville, Vic.: University of Melbourne, 2001), 71.
[7] See Chapter 3, 114–117.

In April 1932 the national and local branches of the YWCA hosted a welcome home reception for Duncan in Connibere Hall, the YWCA headquarters in Melbourne.[8] After speeches by representatives of the World Fellowship committee, Duncan gave a reply which illuminated the issues that were preoccupying her mind. She spoke of the dangers of intense nationalism in China and Japan, and her hopes for a warless world, declaring, 'Unless we disarm our minds of both fear and hatred, we are not going to have a warless world, and if we do not have a warless world we will have no world at all.'[9] Religious historian Roger Thompson acknowledges the significant role in the peace movement in Australia that was played by men associated with ASCM.[10] He does not, however, name any women in his discussion of the topic. Piggin and Linder give brief attention to peace activists in this period, but again no women are named and the ensuing discussion is a debate between various male clergy and laity on the merits of pacifism.[11]

For the next nine months, Duncan was regularly featured in the pages of the Melbourne and regional papers as she spoke at events, often accompanied by lantern slides, describing the culture and rapid industrialisation of Japan. On 5 May 1932, she spoke at a meeting of the Congregational Women's association, focussing on the impact of Christianity on social reform in Japan.[12] On 11 May she addressed the Rotary Club of Melbourne on Japan and its actions in Manchuria.[13] At the end of the month she addressed the annual world fellowship service, co-hosted by the YMCA, ASCM and YWCA, on the conflict between Japan and China.[14] Duncan sought to explain the complexities of the situation, outlining how the atrocity of Japanese military bombing Chinese civilians was due in part to 'an intense political fight' being waged

[8] 'Young Women's Christian Association', 12. Both Duncan's parents were well enough to attend this event.
[9] 'Young Women's Christian Association', 12.
[10] Roger C. Thompson, *Religion in Australia: A History*, 2nd ed (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2002), 74.
[11] Stuart Piggin and Robert D. Linder, *Attending to the National Soul: Evangelical Christians in Australian History, 1914-2014* (Melbourne, Vic.: Monash University Publishing, 2020), 203–6.
[12] 'Social Notes', *Argus*, 6 May 1932, sec. Woman's Realm, 10.
[13] 'Japan and Manchuria', *Age*, 12 May 1932, 7.
[14] 'World Fellowship Service', *Argus*, 30 May 1932, sec. Woman's Realm, 3.

internally in Japan.[15] She described how 'democratic leaders were attempting to prevent militarists from gaining the ear of the Emperor', who was 'a pacifist at heart', and summarised the turmoil by stating that Japan was besieged by two competing evils – 'militarism and Communism'.[16] On 9 June Duncan addressed university students, choosing to speak on the threats faced in Japan from the growth of fascism and communism.[17] It was fascism, she argued, that was the greater threat in this instance. Japan was less susceptible to Communism because the movement there was led by 'half-baked intellectuals' and was only spreading because of the heavy-handed approach taken by the Japanese government, which drove the movement underground.[18]

Duncan had been one of only a handful of white residents in Kyoto, and the only foreign secretary. Moreover, she was in Japan to witness first-hand the continued rise of militarism, accompanied by a surge of nationalism and the consequent expansion into China.[19] It is unsurprising, then, that the demand for Duncan's talks on Japanese culture and development, and Japanese-Chinese, relations was high. She spoke at Mothers' Union meetings, library lectures, churches, 'at home' parties and conferences.[20] Duncan sought to play down fears of Japanese aggression by giving context. While she did not condone Japan's actions in Manchuria, she argued that Japan had legitimate grievances against China that she had been unable to resolve through diplomatic channels.[21] Duncan described a cumulation of microaggressions (or 'pinpricks') that had fomented the unrest in the region, and warned that the League of Nations would have to exercise great tact to resolve the situation without provoking a military coup in

[15] 'Militarism in Japan', *Queensland Times*, 3 June 1932, 6.
[16] 'Militarism in Japan', 6.
[17] 'Communism in Japan', *Age*, 10 June 1932, 7.
[18] 'Communism in Japan', 7.
[19] Cf. Hilary Summy, 'From Missionary to Ministerial Adviser: Constance Duncan and Australia-Japan Relations 1922-1947', *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 54, no. 1 (1 March 2008): 31.
[20] 'Mothers' Union', *Argus*, 5 July 1932, sec. Woman's Realm, 10; 'Prahran Library Lectures', *Argus*, 7 July 1932, 3; 'Personal', *Herald*, 12 July 1932, 7; 'League of Nations Party', *Argus*, 31 August 1932, sec. Woman's Realm and Social News, 13; 'Japan and Manchuria: YWCA Conference Address', *Telegraph*, 24 October 1932, 9.
[21] 'Japan and Manchuria', 7.

Japan.[22] The success of democracy in Japan, she asserted, was dependent on control of the army and navy being given to the government, rather than remaining under the direct control of the Emperor.[23]

In addition to providing political commentary on Japan's internal and regional disputes, Duncan agitated for Australia to have a formal diplomatic presence in Japan.[24] At the time, those wanting to inquire about trade with Australia went to the British consulate, which in turn sent them to the Canadian legation.[25] She described this as a 'comic' situation for Australia, given they were competing with Canada for trade. She lamented that, '[i]t was pathetic that Australian products were not to be seen on the shelves of every Japanese store,' so sure was she of the demand.[26] This was due to a gradual change in Japanese habits, which saw more western foods being consumed, and wool replacing cotton in clothing manufacture.[27]

The respect for Duncan's opinions is evident not only in the demand for her as a speaker, but in the frequent reproduction of her talks in major newspapers. In late August, her remarks at an 'at home' given by Mrs CJ Henderson and Miss LM Henderson to promote the work of the League of Nations were quoted at length (although with different emphases in each case) in the *Argus*, the *Herald* and the *Australasian*.[28] Duncan's address at the YWCA conference in Canberra in October was substantially reproduced in the Brisbane *Telegraph*.[29] In June 1933, when Duncan expressed scepticism towards a report by the British commercial counsellor into working

[22] 'Social Notes - Party at Menzies', *Australasian*, 3 September 1932, sec. Woman's Realm, 10.
[23] 'Japan and Manchuria', 7; 'Communism in Japan', 7.
[24] 'League of Nations Party', 13.
[25] 'League of Nations Party', 13; 'Trade in the East: What Australia Is Missing', *Herald*, 3 September 1932, 20.
[26] 'Social Notes - Party at Menzies', 10; 'League of Nations Party', *Argus*, 31 August 1932, sec. Woman's Realm and Social News, 13.
[27] 'Trade in the East: What Australia Is Missing', 20.
[28] 'League of Nations Party', 13; 'Trade in the East: What Australia Is Missing', 20; 'Social Notes - Party at Menzies', 10.
[29] 'Japan and Manchuria: YWCA Conference Address', 9.

conditions in Japan, her personal experience and precise recollections were reported favourably and thoroughly in the Melbourne *Herald*.[30]

The League of Nations Union and International Affairs

At the same time that Duncan was publicly advocating for the League of Nations and urging that Australia increase its political and trade presence in the region, the local branch of the League of Nations Union (LNU) was looking for new leadership. In September 1933, Nora Collisson, the longstanding secretary of the Bureau of Social and International Affairs in Melbourne, had resigned to return to a career in education.[31] The Bureau was essentially an umbrella organisation for the LNU, Royal Institute of International Affairs, Institute of Pacific Relations, and the International Club.[32] Collisson had worked at the Bureau for nearly five years, developing a strong personal and professional relationship with Mr and Mrs Brookes, both of whom were involved in executive leadership.[33] Collisson's resignation, however, was felt by Herbert Brookes (Chairman of the Board of Directors) as a personal slight, causing him to suspect that she had undermined him in the process by which her successor was appointed.[34]

Collisson's successor was Constance Duncan. The prickliness of the situation with Herbert Brookes meant that Duncan had to use all her diplomatic nous within the organisation she had just joined, before she could get on with the task. Duncan's first letters to Brookes have a cordial formality, while expressing a desire to have Brookes' opinion and guidance.[35] In an early letter, Duncan expresses hope that he will help her to create a 'Plan of Campaign' which would allow

[30] 'Wages in Japan', *Herald*, 1 June 1933, 16.
[31] Nora Collisson, 'Letter to Herbert Brookes Resigning Secretaryship of Bureau of Social and International Affairs', 25 September 1933, NLA MS 1924/35/333.
[32] 'Melbourne Chatter', *The Bulletin*, 28 February 1934, 37; Isabelle Grace, 'Home Pages: Conducted for the Woman Listening', *The Wireless Weekly: The Hundred per Cent Australian Radio Journal*, 22 February 1935, 5.
[33] Nora Collisson, 'Letter to Mrs Brookes', 11 December 1931, NLA MS 1924/35/311.
[34] Nora Collisson, 'Letter to Brookes Regarding Breakdown of Personal Relationship', 16 December 1933, NLA MS 1924/35/344.
[35] Constance Duncan, 'Duncan to Brookes', 3 February 1934, NLA MS 1924/35/343; Constance Duncan, 'Duncan to Brookes', 6 February 1934, NLA MS 1924/35/347.

her to use her time and resources in a way that is most advantageous to the Bureau.[36] While Duncan was new to this particular role, she had been involved with the LNU since her return from Japan, so she was not unaware of its operations.[37] Moreover, Duncan was used to directing her time and affairs for maximum impact in complex cultural and structural contexts, as she had demonstrated in her career to date. Over time, however, Duncan's letters became less stilted, combining professional, organisational information with warm, even chatty, commentary.[38] While this may be simply the natural progression of a working relationship, it also suggests that Duncan understood what was required of her to gain the trust of the men to whom she reported.

An article in the Brisbane *Courier Mail* from August 1935 highlights Duncan's initial goal of inspiring young people, noting that the LNU was deliberately focussed on attracting those aged sixteen to thirty to its 'youth movement'.[39] Historian Hilary Summy asserts that the education of children – informing them about the League of Nations and 'instilling a culture of peace in the younger generation' – was a key focus of the LNU.[40] In this, Duncan played a vital role through facilitating collaboration between teachers and LNU, making the formation of a 'Schools Committee' a key goal immediately after her appointment as LNU secretary. This created a formal link between the LNU and the Department of Education, paved the way for Duncan's school visits and bolstered the Junior League of Nations. The Junior League had been founded in 1930 but was nurtured by Duncan to such an extent that by 1936 there were forty branches in Victorian schools. Summy argues that while the LNU ultimately failed in its objective of preventing future wars, it should be understood as succeeding 'in certain areas', the foremost of

[36] Duncan, 'Duncan to Brookes', 6 February 1934.
[37] Duncan is listed as a current member of the Victorian LNU in the 1932-33 annual report. 'Australian League of Nations Union (Victorian Branch) Annual Report and Balance Sheet 1932-33' (Melbourne, Vic.: Australian League of Nations Union (Victorian branch), 1933), 10.
[38] Constance Duncan, 'Duncan to Mr and Mrs Brookes', 15 August 1938, NLA MS 1924/35/93.
[39] 'A Visitor from Melbourne', *Courier-Mail*, 15 August 1935, 21.
[40] Hilary Summy, 'Countering War: The Role of the League of Nations Union', *Social Alternatives; Brisbane* 33, no. 4 (2014): 16–17.

which was in the education of young people regarding peace and international affairs (for which Duncan deserves to be credited).[41] Furthermore, her nurture of the Junior League led to the implementation of 'League of Nations Day', an annual event to be celebrated in all government schools on the anniversary of the outbreak of the Great War. In 1935, League of Nations Day was commemorated by over 300,000 Victorian students.[42] In her focus on drawing young people to the LNU cause – believing they were they greatest hope for future change – and making a formal alliance with educators, Duncan was imitating the path trod by Levvy before her.

Newspaper reports of Duncan's speeches and public engagements from the time of her return from Japan demonstrate the gendered lens through which she was viewed, and the strategies she used to gain and hold the respect of male colleagues. In May 1932, when speaking to the men of the Rotary Club of Melbourne, Duncan began by stating that she was 'conscious of the audacity she was showing in addressing such an august assembly.'[43] Duncan then spoke to them on complex international relations, giving precise statistics, using technical terminology and demonstrating a nuanced and intelligent grasp of the situation.[44] Her appeals to the ego of her male listeners seemed to have effect, in light of the opportunities given to Duncan to speak in exclusively male contexts. In the 1936 League of Nations Union (NSW Branch) annual report, Duncan appears on the cover with the rest of the National Executive of the Australian League of Nations Union. Duncan is the only woman in the picture – quite literally the only woman with a seat at the table.[45]

[41] Summy, 'Countering War', 17–19.
[42] Summy, 'Countering War', 17.
[43] 'Japan and Manchuria', 7.
[44] 'Japan and Manchuria', 7.
[45] 'The Seventh Annual Report of The Bureau of Social and International Affairs' (Melbourne, Vic.: Bureau of Social and International Affairs, 1935), MS 1924, National Library of Australia.

Figure 7: Constance Duncan pictured with the Australian LNU National Executive in 1936.[46]

In July 1932 the Melbourne Anglican diocese organised a series of monthly lectures for women training to work with the Church Missionary Society (CMS).[47] The first lecture was delivered by the Archbishop, with other lectures on 'appropriate subjects' (by which, presumably, was meant lectures suitable for aspiring female missionaries). In the published list of lecturers, Duncan is the only female.[48] A similar situation occurred in the same month with the publication of a list of public lectures to be given as part of a series run by the Prahran Public Library. Once again, Duncan is the only female on the list of speakers. Furthermore, where the male speakers have their postgraduate qualifications noted with an M.A. after their name, Duncan's is omitted despite holding the same degree.[49] Early that month (July 1932), the *Age* had reported on Duncan's keynote address to the Federation of Students of the World meeting in Melbourne

[46] 'Australian League of Nations Union (NSW Branch): Annual Report for 1936' (Sydney, NSW: Australian League of Nations Union, April 1937), NLA MS 1924/35/42, National Library of Australia.
[47] 'Personal', 12 July 1932, 7.
[48] 'Personal', 12 July 1932, 7.
[49] 'Prahran Library Lectures', 3.

with the subtitle, 'Lecture by Woman Student'.[50] Her Master of Arts degree, majoring in History and Economics, had been conferred a decade earlier.[51] These instances demonstrate that, despite the tendency to characterise Duncan as operating primarily within women's groups and 'the women's movement', she was also regularly called on to speak within male dominated contexts.[52] This did not shield her from paternalistic condescension which would minimise her qualifications and bolster those of her male counterparts. Yet Duncan's experience, combined with an ability to think critically and expansively, ensured that she was able to hold her own and speak authoritatively regardless of the context or audience.

In September 1934, when Duncan was given a civic reception by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Adelaide, the *Advertiser* pointed out that women outnumbered men at the event.[53] In reporting on the event, the journalist notes that women predominated at the reception and describes the outfits worn by all the main female guests (sadly, we are given no hint as to the outfits worn by the men).[54] There were other occasions when Duncan spoke to a mostly female audience, such as when she addressed the Anglican Mothers' Union, an event sponsored by the Country Women's Association (CWA), or a 'special women's meeting' of the LNU.[55] Duncan's speech at the CWA event, held in the Masonic Hall, was reproduced almost in its entirety on the front page of the local paper, which noted in closing that a 'hearty vote of thanks to the speaker' was 'carried with acclamation' having been moved and seconded by two men who were

[50] 'Japan's Problems', *Age*, 4 July 1932, 9.
[51] 'University Notes', *Herald*, 24 June 1922, 11; 'Applications for Positions by Miss Constance Duncan' (Sydney: Commonwealth Office of Education, September 1949), NAA Series A1361 34/1/12 Part 482.
[52] Contra Warne, whose account of Duncan's leadership leaves the impression that Duncan functioned almost exclusively within women's networks, and in female oriented media. Ellen Warne, 'Constance Duncan: Translating Women's Leadership and Internationalism in Asia and Australia, 1922-1958', in *Founders, Firsts and Feminists: Women Leaders in Twentieth-Century Australia* (Melbourne: eScholarship Research Centre, University of Melbourne, 2011), 295-297.
[53] 'Civic Reception to Miss Constance Duncan', *Advertiser*, 7 September 1934, 18.
[54] 'Civic Reception to Miss Constance Duncan', 18.
[55] 'Mothers' Union', 10; 'The League of Nations Interesting Address by Miss Constance Duncan', *North Eastern Ensign*, 2 August 1935, 1; 'Miss Constance Duncan to Lecture', *Frankston and Somerville Standard*, 5 July 1935, 4.

present.[56] In December 1934 Duncan gave a speech on peace at the eastern suburbs branch of the Victorian women citizens movement, highlighting the profits made from war and armaments. She argued that this blocked the world from achieving peace, despite 25% of the world's population demanding general disarmament.[57] Duncan was involved in events organised by the National Council of Women and the International Council of Women, speaking at events and adding her voice to their protests against 'ruthless warfare'.[58]

Warne has described Duncan as 'a constant media presence in the late 1930s' in both radio and print, and in great demand as a speaker on a range of international hot-button topics.[59]
Yet during this period (from her return to Australia in 1932 to the outbreak of World War Two), reporting on Duncan's many speaking engagements frequently featured comments on her gender or appearance. When Duncan's appointment to the secretariat of the Bureau of Social and International Affairs was announced, *The Bulletin* posted a picture accompanied by a comment which began, 'This short-cropped head belongs to Constance Duncan, newly-appointed secretary of the Bureau of International Affairs'.[60] Nearly three years later, at the end of 1936 the Bulletin would call for a series of lectures in Melbourne, by Duncan. With clear admiration they proclaimed,

> Miss Duncan is no globe-trotting tourist, but a qualified observer of sane outlook and more than usual intelligence. She lived and worked 10 years in Japan at the Y.W.C.A., speaks, reads, and writes Japanese and knows something of Asiatic thought and culture.[61]

The article went on to quote Duncan's assurances that Japan 'is not by instinct a militaristic nation', and to repeat her concerns about the 'malignant' intentions of Russia and the 'Chinese

[56] 'The League of Nations Interesting Address by Miss Constance Duncan', 1.
[57] 'Victoria', *Dawn*, 16 January 1935, 5.
[58] 'Women Protest Use of Poison Gas', *Age*, 4 May 1936, 13.
[59] Warne, 'Constance Duncan: Translating Women's Leadership', 296.
[60] 'Melbourne Chatter', 28 February 1934, 37.
[61] 'Melbourne Chatter', *The Bulletin*, 16 December 1936, 36.

Reds'.[62] The announcement of a series of League of Nations addresses in Horsham in 1936 noted that her Sunday night address on the topic 'Need we fear Japan?' would be 'a lecture of particular interest to men,' and gave assurances that Duncan's experience on the ground in Japan qualified her to speak.[63] Emphasis on Duncan's impressive qualifications as a *woman* speaking on international affairs was also given by women's magazines. *The Australian Women's Weekly* expressed admiration for Duncan, highlighting her in their 'What Women are Doing' feature with the caption 'Works for International organisations.'[64] The article listed her association with 'a number of international societies, including the Institute of Pacific Relations, the Round Table, the League of Nations Union, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and the International Club', while also noting her continued work with the national YWCA.[65] Similarly, in September 1935, *The Australian Woman's Mirror*, featured Duncan in their 'Women in the World' section with the comment, 'Few women have such a grasp of world doings as Miss Constance Duncan'.[66] The article highlighted Duncan's work in international affairs and social policy, listing the organisations with whom she worked and those she advised. Like the *Women's Weekly* the month before, the *Women's Mirror* noted Duncan's involvement with the senior activities committee and the LNU youth movement, aimed at those between the ages of sixteen and thirty. Duncan's leadership and influence seemed to be particularly effective with this demographic of young and emerging leaders. Due to her involvement with international affairs, and her commitment to educate and mobilise the younger generation, Duncan was praised as an exceptional woman in her own right, and for the potential legacy of her commitment to younger female leaders. In January 1936, the Age newspaper reported that an address given by Duncan to Warwick Girls' School had led the senior students to form of a branch of the LNU within the school.[67] The

[62] 'Melbourne Chatter', 16 December 1936, 36.
[63] 'League of Nations Lecturer Here', *Horsham Times*, 3 August 1934, 4.
[64] 'What Women Are Doing', *Australian Women's Weekly*, 31 August 1935, 23.
[65] 'What Women Are Doing', 23.
[66] 'Women in the World', *The Australian Woman's Mirror*, 10 September 1935, 20.
[67] 'For Young People', *Age*, 21 January 1936, 4.

journalist wrote hopefully of the potential effect of this association, proclaiming that these junior members would become adults who were 'imbued with a sense of the responsibility of their own position, and the desire to put into practice their worthy ideals'.[68] This view – that girls and women should make a determined contribution to the good of society – was not shared by all. In December the same year, Duncan was invited to present the girls with their prizes at the Warwick Girls' School annual speech night. Unfortunately, however, she met with a serious accident that prevented her from working for eleven weeks.[69] As such, Duncan was not present to hear Rev J. Heyliger Dewhurst explain to the students that education involves 'drawing out all that is best in us', and scholastic achievement was merely a secondary concern. Making his view abundantly clear, Rev Dewhurst declared, 'Naturally Warwick likes to show good examination results, but I believe the principal injunction to its girls is "Be good, sweet maid," and let who will be clever.'[70] While Duncan was urging women and girls to advocate and act for a better society, others, like Rev Dewhurst, were adamant they should focus instead on nurturing their soft, feminine natures. It is likely that Dewhurst believed the girls to whom he spoke had much to contribute to Australian society, but his comments reflect an essentialist understanding in which a woman's influence came from her capacity to harness her maternal instincts, and exercise them outside of the home in ways consistent with her ordained sphere. Quartly and Smart have captured the essence of this view, describing it as a belief that 'mother love, the nearest human beings could come to comprehending and mirroring the love of God, endowed women with the spiritual qualities necessary' to contribute to the good of society.[71] Throughout this period, however, women were seeking to develop a broader self-understanding. Warne

[68] 'For Young People', 4.
[69] 'The Seventh Annual Report of The Bureau of Social and International Affairs', 1935, NLA MS 1924/35/376.
[70] 'Success in Study and Sport: Warwick's Sound Progress', *Argus*, 17 December 1935, 4. Dewhurst's quote originates from 'A Farewell' by English poet Charles Kingsley. He has omitted the next line, which urges the subject to 'Do noble things, not dream them.' Charles Kingsley, 'A Farewell', English Poetry, accessed 10 May 2022, http://eng-poetry.ru/english/Poem.php?PoemId=4300.
[71] Marian Quartly and Judith Smart, *Respectable Radicals: A History of the National Council of Women Australia, 1896-2006*, Australian History (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing in conjunction with the National Council of Women of Australia, 2015), 56.

describes this as a longing for 'a political identity informed by ideas of progress, justice and stability drawn from their own transnational networks.'[72] Duncan embodied this this new paradigm, believing that she could speak not because of her feminine and maternal instincts, but her extensive international experience, which qualified her as an expert in Asia-Pacific relations.

Duncan's commitment to mobilising others behind the causes she believed in was not limited only to young people. She advocated for the active social engagement of the many women's groups to which she spoke. Speaking at the CWA annual conference in NSW in June 1936, Duncan urged the movement to 'throw its full weight behind the great international organisations working for peace.' She declared that Australia must no longer cower behind its geographic isolation, because 'science has made a neighborhood of the world, and it is up to us to make it a brotherhood.'[73]

On the 2nd of May 1935 Duncan spoke at the Scottish Mothers' Union in Melbourne. During her talk she argued that 'men had gone into war thinking that they could make the world safe for democracy' and bring an end to conflict.[74] But, she argued, this had not been achieved whatsoever. She went as far as to claim that 'America under Roosevelt was almost a dictatorship.'[75] Instead, she contended, it is children that will bring about world peace. It is, she said, 'the mother's duty to teach children there are nobler things than war' and that they need not fear foreigners.[76] She also described war as 'un-Christian' and futile, saying that 'the only concrete thing the last war had produced was the League [of Nations], which had dealt with 50 disputes in the 15 years of its existence.'[77]

[72] Warne, *Agitate, Educate, Organise, Legislate*, 188.
[73] 'Country Women in Conference', *Age*, 18 June 1936, 6.
[74] 'Women and Peace', *Age*, 2 May 1935, 12.
[75] 'Women and Peace', 12.
[76] 'Women and Peace', 12.
[77] 'Scottish Mothers' Union', *Argus*, 2 May 1935, 12.

Duncan's remarks in these contexts were at times strident, but her audience was likely to have been sympathetic. Numerous authors have noted the enthusiastic support given to the LNU by women's groups that supported the twin causes of world peace and disarmament.[78] Yet it would be a mistake to think that support for LNU and the peace movement fell along gender lines. As has been mentioned, the majority of the leaders of the movement were men, described by Summy as 'high profile "establishment" figures' including politicians, prominent business leaders and academics, whose participation in the LNU executive overlapped with leadership roles in other prominent internationalist bodies.[79] These included Frederick Eggleston, Herbert Brookes, Judge Alfred Foster and E.C. Dyason. In the midst of all of them, Duncan served as secretary of the Bureau of Social and International Affairs, and the various groups that met under its umbrella, existing at the very centre of the internationalist peace movement in Australia.

Duncan's concern about profits of war being an impediment to peace is evident in speeches she gave on 'Peace through Industry.'[80] Everywhere that Duncan travelled to speak she argued that there should be an international law that holds nations to account. To those assembled at a meeting organised by the CWA in Benalla she reasoned that in the same way that individual citizens were accountable to judges and courts, 'nations should have an accepted law to regulate the conduct and squabbles that will always arise between nations.'[81] She further argued that 'war as a method of settling disputes was repellent to all of us', was in fact 'futile', and that that the 'League of Nations was the greatest gain of the battlefields.'[82] Yet Duncan was not blind to the faults of the League of Nations. In the same speech she recognised that the League failed to mediate the China-Japanese dispute of 1931, and acknowledged that the League needed to deal

[78] Cf. Summy, 'Countering War', 16; Quartly and Smart, *Respectable Radicals*, 118-9. Engel has also outlined the strong support given to the LNY by both ASCM and YWCA Engel, *Times of Change: 1918-1978*, 60.
[79] Summy, 'From Missionary to Ministerial Adviser', 32.
[80] 'Miss Constance Duncan to Lecture', 4.
[81] 'The League of Nations Interesting Address', 1.
[82] 'League of Nations Interesting Address', 1.

with the issue of the abolition of slavery, citing the case of Abyssinia.[83] Indeed, she argued that the great work of the League of Nations should be 'guarding the rights of minorities' and ensuring humanitarian conditions throughout the world, but that this depended on the will of the citizens of every country. Even so, she argued, the League of Nations was essentially still in its adolescence (being only fifteen years old at the time of her speaking) and had achieved a great deal for its young age.[84] In August 1935 the Courier Mail lauded Constance Duncan, describing her visit to Brisbane for the Institute of international affairs. The journalist remarked that, '[f]ew women have such an extensive knowledge of international affairs as Miss Constance Duncan' and pointed out that she had a *male* assistant and three stenographers working underneath her.[85] There is in the article a sense that as a woman in such a position Duncan was an exception to her sex.

Ecumenical Cooperation

In her book, *Political Tourists*, Sheila Fitzpatrick claims that Constance Duncan was in Russia with Dorothy Alexander (later Gibson) during 1935. An examination of the timeline, however, shows that this was not possible, and that the woman concerned was another (as yet unidentified) Miss Duncan.[86] Nonetheless, Fitzpatrick's mistake is understandable given Duncan's friendship with Alexander, and that throughout Duncan's career there were times when she was accused of being a communist sympathiser. Ellen Warne has recounted how, in 1938, the Australian Broadcasting Commission dismissed Duncan from the air because of suspicions that she was a Christian communist.[87] This was largely because of her strong anti-fascist stance and push for international

[83] 'League of Nations Interesting Address', 1.
[84] 'League of Nations Interesting Address', 1.
[85] 'A Visitor from Melbourne', 21.
[86] Sheila Fitzpatrick and Carolyn Rasmussen, *Political Tourists: Travellers from Australia to the Soviet Union in the 1920s-1940s* (Melbourne University Press, 2008), 2, 9, 26-27. Fitzpatrick's mistake is understandable given that Dorothy Alexander and Constance Duncan knew one another through their work with the YWCA and international peace movements. Cf. Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'RE: Constance Duncan Visit to Soviet Union in 1935', 6 September 2021; Karen M. Pack, 'RE: Constance Duncan Visit to Soviet Union in 1935', 7 September 2021.
[87] Warne, *Agitate, Educate, Organise, Legislate*, 221. Cf. Lesley Johnson, *The Unseen Voice: A Cultural Study of Early Australian Radio* (Routledge, 1988), 181–2.

cooperation around humanitarian issues. Warne points to the example of Mrs Kimball, US National YWCA president, and Ruth Woodsmall, world secretary of the YWCA, who echoed Duncan's sentiments in their own speeches and writings. Both Kimball and Woodsmall saw fascism as an anti-Christian movement and called on the church to respond to economic inequality and social justice. Like Duncan, their language paints a picture of the hope of nations working together in a collectivism that unified around economic problems that affected women and children. For this reason, there was close cooperation between the YWCA, the League of Nations and international peace movements, all of which shared a similar agenda. They would also rally together on the issue of refugee resettlement.[88] In addition, LNU annual reports specifically detail their work with and through churches.[89] This suggests to me that more ecumenical branches of the church and parachurch organisations were united in efforts towards World Peace, refugee relief, protections for women and children, and greater international collectivism.[90] More evangelical branches of the church, however, were suspicious of any apparent socialist sympathies. It is significant that Piggin and Linder have no mention of the League of Nations or LNU in the index to their extensive volume on this period (although there is one mention on page 203 of Christian pacifists in South Australia supporting the formation of the League), yet they list seven specific references to socialism. Piggin and Linder characterise the majority of evangelicals as being somewhat allergic to any hint of socialism. As a result, they argue that from the 1920s on, evangelicals began to abandon the Labor Party (which they describe as attracting a high proportion of Catholics) in favour of more conservative, right leaning parties, or no political allegiance at all.[91] Such an understanding reflects the political

[88] Warne, *Agitate, Educate, Organise, Legislate*, 221–2.
[89] 'Australian League of Nations Union (Victorian Branch) Annual Report and Balance Sheet 1932-33', 5; 'Annual Report and Balance Sheet June 1939-June 1940', Annual Report (Melbourne, Vic.: Australian League of Nations Union Victorian Branch, 1940), 5–6.
[90] Karlström details the deep vein of support within the ecumenical Christian movement for international peace movements, and the League of Nations. Nils Karlström, 'Movements for International Friendship and Life and Work, 1910-1925', in *A History of the Ecumenical Movement: 1517-1948*, ed. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986), 509–42. Cf. Summy, 'Countering War'; Quartly and Smart, *Respectable Radicals*, 118–120.
[91] Piggin and Linder, *Attending to the National Soul*, 91.

sympathies of the authors, but does not provide the balance and nuance necessary to understand the complexities of religious and political affiliation in Australia. This is evident from Duncan's alliance with a large cross-section of church and para-church organisations.

In describing the situation that caused Duncan to be taken off air by the ABC in 1938, Warne argues that Duncan's views 'on women's international matters' were an 'unacceptable risk'. She claims that Duncan was known for her 'outspoken criticism of fascism and promotion of the peace movement' and it was this that led to suspicions of her communist sympathies.[92] Summy has suggested that this was exacerbated by Duncan's involvement with the International Peace Campaign (IPC), of which she was honorary secretary from 1936-38.[93] She further asserts that although the IPC was supported by the LNU and drew support from a broad spectrum of groups that were '[u]nited through anti-fascist sentiments', it had been 'initiated and dominated by the Communist Party of Australia.'[94] Consequently, the IPC was targeted by conservative groups who 'saw it as a communist conspiracy'. Summy concludes that it was this 'pervasive anti-communist atmosphere' that ruined Duncan's job prospects at the ABC, where she had been led to believe that a permanent contract would follow upon her return from her research trip in Asia.[95] Renate Howe contests this, arguing that ASCM members would not have supported the IPC had it been a communist organisation. She cites Margaret Holmes, Carolyn Rasmussen and Frank Engel in defence of her position, acknowledging that while there was a 'political edge' to their motivations, they were driven by a desire to oppose fascism by embodying the principles of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7).[96] This perspective is supported by Lesley Johnson's interpretation of the climate at the ABC at the time. He has painted the incident of Duncan's

[92] Warne, *Agitate, Educate, Organise, Legislate*, 221.
[93] Summy, 'From Missionary to Ministerial Adviser', 40.
[94] Summy, 'From Missionary to Ministerial Adviser', 39.
[95] Summy, 'From Missionary to Ministerial Adviser', 40.
[96] Renate Howe, *A Century of Influence: The Australian Student Christian Movement 1896-1996* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2009), 208.

dismissal as part of a broader concern within the ABC at the time about what was appropriate to say on the public broadcaster, and what should be censored to protect the public image of impartiality. Judge Foster, with whom Duncan worked closely in the LNU, had also been caught up in this debate when he stepped outside the bounds of giving 'a scholarly and impartial' account of changes in public opinion and made the mistake of being 'frankly critical of established institutions.'[97] Duncan's error, in comparison, was to talk too often and too authoritatively about international affairs, emphasising the need for peace and giving strong warnings about the rise of fascism. Johnson points out that the ABC was very ready to censor Constance Duncan, but they were reluctant to do the same with 'The Watchman'. This was a pseudonym for Edward Alexander Mann (1874-1951), a conservative male commentator, highly critical of the British government, who spoke from the other end of the political spectrum to Duncan. While Duncan's calls for a commitment to peace and her anti-fascist rhetoric led to her removal under suspicions of being a communist sympathiser, Mann's brash and aggressive public commentary were held up as a symbol of the ABC's independence in journalism. The man was kept on; the woman was let go. Duncan was eventually reinstated after vocal public protests at her removal. Nonetheless, she was from this time given one session a month rather than a weekly slot.[98]

From the mid-1930s until the outbreak of World War Two Duncan continued to be a high-profile speaker advocating for the League of Nations and collective security. She was also involved with the peace movement, serving as the secretary of the International Peace Campaign (IPC) from 1937 to 1938. The LNU supported the formation of the IPC, which used the LNU offices as an administrative base of operations.[99] In her role as IPC secretary, Duncan was lauded

[97] Johnson, *The Unseen Voice*, 180.
[98] Johnson, *The Unseen Voice*, 181–2.
[99] This was a logical choice given Duncan's leadership role in both organisations (IPC and LNU) and the umbrella organisation, the Bureau of Social and International Affairs.

for drawing the support of a broad spectrum of advocacy and justice groups (including WCTU, NCW, ASCM, YWCA and YMCA, church leaders and trade unions), with a particular gift for mobilising women.[100] Despite this success, in 1938 Duncan resigned her position as secretary in a protest against the 'policy of boycotting goods from aggressor countries.'[101] She did, however, retain her position on the executive and continued to strive for peace in all that she did. In September 1938, she was appointed as an honorary secretary for the British Commonwealth Relations Conference, which met in Sydney to discuss how member states might use their combined influence to greatest advantage throughout the world, particularly in the cause of world peace.[102] Delegates came from throughout Britain and the Commonwealth, yet Duncan, once again, was the only woman to hold an official position.[103] Clearly, her influence had not been diminished in spite of the independence of her opinions.

When war eventually broke out Duncan's focus would shift but she would continue to be outspoken in encouraging the public to hold fast to hope and to act with justice: 'The challenge of this war to you and me is that we should be finer people, more unselfish, more loving and kind and generous, devoting each hour to something worth while (sic).'[104] Throughout 1940 she continued to make regular appearances on ABC radio in her 3LO program, 'On Doing Our Bit'. In these segments, Duncan's Christian faith featured in her speech more poignantly than it had prior to the outbreak of war. In a somewhat amusing anecdote, Duncan rallied her listeners in July of 1940 by urging them not to 'live like cabbages, unaware of the mighty forces of good and evil that are at grips in the world today.'[105] The following month she urged listeners to live 'with

[100] Summy, 'From Missionary to Ministerial Adviser', 30; Ralph Gibson, *One Woman's Life: A Memoir of Dorothy Gibson* (Sydney, NSW: Hale & Iremonger, 1980), 43.
[101] 'Miss Duncan Resigns Peace Secretaryship', *Herald*, 8 December 1938.
[102] 'The Life of Melbourne', *Argus*, 20 August 1938, 18; 'British Commonwealth Relations Conference: Force the Dominant Factor', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 September 1938, 12.
[103] 'The Life of Melbourne', *Argus*, 20 August 1938, 18.
[104] Constance Duncan, 'The Spoken Word: War Thoughts', *ABC Weekly*, 10 August 1940, 44.
[105] Constance Duncan, 'The Spoken Word: Awake!', *ABC Weekly*, 27 July 1940, 45.

confidence and courage and unshakable faith in the goodness of God.'[106] While her Christian faith had always been something of a bedrock in Duncan's life, she was now using her platform to explicitly call people to hold on to faith in the midst of the darkness of war.

Conclusion

Throughout the 1930s, from the time she returned home after a decade working with the YWCA in Japan until the outbreak of World War Two, Duncan was one of the most prominent and prolific internationalists in Australia. Her voice was frequently heard on the ABC, and her speeches were quoted at length in the national press. Duncan's experience on the ground in Asia had equipped her with an intimate understanding of Japanese culture and language, and a unique perspective on the tensions simmering in the region. Thus, she was able to provide nuanced, informed, contextualized commentary that appealed to both men and women. She was in demand to speak at women's organisations, and she was often to be found in male-dominated contexts as the only woman granted a voice. Yet Duncan's intellect and charisma did not prevent her being viewed through a gendered lens and considered a threat by some who would have preferred that she remain firmly within a more feminine sphere. Nonetheless, she had a natural flair for mobilising others behind the causes in which she believed, and she continued to advocate for peace until the very last. The following chapter will examine Duncan's steadfast commitment to a just and tolerant society during and after World War Two.

[106] Duncan, 'War Thoughts', 44.

6
A Refuge for All

'The challenge of this war to you and me is that we should be finer people, more unselfish, more loving and kind and generous, devoting each hour to something worth while (sic).'[1]

Introduction

Duncan's hopes for an enduring peace, fostered by the League of Nations and principles of collective security, were shattered by the onset of the Second World War. Rather than retreat in despair, however, Duncan pivoted to ensuring that marginalised and minority communities (such as Jewish refugees and working mothers) would find a safe and welcoming place in Australian society.

This chapter will address Duncan's activism during and after World War Two, her relationship with the composer Margaret Sutherland, and the circumstances of her tragic death in 1970. Feminist historian Hannah Viney contends that most scholarship examining women's political engagement has focused on those who are direct participants in government, while both Marilyn Lake and Joy Damousi have demonstrated the vital role played by female campaigners engaged in political advocacy.[2] This will be evident in an examination of Duncan's activism in the post-war period. Primary materials are drawn from contemporary newspaper accounts, archives from the National Library of Australia (particularly the papers of Herbert Brookes, Frederick Eggleston, ASCM and Margaret Sutherland), the National Archives of Australia (particularly the papers of Ian Clunies Ross), and the YWCA and LNU archives held by the University of Melbourne.

[1] Constance Duncan, 'The Spoken Word: War Thoughts', *ABC Weekly*, 10 August 1940, 44.
[2] Hannah Viney, '"Women Are Born Diplomats": Women, Politics and the Cold War in The Australian Women's Weekly, 1950-1959', *Journal of Australian Studies* 44, no. 3 (2020): 368–69; Marilyn Lake, *Getting Equal: The History of Australian Feminism* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1999); Joy Damousi, *Women Come Rally: Socialism, Communism and Gender in Australia 1890-1955* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994).

The war years (1939-45): refugee advocacy and help for women

In late 1938 the Victorian International Refugee Emergency Committee (VIREC) had been founded through sponsorship by LNU, churches and para-church organisations, including ASCM.[3] This organisation was a consequence of 'steps taken by the [League of Nations] Union to initiate work for European refugees who are non-Jewish by religion.'[4] At the time, refugees who were ethnically or religiously Jewish were cared for by the Jewish Welfare Society. VIREC was founded with the intention of caring for 'non-Aryan Christians, Social Democrats and Czechol-Slovakian Refugees' who might otherwise slip between the cracks.[5] The majority of the refugees in VIREC files in 1940 were undocumented migrants who would otherwise face a tragic fate. As director of VIREC, Duncan fought to rid Australian society of its prejudice against refugees by opposing the increasing xenophobia in Victoria resulting from "'Fifth Column" activities in Europe [which were] making Australians suspicious of every foreigner, and especially those who formerly possessed German nationality.'[6] During this time Duncan continued as a member of the executive committee of the Australian Institute of International Affairs and the League of Nations Union. In July 1939 she applied for the LNU to be affiliated with the National Council of Women (NCW), and in September she was a signatory to a statement by the executive of the LNU regarding the outbreak of World War Two.[7] Her advocacy throughout this period was indefatigable. Every Thursday morning Duncan had a radio program on Melbourne's 3LO on the topic of international affairs. From late 1939 until Easter of 1940, she also made visits to speak at most girls' secondary schools in metropolitan Melbourne.

[3] 'League of Nations Union Memo on Founding of VIREC', Undated, MS 1924/35/224, National Library of Australia; Howe, *A Century of Influence*, 251.
[4] 'Annual Report and Balance Sheet June 1939-June 1940', Annual Report (Melbourne: Australian League of Nations Union Victorian Branch, 1940), 9.
[5] 'League of Nations Union Memo on Founding of VIREC'.
[6] 'Annual Report and Balance Sheet June 1939-June 1940', 9.
[7] For NCW support for LNU, see Marian Quartly and Judith Smart, *Respectable Radicals: A History of the National Council of Women Australia, 1896-2006*, Australian History (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing in conjunction with the National Council of Women of Australia, 2015), 207–15.

One of the most significant events to occur in 1940 was the arrival of *S.S. Dunera*. Duncan had been alerted to the ship's imminent arrival, meeting it at the dock when it arrived at Port Melbourne. From that time forward, Duncan took a keen interest in the welfare of the *Dunera* refugees.[8] In this she worked closely with her ASCM colleague, Margaret Holmes.[9] The experiences of the *Dunera* boys, and their struggle to be treated as refugees rather than enemy aliens, is an important chapter of Australian history.[10] For many Christians, particularly those from more ecumenical branches of the church, refugee advocacy was and is a vital expression of an active faith. Engel and Rouse both see this as a keystone of Christian social justice activism in the twentieth century.[11] Scholar of politics and religion Marion Maddox has described how *The Methodist* (newspaper of the Methodist Church in Australia) campaigned for refugee rights well into the 1950s, urging governments to resettle them and individuals to sponsor them.[12] In contrast, evangelical historians Piggin and Linder do not mention the *Dunera*, or refugees at all, despite having a chapter devoted to 'war-time ministries and prisoners of war.' For Piggin and Linder, the focus is on what evangelical Christians accomplished as wartime chaplains, or endured as prisoners of the Japanese, rather than they ways they assisted refugees coming to Australian shores.[13]

For Duncan, the plight of Jewish refugees was immediate and pressing. She and Holmes used all of their influence to urge the Department of Immigration to classify those who had arrived on

[8] Ken Inglis et al., *Dunera Lives: Profiles*, vol. 2 (Clayton, Vic.: Monash University Publishing, 2020), 358.
[9] Inglis et al., *Dunera Lives: Profiles*, 358–60; Renate Howe, *A Century of Influence: The Australian Student Christian Movement 1896-1996* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2009), 251–52, 264; Frank Engel, *Times of Change: 1918-1978*, vol. 2, Christians in Australia (Melbourne: Joint Board of Christian Education, 1993), 268.
[10] The extraordinary story of the *Dunera* refugees has been portrayed in K. S. Inglis, *Dunera Lives: A Visual History*, vol. 1 (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2018); and Inglis et al., *Dunera Lives: Profiles*.
[11] Ruth Rouse, 'Other Aspects of the Ecumenical Movement, 1910-1948', in *A History of the Ecumenical Movement: 1517-1948*, ed. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986), 605; Engel, *Times of Change: 1918-1978*, 229–30.
[12] Marion. Maddox, *God under Howard: The Rise of the Religious Right in Australian Politics*, 1st ed. (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2005), 17.
[13] Stuart Piggin and Robert D. Linder, *Attending to the National Soul: Evangelical Christians in Australian History, 1914-2014* (Melbourne, Vic.: Monash University Publishing, 2020), 214–42.

the *Dunera* as refugees not enemy aliens.[14] Private correspondence from this time shows the depth of Duncan's commitment. Letters dating from 1941–1945 between Duncan and Kathleen Courtney (a 'peace worker' from Geneva who had toured Australia in 1937–38) show Duncan's extensive efforts on behalf of one young refugee, Peter Jacobsen.[15] The letters also hint at a deep affection between the two women, with handwritten notes declaring the sincerity of their love, and recalling impulsive beach swims on the way to speaking engagements.[16]

On 2 June 1941 Duncan's father, Andrew William Bartlett Duncan, passed away. He had been a staunch supporter of her work, at times travelling to hear her speak and attending receptions given in her honour. In 1942 Constance Duncan was made executor of the will, along with her brother, Frere, and her sister, Kathleen. While she mourned her loss, Duncan's work continued.

Ecumenical historian Frank Engel states that during this period, many Christians were awakening to a 'fresh understanding of the social dimensions of the gospel.'[17] Although evangelicals, under the influence of fundamentalism, were growing 'suspicious of social reform',[18] Duncan's ecumenical outlook and legacy of social justice activism through ASCM and YWCA meant that she was open to new opportunities in which to advocate for social justice. In 1942 Duncan joined the Commonwealth Department of Labour and National Service, where one of her key concerns was how to support working mothers through the provision of creches and preschools.[19] In August of 1943 Duncan announced that she would be contesting the seat of

[14] Howe, *A Century of Influence*, 251.
[15] 'Correspondence between Constance Duncan (Melbourne) and Courtney, 1941 to 1945, (File 49-54), (from Collections Held by the Fawcett Library/Courtney Papers/Correspondence (I))'.
[16] Duncan to Courtney, 14 January 1945, 1, in 'Correspondence between Constance Duncan (Melbourne) and Courtney, 1941 to 1945, (File 49-54), (from Collections Held by the Fawcett Library/Courtney Papers/ Correspondence (I))'.
[17] Engel, *Times of Change: 1918-1978*, 117.
[18] Stuart Piggin and Peter Lineham, 'Australasia and the Pacific Islands', in *Global Evangelicalism: Theology, History & Culture in Regional Perspective*, ed. Donald M. Lewis and Richard V. Pierard (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 247.
[19] 'Applications for Positions by Miss Constance Duncan' (Sydney, NSW: Commonwealth Office of Education, September 1949), Series A1361 34/1/12 Part 482, National Archives of Australia.

Balaclava at the Victorian state election as an Independent.[20] Political scientists Marian Sawer and Marian Simms note that World War Two had led to the unprecedented political mobilisation of women, with Duncan a part of a record setting female cohort contesting the 1943 election.[21] This was a result of the Women for Canberra movement, which sought to turn the tide and see women elected for the first time to federal parliament in Australia.[22] At that time the phenomenon of 'male equivalence' was still part of the Australian political landscape. This meant that women running for political office were 'legitimised in their standing', and thus far more likely to be elected, if they were seeking to replace a now deceased husband or father in the seat they were contesting.[23] Although Duncan's father had been held in high esteem in the community, there was no such legacy on which she could draw. Sawer and Simms assert that there was another pathway to political office for women via the support of women's organisations.[24] This was a form of capital that Duncan had in abundance through ASCM, YWCA, LNU and the various peace movements, and through her membership of the women only Lyceum Club in Melbourne.[25] The Women for Canberra strategy proved effective, with Dorothy Tangey (an unmarried social justice advocate and labour activist) elected to the Senate and Enid Lyons (widow of former Prime Minister Joseph Lyons) elected to the House of Representatives. Although she was not elected, Duncan's decision to stand was consistent with her pattern of activism with and for networks of women, her life of public service, and her desire to enact change not merely agitate for it.

[20] 'Government Notices', *Age*, 16 August 1943, 4.
[21] Until 1943, only 18 women had been candidates for the House of Representatives in its history. The 1943 election saw 19 women candidates standing for the House at the one time. The authors note the reluctance of the major parties to select women to run in winnable seats, ensuring that most (like Duncan) ran as independents. Marian Sawer and Marian Simms, *A Woman's Place: Women and Politics in Australia* (Allen & Unwin, 1993), 46.
[22] Patricia Grimshaw et al., *Creating a Nation* (Ringwood, Vic: McPhee Gribble Publishers, 1994), 263.
[23] Sawer and Simms, *A Woman's Place*, 75.
[24] Sawer and Simms, *A Woman's Place*, 76.
[25] The importance of the Lyceum Club as a gathering place for highly intelligent, politically astute women will be explained in more detail below, and in chapter 7.

Having been unsuccessful in her bid for election, Duncan continued in her role with the Department of Labour and National Service. She advocated for increased support for mothers to give them greater quality of life, before transferring to the Department of Health in 1944 in order to conduct a national survey on maternal and child welfare.[26] This role would give Duncan the opportunity to advocate for nationally consistent policies to support working mothers. Duncan's advocacy for the welfare and rights of mothers at this time is particularly significant, given the expectation that women in public life would conduct themselves in a manner consistent with family roles and values. Feminist historian Marilyn Lake describes the 'long tradition of feminists appropriating the nationalist discourse of motherhood to promote women's political interests.'[27] Women seeking political office in the 1940s still 'had to be careful not to threaten established family roles.'[28] For those who were not married, this could mean creating a persona of 'virgin motherhood' such that their activism could be understood as 'matriarchal influence'.[29] We have seen in chapter two how the need to conform to a maternalist paradigm shaped Levvy's activism and her performance of gendered roles. Simms and Sawer have described a similar phenomenon in politically engaged Australian women in the mid-twentieth century. They cite the example of Dame Annabelle Rankin, who entered the Senate in 1947. Rankin was the first woman to represent Queensland in the Federal parliament, and eventually became the Government Whip. Despite her precedent-shattering career, Sawer and Simms describe how Rankin needed to be 'transmogrified into a mother despite her single status' in order to maintain her agency.[30] As an unmarried, childless woman, Duncan listened to and advocated for vulnerable mothers, seeking ways to improve their quality of life. This in itself could be interpreted as a maternal role, but it was not merely performative. As we have seen,

[26] 'New Post for Miss Constance Duncan', *Advertiser*, 16 May 1945, 3.
[27] Marilyn Lake, 'Feminist History as National History: Writing the Political History of Women', *Australian Historical Studies* 27, no. 106 (1 April 1996): 157; cf. James Keating, "'An Utter Absence of National Feeling": Australian Women and the International Suffrage Movement, 1900-14', *Australian Historical Studies* 47, no. 3 (2016): 465.
[28] Sawer and Simms, *A Woman's Place*, 76.
[29] Sawer and Simms, *A Woman's Place*, 77.
[30] Sawer and Simms, *A Woman's Place*, 77.

such activism was consistent with Duncan's lifelong advocacy for others. In December 1944 Duncan presented her report on maternal and child welfare. In it, she urged a 'fair deal'[31] for Australian mothers and argued that they should receive 'payment commensurate with that of industrial and office workers.'[32] Among the things that the report recommended were a national programme of maternal and child welfare that guaranteed minimum Australian standards in services and facilities, regardless of the state or territory in which one lived.[33] In addition, it called for government subsidies for kindergarten, training colleges, creches for working mothers, and greater provision for children in government sponsored homes.[34] The report also called for uniform divorce law throughout Australia, while another concern of the report was the lack of provision for mentally challenged children.[35] Reflecting what was believed to be best practice at the time, the report called for the segregation of 'normal' and 'mentally defective' children in order that those children with intellectual disabilities would receive greater attention and support.[36] The report was largely concerned with ensuring that Australian mothers had access to the best possible life and all the resources that they would need for effective mothering. This included the right to be able to make a contribution to the life of the community on her own terms, and not only as a wife and mother. Duncan argued that if the government wanted Australian women to have more children, they needed to provide greater assistance to ensure that mothers would be able to maintain both the standard of living and the ideals of the Australian way of life.[37] The National Council of Women (NCW) threw their support behind Duncan in this endeavour, participating in the investigation and supporting the recommendations of the report in full.[38]

[31] '"Fair Deal" Urged for Women', *Mercury*, 9 December 1944, 4.
[32] 'Home Help Needed for Mothers', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 December 1944, 4.
[33] 'Home Help Needed for Mothers'; 'Homes and Help: Mothers' Big Needs', *Mail*, 9 December 1944, 4.
[34] 'Home Help Needed for Mothers', 4.
[35] 'Home Help Needed for Mothers', 4.
[36] 'Home Help Needed for Mothers', 4.
[37] 'Home Help Needed for Mothers', 4.
[38] Quartly and Smart, *Respectable Radicals*, 165.

Post war roles: continued refugee advocacy and internationalism

In May of 1945 Duncan was appointed a welfare officer for United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) in the South-West Pacific area.[39] Her role was to liaise with the various voluntary agencies involved in care for refugees, to recruit welfare personnel for UNRRA operations, and to consult with and assist the governments of UNRRA nations on their welfare problems.[40] In this role, Duncan was again found advocating for refugees through speaking at conferences to inform the public of the great need of displaced persons, and through helping to organise the training of volunteers that would travel to Europe in order to assist with the humanitarian crisis on the ground at the end of the war.[41] Despite the failure of the League of Nations to prevent a second world war, Duncan threw herself wholeheartedly behind the agenda of the United Nations.[42] In a 1945 news documentary for the ABC, she told listeners that 'international cooperation' was the basis of 'our future well-being and happiness . . . Without them we are lost, and San Francisco conferences cannot save us.'[43] Throughout the documentary Duncan demonstrated a depth of understanding of the issues facing UNRRA in its work in Europe, the breadth of the refugee crisis and the measures being taken to address them. She also empowered her listeners in Australia by reminding them of the national clothing drive by which they could take direct and practical action, while asserting that for lasting change to occur they would have to get behind the mission of the United Nations.

> If we want to ensure that it is not just a means of sending relief supplies to people in grievous need, then we shall have to see to it that UNRRA is the living expression of the deep concern which we feel for suffering humanity.[44]

[39] 'Applications for Positions by Miss Constance Duncan'.
[40] 'New Post for Miss Constance Duncan', 3.
[41] 'Guide Conference', *West Australian*, 29 June 1945, 9.
[42] Howe notes that ASCM had a similar response, transitioning from support of the LNU to enthusiastic support of UN. Howe, *A Century of Influence*, 262–263, 312–313.
[43] Constance Duncan, 'UNRRA: Fundamental Experiment in International Co-Operation', *ABC Weekly*, 28 July 1945, 16.
[44] Duncan, 'UNRRA: Fundamental Experiment', 28.

This was consistent with the encouragement she gave to her listeners during the war, when she had called them to live up to the ideals of selflessness, kindness and generosity, devoting themselves to something greater than their own need.[45] It was this, Duncan said, that would enable Australians to be the kind of people who would be able to meet 'whatever the future holds, whether it is tragedy or suffering or success.'[46] At the end of the war, she was again urging listeners to look beyond their own immediate needs to the problems of relief and rehabilitation faced by the occupied countries of Europe.[47] Her appeals were not only to individual citizens, but also for governments of the United Nations. Without their wholehearted commitment to relief efforts, Duncan feared that the world would emerge from war only to drown under a humanitarian crisis.[48] 'It is a grim fight—this battle for peace, and however tired we feel, we dare not relax until it, too, is won.'[49] Furthermore, her concern was not only for Europe but also for Asia and the Pacific; in September 1945 she stated that the European appeal needed to be brought to an end because 'other appeals would follow' and already 'China's need for help was desperate'.[50] Despite not having lived in Japan for more than a decade, Duncan was still deeply connected and keenly aware of conditions on the ground in Asia. Yet her appeals for help were frustrated by what she saw as 'inadequate organisation', with the result that although they had asked for 5 million pounds of clothing for the European appeal, 'We'll be lucky if we get 3½ million pounds of clothing.'[51] Nonetheless, she continued travelling and speaking, keeping the cause always before the Australian public.

[45] Duncan, 'War Thoughts', 44.
[46] Duncan, 'War Thoughts', 44.
[47] Duncan, 'UNRRA: Fundamental Experiment', 16.
[48] 'UNRRA Conditions in Pacific Area', *Telegraph*, 21 September 1945, 4.
[49] Constance Duncan, cited in 'UNRRA Conditions in Pacific Area', 4.
[50] 'State Short on U.N.R.R.A. Quota', *Courier-Mail*, 21 September 1945, 5.
[51] 'Food Scarce for Europe', *Courier-Mail*, 25 September 1945, 3.

Still the only woman at the table

Duncan's tireless efforts and exemplary commitment saw her invited to be a part of the special UNRRA mission to Korea in January 1946. She was the only woman invited to be a member of the mission. It was initially intended to be a fact-finding exercise that would carry out a survey of conditions.[52] Nonetheless, at the end of the survey, Duncan was invited to remain in Seoul as a liaison officer to the American and Russian Commanding Generals in Korea, and was also appointed Acting Chief of Mission.[53] The *Sydney Morning Herald* noted that Duncan was 'the first white woman to enter Korea since its liberation after nearly 50 years of Japanese rule' and that, in a break with ancient tradition by which women would normally be excluded, Duncan was invited to a dinner given by the Korean leaders of the UNRRA mission.[54] Once again, in spite of her sex, Duncan was playing a ground-breaking role in international affairs. It is also significant to note that her activities were being lauded by churches back home in Australia. For example, at a gathering of the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union (PWMU) in Bendigo in March 1946, Duncan's work in Korea was held up as an example by a Miss Gillespie, in a talk in which she praised 'the effects of Christian living and witness.'[55] In the Melbourne *Herald* Duncan was praised by Frank Gaines, Director of UNRRA for South-West Pacific, as 'doing a noteworthy and effective job' while the Adelaide Advertiser praised Duncan as one of a small number of 'Australian women who are proving their ability in important posts overseas.'[56]

In May 1946, former US President Herbert Hoover visited Korea on behalf of President Truman, as part of an investigation into the food situation in occupied nations. At a conference

[52] 'UNRRA Mission to Korea to Leave To-Morrow', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 January 1946, 6; 'Day by Day Events: Mission to Korea', *Age*, 4 January 1946, 5; 'Personal', *West Australian*, 7 January 1946, 4.
[53] 'Applications for Positions by Miss Constance Duncan'; 'UNRRA Worker in Korea', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 March 1946, 7; 'Australian Woman Is U.N.R.R.A. Liaison Officer in Korea', *Border Morning Mail*, 2 July 1946, 4.
[54] 'UNRRA Worker in Korea', 7.
[55] 'Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union', *Riverine Herald*, 28 March 1946, 4.
[56] '"Nan" Heard Today', *Herald*, 24 April 1946, 11; 'Miss Constance Duncan's Interesting Job in Korea', *Advertiser*, 12 June 1946, 5.

held in Seoul as part of the investigation, Duncan was once again the only woman present.[57] In addition to her diplomatic work for UNRRA, Duncan functioned as something of a cultural diplomat (as she had on her return from Japan in 1932), informing those back home in Australia about the culture and context of Korea. This included passing messages between Korean Christians and Australian mission groups who supported them.[58] Duncan gave vivid descriptions of the traditional dresses worn by Korean women and girls, which they had been forbidden to wear during the years of Japanese occupation. She also described Korean celebrations of Easter in 1946, and the work being done by the YWCA to address both adult literacy and children's hunger.[59] While Duncan received praise for her work as liaison between the Russian and American generals, it was not until three years later, while again working for the UN, that she spoke publicly about the risks she took and the privations she experienced. In 1949, she described her experience being quartered in North Korea in 1946 in the home of a Russian General who was away in Moscow. 'We were closely guarded', she recalled. 'A Russian tommy-gunner used to stand outside my bedroom door.'[60]

On her return to Australia, Duncan resumed her busy speaking schedule, 'disseminating much-needed information' and continuing to educate the public on international affairs in Asia.[61] In November 1946 Duncan spoke about her work with UNRRA at the YWCA hall in Sydney.[62] In January 1947 she spoke to an audience of 500 people at the annual ASCM conference on the impact of American policy on Japanese recovery from war, and her bewilderment that American policy prevented the Japanese from accessing British books, newspapers or magazines.[63] During

[57] 'Miss Constance Duncan's Interesting Job in Korea', 5.
[58] 'Miss Constance Duncan's Interesting Job in Korea', 5; 'Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union', 4.
[59] 'Miss Constance Duncan's Interesting Job in Korea', 5.
[60] 'Under Guard in Korea', *Mail*, 28 May 1949, 10; 'In Korea for U.N.R.R.A. but Was Kept Under Constant Guard', *Horsham Times*, 24 July 1951, 3.
[61] 'Japan's Future', *Riverine Herald*, 22 January 1947, 4.
[62] 'In the Churches', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 November 1946, 4.
[63] 'US Policy Bars British Views from Japs', *Argus*, 13 January 1947, 4; 'In the Churches: Big Conference of Students', *Argus*, 4 January 1947, 13. Duncan appears to have been somewhat of an Anglophile. When travelling, she listed her citizenship as British rather than Australian, although this was not unusual for the time. Cf. 'Qantas

this talk, Duncan acknowledged America's contribution to 'human progress' in science, manufacturing and commerce, and described General MacArthur as 'one of the world's truly great men', while also, 'to a large extent . . . Japan's dictator'.[64] Duncan's international commentary combined sharp critique with admiration for strong leadership (such as that shown by MacArthur and Korean women whom Duncan admired). She also expressed her concern lest Japan become Americanised, taking on 'some of the worst features of American life and ignor[ing] the higher and better influences', a result which she described as potentially 'disastrous'.[65] It also points to Duncan's ongoing concern that the fraught relationship between the Russians and Americans was having catastrophic consequences for Korea.[66] In February 1947, Duncan spoke at a Rotary Club luncheon in Melbourne where she described Korea being 'thoroughly exploited' during the 35 years of Japanese 'overlordship' and expressed her concern that the Russians and Americans had now caused Korea to be 'divided into two watertight compartments'.[67] She described this position as 'tragic' and feared that little progress was being made while military and political concerns took precedence over economic needs, leading to food shortages.[68]

Throughout the 1930s, Duncan had expressed her hopes that diplomacy would triumph over Japanese militarism, which had itself been provoked by Chinese micro-aggressions.[69] In the aftermath of World War Two, however, she agreed wholeheartedly that 'Japan should be stripped of all means of making war', while maintaining that equal effort should be expended nurturing democracy through 'satisfactory educational policy . . . universal franchise. . . [and

Empire Airways Passenger List: London to Melbourne via Perth EM534/177, 31 July 1959', Fremantle, Western Australia, Passenger Lists, 1897-1963 for Miss Ada Constance Duncan Reel 170: Jun 1959-Sep 1959, Ancestry.com.
[64] 'Japan's Future', 4.
[65] 'Japan's Future', 4; Cf. 'US Policy Bars British Views from Japs', 4.
[66] Cf. 'U.S. Won't Pay Bill: Light Cut Off', *Daily Telegraph*, 17 December 1946, 2.
[67] 'Tragic Outlook for Korea', *Age*, 6 February 1947, 5.
[68] 'Tragic Outlook for Korea', 5.
[69] 'Japan and Manchuria', *Age*, 12 May 1932, 7; 'Social Notes - Party at Menzies', *Australasian*, 3 September 1932, sec. Woman's Realm, 10.

guaranteeing] the four freedoms.'[70] She pleaded that 'the Japanese should be left to work out their own political salvation' and cautioned against America imposing their own democratic system (as they were doing in other parts of the world) on peoples who were 'incapable of using [it] rightly'.[71] Duncan lamented that MacArthur was 'racing ahead with his programme of making Japan Democratic, and the people were suffering from a kind of political indigestion.'[72]

Duncan was not, however, entirely despondent; she expressed hope that where men had failed, women would succeed. In January 1947 she gave an extensive interview to the Argus in Melbourne outlining her belief that it was the women of Korea who would rebuild the country's future, rather than the occupying powers.[73] During this talk Duncan identified outstanding Korean women who had resisted the Japanese and would be vital in the task of rebuilding. She lauded educationalists such as Pak Il Duk, Louisa Im, and Dr Helen Kim, president of EWHA University and, in Duncan's words, 'a real statesman'. She also praised nurses such as Hong Oak Soon who had travelled across militarised zones to supervise the implementation of modern nursing institutes.[74] In the same month (January 1947), Duncan spoke at a Business and Professional Women's Club,[75] the Women's World Day of Prayer,[76] and at International Women's Day events in Melbourne.[77] At these events, she praised the Korean women who were leading the way, while highlighting that they had benefitted from access to Western education. She particularly stressed the enormous benefit Hong Oak Soon had gained from her time doing post-graduate studies in Nursing in Melbourne before the outbreak of war.[78] Hong had been sponsored by the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Society, leading Duncan to declare that, 'No

[70] 'Japan's Future', 4.
[71] 'Japan's Future', 4.
[72] 'US Policy Bars British Views from Japs', 4.
[73] 'Women of Korea Will Build Country's Future', *Argus*, 6 January 1947, 7; Cf. 'Y.W.C.A. National Youth Conference', *Canberra Times*, 8 January 1947, 6.
[74] 'Women of Korea Will Build Country's Future', 7.
[75] 'People and Parties', *Age*, 7 February 1947, 7.
[76] 'The Churches', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 February 1947, 15.
[77] 'International Women's Day', *Age*, 22 February 1947, 6.
[78] 'Women of Korea Will Build Country's Future', 7.

investment by a mission ever paid a better dividend', and to advocate for the scheme to be extended so that 'social science workers, teachers, and nurses' could all come to Australia to study.[79] This prefigured the work to which Duncan would devote herself throughout the 1950s – welcoming large numbers of international students to Australia. Nonetheless, this was not the solution to Korea's woes. Duncan highlighted the need for equal access to education in Korea itself, where only twenty percent of women could read (compared to sixty percent of men) and education was restricted to those who could afford to pay for it.[80] Meanwhile, Japanese women, she claimed, were embracing their new found freedoms to such an extent that the 'whole educational system of Japan was being rewritten by five women, who were replanning the system on democratic lines.'[81] Whether pragmatic or purely optimistic, Duncan unabashedly proclaimed that it was women who would act as midwives in the 'rebirth' of Japan and Korea.[82]

In mid-1947 UNRRA was wound down and its functions distributed among United Nations subsidiary organisations, including the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organisation, and the International Refugee Organisation (IRO). Duncan acknowledged that America had made the greatest financial contribution to UNRRA, but expressed concern that the USA would 'carry the burden [of relief and rehabilitation] alone' due to its determination to control the agenda.[83] It was in caring for Displaced Persons (DPs) that Duncan believed UNRRA had done its most important work, and it was to this cause that she would now lend her voice, arguing that Australia must broaden its immigration policy (and open its mind).[84] When the president of the NSW Returned Soldiers' League (RSL) demanded that Australia prioritise migrants who were '100 per cent. Briton', Duncan vehemently disagreed,

[79] 'Women of Korea Will Build Country's Future', 7.
[80] 'Education Plans for Koreans', *Daily Telegraph*, 21 February 1947, 14.
[81] 'Japanese Women Welcomed Defeat', *Barrier Miner*, 10 March 1947, 3.
[82] 'YWCA Luncheon', *Herald*, 26 March 1947, 11.
[83] Constance Duncan, 'Chaotic World Says Goodbye to UNRRA', *Herald*, 17 July 1947, 4.
[84] Duncan, 'Goodbye to UNRRA', 4; 'Claim DPs Would Be Ideal Migrants', *Herald*, 25 July 1947, 5.

labelling the RSL 'a parochially-minded pressure group' seeking to sabotage the work of Arthur Calwell, Minister for Immigration.[85] She also found herself at odds with a British Commonwealth Occupation Forces (BCOF) spokesman when she publicly criticised them for being so preoccupied with Japan's demilitarisation that they were neglecting its democratisation.[86] In August 1947, when the Federal government established a special committee to advise on the terms of the Japanese surrender, Duncan's firsthand knowledge, intellect and candour were recognised when she was one of only two women appointed to the committee (the other being Senator Dorothy Tangney); sixteen men were appointed.[87] In several newspapers Duncan and Tangney were patronisingly referred to as 'keen students of foreign affairs'; no such qualifier was used to describe any of the men on the committee.[88]

At the time there was increasing public debate about the kind of migrants Australia should accept, in the hope that they would become hard-working citizens.[89] Particular debate arose as to whether German children, including the illegitimate children of German soldiers in Scandinavian countries they had occupied, could be adopted by Australian parents. Some, such as J.O. Holt, secretary of the British Empire Society, argued that 'British stock' should be prioritised above all migrants. Others, such as Professor Woodruff (president of VIREC) and Mrs Herbert Brookes (president of the International Club in Melbourne) contended that the children should be welcomed. Woodruff commented that the children 'would probably be of virile, active, healthy stock, as Scandinavian combinations always produce excellent types', while Mrs Brookes declared that 'people of Norwegian and German extraction usually made very good citizens', and the Lord Mayor of Melbourne (Cr. Connelly) suggested that by the second generation they might

[85] 'Claim DPs Would Be Ideal Migrants', 5; 'Admission of Europeans', *Advocate*, 26 July 1947, 1; 'R.S.L. Opposes "Continental" Types', *Australian Jewish Herald*, 1 August 1947, 2.
[86] 'Japan Under Occupation', *Age*, 7 August 1947, 2; 'What B.C.O.F. Is Doing', *Age*, 8 August 1947, 14.
[87] 'Advisory Body on Japan', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 August 1947, 4; 'Canberra Will Be Crowded', *Herald*, 12 August 1947, 6; 'Canberra Commentary: Jap Peace Preliminaries', *Argus*, 16 August 1947, 44.
[88] 'Canberra Commentary: Jap Peace Preliminaries', 44; 'Dr. Evatt, Quizmaster', *Warwick Daily News*, 19 August 1947, 4.
[89] 'Children of Germans Needed Here', *Herald*, 24 June 1947, 2.

'become good Britishers'.[90] While Duncan agreed that Australia should accept the children, she couched her argument in very different terms, stating that it would be right to assist our allies (in peace as well as in war), and that 'Australia would be very fortunate' to have them.[91]

With such a resume, it was no surprise that in 1947 and 1948, during public debate on whether the 'White Australia Policy' should be revised, Duncan argued vehemently in the affirmative, contending that the phrase itself was offensive, let alone what it signified.[92] In addition to this, Duncan increased her efforts to build greater cultural awareness and understanding in Australia, thereby influencing the direction of post-war immigration programmes in Australia.[93] She continued to speak publicly about her admiration for the women of Japan and Korea, telling her audience at the International Club in October 1947 that Korean women were 'absolutely tip-top' and far surpassed men 'in character, sincerity, and real patriotism'.[94] Furthermore, she established the 'Know Your Neighbour' initiative through her work with the Council of Adult Education, whereby weekly lectures were given on Australia's Asian neighbours – Japan, China, Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines – and the USA.[95] Aimed primarily at housewives, the lectures were held at Melbourne's Exhibition Youth Centre, with the promise that babies and children under five years old would be minded, so that mothers could attend undistracted and would not have to rush away.[96] In this way, Duncan combined her cross-cultural advocacy with her efforts to ease the burden on women, in particular mothers, and her promotion of increased access to education for all. The lectures were highly-regarded and well-attended.[97] It is significant that at this time, Duncan was invited back to the ABC as a guest editor for the 'Women's Session'. The

[90] 'Children of Germans Needed Here', 2.
[91] 'Children of Germans Needed Here', 2.
[92] J.A. Alexander, 'White Australia — Should Our Policy Be Revised?', *Herald*, 3 March 1948, 4.
[93] This endeavour saw the renewal of Duncan's working partnership with Margaret Holmes, and again demonstrates the ongoing benefits of Duncan's ASCM network. Cf. Howe, *A Century of Influence*, 264.
[94] 'The Life of Melbourne', *Argus*, 1 October 1947, 10.
[95] 'Know Your Neighbour', *Age*, 22 October 1947, 7.
[96] 'Lectures to Housewives', *Herald*, 20 October 1947, 11; 'Know Your Neighbour', 7.
[97] Althea, 'City Gossip', *Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate*, 22 April 1948, 4.

press release announcing this described Duncan as a 'prominent' Australian woman and a 'noted authority on international affairs'.[98] When the inaugural United Nations Appeal for Children (UNAC) was launched the same year (1948), Duncan was the obvious choice to be the State organiser. She spent the rest of the year travelling throughout regional and metropolitan areas, alternately cajoling and bullying Victorians to meet their £300,000 commitment.[99]

Before the war, when she had been busy working for the Bureau of Social and International Affairs and the League of Nations Union, it was said of Duncan that she was 'such a busy and efficient person that no one who has worked with her can imagine her in a state of complete relaxation'.[100] In the years immediately after the war, she continued this pattern through tireless activism, speaking and correspondence. In her private life, however, a change was underway.

Margaret Sutherland

Constance Duncan and Margaret Sutherland (1897-1984) had known each other for many years. Both attended the University of Melbourne from 1914-1919, both toured regional areas in the early 1920s as part of their work, both were members of Melbourne's Lyceum Club.[101] While Duncan became an ASCM travelling secretary and then moved to Japan with the YWCA in 1922, Sutherland moved to London in 1923 to continue her studies in music, before returning to Australia and marrying Dr Norman Albiston, with whom she would have two children (Mark and Jennifer). Sutherland was one of Australia's most renowned composers in the mid-twentieth century, but her marriage to Albiston was not a happy one due to his numerous extra-marital affairs, resentment of her musical success and abusive pattern of behaviour.[102] In late 1947,

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[98] ABC Press Release, 'Guest Editors for Women's Session: Constance Duncan - Tutor for Adult Education' (7 February 1948), C1737 Box 12, NAA, 1.
[99] 'UN Children's Appeal', *Argus*, 31 July 1948, 5; 'Appeal so Far Disappointing', *Age*, 31 July 1948, 2; 'Child Care Committee', *Sunshine Advocate*, 9 July 1948, 1; 'Appeal Gains £2500 a Day', *Age*, 6 August 1948, 3; 'Benalla First Victorian Town to Pass Its Quota', *Benalla Ensign*, 3 September 1948, 5.
[100] 'Melbourne Chatter', *The Bulletin*, 22 July 1936, 43.
[101] Jillian Graham, 'Composer, Wife and Mother: Margaret Sutherland as Conflicted Subject' (Masters Coursework thesis, Faculty of Music, Melbourne, Vic., University of Melbourne, 2001), 51; Joan Gillison, *A History of the Lyceum Club, Melbourne* (Melbourne, Vic.: McKellar Press, 1975), 99.
[102] Margaret Sutherland, '1920 and So On' (unpublished, undated), National Library of Australia, MS 2967, 8–14.

Sutherland returned from a trip to Adelaide and determined that she must separate from her husband.[103] Early in 1948, when her son, Mark, was eighteen and her daughter, Jenny, was sixteen, she packed Albiston's bags and had them waiting for him in the spare room when he came home late at night. Despite his fury at her actions (and Sutherland's terror at his anger), Albiston left and would not return.[104] In an unpublished manuscript, Sutherland described how she had to 'make a completely new life. Bit by bit it grew.'[105] What is not mentioned publicly was the role that Constance Duncan played in the rebuilding of her life.

Sutherland was an active member of the Lyceum Club, frequently performing her musical compositions there and being involved in musical performances.[106] As a keen member herself, Duncan both attended and hosted receptions at the Club. On at least one such occasion (17 February 1937), Sutherland and her husband attended a party hosted by Duncan in honour of a mutual friend (Una Cato) who had returned from an extended overseas trip.[107] Given Duncan's love of music and discussion, and the active involvement of both Sutherland and Duncan in the Lyceum Club, is it highly unlikely that this was a one-off occasion. We know that they had already known each other through ASCM and their university days. Furthermore, they were both members of The Catalysts, a women's club formed in Melbourne in 1911, meeting monthly to share meals and discussion papers.[108] In her biography of Margaret Sutherland, Jillian Graham details the importance of Sutherland's friends at the Lyceum Club, and the support she received from them. Graham notes the influence of women like Dorothy Ross (1891-1982) – who had progressive views on education, sexuality, and marriage – on Sutherland's decision to dissolve

[103] Personal correspondence from the time reveals the depth of concern Sutherland's friends felt for her, and their relief that she was taking back control of her life. See Doris Carey, 'Letter to Margaret Sutherland', 23 November 1947; Iseult Bailey, 'Letter to Margaret Sutherland', 8 October 1947; Keith Macartney, 'Letter to Margaret Sutherland', 19 November 1947. All files in National Library of Australia, MS2967.
[104] Sutherland, '1920 and So On', 13–14.
[105] Sutherland, '1920 and So On', 14.
[106] Gillison, *A History of the Lyceum Club, Melbourne*, 70–77.
[107] 'Engagements', *Argus*, 17 February 1937, 15.
[108] Anne Longmire, *The Catalysts: Change and Continuity 1910-2010* (Melbourne, Vic.: Anne Longmire and The Catalysts, 2011), 56–62, 71–72.

her marriage.[109] However, it was Constance Duncan who was Sutherland's closest confidante. According to Graham, Duncan and Sutherland's friendship became close due to their mutual involvement in the Women of the University Patriotic Fund, while Sutherland's esteem for Duncan greatly increased following Duncan's active role in the *Dunera* affair.[110] From early 1947, while spending time together at the Lyceum Club, Sutherland began to disclose to Duncan details of her troubled marriage.[111] Duncan invited Sutherland to spend some time with her at her holiday house in Olinda. Not long afterwards, Sutherland dismissed her husband, Dr Albiston, from the home and a short time later Duncan moved in.[112] Historian Renate Howe has written of Duncan's openness about her sexuality, but there is no public acknowledgement (that I have found to date) of the relationship between Duncan and Sutherland.[113] At the time, public exposure of an intimate relationship would likely have ended both their careers and reputations, but society could accept them as two single women, living together as friends and companions. Nonetheless, the evidence I have gathered is strongly indicative that the two women were in a long-term, committed partnership. Electoral records show that Duncan would continue living with Sutherland in her home at Kew until the late 1960s.[114] Sutherland's private music scrapbook, otherwise exclusively devoted to her musical accomplishments, features a portrait photograph of

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[109] Graham, 'Composer, Wife and Mother', 53. Graham states that Ross' progressive 'views on education were certainly shared by Margaret'.
[110] Graham, 'Composer, Wife and Mother', 53.
[111] Stuart Rosewarne, 'The Sutherland Family' (17 November 1978), Private collection of Tony Bunney; Graham, 'Composer, Wife and Mother', 53; Longmire, *The Catalysts*', 59; Jillian Graham, *Inner Song: A Biography of Margaret Sutherland* (Melbourne, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, forthcoming 2023), 135–36.
[112] Rosewarne, 'The Sutherland Family', 91–92.
[113] Howe, *A Century of Influence*, 237. Howe comments that the sexuality of lesbian women like Dorothy Ross and Constance Duncan was well known in their own intimate circles, but that finding specific evidence is notoriously difficult. In personal correspondence, Howe confirmed to me that Duncan and Sutherland were long-term partners. Renate Howe, 'Re: Constance Duncan Research', personal email correspondence, 26 April 2018.
[114] 'Australia, Electoral Rolls 1963', Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980 - Ancestry.com.au, accessed 28 September 2021, https://www.ancestry.com.au/imageviewer/collections/1207/images/33112_202631__0144-00268?usePUB=true&_phsrc=gtF118&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true&pId=90958594; 'Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1954', Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980 - Ancestry.com.au, accessed 28 September 2021, https://www.ancestry.com.au/imageviewer/collections/1207/images/31242_202091__132-00224?usePUB=true&_phsrc=gtF119&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true&pId=19879460; 'Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1967', Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980 - Ancestry.com.au, accessed 28 September 2021, https://www.ancestry.com.au/imageviewer/collections/1207/images/45706_542336-00135?usePUB=true&_phsrc=gtF120&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true&pId=192569590.

Duncan, with a caption expressing pride and admiration for her work with the *Dunera* refugees.[115] An examination of Sutherland's personal correspondence during the 1950s and 1960s reveals Sutherland's friends frequently speaking of her and Con (the name by which Duncan was known to her close friends and family) in terms suited to a married couple, referring to the work they were doing on the house, their need for a holiday and the comfort they found in one another.[116] One such letter, from Sutherland's friend Nel, who was working at the UN in New York, speaks of the challenges of Duncan's work and comments, 'Without you to come home to each night it would be so much more unbearable.'[117] While this may not constitute definitive proof of an active sexual relationship, historian of sexuality Rebecca Jennings cites fellow historian Blanche Cook to assert that, 'Proof of genital contact between women . . . [is] not necessary when evidence of passionate affection and commitment demonstrated the nature of women's relationships to the historian'.[118]

Furthermore, although we do not have access to Duncan's reflections on her sexuality or any attempts to understand this in light of her Christian faith, it is helpful to compare her experience to those of her contemporaries and friends. Miss Dorothy Ross, M.B.E. (1891-1982), renowned educator and headmistress of Melbourne Church of England Girls' Grammar School (1938-1955) was a friend of both Duncan and Sutherland. Barbara Falk, Ross's biographer, has described how Ross reconciled her faith and her homosexuality (or 'sexual inversion', as it was

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[115] Margaret Sutherland, 'Personal Music Scrapbook' (unpublished, undated), National Library of Australia, MS2967, 12.

[116] See, for example, Una Bourne, 'Letter to Margaret Sutherland', undated; Margery Coppel, 'Letter to Margaret Sutherland, 24th May', undated; Beryl Kimber, 'Letter to Margaret Sutherland', 14 October 1961; Eileen Lester, 'Letter to Margaret Sutherland, Thursday 12th', undated; Nell, 'Personal Letter to Margaret Sutherland', 6 December 1955; Tommy, 'Letter to Margaret Sutherland, Saturday', undated; Don Banks, 'Letter to Margaret Sutherland', 17 February 1966. All files in National Library of Australia, MS2967.

[117] Nell, 'Personal Letter to Margaret Sutherland', 6 December 1955.

[118] Rebecca Jennings, 'From "Woman-Loving Woman" to "Queer": Historiographical Perspectives on Twentieth-Century British Lesbian History', *History Compass* 5, no. 6 (2007): 1906, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-0542.2007.00482.x; Cook combatted the historical erasure of lesbian women by supplying what she believed to be an unequivocal definition: 'Women who love women, who choose women to nurture and support and to form a living environment in which to work creatively and independently are lesbians.' This definition certainly applies to Duncan and Sutherland. Blanche Wiesen Cook, 'The Historical Denial of Lesbianism', *Radical History Review* 1979, no. 20 (1 May 1979): 60, 64.

often described in the early twentieth century).[119] One influential factor was that at the time, according to a widespread understanding of Christian doctrine, sexual sin was defined by penile penetration, so that 'strictly speaking a woman could not so sin'.[120] For Ross, another moral dimension was a view that allowed for the inherent 'rightness' of the experience of physical pleasure. Nonetheless, Falk outlines Ross wrestling with the reality that her 'erotic image was female', and her need to justify (to herself) her tendency to have 'favourites' among her female staff.[121] One cannot help but wonder if Duncan's internal process was similar, and if she and Ross ever discussed this. Jennings laments the difficulty of understanding the sexual self-identity of women like Duncan and Ross due to a 'paucity of sources' stemming from an 'undervaluing of lesbian experience in the past.'[122] However, she has identified two important influences on lesbian women in the early to mid-twentieth century which are likely to have influenced Duncan (and Sutherland). Firstly, the bourgeoning science of sexology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.[123] Secondly, the publication in 1928 of *The Well of Loneliness*, a lesbian novel by Radclyffe Hall, which Jennings described as 'a pivotal event in crystallising modern notions of the lesbian.'[124] We know from Falk that this book had a profound impact on Dorothy Ross, while Jennings traces the impact (of both the science of sexology and it's expression in Hall's novel) on women who were consequently able to give a name to their self-conception as women attracted to women – lesbian or 'sexual invert'.[125] Given the similarity of the experience of Duncan and Sutherland, their friendship with Ross and their overlapping networks (Ross was also involved in ASCM and LNU), it is probable that Duncan was likewise influenced by these two factors, helping her to reconcile her faith and sexuality.[126]

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[119] Barbara Falk, *D.J.: Dorothy Jean Ross, 1891-1982* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2000), 154.
[120] Falk does acknowledge that within some cultures, the understanding of sexual sin was extended 'to all erotic feelings and physical exchanges between women.' Falk., *D.J.*, 154.
[121] Falk, *D.J.*, 142–54.
[122] Jennings, 'From "Woman-Loving Woman" to "Queer"', 1904.
[123] Jennings, 'From "Woman-Loving Woman" to "Queer"', 1905–6; cf. Falk, *D.J.*, 144.
[124] Jennings, 'From "Woman-Loving Woman" to "Queer"', 1906.
[125] Falk, *D.J.*, 144; Jennings, 'From "Woman-Loving Woman" to "Queer"', 1906–7.
[126] Cf. Falk, *D.J.*, 68.

Figure 8: Picture of 'Con' in the garden, c.1936.
From the private collection of Margaret Sutherland.[127]

Back to work

Meanwhile, in her professional life, having successfully overseen the UN Appeal for Children in Victoria, Duncan began 1949 speaking in Adelaide at the annual ASCM conference. Talks focussed on the outworking of Christian life in the social order, with Duncan challenging students about their responsibilities towards Australia's pacific neighbours.[128] In her talks, Duncan outlined a vision of 'missionary work' that saw Christian faith outworked through 'doctors, dentists, engineers, and scientific and educational workers' who used their skills in the

[127] Margaret Sutherland, 'Photograph of Constance Duncan c.1936', c 1936, Private collection. Provided to me by Jillian Graham, Sutherland's biographer.
[128] 'Student Christians in Camp', *Advertiser*, 13 January 1949, 4.

development of other nations.[129] After her first session, twenty-five students responded by telegramming the Minster for External Affairs to ask about vacant government posts in neighbouring nations such as Indonesia.[130] In another session, Duncan critiqued the White Australia policy, arguing that Australia must abandon its 'grasping policy' towards its neighbours and should not 'regard herself as a privileged nation with an absolute right to determine her own immigration policy.'[131] Rather, Australia must educate its citizens about her responsibilities towards her neighbours.

Not one to ask others to do what she herself was not practicing, in March 1949 Duncan accepted an appointment as Federal Secretary of the Australian National Committee for United Nations (ANCUN), and secretary of the NSW division.[132] Her role was to gain public support for UN projects through 'building up a properly informed public opinion on all questions that concern international cooperation through the various activities of the United Nations Organisation.'[133] In reporting on her appointment, the Adelaide Advertiser declared that, 'Few Australian women have had as wide experience as Miss Duncan in the international field,' and went on to outline her achievements.[134] As part of her role, Duncan set up committees on the Status of Women and the World Health Organisation, and informed the government of information relevant to the Australian delegation at the UN headquarters in Lake Success.[135] As part of her campaign to raise awareness of humanitarian issues, she also ran a national essay competition with the topic, 'What must be done to make the Declaration of Human Rights a Reality?'[136] During her time in this role, Duncan again received public praise as an accomplished

[129] 'They're Lighthearted, and Very Sincere', *News*, 13 January 1949, 15.
[130] 'They're Lighthearted, and Very Sincere', 15.
[131] 'Immigration Quota System Suggested', *Advertiser*, 14 January 1949, 4.
[132] 'United Nations Post for Woman', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 March 1949, 7; 'Federal Officer for ANCUN', *Advertiser*, 9 March 1949, 9.
[133] 'Federal Officer for ANCUN', 9.
[134] 'Federal Officer for ANCUN', 9.
[135] Constance Duncan, 'Letter to Dr Ian Clunies Ross, CSIRO', 22 July 1949, ICR 21/7, National Archives of Australia.
[136] 'Federal Officer of A.N.C.U.N. in Adelaide', *Advertiser*, 24 May 1949, 8.

and engaging speaker, and her ability to speak with conviction due to a combination of personal experience and extensive knowledge.[137]

The appointment to ANCUN, however, necessitated that Duncan be based in Sydney, while travelling to State capitals for conferences and events.[138] By September, Duncan was seeking other positions which would allow her to return to Melbourne, and seemed willing to accept a step down. She wrote to the Commonwealth Office of Education seeking employment as an Education Officer, supporting her application with outstanding references from Sir Frederick Eggleston and Judge Alfred Foster.[139] Her urgency may have been due to the illness of her mother, who died at home in Canterbury, Victoria, on 9 November 1949. Whether she changed her mind after her mother's death, or was unable to find a suitable position in Melbourne, Duncan continued to work with ANCUN throughout 1950. She received high praise for her work on the Status of Women Commission Report and overseeing another UN Appeal for Children.[140] Nonetheless, by August Duncan was back in Melbourne attending parties at the Lyceum Club with Sutherland, and had moved into Sutherland's home in Kew.[141]

For a time, Duncan worked for the Council of Adult Education giving lectures on international affairs, before being appointed in May 1951 to oversee the implementation of Victoria's new Home Help Scheme.[142] In this role, Duncan was able to implement some of the recommendations of her 1944 survey on maternal and child health, in which she had called for 'emergency housekeeper services' to assist families when mothers who had to seek medical care

[137] 'Roundabout: Women Voters', *Advertiser*, 25 May 1949, 9; 'Has Dual Position with U.N.', *News*, 23 May 1949, 13.
[138] 'Roundabout: Status of Women', *Advertiser*, 29 April 1949, 9; 'Roundabout: ANCUN', *Advertiser*, 13 May 1949, 9.
[139] 'Applications for Positions by Miss Constance Duncan'.
[140] 'Status of Women Commission', *Dawn*, 1 May 1950, 1; 'To Help European Children', *Morwell Advertiser*, 3 August 1950, 11.
[141] 'Two Guests of Honor', *Age*, 11 August 1950, sec. People and Parties, 5; Constance Duncan, 'Australia's Asian Policy', *Age*, 2 February 1951, sec. Letters to The Editor, 2.
[142] 'Council of Adult Education', *Gippsland Times*, 29 March 1951, 3; 'Will Organise Help Scheme', *Herald*, 23 May 1951, 11.

could not attend to the needs of their children.[143] Since that time, reports of the successful implementation of similar schemes in Europe and America had energised the Victorian government into action. Before long, other states were expressing their envy and suggesting that the scheme should be implemented nationally.[144] In order to be successful, it required gaining the support of various stakeholders, including baby health centres, women's organisations and municipal councils, and then recruiting sufficient housekeepers to meet demand. The scheme was a recognition of the unpaid labour of mothers, the societal expectation that care for children, cooking and cleaning was the duty of mothers, and that some (perhaps most) fathers would be unable to cope in the absence of the mother. Discussions held at council level were illuminating of deeply ingrained gender stereotypes. At Shepparton Municipal Council, for example, women and women's organisations were enthused by the scheme and keen to give their whole-hearted support, while male councillors prevaricated – with some expressing fears this might be 'the thin edge of socialism'.[145] Others were anxious that as men they should not have to make decisions about such things, because 'Men are liable to make blunders if left to deal with matters such as these.'[146] Councillor Hill was concerned that it would not look good if they were to say no to the scheme; Councillor Fairless was concerned that the scheme did not go far enough: 'The housekeeper is to have a 40 hour week. Who feeds the kids while she is off? Two housekeepers would be wanted.'[147] The shock felt by Councillor Fairless was increased when he realised how many women might be eligible for assistance ('That's seven [births] a week!'), while another councillor, who asked not to be named in the record, questioned the propriety of the scheme, whereby in-home housekeepers might prove too great a temptation for husbands. 'My wife wouldn't like to leave me at home with a strange woman.'[148] At Benalla Council, the Mayor

[143] 'Home Help to Be Organised', *Age*, 24 May 1951, 5.
[144] 'Home Help to Be Organised', *Age*, 5; 'Queensland Women Envy Home-Help Service Plan', *Courier-Mail*, 6 June 1951, 8; 'Judy Garrard's Review', *Herald*, 26 May 1951, 10.
[145] 'Shepparton Supports Home Help Idea', *Shepparton Advertiser*, 7 August 1951, 1.
[146] 'Shepparton Supports HHI', 1.
[147] 'Shepparton Supports HHI', 1.
[148] 'Shepparton Supports HHI', 1.

suggested that the scheme would be too great a burden for his administration, but 'if some women interested in the service could be persuaded to take over the running then it could be carried out to better advantage.'[149] This was echoed by Councillor Wallace of Yallourn Council, who advised that, 'as the women were primarily concerned . . . a panel of women was the proper authority to manage the service.'[150] Duncan travelled extensively throughout Victoria, speaking to councils, soothing fears and explaining logistics. In several regions, she prioritised speaking to women's groups so that she might energise them to work with councils to ensure the scheme was implemented.[151] Despite initial hesitation on the part of some councils, the scheme achieved great success, while highlighting the gender divide in Victorian homes.

By the end of the year, Duncan was exhausted and ready for a change. In November 1951 she and Sutherland left to spend a year abroad, arriving in England on Boxing Day.[152] The two women shared a flat in Bramham Gardens, Sutherland collaborating with other Australian composers in London, while Duncan investigated home help schemes and aged care in Britain.[153] On their return, Duncan's career entered what would be its final phase. She continued to speak on radio and give lectures on international affairs, while giving most of her attention to a project that brought her back to her great passion – nurturing greater cross-cultural understanding and creating opportunities for Australians to mix with and learn to embrace people of other nationalities.[154] Duncan was invited by Sir Ian Clunies Ross to organise the appeal to build International House at the University of Melbourne. The intention was to build a house that

[149] 'Emergency House-Keeper Service?', *Benalla Ensign*, 16 August 1951, 11.
[150] 'Yallourn Advisory Council', *Morwell Advertiser*, 11 October 1951, 4.
[151] 'Borough of Echuca: Emergency Housekeeper Service', *Riverine Herald*, 8 September 1951, 5; 'Town of Portland: Emergency Housekeeper Service', *Portland Guardian*, 13 September 1951, 2; 'Meeting to Discuss Emerg. Housekeeper Service', *Riverine Herald*, 5 September 1951, 3.
[152] 'Margaret Sutherland Writes of Music in London', *Advertiser*, 22 February 1952, 11.
[153] 'Margaret Sutherland Writes of Music in London', 11; 'Overseas Travellers Back in Orontes', *Age*, 30 October 1952, sec. People, Parties, 5.
[154] 'Studio News Brevities', *Age*, 24 April 1953, 17; 'Worth Hearing', *Herald*, 25 April 1953, 6; 'Woman's World: Lecturer to Work on Appeal', *Herald*, 14 July 1953, 13.

could accommodate 120 students – half from overseas and half from regional Victoria.[155] The focus of the appeal asked Victorians to contribute towards the building project, but the appeal was also able to secure significant funding from Singapore and Malaysia.[156] Duncan utilised the appeal to continue to inculcate a measure of cultural awareness. She wrote articles explaining that the great medieval universities of Europe had welcomed students from all parts of the world, while contemporary Australian universities 'remained aloof and failed to attract foreign students'.[157] When Asian students did come to Australia, their experiences were not always pleasant. They struggled to find suitable accommodation where they would be welcome, and some were 'exploited by Australian landladies'.[158] This resulted in them living in enclaves with others of their own nationality, limiting their contact with Australian communities. International House, Duncan claimed, was a 'project of the highest national importance' which would be supported by 'far-sighted citizens who want to serve [Australia's] true interests.'[159] As the campaign funds grew, so did Duncan's optimism. By October 1954 she was applauding the 'wide awareness among Australians of the need to make Asian students happy and comfortable — and [the] willingness to contribute work and money towards such a goal.'[160] At times, however, Duncan's buoyant views on Australia's embrace of other cultures took on a parochial tone, such as when she declared that citizens of her own country had a greater 'capacity for friendliness' than other western nations, and that, 'Although we have a White Australia policy, the Asian students find there is really no racial ill feeling here at all.'[161] This was a marked difference in tone to her comments earlier in the campaign, when she spoke of the exploitation suffered by international students. Nonetheless, the campaign was a resounding success and International House was built. When Duncan retired from her role, she was praised for the way she had

[155] 'Lecturer to Work on Appeal', 13.
[156] 'Singapore Responds to Appeal', *Herald*, 21 January 1954, 9; 'Colony Gives £730 to Our University', *Herald*, 3 February 1954, 11; 'Film Show Aids Appeal Fund', *Herald*, 24 March 1954, 2.
[157] 'Mediaeval Universities Always Welcomed Students', *Camperdown Chronicle*, 1 June 1954, 2.
[158] 'Mediaeval Universities Always Welcomed Students', 2.
[159] 'International House Is Important to Nation', *Horsham Times*, 2 June 1954, 2.
[160] 'Chance to Start Students' House', *Herald*, 1 October 1954, 10.
[161] 'House of Hope', *Argus*, 7 October 1954, 10.

'handled her man-sized job for the International House Appeal so capably.'[162] She became a foundation member of the International House council, and in 1972 the private dining room was named after her, with a framed picture hung in her honour. Duncan's last public role was as a member of the Melbourne resettlement council of the World Council of Churches (WCC), to which she was appointed in mid-1955. It was a fitting end to her career, in that she would once more be working to sponsor refugees and displaced persons, 'who have no friends or relatives to act on their behalf.'[163] During this time she continued to be engaged in activism and advocacy. In the late 1950s and early 1960s she continued to be featured in the pages of Melbourne newspapers, speaking at events and hosting visiting dignitaries at the Lyceum Club, often with Sutherland close at hand.[164] A list of donors to the National Gallery and Cultural Centre Appeal lists donations by Duncan and Sutherland side by side.[165] On at least one occasion, in 1961, she appeared on television to speak about her resettlement work with WCC.[166] In 1963 and 1964 she was still hosting events for visiting scholars at the Lyceum Club, but her official career was coming to an end.[167] Duncan retired from WCC in 1964, having personally overseen the sponsorship and resettlement of nearly two thousand refugees, many of whom continued to correspond with Duncan until the end of her life.[168]

A Tragic end

Little is known of the last five years of Duncan's life. Private correspondence shows that she continued to live with Sutherland until the late 1960s, when she moved into a Baptist run hostel. A personal letter written in February 1966 from Sutherland to her friend, Australian composer

[162] 'Talk About', *Argus*, 2 July 1955, 10.
[163] 'Miss C. Duncan in New Post', *Argus*, 16 July 1955, 6.
[164] 'Hat Trick of Records', *Age*, 14 July 1960, 11; 'Seeking Alumnae', *Age*, 8 August 1963, 15; 'A Western Style House in Tokyo', *Age*, 14 October 1964, 19. Each time Sutherland is listed as one of the distinguished attendees.
[165] 'Cultural Societies Asked Office Need', *Age*, 23 August 1961, 14.
[166] 'TV Programme: Channel 7 - What's Your Problem?', *Age*, 16 November 1961, 28.
[167] 'Seeking Alumnae', 15; 'A Western Style House in Tokyo', 19.
[168] 'Minutes of Appreciation - Ada Constance Duncan Biography' (31 July 1972), IH Archives, Series 1 Council, International House Archives, University of Melbourne.

Don Banks, has a postscript in which she tells him of the sad news that Con's memory was rapidly fading. Sutherland laments that 'nothing can be done except to make conditions as comfortable and safe as possible for her.'[169] On 28th September 1969 Duncan's sister Kathleen, with whom she had remained close throughout her life, died suddenly at home in Canterbury. Later that year, Duncan was admitted to Mont Park Mental Hospital, whether voluntarily or not is unknown. At 5:30pm on 29th August 1970, Duncan was relaxing in a lounge area when she was attacked 'without provocation' by another patient, Mary Hesse.[170] Initially treated for a suspected broken leg, Duncan was returned to bed and administered pethidine. It was two more days before she was transferred to the Surgical Unit for an operation on her fractured right femur.[171] Two weeks later, Duncan died in hospital at 7:45pm on 13 September, 1970.[172] The cause of death was listed as myocardial infarction and bronchopneumonia.[173] Police expressed concern, and the coroner 'requested that fuller inquiries be made' into the attack which caused the injury.[174] There was no public acknowledgement other than a brief death notice published in the *Age*, after a private cremation had already occurred.[175]

[169] Margaret Sutherland, 'Personal Letter to Don Banks', 23 February 1966, Private collection of Tony Bunney. Provided to me by Jillian Graham, Sutherland's biographer.
[170] '1970/3368 Ada Constance Duncan: Body Card' (Melbourne, Vic., 1971), VPRS 24/P0002, 1971/1315, Public Record Office of Victoria, https://prov.vic.gov.au/archive/D2C379EB-F1C8-11E9-AE98-335F8A0E332C, 3–7.
[171] 'Observations showed a definite shortening of the patient's right leg with abnormal positioning of the leg'. '1970/3368 Ada Constance Duncan: Body Card', 5, 7.
[172] 'Body Card'; '1971/1315 Ada Constance Duncan: Inquest'.
[173] 'Body Card'; '1971/1315 Ada Constance Duncan: Inquest'.
[174] '1970/3368 Ada Constance Duncan: Body Card', 8.
[175] 'DUNCAN, Ada Constance', *Age*, 18 September 1970, 22.

Figure 9: Death notice 'DUNCAN, Ada Constance', *Age*, 18 September 1970.

There was, however, a note of appreciation in the minutes of the International House Council for September 1970.[176] To date, I have found no published obituary, and am awaiting the opening of her patient records to understand what happened in the final twelve months of her life. What is without doubt is that this was a tragic end to an astonishing life. In her will, Duncan left her estate to Margaret Sutherland, with bequests to YWCA, ASCM and Canterbury Baptist Church.[177] She was remembered two years later, when her friend Ian Clunies Ross suggested that the private dining room at International House at Melbourne University be named after her. A

[176] 'Minutes of Appreciation - Ada Constance Duncan' (22 September 1970), IH Archives, Series 1 Council, International House Archives, University of Melbourne.
[177] 'Ada Constance Duncan: Will'.

one-and-a-half-page biography of Duncan was included in their minutes at that time.[178] To this day, Duncan's portrait still hangs in the dining room.

Figure 10: Constance Duncan c.1920.
Portrait Hanging in the dining room of International House, University of Melbourne.

How is it that a woman who had devoted herself to a life of public service, who was a reliable and highly esteemed source of information and advice on international affairs, featuring regularly in the national media for four decades, has all but disappeared from the historical record? The next chapter will consider why both Duncan and Levvy have been excised from the records, and what this says about the writing of Australian religious history.

[178] 'Minutes of Appreciation - Ada Constance Duncan Biography'.

7
Connections through time

'On what terms, we might see her as asking, should modern women seek to enter the historical narrative? Now that there was a chance of writing it for themselves, might they not want a different plot altogether?'[1]

Introduction

At the turn of the twentieth century, Frances Levvy – an unmarried, childless woman – functioned as a public intellectual and animal justice advocate in the colony – soon to be state – of NSW. Levvy lobbied politicians and prominent citizens, engaged in vigorous debate about issues of public morality, advocated for public education for all and raised funds for public infrastructure, all motivated by her ardent Christian faith as a committed Anglican.

Twenty years later, as the sun set on Levvy's long and fruitful endeavours, Constance Duncan's career was dawning. Like Levvy, Duncan would successfully advocate for humanitarian causes, gain prominence as a public intellectual and contribute to forming the mindset of a generation through her commitment to educating and empowering young leaders. While Duncan specialised in international affairs, she too was motivated by her faith and a belief that activism and advocacy could affect positive social change. As I have shown in chapters one to three, Frances Levvy had spent forty years advocating for the humane treatment of animals in NSW, motivated by a devout Christian faith. Chapters four to six traced the long public career of Constance Duncan, who spent over forty years advocating for factory workers, international students, refugees, and child and maternal welfare with organisations as diverse as ASCM and the United Nations. Like Levvy, she was motivated by her faith and urged on by a robust network of women and women's organisations. Despite the acclaim that followed Duncan and Levvy throughout their careers, to date neither woman has been recognised in any Australian religious

[1] Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature, and Conservatism between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991), 5.

history, other than a slight nod of acknowledgement when discussing the movements which they served.

Levvy and Duncan have more in common than their faith and their erasure from Australian history. Each exercised her agency and activism through educating others – both young people and adults – in the hope that this would lead to a more just and humane future for all. They both utilised contemporary media to disseminate their message, and to build a public platform giving them greater reach. Both women were empowered by a 'sisterhood' of likeminded women. They were each enmeshed in the gendered expectations of their day and constrained by the need to enact their femininity in ways acceptable to the patriarchal systems in which they worked. This chapter will explore these common threads in the lives and legacies of Frances Levvy and Constance Duncan with a view to understanding what fuelled their agency and activism, and why, in spite of the breadth of their contribution to Australian society, they have been effectively erased from religious histories to date.

Educating for a brighter future

Throughout their long careers in activism, both Levvy and Duncan each prioritised education as a means to social transformation. Levvy's commitment to the Bands of Mercy and her innumerable school visits were not simply about transferring information. Rather, she hoped that by forming the minds and characters of young people, she could affect lasting social change. Levvy concluded the WSPCA annual report of 1889 by summing up the 'great cause' for which 'we are all working . . . men, women and little children', quoting a poem by George Linnæus Banks (1821–1881), entitled 'What I Live For':

> For the cause that needs assistance,
> For the wrongs that need resistance,
> For the future in the distance,

And the good that we can do.[2]

In one of her many letters to the editors of the major Sydney papers, Levvy wrote that, 'My society is endeavoring to prevent [animal cruelty] in the future by educating our boys and girls to take a nobler view of our duties to all helpless creatures.'[3] Levvy's hope that the work that she did would have an enduring impact was echoed by those who supported her work. In 1902, for example, Archbishop of Sydney Dr Saumarez Smith gave an address at the WSPCA annual meeting in the Town Hall. He remarked that, 'The aim of the society was to influence the characters of future men and women and make them kind in their early days.' He added that he 'trusted that the training they received would make them a merciful people.'[4] There were also many encouraging reports that the society was making a very real difference on the streets of Sydney. This is to be expected given that Levvy began the Bands of Mercy with 15 members in her sister's home in 1884, and by 1900 it had grown to be the largest society in NSW with over 40,000 members.[5] The cumulative impact of so many people having even a small measure of humane education would inevitably lead to social and legislative change.[6] Achieving these measures involved protracted campaigns and extensive lobbying of politicians, but Levvy was ultimately successful in establishing humane homes for dogs (complete with lethal chambers for painless deaths) and for horses no longer able to work, as well as ambulances for horses. She also succeeded in arousing greater compassion for working animals.[7] Thus Levvy was able to hope

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[2] George Linnaeus Banks, 'What I Live For', in *Daisies in the Grass: A Collection of Songs and Poems* (London, UK: R. Hardwicke, 1865), 21–23. Levvy has slightly modified the original, including changing last line from 'I' to 'we'. Cited in 'The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals: Children's Gathering at the Centenary Hall', *The Daily Telegraph*, 16 December 1889, 3.

[3] Frances Levvy, 'Pigeon Matches and Coursing', *The Daily Telegraph*, 9 September 1903, sec. Letters to the editor, 4.

[4] 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Annual Meeting of the Woman's Society', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 November 1902, 5.

[5] 'Woman's Column', *Newsletter: An Australian Paper for Australian People*, 4 October 1902, 13; 'Portia', 'Boudoir Confidences', *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 24 December 1900, 6.

[6] By way of comparison, the population of Sydney as measured by the census in 1901 was 493,956 persons and the population of NSW was 1,362,232 persons. Thus Levvy's total equates to approximately 8% of the population of Sydney. 'The Population of N.S.W.', *Northern Star*, 11 May 1901, 8.

[7] 'Women's Work Among Animals', *The Daily Telegraph*, 31 January 1906, 13.

that the tens of thousands of children who had come through her Bands of Mercy would be 'true to the convictions they now express' so that better times would come for birds and animals.[8]

Transformation through education was essential to the evangelical project. During the Protestant Reformation, Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531) had introduced general public education as part of his program to 'restore biblical faith and practice' in Zurich.[9] In the earliest days of John Wesley's (1703-1791) preaching ministry in Bristol, the 'Methodist societies' were divided into 'classes' consisting of a leader and eleven members who would read the Bible, discuss it and pray together.[10] Beginning in the late eighteenth century and well into the twentieth, Sunday School was a core activity of the local church.[11] Initially it offered teaching in basic literacy and numeracy, as well as Bible instruction. The Band of Hope temperance movement – upon which the Bands of Mercy were modelled – involved weekly meetings featuring catechism, songs, lantern slide presentations and lectures. A monthly journal was also published to inculcate principles of abstinence from alcohol in young people.[12] Thus the educational focus of Levvy's work had an undeniable religious foundation and longstanding precedent. Levvy was explicit that she was following in this tradition by 'teaching our future men and women —our successors— that cruelty to any helpless creature is a crime against our own nature and against the Creator, in whose sight no suffering is unheeded.'[13] In Protestant and evangelical circles in the nineteenth century, the educational imperative was frequently linked with a 'Postmillennial' eschatology which held that the world must be – and could be! – transformed so that Jesus Christ could

[8] 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Presentation of Prizes', *Australian Star*, 22 November 1906, 7.
[9] Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity: The Reformation to the Present Day*, Prince Press ed., vol. 2 (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 2006), 50.
[10] González, *Story of Christianity*, 213.
[11] Cf. Stuart Piggin and Robert D. Linder, *The Fountain of Public Prosperity: Evangelical Christians in Australian History 1740-1914* (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2018), 497.
[12] Annemarie McAllister, 'Picturing the Demon Drink: How Children Were Shown Temperance Principles in the Band of Hope', *Visual Resources* 28, no. 4 (1 December 2012): 309–23; Nicole Starling, 'A New Faith? Religious Belief and Moral Enlightenment in the Temperance Movement in Eastern Australia: 1832-1880' (Doctor of Philosophy, Sydney, NSW, Macquarie University, 2021), 95.
[13] Frances Levvy, 'Coursing, a Cruel Sport', *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 December 1906, sec. Letters to the editor, 13.

return in his 'Second Coming' and rule over the whole earth. Religious historian Nicole Starling has demonstrated the close links between teetotalism, evangelicalism, and postmillennialism in her study of the temperance movement in Eastern Australia.[14] This was a pattern repeated in the WSPCA and Bands of Mercy, which were closely allied to the temperance movement, due to the prevailing view that cruelty was too often fuelled by alcoholism.[15] In a sign of this close relationship, Levvy was herself a member of the WCTU, and as early as 1887 the WSPCA committee was proudly declaring that eleven of the Bands of Mercy were also 'temperance organisations'.[16] Levvy could not contain her delight when, in 1895, the St Matthias Band of Hope from the Anglican Church near her home in Paddington decided to form a Band of Mercy in conjunction with its work.[17] The two movements were seen to go naturally hand in hand. Whether or not Levvy had a strictly postmillennial theology is unclear, but she did display an optimism about the direction society was taking that corresponded with such a belief. In 1902 she told senior members that the success of the Band of Mercy work was 'a sure sign that the world is better, and a step nearer to God TO-DAY.'[18] The inference is that she would have agreed with evangelicals that Christians must 'co-operate with God to bring in the millennial Kingdom.'[19] The obvious conclusion of this is that Levvy's educational work fell within the long tradition of Protestant, evangelical Christianity which one would expect evangelical historians to celebrate.

[14] Starling, 'A New Faith?', 314–15.
[15] Frances Levvy, 'The Dog's Shelter', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 18 February 1895, 14. In this article Levvy also attributes poverty to gambling and 'improvidence', and identifies this as a key cause of suffering for children.
[16] 'Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 7 January 1887, 7.
[17] Frances Levvy, 'St. Matthias Band of Hope', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 18 February 1895, 14.
[18] Frances Levvy, 'To-Day (for the Seniors)', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 25 January 1902, 6. Emphasis in original text.
[19] Piggin and Linder, *Fountain of Public Prosperity*, 30.

Like Levvy before her, Duncan's activism had a strong pedagogical bent. The same understanding that education was a pivotal means of transforming society is evident in Duncan's work with ASCM and YWCA, as well as later in life in her campaigns for maternal health and the integration of international students in Australian society. In her early work with ASCM Duncan spent a significant amount of time training leaders for Bible circles that taught Christian principles through discussing the application of Scripture to everyday life and work. The intention of these groups was not rote memorisation of doctrine, but drawing out the thoughts of students such that they would learn to think critically and engage actively in working to achieve social justice.[20] The focus on education was continued during Duncan's time with YWCA in Japan, when she taught English to female Japanese students. Not limiting herself to formal classroom teaching, Duncan devoted herself to giving extracurricular education in life skills, Christianity (especially the life of Jesus), and the need for factory reform. In this sense, Duncan was continuing the tradition of 'cooperating with God' in the improvement of society, though not from a postmillennial belief so much as a fundamental understanding that to love God was to love one's fellow people and seek their good. This was a belief that Levvy had articulated many times herself – that to be Christian was to act with justice and mercy in the world.[21] Acting out of this core belief, Duncan advocated for better working conditions for female factory workers in Japan, and urged others to join in with her activism.[22] This thread of activism motivated by faith continued throughout Duncan's career. Whether she was seeking to avoid war and support a tenuous peace in her work with the LNU, advocating for the humane treatment of refugees, or calling for greater acceptance and welcome for international students, Duncan continuously sought to enact her faith in ways that benefitted others. In one of the last offices of her long career, Duncan was appointed to the resettlement department of the World

[20] 'Student Christian Movement', *Mail*, 16 October 1920, sec. Society News and Events, 14.
[21] Chapter 3, 110–114.
[22] Chapter 4, 138–139.

Council of Churches (WCC).[23] This was a recognition of the vastness of her experience and the genuineness of her faith. Duncan explained that one of the attractions of the appointment for her was the ecumenical nature of the organisation.[24] Yet it was also another opportunity to educate others on the need for greater compassion and inclusion, through raising awareness of the reality of the conditions of refugees. While the work was 'concerned particularly with the sponsorship of refugees and displaced persons who have no friends or relatives here to act on their behalf', Duncan stayed true to her lifelong mission of using the post to educate the public about the desperate needs of migrants to Australia.[25] This she did through speaking engagements at churches and events, and television appearances.[26] In taking this approach, Duncan's activism reflects the 'prophetic' calling of the WCC, as articulated at the First Assembly of the WCC in Amsterdam in 1948.[27] At this Assembly, the WCC committed itself to 'bear concrete witness to the modern world', which would be enacted (at least in part) through 'express[ing] their convictions concerning the crucial issues of social and international life.'[28] This had been Duncan's praxis since her first days with ASCM – to both educate and transform the society around her. In 1932 she told an audience at Wesley Church in Melbourne that Christianity must 'concern itself with the salvation of society as well as with the salvation of individual souls.'[29] Duncan's lifelong, prolific partnership with churches and para-church organisations to 'act justly' and 'love mercy' (Micah 6:8) must surely be understood as an expression of the ecumenical urge towards what Rouse has called 'Unity in Christian fellowship'.[30] Furthermore, Duncan's long

[23] See, for example, 'Important Task for Woman', *Age*, 16 July 1955, 13; 'Aim to Empty Camps This Year', *Age*, 8 August 1959, 7.
[24] 'Aim to Empty Camps This Year', 7.
[25] 'Important Task for Woman', 13.
[26] 'Aim to Empty Camps This Year', 7; 'Cathedral Meetings', *Age*, 6 August 1960, 8; 'TV Programme: Channel 7 - What's Your Problem?', *Age*, 16 November 1961, 28.
[27] Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft, 'The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches', in *A History of the Ecumenical Movement: 1517-1948*, ed. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986), 723. 'Prophetic' in this sense means declaring the will of God, specifically the responsibility for Christians to act in a way that was consistent with the grace and mercy of God (as it was understood by the ecumenical movement), such that society would become more just and equitable.
[28] Visser 't Hooft, 'The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches', 723.
[29] 'Communism in Japan', *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 7 July 1932, 6.
[30] Ruth Rouse, 'Voluntary Movements and the Changing Ecumenical Climate', in *A History of the Ecumenical Movement: 1517-1948*, ed. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (Geneva: World Council of

career at the forefront of international relations and social change in Australia is consistent with Rouse's finding that the Student Christian Movement, to which Duncan remained intimately connected throughout her life, was unprecedented in its ability to draw the churches together and produce leaders in the ecumenical movement.[31]

In light of this, it should be understood that education and social transformation were at the heart of the work of both Levvy and Duncan, and that this was a core value of the Christian traditions to which they belonged – Anglican evangelicalism for Levvy and ecumenism for Duncan. Given the prominence of both women in their contemporary societies and church circles, one would expect this to be a reason for their inclusion in Australian religious histories. To date, this has not been the case.

Gender Roles and Expectations

Although both Duncan and Levvy were involved in social activism that was at times perceived to push the boundaries of contemporary, idealised gender roles, both were careful to abide by public rules of propriety. As was discussed in detail in chapter two, Levvy consistently interpreted her work as fitting her womanly nature. In doing so, she conformed to a 'maternalist paradigm' consistent with the ideology of separate spheres, even though she was herself childless and unmarried. In her talks to female school students, stories and reports in *BMHJ*, and engagement with print media, Levvy consistently presented herself and her work as an expression of 'civic motherhood'.[32] Furthermore, she explicitly taught that marriage and

Churches, 1986), 325. Micah 6:8 (NIV) states, '[God] has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' It is a favourite Scripture of Christian social justice advocates.

[31] Rouse, 'Voluntary Movements and the Changing Ecumenical Climate', 327–29.

[32] Marian Quartly and Judith Smart, *Respectable Radicals: A History of the National Council of Women Australia, 1896-2006*, Australian History (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing in conjunction with the National Council of Women of Australia, 2015), 56; Marilyn Lake, 'A History of Feminism in Australia', in *Australian Feminism: A Companion*, ed. Barbara Caine (Melbourne, Vic.: Oxford University Press, 1998), 133.

motherhood was the highest calling to which a woman could aspire.[33] This was in spite of her activism trespassing on the 'masculine' public sphere. Like other social reformers of her time, Levvy introduced new, humane systems and institutions (such as the dog's shelter and lethal chamber), lobbied politicians and engaged in vigorous intellectual debate. For these activities she was accused by Horbury Hunt of abandoning the work for which she was fitted and seeking to do that which 'by duty [belonged] to man'.[34] Yet many of the most eminent citizens of NSW clearly disagreed with Hunt, given their enduring support for Levvy and her work. Not only other women, but the Anglican Archbishop (Dr Saumarez Smith), prominent politicians such as James Inglis, Sir Joseph Carruthers, Francis Suttor, A.J Gould and Sir Arthur Renwick, as well as every NSW Governor and Mayor of Sydney that served during the period of her public activism publicly supported Levvy's cause and lauded her character. Journalists proclaimed her virtues and activists the world over were keen to correspond with her.[35]

In examining Australian religious histories, I have identified a pattern in which women disappear from the narrative when discussion turns to more intellectual matters of doctrine, biblical interpretation, or the application of scripture to public morality.[36] Yet this is not because women were disengaged from such work. As I demonstrated in chapter three, Levvy was a keen, skilful interpreter of the Bible. In doing so she followed in a (more than) one-thousand-year-old tradition of female Bible interpreters.[37] In the nineteenth century, the tradition of robust biblical debate and exegesis was taken up by women as renowned and revered in Christian circles as

[33] Frances Levvy, ed., 'The Mother's Association of the WSPCA, Summer Hill', *Band of Mercy and Humane Journal of New South Wales*, 23 July 1897, 74.
[34] J. Horbury Hunt, 'Letter to the Editor', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 June 1896, 6.
[35] 'The Animal's Friend: The Band of Mercy', *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 January 1906, 3.
[36] Introduction, 11–20.
[37] Gerda Lerner, 'One Thousand Years of Feminist Biblical Criticism', in *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1993), 138–66; Christiana de Groot and Marion Ann Taylor, eds., *Recovering Nineteenth-Century Women Interpreters of the Bible* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 1–16.

Catherine Booth and Florence Nightingale.[38] Once again we find that although Levvy engaged in tasks that some believed to be outside the proper (maternal, nurturing) sphere of a Christian woman, there was precedent for her actions, which were widely accepted and applauded at the time.

Duncan is less amenable to being squeezed into a maternalist paradigm. She was, after all, a lesbian woman described as having an 'almost masculine forcefulness'.[39] In her work with ASCM and YWCA, Duncan worked mostly with women and girls. On her return from Japan, however, she was frequently the only woman in otherwise all-male political and diplomatic contexts. Duncan was the only woman pictured as part of the LNU executive in 1936; one of only two women to take part in the Australian delegation to the Institute of Pacific Relations conference at Yosemite in 1936; the only woman to hold an official position at the British Commonwealth Relations Conference in 1938; the only woman invited on the UNRRA mission to Korea and the only woman invited to be part of President Hoover's investigation into the food crisis in 1946; and one of only two women to be appointed to the special committee to advise on the terms of the Japanese surrender in 1947.

In spite of Duncan's frequent incursions into predominantly male territory, contemporary media coverage expressed admiration and gratitude for her advocacy and internationalism. Further evidence of the esteem in which she was held by her peers is seen in the series of important posts, often of a sensitive nature, to which she was appointed. This includes her mission to

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[38] Catherine Booth, *Female Teaching or, the Rev. A. A. Rees versus Mrs. Palmer, Being A Reply To A Pamphlet By The Above Gentleman On The Sunderland Revival*, 1st ed. (London: G.J. Stevenson, 1859); Florence Nightingale, *Suggestions for Thought by Florence Nightingale: Selections and Commentaries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994); Karen M. Pack, 'The Distinctiveness of The Salvation Army within Nineteenth Century Evangelicalism: The Unique Vision of Catherine Booth' (Vancouver, BC, 2007); Val Webb, *Florence Nightingale: The Making of a Radical Theologian* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2002).

[39] Cited in Diane Langmore, 'Duncan, Ada Constance (1896–1970)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, n.d.), http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/duncan-ada-constance-10061.

Korea in 1946, her report on child and maternal health at the end of World War Two, her UN report on the status of women, and her place on the resettlement committee of the WCC in the 1950s and 1960s. Each of these posts required high levels of skill in negotiation, persuasion and tact. While Levvy had been complimented in the media for her womanly virtue and sweet nature, Duncan was praised for her skill, intellect and affability. She had a 'great mentality' and 'delightful personality'.[40] She was 'well-known', had 'wide experience', was 'well-informed' and 'an accomplished speaker' who 'knows her subject so well'.[41] Such was the admiration for her capacity and drive, that at times journalists had to resort to more masculine descriptions to communicate Duncan's ability. Thus, the *Sydney Morning Herald* marvelled that Duncan was able to handle heavy duties, the *Courier Mail* was agape that she had a *male* assistant, three stenographers and a large contingent of volunteers working for her at the Institute of International Affairs, and the *Argus* gushed that she so capably carried out 'her man-sized job' as head of the International House Appeal.[42]

Initially, this led me to speculate that it was Duncan's dexterity in the 'masculine' public sphere, combined with her sexual orientation as a lesbian woman, that saw her excluded from religious histories that should have celebrated the significant contribution she made to the public good in Australia, motivated by her Christian faith. Yet Duncan herself was careful not to present herself as encroaching on the masculine domain. Her approach to building a working relationship with Herbert Brookes began with humility and praise for what he might teach her. When she spoke to all male audiences, she began with a statement of her insufficiency to speak in such august company (before demonstrating her unmatched knowledge of international affairs in the Asia-

[40] Franziska, 'Mainly About People', *Daily News*, 12 November 1921, 6.
[41] 'To Organise Home Help Scheme in Victoria', *Advertiser*, 1 June 1951, 11; 'Roundabout: Women Voters', *Advertiser*, 25 May 1949, 9; 'Blue Triangle', *Geelong Advertiser*, 24 March 1928, sec. Mainly for Women, 3.
[42] 'Miss Constance Duncan', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 May 1928, sec. For Women, 8; 'A Visitor from Melbourne', *Courier-Mail*, 15 August 1935, 21; 'Talk About', *Argus*, 2 July 1955, 10.

Pacific region).[43] Sadly, there is a long history of women minimising themselves in order to be heard by a male audience. In the fifteenth century, renowned scholar Cassandra Fedele began her 'Oration in Praise of Letters' (c. 1487) by apologising for acquiescing to repeated requests for her to lecture. 'I blush to do so,' said Fedele, 'and am ever mindful that I am a member of the female sex and that my intellect is small.'[44] Nor did Duncan parade her sexuality, which was only known within the circle of her intimate acquaintances and, until now, has not been publicly examined.[45] In this sense, like Levvy and myriad women before and since, Duncan faithfully performed the gender roles which were expected of her, and which would guarantee her continued acceptance in heteronormative, patriarchal contexts, including the Christian community that she loved.

I have written of the theory that suggests that women's involvement in the animal protection movement was essentially an outlet for their 'proxy rage' against the cruelty and abuse they suffered at the hands of violent men.[46] In this schema, women were able to focus their condemnation on vicious acts carried out against animals when they felt they could not speak for themselves or their sisters. This perspective has the potential to diminish the very real concern of women like Levvy for the perpetuation of cruelty towards animals on its own terms. Yet it also acknowledges the complexity of their situation. Could it be that in some form, Duncan's tireless activism for refugees, overworked factory workers, single mothers, international students and others on the margins of society was a means of retaking for others the power that she could not exercise on her own behalf? In mid-twentieth century Australia it was inconceivable for a woman

[43] 'Japan and Manchuria', *Age*, 12 May 1932, 7; Chapter 5, 155.
[44] Cassandra Fedele, 'Oration in Praise of Letters (ca. 1487)', in *Renaissance Humanism: An Anthology of Sources*, ed. Margaret L. King (Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing Company, 2014), 284. In my own career as a missionary, lecturer and leadership trainer in explicitly patriarchal contexts, I frequently began conferences (at which I was the keynote speaker) by bringing greetings from my father and my senior pastor. I knew that only such a pre-emptive acknowledgement that there were male 'authority figures' in my life would dispel the unease of male clergy being taught by a woman – no matter how qualified to do so.
[45] Chapter 6, 185–189.
[46] Chapter 1, 47–49. Jennifer MacCulloch, 'Creatures of Culture: The Animal Protection and Preservation Movements in Sydney, 1880-1930', Doctor of Philosophy (Sydney, NSW: University of Sydney, 1993), 88; Diana Donald, 'Anti-Vivisection: A Feminist Cause?', in *Women Against Cruelty: Protection of Animals in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, Gender in History (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2020), 191.

like Duncan to be completely open about her sexuality, *and* to escape censure from the church or the structures in which she worked. It is conceivable, therefore, that Duncan's advocacy for marginalised groups was a proxy for the exclusion and closeting she faced as a lesbian woman of faith. In this paradigm, it was even more necessary that Duncan and Levvy outwardly conform to expected gender norms so that they could continue to exercise their agency in oppressive patriarchal contexts. This they did so effectively and to such an extent that both women were lauded by some of the most prominent men in Australia at the time.

The power of a sisterhood

Christian community is another thread that binds the dedicated activism of Duncan and Levvy. One of the most striking features of the agency of both women is the extent to which they were embedded in networks of female friendship which informed and energised their activism. For the entirety of her public career in animal protection, Levvy was sustained by a network of like-minded women throughout Australia and around the world. In Sydney, the WSPCA and Bands of Mercy were patronised and governed by the most influential women in the colony (later state) of NSW. Included in this esteemed group were the wives and daughters of governors, mayors, clergy and politicians. When scandal plagued the WSPCA in the wake of criminal charges being laid against two of their inspectors, the high regard in which Levvy was held by her female friends and supporters ensured that her work continued undiminished. This network extended throughout the world, as was demonstrated by her extensive correspondence, and the frequency with which her work was quoted in the publications of sister societies. When Levvy died, the notice published in the Sydney papers was requested to be copied by the English and American papers – another acknowledgment of the impact of her life and the grief that would be felt by friends across the globe.[47] Levvy's obituary made reference to her influential friends, and the

[47] 'Family Notices', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 December 1924, 12; 'Family Notices', *Daily Telegraph*, 3 December 1924, 8.

proliferation of *BMHJ* throughout 'all parts of Australia, England, America and the East'.[48] Shurlee Swain and Pauline Nestor have both written of the sisterhood that sustained women involved in philanthropy and social activism.[49] For forty years, from 1884-1924, Levvy was an exemplar of what could be achieved through such networks.

Duncan was also sustained by a robust network of capable, professional women throughout her own long career. Even after World War Two when Duncan had begun working with the UN, and in the 1950s when she was organising the Home Help Scheme for the Victorian Government, reporters still commented on her enduring links with the Student Christian Movement and YWCA.[50] Ecumenical Christian historians have paid tribute to the profound impact of both these movements to positive social change in the twentieth century.[51] In later life, Duncan's involvement with the World Council of Churches allowed her to continue to work with many of her ASCM and YWCA colleagues.

In addition to these Christian networks, Duncan was a member of two explicitly feminist networks of women. The first was through her membership of the Lyceum Club, an elite club for professional women established in Melbourne in 1912 as a branch of the London Lyceum Club.[52] The Lyceum Club was a dedicated space for reading circles, debates on public issues, musical performances, and soirees. It was a safe space for women to meet, freely exchange information or opinions, and cement friendships (or other forms of intimacy). As such, the

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[48] 'Obituary - Miss F. D. Levvy', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 December 1924, 6.
[49] Shurlee Swain, 'Women and Philanthropy in Colonial and Post-Colonial Australia', *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 7, no. 4 (1996): 435; Pauline Nestor, 'Female Friendships in Mid-Victorian England: New Patterns and Possibilities', *Literature & History* 17, no. 1 (2008): 36.
[50] 'En Route to Korea', *Advertiser*, 9 January 1946, 3; 'Miss Constance Duncan's Interesting Job in Korea', 5; 'Federal Officer for ANCUN', 9; 'To Organise Home Help Scheme in Victoria', 11.
[51] Rouse, 'Voluntary Movements and the Changing Ecumenical Climate', 309–49; David L. Edwards, 'Signs of Radicalism in the Ecumenical Movement', in *The Ecumenical Advance: A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1948-1968*, ed. Harold E. Fey, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986), 404–5; Frank Engel, *Times of Change: 1918-1978*, vol. 2, Christians in Australia (Melbourne: Joint Board of Christian Education, 1993), 198–215.
[52] Innes M. Keighren, '"A Royal Geographical Society for Ladies": The Lyceum Club and Women's Geographical Frontiers in Edwardian London', *The Professional Geographer* 69, no. 4 (2 October 2017): 664.

Lyceum attracted women's rights activists and suffrage campaigners.[53] Both Duncan and Sutherland were members in Melbourne, as were Vida Goldstein and Dorothy Ross. Edith Cowan and Bessie Rischbieth were members of the Perth Lyceum Club, while Dr Leontine Cooper and her same-sex partner, Miss Bedford, were members in Brisbane.[54] Australian historian Kay Ferres has described the Lyceum Club as a place where women 'could negotiate their new identities in changing social structures, and reframe their understandings of women's legal, political and economic status.'[55] Understood in this light, it is natural that the Lyceum Club should be one of the first places where Duncan and Sutherland would trade confidences and cement their relationship.[56] However, to see it as a place for female trysts is terribly reductionist; it was, as stated above, a meeting place for some of the most astute and influential women in Australia, who were seeking to create a more just and equitable Australian society.

The second of Duncan's feminist networks was linked closely with the first. 'The Catalysts' were originally formed in 1910 by a group of nineteen women 'in response to massive social change in the status of women.'[57] The women met monthly to share a meal and a discussion paper. They were fiercely protective of their privacy, choosing not to advertise themselves in any way. Instead, secretaries would send out invitations each month giving the location of a tearoom where they would meet, and the topic of the discussion to be had.[58] Barbara Falk, Dorothy Ross's biographer, discloses that Ross was one of a small group of members of the Lyceum elected to 'The Catalysts'. Duncan and Sutherland were also members, as was Dr Georgina

[53] Barbara Caine, 'Australian Feminism and the British Militant Suffragettes', *Papers on Parliament No. 41*, (Centenary Issue: One Hundred Years of Women's Suffrage in Australia, June 2004), 2, Australia, https://www.aph.gov.au/senate/~/~/link.aspx?_id=3C44655A04494661A14BF77C89E93438&_z=z; Kay Ferres, 'The Lyceum Club and the Making of the Modern Woman', *Queensland Review* 21, no. 1 (June 2014): 64.
[54] Ferres, 'The Lyceum Club and the Making of the Modern Woman', 64; Barbara Falk, *D.J.: Dorothy Jean Ross, 1891-1982* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2000), 129.
[55] Ferres, 'The Lyceum Club and the Making of the Modern Woman', 70.
[56] Chapter 6, 186–187.
[57] Anne Longmire, *The Catalysts: Change and Continuity 1910-2010* (Melbourne, Vic.: Anne Longmire and The Catalysts, 2011), 1.
[58] Longmire, *The Catalysts*, 7.

Sweet, National President of YWCA.[59] The Catalysts provided another place for Duncan to meet with exceptional, likeminded women, in an environment that allowed for authenticity and collaboration. While Renate Howe has described the operation of the ASCM network in supporting Duncan's involvement with the Dunera Boys,[60] Anne Longmire, who authored a history of the Catalysts, has described a similar network. Longmire describes the cooperation of Catalysts Marjorie Coppel, Mary Lazarus, Eileen Giblin and Constance Duncan in fighting for the civil liberties of the Dunera refugees.[61] Although Levvy was not, to my knowledge, a member of the Lyceum Club in Sydney nor of a group similar to the Catalysts, she did have strong reciprocal relationships with other feminists such as Maybanke Wolstenholme and Louisa Lawson. This led to the exchange of ideas and advocacy through mutual recommendations, publishing Levvy's work in feminist journals such as the *Dawn*, and Levvy joining the cause of suffrage alongside Wolstenholme and others. Furthermore, both Levvy and Duncan were involved in the National Council of Women (NCW), with Levvy attending the first meeting in the Sydney Town Hall on 28 June 1896, and Duncan a frequent speaker at NCW events.[62] Lastly, both Levvy and Duncan had their profiles substantially lifted through the women's pages of major newspapers. In chapter four I detailed the extent of Duncan's coverage in the women's pages. It is worth noting that Levvy, too, had frequently featured in these pages decades before Duncan.[63]

[59] Longmire, *The Catalysts*, 2, 56, 71.
[60] Renate Howe, *A Century of Influence: The Australian Student Christian Movement 1896-1996* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2009), 251–2, 264.
[61] Longmire, *The Catalysts*, 104–6.
[62] 'The National Council of Women: First Meeting of the Council', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 August 1896, 7; 'National Council of Women', *Age*, 29 April 1938, 4; 'National Council of Women', *Argus*, 28 June 1940, 11; 'UNRRA Conditions in Pacific Area', *Telegraph*, 21 September 1945, 4; 'National Council', *Age*, 6 July 1948, 5; 'More Home-Help Schemes', *Age*, 26 June 1951, 5.
[63] See, for example, 'Woman's Column', *Newsletter: An Australian Paper for Australian People*, 4 October 1902, 13; 'In the Throng', *The Daily Telegraph*, 22 November 1906, sec. For Women, 13; 'In the Throng', *The Daily Telegraph*, 4 December 1908, sec. For Women, 3; 'Women's News', *The Sunday Times*, 11 September 1921, 14.

These networks, or 'sisterhoods', of female activists were not peripheral to the work of Levvy and Duncan. Nor were they purely social. Rather, networks of women provided the intellectual and spiritual clarity necessary for their work, as well as the companionship and encouragement that sustained them over decades of activism. For Duncan, such networks also allowed her to build friendships with other lesbian women, ultimately to partner with Margaret Sutherland, and thus to stave off some of the isolation inevitably experienced by LGBTQI+ women in a heteronormative world. With this place of refuge established for herself, Duncan could continue to go out into society and advocate for greater social equality for women, migrants, and other marginalised groups.

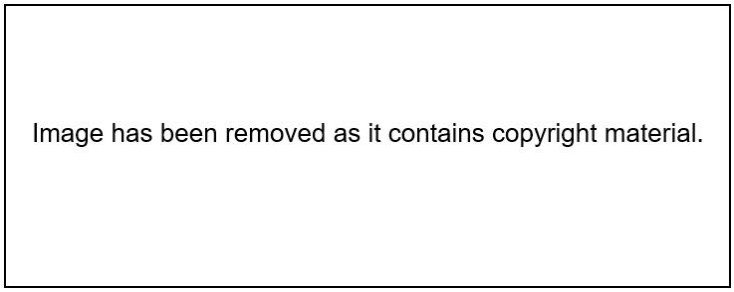

Figure 11: Record of The Catalysts meeting on 21 May 1949.
Duncan was speaking on the topic of the United Nations, while Sutherland chaired the meeting.[64]

[64] Provided to me by Jillian Graham, Sutherland's biographer.

Inhabiting the female sphere

What begins to emerge from an analysis of the agency and activism of Frances Levvy and Constance Duncan is a picture of two women publicly performing their femininity in the manner required of them if they were to succeed within the patriarchal societies in which they lived. Levvy's performative femininity emphasised her nurturing, character training role, suggesting that she accomplished all she did by turning her 'natural' maternal instincts towards the moral education of children. In her public activism, Levvy enacted what she recommended to women and girls. This included sitting demurely on the platform while the annual reports of the WSPCA, and the prizes for the annual essay competition – both a result of her own tireless labour – were read out and announced by male dignitaries (who had not been personally involved in the work). There is every indication that Levvy internalised who she was taught (by church and society) she must be, despite her unmarried state: a mother figure devoted to the nurture of others. Consequently, Levvy enacted her roles in WSPCA and Bands of Mercy with gentleness befitting a woman. This does not, however, suggest that her public presentation was purely performative or insincere. She would not have embraced what she did not condone. Levvy is unlikely to have adopted masculine or 'macho' characteristics, given that her whole career was marked by a critique of cruel masculinity. In contrast, Constance Duncan publicly performed the role she must in order to retain agency over her own life and activism. She was a woman invited into a male-dominated world, yet needing at times to minimise herself in order not to be a threat. Privately, however, she found intimacy outside the accepted domain through the safety of feminist and lesbian women's networks in the Lyceum Club and the Catalysts. I believe that neither woman was allowed to have complete congruence between her public and private worlds. Each was required at times to interpret her strength, intellect, and bravery through a patriarchal prism so that her actions would be acceptable. In this way, the ideology of separate spheres continued to muddy the waters of their activism long after it ceased to be a fashionable concept.

Nonetheless, the female sphere that Levvy and Duncan inhabited was not a private, domestic world. They were vigorously, persistently engaged in public spaces, seeking to create a better world for future generations. The sisterhoods of which they were a part enabled and empowered their agency and activism, allowing them to endure in their work over decades. It is, however, my belief that these very networks also had a 'siloing' effect – protecting them in a female world away from male domination, and thus acknowledgement. It is significant to note that mentions of Levvy and Duncan by Australian historians occur almost exclusively in the works of female (and feminist) historians writing institutional histories of women and women's organisations that have been largely overlooked by male historians. These include *Respectable Radicals*, a history of the National Council of Women by Marian Quartly and Judith Smart, Barbara Falk's biography of Dorothy Ross, and Anne Longmire's history of the Catalysts.[65] Duncan is also mentioned briefly in two works devoted to organisations that were strongly influenced and frequently led by women – Renate Howe's history of ASCM, *A Century of Influence*, and Frank Engel's ecumenical history, *Times of Change*.[66] Duncan's minor recognition in Engel's volume is due largely to her friendship and close working relationship with Margaret Holmes, whom Engel greatly admired. A similar dynamic is evident in references to Levvy made in *More Valuable than Gold*, evangelical historian Paul Cooper's biography of philanthropists John and Ann Goodlet.[67] Levvy's brief mentions in this volume stem from her close friendship with Ann Goodlet, with whom she worked in WSPCA. In other words, the networks of women that sustained Levvy and Duncan throughout their lives also became the keepers of their legacies – the ones to remember and celebrate all that they had achieved.

[65] Quartly and Smart, *Respectable Radicals*; Falk, *D.J.*; Longmire, *The Catalysts*.
[66] Howe, *A Century of Influence*; Engel, *Times of Change: 1918-1978*.
[67] Paul F. Cooper, *More Valuable Than Gold: The Philanthropy of John and Ann Goodlet* (The Ponds, NSW: Eider Books, 2015), 97–99, 282.

This is not because Levvy and Duncan do not appear in the sources used by male religious historians, as I first hypothesised. While 'great man' histories and broad strokes or big picture religious histories do use the archives of theological institutions and clergy records of institutions from which women were (and often still are) excluded, their sources go far beyond this. Male religious historians in Australia make extensive use of Trove, mining the pages of old newspapers just as I have done in this thesis. They also dive into the invaluable archives of the National and State Libraries, searching the records of LNU, ASCM and other organisations. Even so, their histories give proportionately scant attention to women. The split between evangelical and ecumenical branches of the church has further exacerbated the problem. Starling is the most recent in a line of evangelical historians to identify a schism within the Australian churches between modernists 'who chose a path of cultural accommodation and broad political influence', and fundamentalists who clung to 'resistance, separation and . . . sectarian conversionism.'[68] Both Levvy and Duncan were involved in movements that owed much to evangelicalism in their origins, but which have since drifted away from these roots due to evangelicals' defensive and reactionary responses to Darwinism, socially progressive activism and theological liberalism. In the process they have often been dismissed (by evangelical historians) as modernist or theologically liberal.[69] While ecumenical historians such as Engel and Howe have recognised the contribution of ASCM, YWCA, WCC and other such groups, the landscape of religious history in Australia has to date been dominated by evangelical historians whose work is filtered through a theological lens suspicious of feminism and likely to deny the place of LGBTQ people in the church. Stuart Piggin, who is arguably the most prominent and prolific evangelical historian in Australia, readily recognises the contribution of and need for feminist religious historians. He notes that '[h]istorians have been helped by feminist insights to inspect rather than respect the activities of the ostensibly well-meaning'.[70] But Piggin deliberately distances himself from

[68] Starling also lists other historians who have commented on this schism. Starling, 'A New Faith?', 342 n. 18.
[69] Chapter 3, 99–105.
[70] Piggin and Linder, *Fountain of Public Prosperity*, 301.

feminism, arguing that 'the mindset of conservative evangelicals . . . is allergic to what feminism has become, and many feminists view biblical Christianity as irredeemably patriarchal.'[71] Although I do not believe it is his intention, this implies that to be truly 'biblical', a Christian must accept a patriarchal framework as God-ordained. Piggin also writes of women 'whose faithfulness was more commendable because it was largely unrecognised in their day' and who are yet 'awaiting the resurrection afforded them by feminist scholars.'[72] The implication here is that the inclusion of women who have previously been overlooked or ignored is the task of feminist historians and thus simply not Piggin's job.

Feminist historian Clare Wright has recently spoken out in the media about the erasure of women from historical accounts. Interviewed by the Australian Broadcasting Commission's (ABC) Radio National, Wright spoke of the 'many invisible women of history'.

> Women were there . . . they were history makers, they participated in events, they agitated, they invented, they explored, they colonised, they resisted colonisation. Basically any historical activity you want to document, women were there doing the same thing . . . Women have been written out of events for political means, and it's part of a political moment to put them back in.[73]

In her interview, Wright spoke of the women who were present at and involved in the events of the Eureka Stockade, yet were omitted from every public monument built and memorial written. She makes the point that women were always there in the sources, but that male historians simply read past them. In the same article, historian Suzanne Falkiner describes the erasure of Rose de Freycinet from accounts depicting her husband's circumnavigation of the globe. Even when Rose's journal recounting the expedition was published, Falkiner says it was 'redacted' to

[71] Piggin and Linder, 359.
[72] Piggin and Linder, 192.
[73] Erin Stutchbury and Catherine Zengerer, 'Rose de Freycinet Circumnavigated the World and Wrote about It. Male Editors Changed Her Story', ABC News, 3 May 2022, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-05-04/writing-women-like-rose-de-freycinet-back-into-history/100929074.

minimise her female perspective. The journals 'passed through the hands of several male editors who cut out things they thought might be a bit disreputable.'[74]

The work of Wright and Falkiner is extremely pertinent to the histories of Levvy and Duncan, because it shows that erasure does not necessarily occur because of the inaccessibility of the records of women's lives, but a persistent blindness on the part of historians who simply read past the women to see what they expect to see. It is true that Levvy and Duncan remained unmarried and childless throughout their lives, and this is likely to have contributed to the loss of their personal papers. Yet this did not leave them without a significant footprint in the historical record, as I have demonstrated in this thesis. Their work is there to explore, if we choose to see it.

'Equal but different' – A new label for the same pattern of erasure

Sadly, the deep faith that motivated both women has contributed to their erasure. Australian religious history remains a field dominated by men, and largely by evangelical Christians. This is the world in which I grew up – a world still stubbornly resistant to the full equality of women. Grimshaw et al. have written of women campaigners in the labour movement in the mid-twentieth century that, '[g]radually talk of human freedom and equal rights replaced references to women's special vocation.'[75] In many of the churches in which I grew up, that transition is yet to take place. As I have written elsewhere, even in contexts that claim to celebrate women and allow them to lead, there is within the evangelical churches in Australia a blatant patriarchy that marginalises women, especially if they do not conform to the enduring ideal of marriage and

[74] Stutchbury and Zengerer, 'Rose de Freycinet Circumnavigated the World and Wrote about It. Male Editors Changed Her Story'.
[75] Grimshaw et al., *Creating a Nation*, 247.

motherhood.[76] For women caught in the multiple intersections of erasure through sexuality, gender identity or race, their exclusion is even greater. Arguably, the pain of isolation is even more acute within faith contexts that claim to be havens of full acceptance and welcome in which, 'There is neither Jew nor Gentile [racial equality], neither slave nor free [economic and social equality], nor is there male and female [sexual and gender equality], for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:28). Although the language of separate spheres has faded from use, in many evangelical circles it has been replaced by the language of complementarianism. In essence, this is a relabelling of separate spheres. In a complementarian framework, women are 'equal but different' and must surrender leadership in the home and society to men, who are called by God to exercise their 'headship' over women and creation. This doctrine has been popularised by celebrity preachers such as John Piper in the USA, but it is rife within many Australians churches and dominates the Sydney Anglican Diocese.[77] In recent times, church leaders have begun to recognise and investigate the harmful effects of this doctrine as it plays out in homes and churches, too often contributing to Australia's epidemic of domestic violence.[78] A podcast hosted by evangelical magazine 'Christianity Today' went viral in 2021 for its investigation into the toxic culture created at Mars Hill Church in Seattle by another celebrity preacher, Mark Driscoll, who demanded strict adherence to complementarianism.[79]

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[76] Karen M. Pack, 'The Single Strife: Nurturing Wholeness in the Lives of Single Christians', in *Justice, Mercy, and Well-Being: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Peter G. Bolt and James R. Harrison (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2020), 178–190.

[77] John Piper, 'Headship and Harmony', *Desiring God* (blog), 1 May 1984, https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/headship-and-harmony; John Piper, 'Weighty Words on the Meaning of a Husband's Headship', *Desiring God* (blog), 5 August 2009, https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/weighty-words-on-the-meaning-of-a-husbands-headship; 'The Importance of Complementarianism : Anglican Church League, Sydney, Australia', *Anglican Church League* (blog), accessed 13 May 2022, https://acl.asn.au/the-importance-of-complementarianism/.

[78] Erica Hamence, 'Reflecting on Complementarianism and Domestic Violence', Common Grace, accessed 13 May 2022, https://www.commongrace.org.au/reflecting_on_complementarianism_and_domestic_violence; Alys Gagnon, 'This Is Why Women Feel Abandoned by the Church.', Mamamia, 14 February 2016, https://www.mamamia.com.au/archbishop-glenn-davies-women-church/.

[79] Mike Cosper, 'The Rise and Fall of Mars Hill', accessed 13 May 2022, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/podcasts/rise-and-fall-of-mars-hill/.

Why is this relevant to the agency and activism of Levvy and Duncan? Their continued erasure from Australian religious histories is exacerbated by church cultures which simply do not expect to see women in prominent positions of leadership, and credit husbands, fathers and other male leaders with their success. I am not suggesting that evangelical historians are deliberately ignoring the contributions of women. Far from it. Christian historians like Stuart Piggin, Paul Cooper, Hugh Chilton and Mark Hutchinson are seeking to raise the profile of women in the history of the Australian church. They are, however, hampered by a patriarchal, heteronormative reflex trained by practice and tradition to recognise the leadership of men. This erasure is a passive act by which historians have simply read past women when they appear in the sources, which is ironic given the ideology of separate spheres and its inherent framework of male activity and female passivity. Consequently, it has been left to female and feminist historians to address the imbalance, which they are doing with skill and precision. In the twentieth century Anne O'Brien, Pat Grimshaw, Hilary Carey, Shurlee Swain, Muriel Porter, Renate Howe and others contributed significant works that paved the way for greater recognition of Christian women in the history of Australia. More recently Marion Maddox, Meredith Lake, Laura Rademaker, Katherine Massam, Joanna Cruickshank, Clare Monagle and Nicole Starling are just a few of the feminist historians broadening, and thus enriching, our knowledge of women, Indigenous Australians, LGBTQ people of faith and racial minorities in the church. This is vital work that must be continued, and which highlights the extent of intersectional erasure that has characterised Australian religious histories to date. The erasure of unmarried women is symptomatic of a far broader problem, poignantly described by Clare Wright. In *Forgotten Rebels of Eureka* Wright recounts the deliberate erasure of women from historical accounts of the nation-defining events of the Eureka Stockade. Wright also describes the futile attempts of women who sought compensation for property destroyed in the rebellion. 'It was', she writes, 'a small taste for these new Australians of the

bitter pill of dispossession suffered irretrievably by the old Australians.'[80] It is true that women have frequently been erased from religious histories and not allowed to speak on their own behalf. If white, cisgender women (like Frances Levvy) can be so easily erased, how much worse is the plight of Indigenous, LGBTQ and differently abled people of faith? Only as we tell the stories of a truly representative spectrum of the church can Christians who have been marginalised within their faith communities begin to find their place in the story.

The dominance in Australian religious historiography of 'big histories' written by white men, with a disproportionate focus on the achievements of cisgender white men, can lead to surprising omissions. Feminist historian Hilary Carey is an internationally renowned religious historian who includes proportionately more women in her *Believing in Australia* than any other broad religious history in Australia.[81] Even so, in writing of the rescue of the *Dunera* refugees and the struggle to cement their civil liberties, Carey does not mention any of the women involved (such as Duncan and Holmes), despite their prominent place in the primary sources.[82] There is, therefore, a need for more attentive study that sees women, including queer and Indigenous women, within religious history, not attempting to break in or disrupt the narrative, but always a part of a story that is theirs every bit as much as it belongs to straight, male, cisgender Christians. The sincere Christian faith of Levvy and Duncan motivated them throughout their careers and was recognised by those around them. Our histories must recognise such people – the marginalised believers in our midst. Though muted at times by social and gender constructs, they have been nonetheless always present, quietly but powerfully enacting their faith, gender identity and sexuality, *and* their conviction of the need for social reform.[83] It is also vital that women be

[80] Clare Wright, *Forgotten Rebels of Eureka* (Melbourne, Vic.: The Text Publishing Company, 2013), 514, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/mqu/detail.action?docID=1334233.
[81] I say this to distinguish 'big picture' histories which trace the breadth of Christian history in Australia, from the histories of particular people and institutions. The latter generally are far more inclusive and deliberate in naming and highlighting women and minority groups.
[82] Hilary M. Carey, *Believing in Australia: A Cultural History of Religions* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1997), 146–47.
[83] Cf. Starling, 'A New Faith?', 42–43.

allowed to tell the stories of women, that Aboriginal scholars tell the stories of Indigenous Christians, and that LGBTQIA+ folx tell the stories of queer people of faith. *Nihil de nobis, sine nobis* as the saying goes – 'nothing about us, without us'.

Conclusion

Finding my place in the story

'Women have been written out of events for political means, and it's part of a political moment to put them back in.'[1]

This thesis set out to ask why Australian religious histories - specifically 'big picture' histories – have largely ignored the agency and activism of unmarried Protestant and evangelical Christian women. Biographical case studies of Frances Deborah Levvy and (Ada) Constance Duncan were used to question assumptions about the spheres in which unmarried women contributed to Australian social and religious life. In doing so, I demonstrated their crucial role in social justice activism in Australia, and the enduring impact of separate spheres ideology that would relegate them to the margins of history. Chapter one traced a biography of Levvy's life, demonstrating her forty years of activism in the animal protection movement in NSW from 1884-1924. In chapters two and three I examined key themes emerging from Levvy's life. Chapter two questioned whether Levvy's self-understanding and public persona conformed to the gendered expectations of her day. Although there were some men (such as Horbury Hunt) who raged that Levvy's activism went beyond the bounds of feminine propriety, I demonstrated that there was precedent for her actions in the lives of other women. Far from rejecting the gendered expectations of her time, Levvy herself internalised a maternalist understanding of her role. This did not, however, protect her from derision for her 'unwomanly' involvement in animal protection when male critics deemed her to have stepped beyond her allotted sphere. Chapter three examined the central role that her Christian faith played in grounding and motivating her activism. Levvy was revealed to have functioned as a Bible interpreter and public intellectual. There was shown to be precedent for this role in a long history of female Bible interpreters, but I

[1] Erin Stutchbury and Catherine Zengerer, 'Rose de Freycinet Circumnavigated the World and Wrote about It. Male Editors Changed Her Story', ABC News, 3 May 2022, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-05-04/writing-women-like-rose-de-freycinet-back-into-history/100929074.

also demonstrated that religious histories have largely ignored this enduring and important legacy. Furthermore, Levvy's skill as an expositor and exegete showed that she was unafraid to use the latest scientific discoveries and tools of biblical criticism to make her point. This left her open to being labelled a theological liberal, and thereby dismissed by evangelicals committed to biblical literalism. Despite Levvy's ardent Anglican faith, it was argued that her *apparent* challenge to gendered expectations and her embrace of modern methods of biblical interpretation contributed to her erasure from Australian religious histories.

In chapters four through six, I traced the activism of Constance Duncan from 1922-1964, integrating a discussion of key themes as they emerged throughout her biography. Chapter four examined Duncan's career with ASCM and her ten years as a foreign secretary for the YWCA in Japan. This revealed her early focus on education as a tool of empowerment and social transformation. I discussed the extensive coverage of her work in the media, including (but not limited to) the women's pages of newspapers and magazines, and her emergence as an important voice in international affairs. Chapter five discussed Duncan's work with the League of Nations and peace movements throughout the 1930s. She was shown to be one of the most prominent internationalists in Australia, and a prolific commentator on international affairs (particularly events in the Asia-Pacific region) on radio, in the press and in her many speaking engagements. While she was very involved with a variety of women's organisations, Duncan was shown to frequently be the only woman present in male-dominated contexts. She believed in the mandate of the League of Nations and the principle of collective security, and had a gift for mobilising support for these causes, particularly amongst women. Chapter six illustrated how she called Australians to hold to their faith in the midst of the darkness of World War Two. During this period Duncan's activism, motivated by faith, was most clearly expressed in her advocacy for refugee rights and resettlement with VIREC, and for campaigns for greater equality for women with the Department of Health. This continued after the war through her work with the United

Nations and the Victorian Government's Home Help Scheme. The post-war period again saw Duncan experiencing the twin realities of being popular with women's organisations and invited into what had been exclusively masculine contexts. Chapter six also revealed Duncan's sexuality as a lesbian woman in a long-term partnership with composer Margaret Sutherland. I traced the end of Duncan's career, advocating for international students and working for the resettlement of refugees, and her tragic death in 1970. It was argued that Duncan's activism was contingent with early evangelical's emphasis on social reform, but that the twentieth century saw a split within the Australian church whereby evangelicals pursued 'Unity in truth' (largely through agreement on key doctrines and issues of public morality), while more ecumenical Christians pursued 'Unity in Christian fellowship' expressed through cooperation in social justice and a more equitable society.[2] Thus, it was argued that Duncan's ecumenical Christianity and identity as a lesbian, feminist woman contributed to her erasure from religious histories.

Chapter seven examined the connections between the life and work of Levvy and Duncan. Their shared commitment to education as a means to social transformation was discussed, noting that this was a traditional focus of evangelical Christianity. This was followed by an examination of the way that Levvy and Duncan both challenged and embodied the gendered expectations of their time. I argued that although they were each at times accused of trespassing on the masculine public sphere, they (outwardly) conformed to gender norms in order to preserve their agency in patriarchal, heteronormative contexts. Furthermore, it was demonstrated that Levvy and Duncan were enabled and sustained by networks (or sisterhoods) of like-minded women. I argued that it was their involvements in these networks of women that preserved their memory and legacy, when they were otherwise ignored by white, male religious historians. I contended that the ease with which white, cisgender women had been erased exposed the precarious

[2] Ruth Rouse, 'Voluntary Movements and the Changing Ecumenical Climate', in *A History of the Ecumenical Movement: 1517-1948*, ed. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986), 325.

position of Indigenous, non-white and LGBTQI+ people of faith, whose erasure from our religious histories is even more stark. No historian should ignore their responsibility to include women and marginalised peoples in their histories, and to name the people whom they are discussing. Finally, I argued that there is a need for a network of inclusive, feminist historians to correct the 'big picture' of Australian religious history, but that in doing so we must allow each minority to speak for themselves. To do otherwise would be to continue the process of white-washing and erasure.

The Religious is Political

The activism of Levvy and Duncan was by nature inherently political. In seeking a more humane and merciful society, Levvy did not want merely changed opinions and soft hearts; she wanted to alter societal structures and create institutional reform. To do this required a public inspectorate, cooperation with the Police force, and positive relationships with political powerbrokers in NSW. It required Levvy to engage in direct lobbying of elected officials, from local mayors to federal representatives. Duncan also had a political agenda. She sought tangible change in the policies of governments around the world, including her own state and federal governments. More just and equitable refugee policies, greater rights and protections for women and children, welcoming border policies and educational institutions for international students – all this could only be achieved through political agitation. Duncan's political activism reached its most direct expression in her standing as an Independent candidate in the 1943 Women for Canberra campaign. Yet her work with the ASCM, YWCA, UN, University House and WCC all required a readiness to engage with formal and informal power structures in order to see her ideals of social justice come to fruition in concrete actions. It is also true that both Duncan and Levvy found in their Christian faith the encouragement and motivation to pursue their respective agendas. It is my argument that the activism of Levvy and Duncan was both religiously motivated and politically engaged.

There is a long precedent for political engagement on the basis of faith conviction in both evangelical and ecumenical branches of the Protestant church. The religious histories of Rouse and Engel showcase the social justice activism that has for centuries been inextricable from Christian faith. This is evident in those who have sought more protections for women and marginalised people, and better stewardship of the environment. Similarly, as I have discussed earlier, the evangelical branches of the church trace their roots to the anti-slavery campaigns of Wilberforce and the Clapham sect, and movements seeking greater protections for women from abuses of power in marriage and society. Noteworthy examples include Josephine Butler and Catherine Booth. The emphasis on 'Unity in Christian fellowship' of the ecumenical branches of the church has cultivated a sense of shared work and shared history, as they look back on a long tradition of Christian advocacy as inspiration and impetus for contemporary activism. Although the evangelical branches share this history of activism, the increasing emphasis on 'Unity in truth' has led to a focus on doctrinal correctness and personal piety over social justice – which is sometimes seen as a distraction from the real work of converting souls. Recently, theologians have sought to understand why the political agenda of evangelicals (particularly in the United States of America) has become 'almost entirely domestic in its scope', with a focus on protecting their own rights and values elevated above the responsibility to 'love thy neighbour'. Overwhelmingly, this change has been attributed to 'evangelical eschatology and Biblical literalism'.[3] Changes in eschatology (that is, beliefs around what will happen at the end of time at the final judgement of humankind) occurred throughout the twentieth century as the optimism of post-millennial theology gave way to the brutal realities of world wars and atomic weapons. Thus, in place of post-millennialism, many evangelicals adopted a millennialist, post-tribulation eschatology that saw the increasing turmoil in the world as a sign of Christ's imminent return

[3] Motti Inbari, Kirill M. Bumin, and M. Gordon Byrd, 'Why Do Evangelicals Support Israel?', *Politics and Religion* 14, no. 1 (2021): 2.

and their rescue to a place of eternal reward.[4] For some, the belief that Christ would come again only after the world had grown much, much worse, led to a belief that everything from nuclear holocaust to climate destruction, to war in the Middle East should be accepted as inevitable, and in fact necessary, for ultimate salvation.[5] The only way to guarantee salvation was through right belief in Jesus Christ, as evidenced by holy living and personal evangelism. In this paradigm, social justice activism is a distraction from the more pressing work of saving souls and moral living.[6]

This has pressing relevance to a discussion of the agency and activism of Levvy and Duncan, and their erasure from Australian religious histories, when we consider the context in which such histories were written. The focus on those campaigning for public morality as an expression of righteousness and the suspicion of those who too stridently work for fundamental social change is evident in evangelical and Protestant histories of Australia. This is understandable when set against the theological framework of the authors. In this context, those who fight against the LGBTQ 'agenda', oppose abortion rights and resist euthanasia legislation are acting as faithful witnesses to Christ. They are (in this paradigm) standing for righteousness in an increasingly ungodly world. Similarly, those who call for repentance and changed behaviour to slow the effects of climate change are seen as failing to read the signs of the times, and foolishly focusing on saving habitats, when they should be saving souls. In Christian theology there is a concept

[4] Alan Hultberg, Craig A. Blaising, and Douglas J. Moo, *Three Views on the Rapture: Pretribulation, Prewrath, Or Posttribulation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010). In the US, this view of the imminent and necessary destruction of Earth led to the immense popularity of Hal Lindsay's, *The Late Great Planet Earth* and the *Left Behind* novel series by Tim LaHaye. In Australia and New Zealand, this saw the proliferation of books such as Barry Smith's *Warning* (followed by *Second Warning*, and *Final Notice*), which explained the crises of the twentieth century as a call to repentance so that faithful Christians could be guaranteed salvation in the last days. See Hal Lindsey and Carole C. Carlson, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970); Barry Rumsey Smith, *Warning* (New Zealand: Smith Family Evangelism, 1980); Tim LaHaye, *Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last Days* (Christian Art Publishers, 1998).

[5] New Testament theologian Pieter de Villiers expresses alarm about the real-world impact of such theology, particularly in the Middle East. He notes the 'lackadaisical attitude towards war that is implicit in this ideology. The impression is that war in the Middle East is regarded as unavoidable, if not necessary.' Pieter G. R. de Villiers, 'The Dangerous Role of Politics in Modern Millennial Movements', *HTS Theological Studies* 75, no. 3 (14 November 2019): 7.

[6] Villiers, 'The Dangerous Role of Politics', 2.

known as the *via negativa* – or negative way – which argues that God so far transcends human experience that God cannot be truly known or defined. All that can be said is what God is not. Elsewhere I have argued that the *via negativa* has also come to characterise Christian discipleship such that the all-consuming focus is on behaviours (and people, and places) that must be avoided if one is to stay pure.[7] This replaces a focus on bringing beauty to the world with a determination to protect oneself from the ugliness of the world. Increasingly, such a *via negativa* characterises evangelical political engagement.

Consequently, an understanding of the sociological and theological context of those pursuing a *via negativa* and seeking 'Unity in truth' helps to explain the phenomenon of evangelical engagement in right wing conservative politics. This has been examined in detail by Australian scholar of politics and religion, Marion Maddox, and American religious historian Kristin Kobes Du Mez. For over twenty years, Maddox has been expressing concern about the convergence of political and religious conservatives in Australia. She identified the Prime Ministerial tenure of John Howard as having fundamentally altered the relationship between church and state. The Howard government advanced a political agenda characterised by 'vilification of homosexuals, punishing the unemployed, cruel border protection and illegal war'.[8] This was done by pushing conservative values and calling them Christian. Maddox interrogates Howard's claim that his conservative values were rooted in his Methodist upbringing, by exposing the socially progressive agenda of the Methodist church at that time.[9] She demonstrates that the Methodist 'Mission to the Nation' (1953-55) distanced itself from 'biblical literalism and social disengagement', and that Earlwood Methodist church (which Howard attended at the time), 'gave regularly to organisations with a strong tradition of progressive social service tradition and

[7] Karen M. Pack, 'Mateship – a Holy Alliance: Rediscovering Covenant Friendship in the Contemporary Australian Church', *Zadok Perspectives*, no. 133 (Summer 2016): 14.
[8] Marion Maddox, *God under Howard: The Rise of the Religious Right in Australian Politics*, (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2005), 25–26.
[9] Maddox, *God under Howard*, 5–24.

critique of government policy'.[10] She concludes that Howard's policies were not influenced by his attendance at a Methodist Church as much as they were by his family. This was a family that did not read the *Methodist* (newspaper of the Methodist Church), but religiously devoured *Reader's Digest* and the *Saturday Evening Post*, both of which championed American consumerism and conservative family values.[11] Maddox laments that the dissonance between Howard's childhood religion and political direction resulted in 'religiously inflected social conservatism [that] has become firmly enmeshed with right wing economic thought, even as many churches continue to criticise from the left.'[12] Despite arising in a different context, the result is a political ideology resembling the right-wing conservatism of the USA.

In the introduction to her ground-breaking book, *Jesus and John Wayne: How white evangelicals corrupted a faith and fractured a nation*, Du Mez tells of how she was given a copy of *Wild at Heart* by John Eldridge – a defence of rugged masculinity, 'purity culture' and, essentially, the separate spheres and needs of men and women.[13] Du Mez describes it as a 'muscular, and even militaristic, ideal' of manhood. Reading *Wild at Heart*, with its celebration of 'renegade Christian masculinity', precipitated Du Mez's journey of writing *Jesus and John Wayne*.[14] It was a familiar scenario for me. In the late 1990s and early 2000s I was a teacher and pastoral carer at a Christian high school, where one of my roles was to teach students about 'biblical sexuality' and purity culture. We used *Wild at Heart* and *Captivating* – the companion volume for women and girls written by Eldredge and his wife Stasi – to teach fourteen-year-olds about 'God's intention' for their relationships and sexuality.[15] The message was unapologetically heteronormative and

[10] ASCM was one of the organisations supported by Earlwood Methodist Church. Maddox, *God under Howard*, 10–12.
[11] Maddox, *God under Howard*, 24.
[12] Maddox, *God under Howard*, 24.
[13] John Eldredge, *Wild at Heart: Discovering the Secret of a Man's Soul* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001).
[14] Kristin Kobes Du Mez, *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2020), xiii–xiv.
[15] John Eldredge and Stasi Eldredge, *Captivating: Unveiling the Mystery of a Woman's Soul* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005).

homophobic. On reflection, it was possibly one of the most self-hating things I have done, but at the time I was in complete and utter denial about my own sexuality. I write this to acknowledge that for most of my life I have been complicit in the very systems that oppressed me, and told me that people like myself do not exist. I was fortunate to grow up hearing the stories of incredible women of faith (it was the Salvation Army, after all; the church built by Catherine and William Booth and led in the 1990s by General Eva Burrows). Yet I did not hear about women like myself – gay Christian women who loved God with all their hearts yet could not change their sexuality no matter how hard they tried. Such a person did not exist. To be gay was a choice – a choice to reject God. As I write this, the media is reporting on the very real possibility that disagreement over same sex marriage will tear apart the Anglican church in Australia.

Du Mez has examined the politicisation of evangelical churches in the twentieth century, noting how for decades evangelical leaders deliberately stoked a climate of fear as if 'their own power depended on it.'[16] She cites evangelical leaders who 'invoked a sense of peril in order to offer fearful followers their own brand of truth and protection.' In consequence, evangelicals were taught to fear 'communists, feminists, liberals, secular humanists, "the homosexuals," the United Nations, the government, Muslims, and immigrants.'[17] Maddox described a similar phenomenon in the Howard era, with the proliferation of anti-women, anti-gay, anti-immigrant policies, and a climate in which 'fear became a permanent political subtext.'[18] What is striking about these lists is the number of intersections with Duncan's life. She was a feminist, a lesbian, who called for compassionate protection and resettlement of migrants, and was accused of being a Communist. Du Mez traces the emergence of a 'militant masculinity' that has come 'to reside at the heart of a larger evangelical identity.' This in turn evoked 'a persecution narrative rooted in a sense of

[16] Du Mez, *Jesus and John Wayne*, 13.
[17] Du Mez, *Jesus and John Wayne*, 13.
[18] Maddox, *God under Howard*, 4–5.

cultural decline' that mobilised political engagement against perceived social threats.[19] In Australia, the Howard era of government paved the way for a similar evangelical militancy, stoked by organisations such as the Australian Christian Lobby (ACL). This enabled the mobilisation of the evangelical church in opposition to the moral decline of Australian society, culminating in the extensive 'No' campaign during the referendum on same-sex marriage. The alliance between political and religious right was most blatantly seen when the Sydney Anglican Diocese donated one million dollars to the 'No' campaign against same-sex marriage.[20] It continues in the anti-trans rhetoric that proliferated during the 2022 federal election campaign.[21] Of particular interest for the current context is the relationship between political and religious right as embodied by the career of religious historian Stephen Chavura, who is a member of the Evangelical History Association (which promotes his books on their website) and has been the keynote speaker at ACL events.[22] Chavura has also published articles with titles such as 'The same-sex marriage brigade need to be humbled'.[23] My intention is not to attack Chavura, but to illustrate that evangelical historians write from within a religious and political framework, and this influences the people and organisations who are celebrated within their work. Yet the work of feminist historians, and self-identified evangelicals, Rademaker and Starling demonstrates that one can be true to one's faith *and* contribute to a more just and inclusive religious history that centres the stories of those previously erased. This is the *via positiva* that is needed in Australian religious historiography.

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[19] Du Mez, *Jesus and John Wayne*, 295, 297.
[20] Michael McGowan, 'Sydney Anglican Diocese Donates $1m to No Campaign for Same-Sex Marriage Vote', *The Guardian*, 9 October 2017, sec. Australia news, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/oct/10/sydney-anglican-diocese-donates-1m-to-no-campaign-for-same-sex-marriage-vote.
[21] Sarah Martin and Michael McGowan, 'Katherine Deves Claims Key Role in Controversial Bill to Ban Trans Women from Women's Sport', *The Guardian*, 19 April 2022, sec. Australia news, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/apr/19/katherine-deves-claims-key-role-in-controversial-bill-to-ban-trans-women-from-womens-sport; 'Katherine Deves Insists She's NOT Transphobic as She Does Interview with Ben Fordham | Daily Mail Online', accessed 19 May 2022, https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10765143/Katherine-Deves-insists-shes-NOT-transphobic-does-interview-Ben-Fordham.html.
[22] http://www.evangelicalhistory.org/books.html; https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=999921667027680; https://www.acl.org.au/tags/video?page=.
[23] Stephen A. Chavura, 'The Same-Sex Marriage Brigade Need to Be Humbled', The Spectator Australia, 28 August 2017, https://www.spectator.com.au/2017/08/same-sex-marriage-brigade-need-to-be-humbled/.

There are, therefore, reasons for hope. What is learned can also be unlearned. Du Mez notes that while there is ample evidence of 'sexism, racism, xenophobia, violence, and imperial designs' within evangelicalism, there are also many examples of Christians, including evangelicals, who have 'disrupted the status quo and challenged systems of privilege and power.'[24] Duncan's life intersects with many of the things evangelicals were taught to fear and to condemn. Likewise, Levvy was unafraid of things evangelicals were taught to treat as suspect. She utilised tools of text criticism and elements of liberal theology in her animal rights activism, and championed faithful stewardship of creation. Together, Duncan and Levvy are examples of Christian women politically engaged in social activism, motivated by their faith. Their stories need to be told, because it is through actual encounters with the 'other' that our prejudices are revealed to be irrational.

In the conclusion of her book, Du Mez makes the following observation:

> Militantly patriarchal expressions of the faith thrived in male-only discussion spaces, and so for some men, *it was by listening to Christian women* that the darker aspects of evangelical masculinity became visible. For one man, it was *the surprise of meeting loving, Christian couples who rejected the teachings of complementarianism* that led him to rethink the teachings of men like John Piper and Mark Driscoll.[25]

Du Mez describes men who were marginalised because they did not fit a masculine stereotype, and women who found that evangelical purity culture left them traumatised and unprepared for sexual intimacy. Yet she also describes the new awareness that came through encountering those with a markedly different perspective and life experience.[26]

After systematically tracing the corrupting of evangelical faith through toxic masculinity and white supremacy, in the last lines of her book, Du Mez writes, 'Appreciating how this ideology

[24] Du Mez, *Jesus and John Wayne*, 14.
[25] Du Mez, *Jesus and John Wayne*, 302. Emphasis added.
[26] Du Mez, *Jesus and John Wayne*, 302–3.

developed over time is also essential for those who wish to dismantle it. What was once done might also be undone.'[27]

As historians, we have the advantage of knowing that the Christian family tree is broad indeed. It includes many unmarried women who did not bear children to carry their stories to the next generation. It includes – and should celebrate – Indigenous people who for millennia have been faithful custodians of these lands now called Australia, and who, by their example, have taught us how to care for the Earth.[28] There are LGBTQI+ folx who remained faithful in the face of their silencing and oppression, and strove for the full embrace of others despite their own exclusion. An examination of the degree of awareness amongst evangelicals of the breadth of this family tree, and the legacy of social justice advocacy, requires a different kind of study – qualitative and quantitative research that is not the domain of this thesis. Yet there is a way forward. What has been done can be undone as we centre the marginalised and tell the stories of those who have until now been erased from our histories. In the conclusion of her work Wright says of the Eureka rebels, 'For the most part, they were British subjects denied the basic civilities of British justice. They were ethnic insiders being treated like outsiders.'[29] This is evocative of the lives of Duncan and Levvy, who were Christian 'insiders' with a fervent faith, yet have been treated as 'outsiders' in Australian religious histories. It is my contention that through biographical case studies and life writing we can bring to light the stories of women like Duncan and Levvy, and in doing so correct a one-sided version of history that inadequately addresses the long tradition of political and social justice activism in the church.

[27] Du Mez, *Jesus and John Wayne*, 304.
[28] 'These lands now called Australia' is the designation used by Aboriginal Christian leader Brook Prentis, who is a proud Wakka Wakka woman.
[29] Clare Wright, *Forgotten Rebels of Eureka* (Melbourne, Vic.: The Text Publishing Company, 2013), 505, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/mqu/detail.action?docID=1334233.

An apologia

Early in 2021 I was asked to share my story at the church I helped to found, and at which I am a pastor. It was the first time that I shared my life story (or 'testimony' as it is called in Christian circles) since I had come out as a gay woman. Since then, I have been shunned by the denomination in which I was ordained and fired from a job I loved lecturing at a theological college in Sydney. I spoke about my upbringing in a Christian home as a pastor's daughter (both my parents are ministers), of coming to Christ in my early teens and discovering the breadth of God's love for me. Then I told of my comprehensive self-closeting as I realised that there was a part of me (my sexuality) that could never be acknowledged or acted upon. To do so would be to forfeit the love and salvation of God, and acceptance in the Christian community – the only community I had ever known. What followed was nearly thirty years of psychological and emotional agony. During that time, I was frequently depressed and suicidal. *At the same time*, I rose to leadership in the evangelical church, speaking at camps and conferences in Australia and North America. I became a missionary training pastors and lay leaders throughout Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and finally I was appointed a tenured lecturer at the Baptist Bible College in Sydney.

It must have been excruciating to listen to, as through tears I told of meeting my wife Bronte, falling in love and finally having the courage to come out – first to myself, then to those closest to me, and finally to the Christian community that would ostracise me just as I had so long feared. Yet I was also able to speak of the peace and acceptance I have found in the affirming Christian community and in the queer community, which I had been taught my whole life was intrinsically evil. Today, my mental health is better than it has ever been. I am happy. I am loved.

When the service finished, one of the young gay women in the church asked if she could speak with me. At first, she found it hard to speak through her tears, but eventually she was able to say,

'Thank you. Thank you for coming out and sharing your story about all you went through, so that I don't have to spend the next 20 years going through that and replicating your pain. Thank you for creating a space where I can be safe and loved and live true to my faith and sexuality.' Even though she was thanking me, it was one of the most healing conversations I have had in my life.

Du Mez writes that white evangelicalism is characterised by an 'ever-present sense of threat', and traces how issues of gender and sexuality have become the locus of battle in recent years.[30] In such a context, labelling continues to be an act of erasure not only in Australian churches, but in our religious histories. To bear the wrong label is to be written out of the story. A few weeks ago, I had just finished watching season 1 of *Total Control* on ABC iView when I realised: this whole thesis was built on a misbelief.[31] I began my research looking for heroes – women who had dared to stand up to the patriarchal constraints of church, ministry, and faith. Women who had broken the rules, smashed the boxes that contained them, and been punished for it by silence, and erasure from our faith histories. But that is not what I found. I found Levvy and Duncan, women who squeezed themselves into the required boxes, did all that was required of them to serve a vision they believed in, and were punished anyway. Erased not because they broke the rules, but because they would never fit the boxes. The boxes were made for men. I realised that in writing this thesis I have not found heroes, but women like me, who were complicit in the very systems that oppressed them. Women who did everything that was asked of them and were still erased.

[30] Du Mez, *Jesus and John Wayne*, 13.
[31] 'Total Control' (Australia: ABC iview, 2019), https://iview.abc.net.au/show/total-control. The series tells the story of an Aboriginal woman who is invited by the Prime Minister to take up a vacant Senate seat in order to advocate for the rights of her people. Instead, she is problematized and ignored.

In that sense, this thesis is an apology, in both senses of the word. It is an *apologia* – a defence of the faith of women written out of our faith histories. Duncan and Levvy loved God, their faith communities and the people whose lives they sought to improve because of that faith. They deserve to have their faith recognised, and their stories told.

This is also my apology, my statement of contrition and remorse for the women, lesbians and queers who I told to cut off parts of themselves in order to fit the box. I am sorry. I was wrong. You never had to choose between your faith and who you are. Levvy and Duncan were never going to overcome the forces that pushed them to the margins. Their intersectional erasure was too broad, too ill-defined. But we can. We can tell the stories without curating the boxes. When women tell us they are people of faith, we can believe them, and include them in our faith heritage. We must not limit the story to 'faith worthies' – those faithful enough to fit in predetermined boxes about who is allowed to claim the heritage of faith.

To truly overcome the comprehensive, intersectional erasure that has plagued Australian religious histories will require a collaborative effort. A sisterhood, if you will, but broad enough to joyfully include trans and non-binary folx, and male allies. The stories that have been written and are being written that centre those previously excluded must continue to be published. Works like Rademaker's *Found in Translation*, that recovers the story of the Anindilyakwa-speaking people of the Groote Eylandt archipelago,[32] and Cruickshank and Grimshaw's *White Women, Aboriginal Missions and Australian Settler Governments*.[33] It is my belief, however, that we must go even further than this. In *Forever England*, feminist historian Alison Light asked, 'On

[32] Laura Rademaker, *Found in Translation: Many Meanings on a North Australian Mission* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2018).
[33] Joanna Cruickshank and Patricia Grimshaw, *White Women, Aboriginal Missions and Australian Settler Governments: Maternal Contradictions* (Boston: Brill, 2019).

what terms . . . should modern women seek to enter the historical narrative?'[34] She suggests that we might, in fact, require a different plot. It is time for Australian religious historians to craft a new narrative, which moves those who have been erased from the margins to the centre. To do that we cannot only write companion volumes that stand alongside 'broad histories', addressing what was previously ignored. Instead, let us gather specialists in each field – Indigenous history, women's history, queer history, migrant histories – and together rewrite the bigger story. We can continue to retrospectively correct the record with additions, a task that will always be needed, as we discover more and more of those stories which were cast aside. I hope this thesis contributes to that task. Yet we can go even further. Let us also begin afresh, writing a 'big history' of religion in Australia which starts with the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and never stops telling their story. A religious history that recognises that women make up more than fifty per cent of the people in our churches, and gives them at least fifty per cent of the voice. A history of faith that recognises the LGBTQI+ people who have been told they must choose between their faith and sexual or gender identity, and yet who loved God and themselves anyway and never left the faith. It is only in writing such a history, where the voices of the overlooked and erased are allowed to tell their story in their own terms and from the pulpit, as it were, that we can hope to finally stem the tide of intersectional erasure and tell the story of religion in Australia in a way that honours all.

[34] Alison Light, 'Forever England: Femininity, Literature, and Conservatism between the Wars' (London: Routledge, 1991), 5.

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