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**AUSTRALIAN
AND
NEW ZEALAND
RELIGIOUS HISTORY
1788-1988**

A Collection of Papers and Addresses

**Delivered at the 11th Joint Conference of the
Australian and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools and
Society for Theological Studies held at Burgmann College,
Australian National University,
5-8 September 1988**

**Edited by
Robert S.M. Withycombe**

ANZSTS/ATS

Published for the Australian and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools and Society for Theological Studies and distributed by 'The 1988 Joint Conference Committee', c/- P.O. Box 98, Jamison Centre, A.C.T. 2614.

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Published December 1988.

Camera-ready copy by The Typist, 19 Jansz Crescent, Griffith, A.C.T.

Printing and binding by Copy-Oik, Philip, A.C.T.

ISBN 0 7316 4910 9

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The Evangelical Tradition in South Australia

Definition

My interest in this paper is focussed upon a group of Christians who were identifiable in Britain and Ireland from the later 18th century and in Australia from 1788 onwards. They have consistently called themselves 'Evangelicals', whatever denomination they have been part of. By this term they have meant a reference to certain Christian doctrines, combined with certain styles of life and even worship. The term also encompassed a view, an interpretation, of the history of the Christian church, especially since the Reformation. The doctrines emphasised by 'Evangelicals', those who took their religion seriously from the late 18th century onwards, included the necessity of the death of Christ as the atonement for the sins of the people of the world, appropriated individually by faith and not by works or rituals. This emphasis on personal salvation went along with a confidence that the Bible was God's unique word of salvation for the whole world, and that the merciful God who had provided for such a salvation in Christ was in control of the history of the world. Such a salvation, therefore, needed to be communicated urgently to the peoples of the world. Some Evangelicals even went so far as to argue that the evangelisation of the world would influence the timing of its end. This question of the successive dispensations of history became controversial by the 1840s and was never recognised as central in the Evangelical tradition.

As might be realised, this tradition consciously claimed the heritage of the Reformation of the 16th century in England and Europe, marked as it was with the blood of martyrs and the writings of such great ones as Luther, Calvin and Cranmer. If speaking from within the Church of England, the 39 Articles would usually be added as definitive of the tradition perhaps with the Book of Common Prayer thrown in too. Within other Protestant denominations somewhat different references to formularies and church orders were made.

As is well known, the Evangelical Revival of the 18th century, driven by the leadership of the Wesley brothers and George Whitefield, was the major element of active religion in England from the 1740s to the 1840s. While Wesleyan Methodism was by 1800 a separate denomination, influenced too by the Wesley brothers' inheritance from the "High" tradition of the Church of England taught them by their father, the influence of the Evangelical Revival has spread widely within all the Protestant denominations in England. The curse of unitarianism within eighteenth century Presbyterianism was in retreat, the obsessions within the Baptists about identifying the elect were being

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modified. In such a context of serious religion, many Anglicans could work in fellowship with such nonconformist Protestants, especially in the great Societies created in the last ten years of the 18th century, notably the Bible Society, and in the missions to Continental Europe and to the Jews (the latter because it would help bring in the Kingdom). Sometimes cooperation was not complete, so we find the London Missionary Society gradually becoming the sole possession of the Congregational Union, while the *Church* Missionary Society (CMS) replaced it in the affection of Evangelical Anglicans.²

Evangelicals and the establishment of South Australia

The colony of South Australia was promoted in England in the early 1830s. It was a decade of creative and radical proposals for economic and social change.³ The debate over parliamentary reform had seen the end of a generation of Tory government, and the entry of the Whigs into the promised land. An avalanche of proposals greeted them. Farmers called for relief from the burden of a rising poor rate. The Irish wanted greater control over their own affairs. Municipal reform, factories, health, prisons and much more were on the many agendas. The economy was changing, with profit flowing from industrialisation, while the grain-growing farmers and the more cautious investors looked for better returns and did not find them, though not for a want of advice about how to make their resources work harder.

In particular, many of the more radical reformers possessed a deep distrust of the power of the Church of England, which as the Established Church had denied them full civil and religious participation in English life. While they accepted the changes of 1828-9 which removed burdens on Nonconformists and emancipated Catholics, there were still many changes to be fought for, and a long history of second-class citizenship to remember. These attitudes went far to set the agenda of political action in the wake of a generation of growth in the Nonconformist denominations because of the Evangelical revival.

In this volatile setting the central propositions about the new colony of South Australia put about by its propagandists, beginning with Edward Gibbon Wakefield's "Letter from Sydney" of 1829, can be located with some confidence.⁴ In the succession of writings expounding Wakefield's ideas about systematic colonisation there was much about maximising the return on heretofore underutilised capital and little or nothing about religion. To put it bluntly, the promoters of the colony of South Australia were after a swift and substantial capital gain. The colony was planned as an exercise in investing unproductive capital in a coordinated way in an environment where land was cheap.⁵ The South Australian Company, for example, wrote in its 1835 Prospectus, of 'a secure investment', as likely 'to yield a handsome profit'. On the proceeds of the land sales people would be brought to the new colony in controlled quantities to serve as workers and supervisors of this investment: it would indeed be a paradise for capitalists.

But those men of business were mostly men of religion as well. Some even shrewdly calculated that religious freedom would be a selling point in attracting

investors from among the disgruntled Nonconformists or others who felt excluded from the dominant religious ethos of the ruling classes. Indeed, the planners believed, as a matter of organisational theory about how their investments would best flourish, that cheap government and limited government initiative would promote the new colony best. These obsessions about economics and religion informed some of the thinking and action about South Australia. The most famous of these propagandists with a religious flavour was the Baptist banker, George Fife Angas, who deliberately sought out Nonconformist clergy to promote the new colony, and who in his appeals drew especial attention to the opportunities for religious freedom offered by the new colony. His appeals were but part of the total promotion effort by which the necessary initial investment was raised, largely as is well known from Angas' own resources. His religious appeals did not then have such an impact on the investing public after all.

So it must be emphasised that South Australia was not formed *because* of a desire for religious freedom. That is a myth propagated by the title of Douglas Pike's famous book, *Paradise of Dissent*, though not from a careful reading of Pike's detailed research. It is a myth full of wistful admiration for the Pilgrim fathers which fails to address the entirely different ideas current in the 1830s.

If, however, there *was* a religious flavour to the colony, it was that of Evangelical Protestantism, widely shared in England across the still fluid denominational boundaries of the 1830s, and especially among the marginal men on the make who comprised the group promoting South Australia. In a sense, this is only to be expected. Those who were at peace with the existing economic and religious systems were unlikely to be anxious to take risks with their money or their beliefs. It was the burgeoning outcome of the Evangelical Revival which shaped the lives of many potential participators in the South Australian experiment, as their behaviour in the new colony was to reveal.

But denominationalism still had its influence in the founding of South Australia before the intending colonists set out for the Antipodes. By early 1836 separate fundraising societies to promote religious institutions in the new colony were put into motion on behalf of the Anglicans and the Congregationalists.⁶ The promoters of the South Australian Church Society wrote of transplanting a whole society, where religion, as one of society's essential attributes, should take immediate root. Those writing on behalf of the Society for Providing Religious Instruction Among the Dissenters in the Proposed New Colony of South Australia emphasised that 'the colony must depend for the enforcement of religion upon the voluntary contributions of the settlers, and of those who in the mother country may feel interested in their welfare'. Out of these fundraising efforts flowed the appointment of the first two clergymen, the Revd Charles Beaumont Howard as first Church of England clergyman, and the Revd Thomas Quinton Stowe the first Congregational clergyman.

In these founding influences there was little reference to Roman Catholicism. That was because the founders of the colony of South Australia were English, and drew their investments and their labour force from the shires of England.

Their Protestantism made them suspicious of Roman Catholics, and while their liberal political views might make them tolerant of them, their social and national attitudes made them prefer English to Irish workers. All this went to reinforce the Evangelical Protestant character of the colony's foundation. So too did the prompt establishment of a Lodge of Free Masons, convened in September 1838 by the staunchly Protestant Irishman, George Strickland Kingston.⁷ Catholicism in South Australia would be a missionary work.⁸

Early Founding Years

What was crucial for the establishment of a tradition, especially in a matter as personal and yet as fundamental as religion, was the character and commitment of the first leaders. That was true of Howard and Stowe.

Howard was an Irishman, trained at Trinity College, Dublin, who had been serving curacies in the diocese of Chester under the forcefully Evangelical bishop Sumner.⁹ All the evidence of that training and experience show that Howard was a convinced Evangelical. He readily manifested those convictions in the colony by his urgent, eager and exhausting ministry. It is hard to distinguish his activities as Colonial Chaplain from those as incumbent of the first Anglican congregation, but some matters were obviously more relevant to his parochial Anglican ministry rather than his public religious duties. Thus he oversaw the design and erection of a simple parish church; he moved about the pioneering colony reading services and preaching, encouraging the gradual creation of further groups which would eventually become Anglican congregations; he exercised pastoral care wherever he was called; he joined a variety of public bodies and served on several committees (the Hospital, the Temperance Society, the Sailors Society, the Schools Society, the Savings Bank, the Botanic Gardens and more). For all this he was widely approved in a colony where concerned active Protestantism was taken for granted, the basis of the colony's 'common Christianity'.

On one occasion however his ministry was challenged by sensitive Nonconformists. The cause does not concern us, but his reply thanking his supporters (which like the criticism appeared in the press) does. It gives as clear evidence as we could wish for of Howard's Evangelical stance. He wrote to express his hope, in replying to his friends,

that the connection which exists between us as a minister and his flock may not only be lasting but of daily spiritual benefit to both, is my heartfelt prayer. May your minister so deeply feel his responsibility that he may with earnestness set forth "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" as the only foundation for a sinner's hopes, and the sanctification of His Spirit as the only satisfactory evidence of having secured an interest in his salvation. May you, his flock receive the word at his mouth "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God", which is able to make you "wise unto salvation". Thus may we hope that the union which has com-

menced here below will be continued above, and prove everlasting as eternity.¹⁰

The Evangelical piety of this statement might be cloying, but it is overwhelming in the directness of its Evangelical doctrine.

Unfortunately, Howard died in July 1843, worn out from the demands of his ministry. The Revd James Farrell, his successor at Trinity Church, had arrived in the colony in 1840 with the financial support of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Like Howard, Farrell was a TCD graduate. He maintained the Evangelical ministry already begun, even to exchanging public letters with his congregation in 1848 as Howard had done a few years before. They thanked him that he had 'never shunned to declare unto them the whole counsel of Almighty God, and have ever laboured to place before your congregation, with all fidelity and earnestness, the truth as it is in Jesus'. Farrell, never a man for many words, deprecated his achievements and claimed merely that he has "endeavoured to preach Christ and Him crucified, as the sinner's sole and sure hope; persuaded that there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved". Again the evidence of the reality of the Evangelical tradition in South Australia is clear.¹¹

Most of the other early clergy, sent out with support from the SPG shared these Evangelical attitudes. James Pollitt was a former Church Missionary Society missionary in the West Indies, while E. K. Miller, John Fulford and W. H. Coombs were younger recruits. Coombs served his whole clerical career at Gawler, and at his life's end endowed annual lectures in the cathedral on prophecy, a sure mark of the Evangelical's concern with the coming rule of our Lord. Fulford, while incumbent of St James's, Blakiston, Mount Barker, preached an eloquent sermon on the occasion of the death of one his parishioners in 1856. As might be expected, it was a word of comfort to the bereaved, but it was also a ringing assertion of the gospel and a direct invitation to his hearers and readers to accept that gospel of hope for themselves.

But the good news of salvation by Jesus Christ proclaims to us that Jesus died for our sins, rose for our justification, and has now ascended into the kingdom of heaven to prepare a place for all believers ... Let me, then, intreat *you* that have hitherto led careless and ungodly lives, to begin at once, by all your powers of mind and body, to serve God ... to the true believer in a crucified Saviour ... "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" ...

Any wonder his hearers arranged for the printing of the sermon.¹²

As we continue to examine this Anglican strand of Evangelicalism in the colony we meet, head on, the person of Augustus Short, first bishop of Adelaide. He arrived in 1847 full of enthusiasm for his duties. He served till 1881. As fully authorised episcopal head of the Anglican communion in South Australia his

judgements and decisions over such a long period were crucial to the tradition of churchmanship which emerged in the colony.

Short had little sympathy for the Evangelical tradition. While in the early years of his episcopate he reiterated the Protestant account of the gospel, he was a High Churchman in his attitude to authority within the church and his view of the special historicity of the Church of England. Thus for example, while in his 'charge' on the occasion of the ordination of Fulford, Miller and Coombs in 1848, Short first emphasised the apostolic validity of a preaching ministry threefold in character, which was a task involving leading sinners to repentance, in these terms;

It will be your crown and joy to set forth "Christ crucified"
"as the power of God unto salvation to every one believeth";
the fulness and freeness of God's mercy to them that repent;
the power of Divine grace to regenerate the heart of man,
and to sanctify it for the presence of Almighty God ...

he went on to speak about matters of church order. He claimed that their ordination possessed validity traceable through the Apostolic succession of actual bishops of the Church of England.¹⁴ This dual reference to scripture and the authority flowing from the episcopal tradition found repeated enunciation in Short's speeches in the 1850s.¹⁵ When pressed in a public controversy in 1850-51 he aligned himself with the Protestant character of his Church, but never so as to compromise its separate and unique identity.¹⁶ He published a strong rejection of 'Tractarian and Anti-Protestant views'. More to the point, it does not seem likely that he ever knowingly appointed an Evangelical clergyman from England to his diocese, while he happily imported a flow of high Churchmen and then men whom he knew to be active promoters of the views of the Oxford Movement and its outgrowth, the Anglo-Catholic style of worship and church life popular from the 1860s.

Janet Scarfe in her MA thesis has examined Short's work in detail with some sympathy and sensitivity. Her title 'Bridge of Polished Steel as Fine as a Hair' was drawn from a contemporary judgement about Short's efforts which wished to emphasise what the observer believed to be the wonderful balancing act which Short achieved between the various parties in the diocese. The judgement was offered in the 1850s when indeed Short was managing substantial disagreement between the older Evangelical tradition and the newer High Church thrust developing in his denomination in South Australia. Scarfe shows that, taking the whole of Short's tenure into view, it was less of a balancing act and more a steady acceptance of the practices and then the teachings of the Anglo-Catholic tradition. She presents a picture of the evolution of Short's ideas and practices away from generalised Protestantism and towards the high claims for the sacraments, the priest and the bishop made by the Anglo-Catholics. What is more, Scarfe presents this evolution as the necessary and preferable development of Anglican churchmanship in the colony. Her account emerges from the point of view of Short - from his diaries, speeches and decisions. The older tradition which he did so much to undermine is treated as other, from the out-

side. There is little attempt to measure its rich and powerful appeal, nor its valid claims to primacy in the colony or in the Church of England at home. Short's balancing act can be interpreted in other ways: for example as the authoritarian destruction of much of the Evangelical tradition in South Australia.¹⁷ We will examine some of the controversies of Short's episcopate from that point of view in a moment.

Before we do that, we should examine the evolution of other Protestant groups in the colony. Thomas Quinton Stow, a protege of Thomas Binney of Weigh House Chapel, London, was sent to South Australia with the approval of the Congregational Union of England and Wales after training under Dr David Bogue at the Missionary College at Gosport. He received much influential support - from the Baptist merchant George Fife Angas in England, from William Giles, the South Australian Company manager who had been appointed by Angas, in the colony. His ministry began vigorously and by the 1850s there were 240 full members and several men being prepared for the ministry under Stow's guidance. Stow's preaching was widely commended.¹⁸ It seemed as if Congregational nonconformity would become the defining Protestant tradition in the colony. But it was not to be. Congregationalism never recovered from the loss of support it experienced in the goldrush years of the early 1850s. Its subsequent character was also greatly influenced by the work of James Jefferis, appointed direct from ordination in England to Brougham Place, North Adelaide in 1859. He espoused "progressive theology" and led the enunciation of that more liberal view of Christianity among the surviving Congregationalists during his two pastorates in Adelaide.¹⁹ The great confidence generated by the early nineteenth century English expansion of Congregationalism as a result of the Evangelical revival was not therefore replicated in Adelaide a generation later.

The same was not true of the various branches of Methodism. The Wesleyans, the Primitive Methodists, the New Connexion Methodists and the Bible Christians all found a footing in South Australia in the first generation. They survived the crises of the 1840s and 1850s, and by the end of the century could lay claim to a combined total of about 25% of the census population of the colony, far in excess of their share in any other colony in Australia and obviously a very powerful and influential bloc in South Australia. It was a remarkable achievement. It was one in which I believe the Evangelical tradition played a major part.

The Methodists gained from their founder and the Evangelical Revival an emphasis on all the Christian doctrines mentioned in my introduction. In addition, it was easy to detect among them Wesley's sense of urgency about evangelism and his view that grace was open for all to receive. What is more, the techniques of church extension used by the Methodists - the circuit, lay preachers, class meetings - and the ethnic reinforcement base provided by the migration of Cornish miners all strengthened the appeal and impact of Methodism. In the person of Daniel Draper, who led the Wesleyans in Adelaide from 1846 to 1855, Methodists gained a pastor of great administrative ability, Christian vision and Evangelical faith. He did much to carry the Wesleyans to secure strength.

But the expanding adherence to Methodism needs more attention. In the second phase of the colony's life, from the 1860s to 1914, when farming life replaced the frantic and precarious life of the first generation, Methodist congregations spread colony-wide.²⁰ They easily outstripped Anglicans and all the other Protestants in the number of their adherents. Charles Wesley's hymns, boldly sung, became the community rallying cry in town after town across South Australia. In part at least this must mean that between the "neologism", the liberalism, of the Congregationalists, and the growing Anglo-Catholicism of the Anglicans, the Evangelical thrust of the Methodists gained them adherents all over the colony. True, their circuits, their simple arrangements for preaching and for ordination aided that spread. But the behaviour of their competitors made it easier to differentiate their product: they became the residual Protestant grouping in South Australia, unchallenged till after World War Two for effective religious leadership in the colony.

Not that the various Methodist denominations were uninfluenced by changes in religious thinking. Hugh Gilmore and Brian Wibberley were two late nineteenth century clergymen whose deliberate liberalism gained widespread attention in Adelaide - both at Wellington Square Primitive Methodist, Wibberley also in the pages of the Australian Christian Commonwealth.²¹ These men and others deliberately sought to combine their Evangelical heritage with the liberal tendencies of thinking about science and society, making progress the ally and outcome of religion. There is plenty of English evidence that the attempt at such a combination was fraught with danger for the strength, character and security of the Evangelical tradition. What these men increasingly were espousing were the values of the age, including vigorous support for the British Empire and its wars, and a conservative and entrenched account of social behaviour that owed only a little to the Bible.

There were various moments of truth in the out-working of this liberal influence within Methodism, but one to notice was the debate in the General Conference of Australian Methodism in 1923 as to whether or not Peake's commentary on the Bible could be allowed for study in the theological college. Peake was a symbol of modern, as opposed to Evangelical, scholarship. The vote to approve his commentary symbolised half a century of drift away from the clarity and commitment of Evangelicalism within Methodism.²²

As yet, it is not possible to say much about the Baptists. Their principal historian presents a tale of repeated division among eager and hopeful Baptists which contributed much to the relative ineffectiveness of the denomination in South Australia, despite the occasional presence of singular pastors such as Silas Mead, first minister at Flinders Street, Adelaide. Aside from the matter of baptism which set them apart from most other Protestant denominations, the Baptists as a denomination maintained their official commitment to the original Evangelical character of their formularies.²³

Meanwhile, to return to Anglicanism, Bishop Short's High Church preferences did not go ahead without challenge. The problem for the critics was that Short held the initiative, and appeared always to be promoting the cause consistent

with the spirit of the age. Thus when several congregations, led by Trinity and St Luke's, Whitmore Square, expressed reservations about the new diocesan constitution in the 1850s, moderate opinion forced them to cooperate with the other parishes and the bishops: complete withdrawal was not an option.²⁴ Again, when Thomas Binney visited the colonies in 1858, there was a resurgence of the common Christianity of the early cooperating years of the pioneers, as men considered wistfully how there might be one united Protestant church in the colony. Short's thoughtful reply could bow towards the Protestant heritage his denomination shared with the others, but he would not budge on episcopacy or church government.²⁵ Denominationalism had come to South Australia to stay.

Again in 1868-70 and in 1880 there were vigorous controversies about the conduct of church services. Evangelicals, or at least anti-ritualist Protestants, many of them worshipping at St Luke's under the ministry of James Pollitt, an early arrival and a convinced Evangelical, sought to get synod to condemn the Anglo-Catholic rituals being introduced by Russell (Pulteney Street) and Dove (Walkerville). D.J. Ibbetson was the clergyman most vociferous in 1869, both at Synod and later in print, in challenging these ritualists. His was a fully developed critique of the Oxford Tractarians of the 1830s and 1840s, and their heirs, the ritualists of the 1860s. He argued that these people appealed to reason and sense, not to scripture, to authorise their departures from orthodox doctrine and practice. He argued, in company with the leaders of the English Reformation, whom he quoted, that the Church was the Communion of Saints everywhere distributed and that the Apostolic succession was a succession in doctrine, not in person

in which the *Scriptures* are honoured and appealed to in all controversies of Faith, and Creeds, Articles, and Liturgies, &c., urged and binding only insofar as they are sanctioned and supported by Holy Writ.

He expressed alarm at the news that worshippers were leaving a city church (possibly St Luke's) 'because of the practices of the minister in the conduct of the services', and called upon Bishop Short to state clearly what his preferences were.²⁶

Another outspoken critic was James Penn Boucaut, the colony's Attorney General and eventually a Supreme Court judge. He advised the St Luke's Vestry in 1869 not to adopt the bishop's model trust deed, for he knew what a loss of independence this would bring to the Evangelical character of the ministry at St Luke's.²⁷ There was controversy during 1870 while James Pollitt was on leave and his son, Henry Martyn acted as locum. The younger Pollitt, already a declared ritualist, was made to pledge that he would introduce no innovations in worship, that he would discontinue the special services for 'Great Days' which he had inaugurated, and that he would maintain the services as they had been under his father 'and would allow no Ritualistic Books, Music or practices introduced into either, or the changing of books'.²⁸ It might have been humiliating to H.M. Pollitt, but these demands reflected the sensitivity of

the St Luke's congregation, especially as they contemplated the new ceremonies being introduced across the city at St Paul's.²⁹ Later in 1870 it was William Marshall, H.M. Pollitt's assistant, who was attacked at a special Vestry meeting. This time, a motion regretting the loss of membership as a result of innovations was carried with only two dissenters.³⁰ At the 1871 annual Vestry meeting, Boucaut came out vigorously in condemnation of the Ritualistic Party not only as 'against the Church's doctrine, but [also] against the law'. The Vestry responded by electing him a trustee of the church.³¹

Scarfe shows that affection for Short, a desire to avoid disturbance despite the warnings about ritualism arriving from England, and a disbelief that questions of millinery were vital all combined to see the protests sink with little impact. The Evangelical spokesmen were noisy, lacking stature and ability. Perhaps some of their support had leached away to Methodism. The unwillingness of Synod on each occasion to condemn Dove and Russell, or to direct the bishop in any way, showed how comfortable most of them were with the new practices, or at least how unwilling they were to challenge their bishop, who had so completely identified himself with the colony where his large family had grown up and married, and whose contributions to the general life of the colony had been so outstanding, including the creation of St Peter's Collegiate School and a leading part in the foundation of the University of Adelaide.

The Evangelical Counter-Attack in the late Nineteenth Century

Not all became liberals, Anglo-Catholics or drifted into unbelief. There were vigorous campaigns to make South Australia a Christian country from the 1880s onwards, when the concerns about Christian moral standards were raised with great vigour. Vigorous campaigns were launched on behalf of temperance, Sunday observance and the reading of the Bible in schools. All of these causes readily gained Evangelical support, although the motives and purposes of the promoters were wider than just an Evangelical constituency. More liberal churchmen could also seek to use the law of the land to Christianise the community as readily as any Evangelical. Indeed, it need not be so obvious to some Evangelicals that to attempt such "Christianisation" was wise. To most though this was a valid and necessary part of the Christian life.

Alongside these endeavours were a string of evangelistic campaigns in the same years from the 1880s to World War One, all designed to stem the perceived loss of support for Christianity in the community, all employing the most up-to-date communication methods such as torchlight processions, mass meetings, rousing singing, even female speakers, as well as direct and psychologically forceful appeals for commitment.³²

Particular denominations sought to develop this same sort of evangelistic ministry, especially focussing on the poorer classes of the city and the port. Even earlier, the Adelaide City Mission began permanently in 1867 (with a prehistory in the 1850s), modelled on similar efforts in London and Sydney. It was Evangelical and interdenominational, a classic expression of the tradition. By 1880 a newer attack on the same problem arrived in Adelaide - the Salvation Army.

Eager in its concern for evangelism, this tough new group cut many corners and gave new vigour to the Arminian emphasis maintained by the Methodists from whom the Salvationists sprang. Then in 1901 the Methodists, now united, set up their own institutional mission to the poor, their 'Central Methodist Mission'. That element of the 'Evangelical tradition' focussing on the offer of grace in Christ was therefore receiving a variety of reinforcements in Adelaide as elsewhere in Australia in this generation.³⁵

The same could be seen at the congregational level too. W. G. Marsh at St Luke's (1896-1911) and F. Webb at Trinity (1895-1925) were both vigorous evangelistic preachers within the Evangelical mould. Soon after his arrival Webb began preaching mission sermons in his old hall in Morphett Street in an effort to attract the rough elements of what was now an industrialised part of the city, but unfortunately his voice gave out and he had to desist.³⁵

Marsh created many organisations and vigorously canvassed his parish, however poor. He appointed Miss Bayly, a deaconess from the new Sydney training institution, to assist him in this visiting work. His Wardens remarked to the 1897 Vestry meeting that 'St Luke's congregation have much cause for thankfulness to Almighty God that he has been pleased to send to us in our necessity one who is so full of zeal for God's service and the salvation of souls ...'³⁵ It is not clear with what motive the Bishop of the day authorised the establishment of new parishes carved out of the broad area of responsibility carried by St Luke's, first St George's, Goodwood, and then St James', Mile End, later to be called West Adelaide. What is clear is that these massive excisions of suburban territory locked St Luke's into the city within the parklands, from whence prosperous citizens were rapidly moving. What is also clear is that the two new parishes quickly took on Anglo-Catholic character, so much so that Bishop Nutter Thomas took legal action to restrain Canon Wise at St George's, though with little effect.³⁶

More important than such congregationally based efforts as these - possible it should be noted because there were trustees with the right to nominate incumbents of their choice without deferring to the bishop - were the creation of deliberately Evangelical organisations beyond the range of one congregation. There had been a Sunday School League in the 1870s which possessed deliberate Evangelical character, but it seems to have faded, possibly because Sunday Schools were so intimately bound up with the character of the individual congregation. Soon after the arrival of David Knox in 1912 to succeed Marsh at St Luke's the steps which had been taken to establish a branch of the Church Missionary Society were carried forward to fruition. Knox joined Webb (who had begun the project) to ensure the survival of this organisation in South Australia. The CMS was one of the constituent agencies of the Evangelical Revival, dated in England from the 1790s. Its focus had always been on the unevangelised peoples of the world, not British colonies, which were left to the SPG. By the 1890s branches were emerging in Sydney and Melbourne, and there was likelihood of full Australian CMS identity. The Society was wholly Evangelical in outlook, and aimed to commit Anglicans in Australia to an expansion of evangelism in Asia and Africa. General Synod of the Church of

England in Australia recognised the Australian support for CMS in 1915 by giving it full status alongside the ABM as a missionary society of the Church of England in Australia. Bishop Nutter Thomas in Adelaide sought to reject this recognition, and Knox took him on. It took two years of manoeuvres and several vigorous exchanges in synod, some unprintable, before Thomas was forced to acknowledge the lawful character of CMS in South Australia, or rather the illegality of his stubborn opposition to this Evangelical institution's recognition in South Australia. The branch therefore dates its formation from 1917.

That step, denominational in character as it was, was the turning point for the Evangelical tradition in South Australia. There was now an alternative rallying point for Evangelicals outside the votes of synod, which tended to follow the bishop politely and concentrate on internal matters. Quickly the new branch showed results with funds and missionaries being found in increasing quantities between the wars. The CMS committee undoubtedly served as a contact point for Evangelicals within the Church of England as they reviewed the opportunities and difficulties which surrounded them.³⁷

Another Anglican Evangelical counter-attack came in the form of the Bush Church Aid Society in the 1920s. Already several Anglo-Catholic bishops of country dioceses had drawn on the enthusiasm and interest in religious orders among young Anglo-Catholic clergy in England by creating a series of 'bush brotherhoods'. Clergy served, often for just seven years, in missionary postings all over the Australian outback. BCA was the vigorous, if belated, Evangelical response. Funds and organisation would emplace Evangelical clergy in the outback where "the real Australians" were ready to be evangelised (!). Understandably BCA was welcomed by some bishops with the same enthusiasm as the horse outside the walls of Troy, but the Australian character and base of BCA have meant that it has been the longest-lasting and best maintained of the missionary organisations aimed at strengthening a ministry in the sparsely settled parts of Australia.³⁸ The continuing South Australia connexion can be illustrated in various ways: two rectors in succession at Trinity had been BCA missionaries before appointment; the present state BCA leadership, much of its funding and several members of the descendant family of its founder, Bishop Kirkby, are all located at Trinity. It should be noted that its South Australian state office is now located in the Anglican Church office!

Yet another, and less successful, effort was Knox's creation of an Evangelical Trust just before he left Adelaide in 1922. It was designed to permit the independent accumulation of assets against the time when key opportunities became available. The Evangelical character of its base was strongly expressed in the declaration of belief demanded of its trustees:

I accept and acknowledge ...

The Supreme Authority of the Holy Scriptures.

The Acceptance of the Reformation settlement of the Protestant and Reformed Church of England as confessed in the language of the 39 Articles taken in their literal and grammatical sense.

The free access of the individual to God through Christ alone.

The right of private judgement within the limits of the Creeds and Articles.

The right of individuals to take combined action for the extension of the Kingdom of God.³⁹

But several factors have eviscerated it, despite Knox's strategic vision. The Great Depression possibly sucked it into welfare work and undermined its long term security. Its close relationship with St Luke's and the mutual intransigence of the trustees and the incumbent there in the 1960s saw it become merely an adjunct to that now run-down parish until a traumatic legal separation of the two in the 1970s. Whether the Trust will become a late twentieth-century agent to sustain Evangelicals in South Australia remains to be seen. If it does so, it will have to overcome the fundamental weakness of such structures, which is their lack of accountability and specificity: the SA Evangelical Trust became what the rector of St Luke's wanted it to be and in the end it lost its way when the trustees fell out among themselves. There needs to be greater responsiveness to the living congregation convinced of their Evangelical heritage and committed to promoting it in specific and evolving opportunities.

We should next notice the emergence of the bible college movement in South Australia. These successive agencies were another example of the search for Evangelically-controlled agencies outside the direction of the denominational councils and synods. Once again the problems of accountability and specific purpose can be observed.

First came the Angas College in 1893, founded by the Presbyterian pastor, evangelist and welfare worker, the Revd W. Lockhart Morton, on 'faith' principles and policies learnt from Hudson Taylor and George Mueller.⁴⁰ Then came the college funded with the surplus of funds from the Chapman-Alexander mission of 1914. By the 1920s both had been absorbed into the denominational training colleges as trustees hurt by the changes imposed by World War One yielded to the importunities of denominational conferences and gave over their resources. These were lamentable failures of will promoted by the exposed separate character of the organisations. They were followed by the Adelaide Bible Institute in 1924. For 25 years this was a struggling night-time only effort sustained in manses, parsonages and rented halls by devout men with a sense of urgency for training and sending missionaries. In 1949 it was re-formed and took on a more permanent character, along with similar self-consciously Evangelical training colleges in other parts of Australia. Resources and quality leadership were crucial. For a time ABI was based at Victor Harbour where, especially under the leadership of Geoff Bingham in the 1960s, it flourished as a training ground for clergy and missionaries. It was renamed the Bible College of South Australia and returned to Adelaide in the late 1970s. It remains Evangelical in

outlook, and retains a wide constituency, though as always it faces severe financial problems. It institutionalises the possibility of an alternative training to those offered by denominational colleges which have moved decisively from the Evangelical tradition. It relies on the quality of its leadership and the willingness of an ill-defined constituency to sustain it with funds. While it is seen as promoting the Evangelical cause, preferably in concert with active Evangelical congregations who can send people to it for training, it will flourish and continue to serve the Evangelical cause in South Australia. When it is perceived as failing in that role it will decline.

There were other institutional efforts during the first half of this century aimed at giving identity and effect to the Evangelical tradition in South Australia, especially as the Protestant denominations seemed less and less responsive to Evangelical influence.

Rene Jeffrys has told⁴¹ of one such remarkable effort, the CMS League of Youth, which gained a substantial following in the 1920s and 1930s. With the encouragement of Arthur Riley, a CMS missionary on furlough, many young people in the existing Diocesan Fellowship of Youth took their Christianity so seriously that they were converted during 1929-30. So vigorous did they become at evangelising their peers that Bishop Thomas started a branch of the ABM Comrades of St George, and in response the CMS formally started its League of Youth. Groups of 80-100 young people came to the quarterly rallies, where Rene Jeffrys and others confidently prayed and expounded the Bible. They had support from St Luke's in particular, and from St George's, Magill and St Bartholemew's, Norwood as well as Trinity. They had outside speakers, often missionaries passing through. They found great encouragement in the annual CMS Summer Schools, which permitted powerful Evangelical teaching to be brought to Adelaide from interstate. Clearly for the diminutive Jeffrys all this was affirming and formative, and she was to repay her debt to CMS with years of service as the full-time SA organising secretary, as well as work on many other Anglican councils and synods. There can be little doubt that the League of Youth and CMS were definitive of Evangelical Anglicanism between the wars.

Sometimes these Evangelical agencies were consciously imported from interstate, as Scripture Union and the Inter Varsity Fellowship both were in the 1930s through the work of Dr Howard Guinness. The former promoted Bible study and developed evangelistic work among children, while the latter sought to evangelise students at the university.⁴² There were also efforts at special forms of ministry, such as Fulford's 'Reveille Fellowship' which served many young adults in Adelaide well beyond his own parish of Holy Trinity with direct bible reading and fellowship in the Evangelical mould.

The denominations meanwhile maintained a series of public programs aimed not at evangelism but at social welfare: the Methodists led the charge in the 1920s and 1930s to retain limited hours of trading for the sale of liquor; they and the other Protestant groups campaigned, though with little effect, against gambling; the struggle to get Bible reading into schools continued till some for-

mal success was achieved in 1940. These and a number of other campaigns were informed largely by the more liberal vision of what Christianity was about.⁴³ Did they think that by such efforts at Christianity by legislation they were 'bringing in the Kingdom'? For some of the temperance campaigners the call to sign the pledge had gone far to replace the very offer of grace in Christ. It is not difficult to grasp why many Evangelicals felt isolated and suspicious of the 'mainline' denominations when such qualifications were imposed on the meaning of Christianity. Perhaps some withdrew apart into gathered congregations with too much conviction and failed to serve the community around them. It was understandable response.

Post War Recovery

After World War Two there was a period of community expansion and confidence which saw marked growth in church attendances and in the general acceptance of Christianity of whatever hue. Prosperity meant more funds were available for new departures. A new generation of leadership was taking over, some shaped by their wartime experiences.

Evangelicals shared in those opportunities in the 1940s and 1950s. One striking example was the way the Campaigners for Christ organisation, which had conducted the 'Everyman's Huts', a Christian based welfare system working among the forces of the Australian Army in World War Two, opened a similar Everyman's hut in post-war Adelaide near the railway station. Their wartime good works stood them in excellent favour with former soldiers and their friends. For a while so successful was the Campaigners for Christ activity that it seemed to threaten the youthwork being conducted by the Methodists and Baptists, especially when it is remembered that it was lay-controlled. Its effectiveness was cut short in 1951 by one of those recurrent doctrinal disagreements about holiness which have plagued Evangelicals ever since Wesley and Whitefield fell out in the eighteenth century.⁴⁴

Evangelicals were greatly influenced, in addition, by developments in Evangelical Christianity occurring in England and America. In England, as in Australia, the resurgence of Christianity saw great strides taken by Evangelicals. In particular, there was an outpouring of literature from the Inter Varsity Press restating the Evangelical tradition as it addressed the Bible and theology. The Revd John Stott became Rector of All Soul's, Langham Place in 1948 and rapidly moved to the forefront as an expository preacher. He moved with great effect in 1955 to support the evangelistic "Crusade" at Harringay led by Billy Graham, the American evangelist. The new alliance was noted with great interest in Evangelical circles in Australia.

Stott and then Graham were invited to minister in Australia, Stott mainly on university campuses in 1958, Graham in a series of immense Crusade meetings around the nation in 1959. Here was the gospel being proclaimed with authority and effect to thousands. Here was the Bible being used confidently and without reserve. Here was the death and resurrection of Christ placed at the centre of the life of Christians. Graham had insisted on denominational

patronage, and he got it in varying degrees around Australia. Bishop Reed in Adelaide was conspicuous by his suspicious withdrawal of official Anglican support. This did not stop enthusiastic support from Anglican parishes such as St Bartholomew's, Norwood, and Trinity, Adelaide, along with vast busloads of Methodists, Baptists and others.

The Graham Crusade alone may not be the full explanation for the resurgence of Evangelicalism in South Australia as elsewhere in Australia in the 1960s, but it was a major benchmark, a moment in the lives of a generation of Christians which still reverberates in their lives and their congregational singing ('How Great Thou Art!').

It came too as the effects of liberalism in the denominations and the attractions of the secular world bit into church membership. While membership figures declined across the board during the 1970s, Evangelically-oriented congregations increasingly emerged as secure and continuing, whether in Anglican, Baptist or Uniting traditions.

As yet it is not possible to document the more independent of these congregations in detail. Some were within the Brethren tradition, but increasingly willing to join in joint action with other Christians, for example in supporting ABI. The most obvious example, however, of self-conscious and active Evangelicalism at the congregational level in the 1950s and 1960s was Lance Shilton at Holy Trinity (1957-73). He took every opportunity to bring a Christian comment upon the affairs of the day, especially questions of morality. Perhaps at times Shilton's enthusiasm to get some publicity for Christianity in a secularising age led him to adopt a limited and calculating stance on some issues: he was in danger of merely reinforcing conservative political and social prejudices rather than allowing the Bible's power to be developed in full play on the complex social issues of the day. And about some issues he was quite silent. In retrospect the omission of any critique of the killing in Viet Nam was striking.⁴⁵

Other expressions of rising Evangelical confidence in these years would include the structure to maintain the Billy Graham ventures - of 1968 and 1978; and linked with that, the emergence of the Christian Businessmen's Committee. It has always been aggressively lay in character, but equally, anxious to evangelise within the business culture of the city. Probably some of the same people gave their support to the Festival of Light, which in the early 1970s took up the burden from Lance Shilton of developing a critique of moral and legal developments in the secular community. At first it sought to express an alternative account of social values in a positive way, and while it did so it attracted widespread support among the Evangelical constituency of Adelaide. Gradually its targets became smaller, its attitudes more negative, its public statements more predictable, its effect on either Christians or politicians declining. It had become old-fashioned wowsers with little to offer of God's loving grace, so that few Evangelicals still support its activities.

Another remarkable expression of Evangelical confidence was the New Creation Teaching Ministry [NCTM], the outcome of Geoffrey Bingham's remark-

able personal ministry, especially after he resigned from ABI. Here has been developed a program of instruction, library resources, publications in book and tape form, and a variety of counselling and fellowship facilities. Bingham has gathered around him a number of largely Baptist clergy who have taken his teachings and offered it to their congregations, who in turn have attended the teaching programs offered at the NCTM site at Cherry Gardens. It is not, however, clear if NCTM can survive the gradual withdrawal of Bingham from active ministry. Nonetheless, from these examples it can be seen that Evangelicalism in South Australia, or more accurately, in Adelaide, had, by the 1970s gained confidence and organisational identity.⁴⁶

But another challenge emerged by the 1980s, alongside the emptiness of liberalism and the secularity of the community at large, namely the charismatic movement. Arising from similar roots to the Evangelical movement, charismatics appealed to many of the same people who attended Evangelical congregations. Their offer of results in changed lives was a powerful attraction. The charismatic movement seemed to be repeating the sequence of the 18th Century Evangelical Revival. There are disagreements and there are points of substantial agreement between charismatics and Evangelicals. At least three Baptist congregations have split during the decade over the question of the necessary possession of the power of the Holy Spirit. It would be good to think that the charismatic movement was merely the next stage of the history of the Evangelical Tradition in South Australia, but I believe this will not be so while some charismatics make the experience and public manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit a condition of salvation, even though most would speak of tongues for power, rather than for salvation. While grace is thus constrained Evangelicals will stand apart from some aspects of these new and expanding denominations.

There will always be problems too as Evangelical congregations work out the significance of their affiliation with denominational organisations. Some withdraw to maintain the purity of doctrine and practice, for example Kings Park Baptist. Others soldier on, paying the price of continued affiliation in substantial assessments - because Evangelical congregations still tend to be the biggest and most effective. Thus Trinity pays nearly 100% more in annual assessment than the next parish, also Evangelical, to the diocese of Adelaide. Others again develop a special emphasis which commends them beyond the narrow confines of the Evangelical cause - the most obvious example in the late 1980s is the work among the homeless based at St Luke's, Whitmore Square.

There remains the problem of coping with change in perspective and opportunity without thereby destroying the tradition. Applications and developments to the questions of the day must never become the definition of grace itself even though the effort of such applications should always be encouraged: smoking and drinking for example are not marks of either Christ or the devil, of salvation or damnation, despite the way they have so often been used in the past. Certainly Christians have expressed valuable insights about the expressions of grace in practice through their analysis of these issues. The danger comes when the issue becomes an object in its own right, independent of the ministry of grace and mercy in Christ. No doubt similar tests of Evangelical orthodoxy will

be named for the 1990s as Christians strive to apply their faith to the circumstances of the day! But whatever the dangers of becoming over-specific, the Bible must still be made audible to the people of the coming generation, unfettered and clear, in ways that they can understand. Grace must still be proclaimed on the basis of the atoning death of Christ and the power of his resurrection. The challenge continues.

NOTES

- 1 This paper is very much work in progress. My thanks to Dr Stuart Pigglin, of the University of Wollongong, who is leading the project on the history of Evangelical Christianity in Australia, and to the Revds Len Abbott and Reg Piper, for their comments on earlier drafts, and to Stephen Lake for research assistance funded by the Research Committee of Flinders University.
- 2 Stuart Pigglin, 'Towards a Bicentennial History of Australian Evangelicalism', *Journal of Religious History* 15, 1988, 20-36, has some useful suggestions on definition
- 3 The most useful recent study is Eric J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: early industrial Britain 1783-1870*, London: Longman Cheshire, 1983.
- 4 Douglas Pike, *Paradise of Dissent: South Australia 1829-1857*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1967, 2nd ed, is the definitive study.
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- 6 SAF, nos. 2 and 3
- 7 *Register* 15 Sep 1838, 3c-d
- 8 Margaret Press, *From Our Broken Toil South Australian Catholics 1836-1906*, Adelaide: Archdiocese of Adelaide, 1986, presents this story with sympathy.
- 9 Brian Dickey, *Holy Trinity Adelaide 1836-1988: the history of a city church*, Adelaide: Trinity Church Trustees, 1988, 23
- 10 Dickey, 37-8
- 11 Dickey, 45, 54
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- 15 *Register* 28 January 1851, *Observer* 8 Jan 1853
- 16 *An Account of the Proceedings of the Laity and Clergy of the Church of England in South Australia occasioned by the publication of Certain Minutes of a Meeting held in Sydney by the Australasian bishops in October, 1850*, Adelaide, 1851, 55
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- 18 John Cameron, *In Stow's Footsteps: A Chronological History of the Congregational Churches in South Australia 1837-1977*, Adelaide: South Australian Congregational History Project Committee, 1987, 10
- 19 Cameron, 24
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- 24 Dickey 57-60; St Luke's Vestry minutes, 22 Aug 1855, 14 Apr 1857
- 25 This controversy deserves a separate study. Short's most significant reply, 5 Nov 1858, is republished in *Protestant Church Alliance. Thoughts and Facts connected with a movement to promote a closer Alliance of Evangelical Christians in South Australia*, by a Lay Member of the United Church of England and Ireland, Adelaide, 1858, 37-8
- 26 D.J. Ibbetson, *A Few Thoughts on Ritualism*, Adelaide, 1869
- 27 St Luke's Vestry, minutes, 6 Jul 1869
- 28 Minutes, 22 Apr 1870
- 29 Janet Scarfe, *Diocese of Adelaide in the Nineteenth Century: controversies over churchmanship under Bishop Short*, Adelaide, ABCE, 1982, 17-18, 27
- 30 St Luke's Vestry, minutes 23 Dec 1870
- 31 Minutes, 30 Mar 1871
- 32 David Hilliard, *Popular Revivalism in South Australia*, Adelaide: Uniting Church Historical Society, 1982
- 33 Brian Chalmers, "Need Not Creed": A History of the Adelaide Central Mission, 1900-1952, MA Thesis, Flinders University, 1986
- 34 Dickey 83
- 35 St Luke's Vestry, minutes, 13 April 1898
- 36 Hilliard, 89
- 37 Dickey, 93-5; R.V. Davies, *A History of the CMS of South Australia, South Australia Branch, including Western Australia 1910-1960*, Adelaide: CMS, [1960]
- 38 Helen Caterer, *Australians Outback: Sixty Years of the Bush Church Aid Society*, Sydney, AIO, 1981
- 39 St Luke's Vestry, minutes, 28 Feb 1971
- 40 David Parker, *Fundamentalism and Conservative Protestantism in Australia 1920-1980*, PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 1982, 542
- 41 Interview with author, 24 Aug 1988, copy of tape held by author
- 42 John and Moyra Prince, *Out of the Tower*, Sydney: ANZEA, 1987, is a short essay on the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students (formerly IVF).
- 43 Judith Raftery, "Till Every Foe is Vanquished": churches and social issues in South Australia, 1919-1939, PhD thesis, Flinders University, 1988
- 44 Interview with Bruce Bryson by Brian Dickey, 1988. Bryson conducted the Hut in Adelaide
- 45 Brian Dickey, 'Post-War Church Growth: Trinity Church, Adelaide, 1945-73 as a Case Study', a paper read to the 1988 ANZATS/STS Joint Conference.
- 46 The observations of the last few sentences are based on twenty years' residence in Adelaide by the author