

III - Early Church History

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3.1. Resume - Thoughts on Christian Foundations:

- * A Planned Seed of Holiness for Australia:
 'Godly Preparation' and 'vision'.....
 A Special Man of God...
- * A Rejected Nation of Misfits:
 Ignoble penal settlement under man
 Not....noble nation under God
- * Spiritual Opposition to Birthing the Church:
 Actively opposed by the powers of darkness
- * Distortion of the Pure Truth through the Church:
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- * Wrong Model for God's Authority:
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- * And...Consequent 'Lack of Respect' for Clergy:
- * A Transplanted 'Legacy of Privilege':
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 Deep seated differences Anglicans/Catholics
- * Growing Disturbance to the 'Status Quo':
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- * Persistent Resistance to Revival:
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 Distorted image of God's authority ?
- * Yet through it all...A Persistent Light in the Darkness:
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A Planned Seed of Holiness for Australia:

I sense a divinely appointed 'preparation' in England for the 'birthing' of Christianity in the colony...one senses there was a real vision and high hopes....this led up to the appointment of a special man of God in Rev Johnson...

A Rejected Nation of Misfits

What was established here was an "ignoble penal settlement under man" not a "noble nation under God".....it was harsh territory in which to plant that 'seed of holiness'....

Spiritual Opposition to Birthing the Church:

And the 'planting' wasn't too successful and perhaps we shouldn't be surprised. But it's almost like the actual 'birthing' of the Christian faith in Sydney (and here I mean the essence of the faith not specifically the traditional C of E) was actively opposed.....by the powers of darkness....eg

there was no religious blessing at the raising of the flag on that first 26th January.....

resistance or indifference from the authorities forced Johnson to go it alone and build the first church....which was later burnt down.....

the first Cathedral St Andrews was believed to be unconsecrated for many years (foundation stone being laid by Gov Macquarie, a mason, and designed by Greenway also a mason)

and Johnson...the first Minister...Christ's representative....was openly rejected by the people (being 'treated with apathy, discourtesy and ridicule')

It was like something was inhibiting the birthing of the pure church....the rooting of God's Spirit in the foundation of the nation....and Johnson's attempt to build his own church (without help/approval from the authorities) could almost be seen conceptually as an attempt to 'separate' the Church and the State.....to proclaim through the first church building the supreme Lordship of Christ....Christianity in its own right, if you like, rather than Christianity in the C of E which in turn was 'buried/entangled' in - almost subjective to - secular affairs of the State.

It seems significant too that the man chosen to birth the church here....was such a godly man....about whom nothing 'bad' appears to have been written....in contrast to Marsden for example or Lang...

Distortion of the Pure Truth through the Church:

Despite Johnson's valiant and godly efforts, the real truth of the gospel was 'distorted' because it was 'used' as a religion to be IMPOSED ON the people - rather than a religion FOR ALL. It was imposed 'from above' - with spiritual and secular authority being seen as 'in league' with each other.

As put in the book 'Sydney Anglicans'....." The ministry of the C of E in NSW was Evangelical as well as formal, the impetus for it coming from the upper classes of society. It was religion for, rather than to, the motley inhabitants of the penal colony."

And so the 'vehicle' for God's truth - the Church - got itself into a position of compromise.....a wrong 'position' being locked in/associated with secular authority (see Dean Inge's later comment on...."being married to the spirit of the age).....and a wrong 'position' by trying to impose religion from on high. God's truth couldn't really be 'heard' from this position.....

It led - no doubt exploited to the full by Satan - to a total disregard and ridicule of the institutional church in Sydney by all parts of society here.....one suspects that Marsden, for all his undoubted good work, would have been 'used' to discredit/distort the vital 'truth' of the gospel....

Wrong Model for God's Authority:

This flows from the above...the early Church's authority would have been seen in the same light as the oppressive penal secular authority of the State....indeed Church and State were probably seen as inseparable. This was a distorted image of God's authority....which one suspects still exists...and helps explain negative attitudes to the 'church'....

The 'penalty' for this legacy is still being paid. Dean Inge once said that the church which 'marries the spirit of the age becomes a widow in the next'. In Britain at that time, the 'Established' Church at least, by its identification with the State, its intimate association with the ruling class, and its belief in the existing social order being unquestionably God-ordained, had married the 'spirit of the age'. It paid dearly for it by becoming a 'widow' in the antipodes, so far as the great majority of convicts and ex-convicts were concerned.

And so....the wrong model for God's authority....was rooted in our English heritage....and transported here from day one...

(The model brought in later by the Catholics was also 'wrong', though for different reasons....)

And a Consequent 'Lack of Respect' for Clergy:

This 'model' brought the almost inevitable response from the people in the early days.....(see later section 3.5. "Attitudes to the Clergy & Church")

And this lack of respect for clergymen in Australia still exists today. It may not be outright hostility, except toward men like Rev Fred Nile, rather it is a sniggering, disinterested attitude and certainly on the media clergy are portrayed very much as figures of ridicule.

There is a noticeable contrast to the way the clergy are treated in England where they are given a special respect in society. German parents of a friend also compared the salaries of German pastors with those of Australian clergy - a marked difference down for the Australians.

The book 'CCC' gives considerable evidence to support the view that anti-clericalism is rooted in the early foundations of the church in the colony. One senses that the clergy are still labouring under the burden of this today.

The mocking attitude of Australians today toward anything Christian or to do with the church is also probably rooted in this time.

The Awesome Accountability of the Early Church:

The corporate accountability of the early church is awesome and surely continues to need prayer.....it may not be too alarmist to suggest that the institutional church bears some of the responsibility for not only turning people AWAY from God but also for turning them TO things definitely not of God...as outlined graphically in CC&C....

" By the 1820's.....the convicts and ex-convicts had no interest in the doctrines and liturgies of 'Old England'; they felt no need to come to God in prayer; and they had no desire to wash away their sins in Christ's precious blood. There were exceptions, but mostly they were sustained by mateship....."

A Transported 'Legacy of Privilege':

The C of E was effectively the State religion in the early colonial days.....and there was deep-rooted conflict and difference between the denominations (partic Anglican and Catholic).....this early history/legacy must still hinder the real development of a real "spirit of unity" across the churches in Sydney....

A Growing Disturbance to the 'Status Quo':

The early church - which was the C of E - faced ongoing threats to its traditional 'power and status':

- its legacy of 'privileged position' was effectively diluted as other denominations came to the colony...
- particularly savage opposition from authorities, officers and convict populace in the early days was common....
- clergy and church were held in low esteem....
- threat 'from within' also disturbed the church at that time....a 'threat' to the 'Evangelicals' in the Anglican Church from the Tractarians (and the Oxford Movement) and the real potential for this to undermine the traditional doctrines of the church...

A natural reaction to this from the church over the years appears to have been a move.....to 'protect'... to 'control'...to 'hold on to' their traditions....to 'stay aloof' and assume their traditional position. Part of this may have been an unconscious sustaining of the church's tradition from those early days to 'impose from above'....almost to dictate how it will be...

It does seem to help explain what some see as the 'prideful aloofness' of the Anglican Church - and in particular what seems to many to be the 'arrogant separateness' of the Sydney Diocese. It would appear to be rooted back to the early days in the colony.. Research illustrates this in a number of ways:

- comment from a visiting US Anglican Priest, Howard Johnson in 1964 - after investigating Anglican Churches all over the world - that "Nowhere in my entire tour of Anglicanism did I encounter questions of churchmanship so divisive...."
- the marked difference in 'climate' within Anglican clerical circles in the city of Sydney and in the country of NSW....(personal observations by Mrs Barker....written up in Marcus Loane's book....)
- the noted difference in the way the Sabbath was used in Melbourne and Adelaide as compared to Sydney....written up by an historian (not a Christian)...
- the serious differences (quarrelsomeness) between the Anglican Church and the other denominations in the early days....

A Persistent Resistance to Revival:

Australia is one of the very few countries in the world that has never experienced revival.....a real sweep of the Holy Spirit.....despite much 'investment' over the years to reach people for Christ it has not happened.

It has happened in US, England and Wales....yet curiously it has not (like most everything else) been 'transplanted' to Australia....

Why ?....Why has it happened elsewhere and not here ?....How have the 'powers of darkness' succeeded in blinding the eyes of Australians to the gospel ?

From our early Church History some of the underlying reasons may be:

- that the Christian faith has never really been birthed in the land...never really been 'allowed in' so to speak....
- until the post World War II period, we were symbolically a nation of 'rejected people' who had never really felt 'accepted'...(the expression 'spirit of convictism' littered much secular writing we researched)...
- and finally we have a distorted image of God's authority.....our 'authority figure' as a nation was an oppressive cruel penal secular authority (with which the early church was directly related).....which originally inhibited us seeing God's authority and 'Fatherhood' as it really is.....

....and I believe the 'spirit of Momus' (the god of Ridicule - and possibly the root of our uniquely Australian 'put down' mentality) has been used by the powers of darkness to sustain this wrong image.....

As with Japan - another nation where much evangelism and prayer has produced 'low' returns - maybe for Australia too intensive and sustained spiritual warfare could be a key to bringing people to Christ. As Peter Wagner said in a recent article " 'If God had called me to be a leader in the evangelisation of Japan, I would:

- Seek God's power to unite the various Christian factions
- Train pastors and lay leaders in deliverance ministries,
- And...Look to God for ways to identify, engage and break the power of the territorial spirits that have held Japan in their clutches for centuries."

Yet through it all - A Persistent Light in the Darkness:

Despite all this....God's light has been 'spread abroad' in Sydney since Johnson arrived....through the faithfulness of so many great men of God over the years....God's grace and goodness is so evident in the lives of individuals....such as Johnson, Barker, Campbell etc....despite real corporate difficulties.....Successful inroads have of course been made....often where free from authority....eg itinerant, mostly non-Anglican.....mobile ministries....

We pray that there is indeed truth in the vision Newton had so many years ago for the settlement - and in particular for Johnsons ministry - when he said " The seed you sow in the settlement may be sown for future generations and be transplanted in time far and near. I please myself with the hope that Port Jackson may be the spot from whence the Gospel light may hereafter spread in all directions".

Is this a prophetic word for Sydney today ?

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3.2. Outline of Early Christian Life:

In 18th century England:

- religious ignorance and practical atheism well established
- mass of working class not outwardly religious, never attended church
- poverty was considered God-ordained and the social hierarchy part of the divine plan for mankind
- established church closely linked with State and status quo
- the professional criminal class would have had no contact with Christianity and their first contact possibly in prison usually did not go down too well

All these attitudes were transported to Australia.

In Sydney:

- Church services regarded as punishment by convicts.....used to preach good subservient behaviour
- Was compulsory, caused indifference and cynicism to harden into hatred and opposition
- Anglican chaplains were:
 - objects of ridicule and abuse
 - the most easily hoodwinked of the ruling hierarchy.
 - scorned for participation in penal system - Marsden, particularly severe.
 - seen as moral policemen - sanctimonious spies of the govt and puritanical 'kill-joys'.
 - Overly identified with ruling class.
- only the Catholics and Methodists were able to bridge the gap between convicts and clergy through friendship
- The few convicts who were genuinely religious and publicly showed it, were mostly Catholics. Such men displayed admirable courage in the face of merciless ridicule and persecution by other convicts, who saw them as hypocrites, renegades or traitors.
- Prison inmates forced to play hypocrite in order to gain indulgences and shorten their sentences.
- Catholic convicts hated compulsory C of E services.
- (Norfolk Island) - anti-religious attitudes were partly institutionalised in the blasphemous liturgies of the 'Ring'.

Interesting to note - the monopoly of the powerful 'Rum Trade' was finally broken by Robt Campbell, a Christian businessman/merchant.

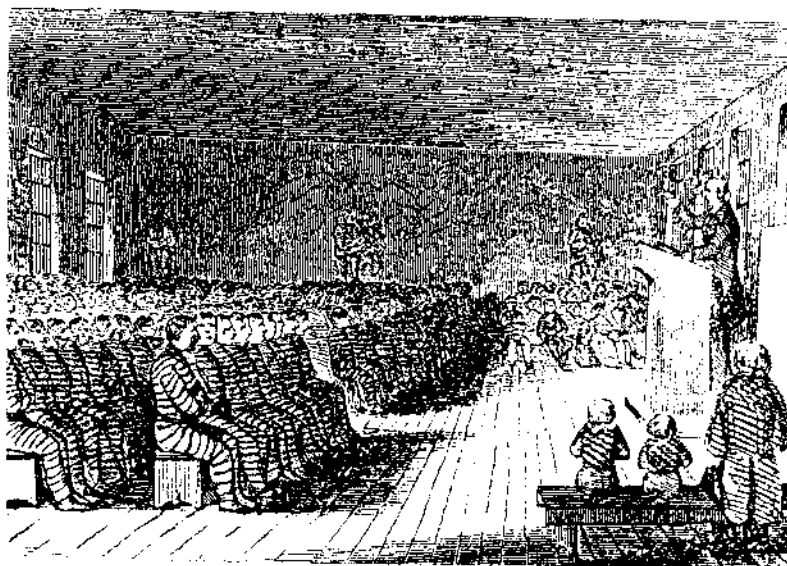
Frontier environment and struggle for survival put Church at bottom of people's priorities.

Most 'new chum' clergy were depressed by the penal character of the colony, many had great difficulty in adjusting and some failed outright.

In the bush many parsons were regarded as a 'standing joke' by acclimatised bushmen.

The churches, with some exceptions, failed to win the hearts and minds of the felonry. The evangelical and moralistic message of the Protestant Churches especially, was unappealing and unacceptable to the convict world.

Dean Inge once said that the church which 'marries the spirit of the age becomes a widow in the next'. In Britain at that time, the 'Established' Church at least, by its identification with the State, its intimate association with the ruling class, and its belief in the existing social order being unquestionably God-ordained, had married the 'spirit of the age'. It paid dearly for it by becoming a 'widow' in the antipodes, so far as the great majority of convicts and ex-convicts were concerned.



A 'Model' Prison Congregation, nineteenth century
W. H. Daniels, *The Illustrated History of Methodism*, New York 1883

3.3. The Early Christian Ministers:

Unlike America the first settlers in Australia did not come to establish a nation under God, they came in chains sentenced to hard labour, brutal treatment and death. The arrival of the First Fleet (12 sailing ships with prisoners, soldiers and officers as well as food and livestock) was a military operation without any consideration for the spiritual needs of the men and women sailing to the other side of the earth from Britain (it took about 10 months by ship) to establish a penal colony simply to relieve the overcrowding of the British jails. In all over 80,000 convicts were sent to Australia over a 60 year period.

Rev Richard Johnson:

Five months before the First Fleet sailed, Rev Johnson was appointed as Chaplain by Pitt at the recommendation of Wilberforce. The first fleet subsequently arrived on 26th January 1788. He was Chaplain to 568 male convicts and 191 female convicts with 13 children. Johnson also felt responsible for the Marines as well as the Governor (Captain Arthur Phillip and his staff) which composed his whole 'parish' of about 1,000 people. There were about 300 Roman Catholic convicts amongst them.

The first public service of worship in Australia was held at 10 am on Sunday 3rd February 1788 and Johnson preached from Psalm 116: 12 "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord".

Johnson's ministry was not easy as he had very little support from the Governor and the military. Once Governor Phillip left (December 1792) his job became very difficult dealing with the officers of the NSW Corps (the Rum Corp). Major Grose positively discouraged people from attending Johnson's services. They provided no building for a church so Johnson with helpers built a church himself out of his own funds. When Grose became Lt Governor he prevented Johnson having a second Sunday service and sometimes even marched his soldiers out of the middle of Johnson's morning service. At this time Johnson said 'almost all common morality and even decency was banished from the colony'.

In 1794 he was encouraged when a second Anglican Minister arrived by the name of Samuel Marsden. By 1798 (ten years of settlement) things had improved under Governor Hunter however Johnson's health was worn out and he returned to England in September 1800. In 1794 he issued his one only publication "An Address to the Inhabitants of the Colonies established in NSW & Norfolk Island" - a bold challenge of the Gospel to an indifferent colony.

Socially Johnson was despised because he was a 'Methodist' instead of a traditional Anglican 'church man'. He was a strong evangelical who faithfully preached Christ to both convicts and their military keepers.

Samuel Marsden:

At the age of 28 he arrived with his wife Elisabeth and first child born at sea. He was given the spiritual care of the small settlement at Parramatta (where all the food was grown for the colony) and, when Johnson left, responsibility for the settlement of Sydney as well.



Samuel Marsden
Mitchell Library, Sydney



Samuel Leigh
Mitchell Library, Sydney



John Dunmore Lang
William Nicholas, portrait,
Mitchell Library, Sydney

He was joined by another Anglican minister William Cowper in 1809. His two eldest sons were killed as children, one thrown from the horse and gig whilst the other fell into a pan of boiling water when left to the care of a servant.

Christian fellowship was very small although all convicts and soldiers had to attend Sunday services. He writes; "living where iniquity abounds so much, our civil connection with the worst of men renders our souls dry and barren. We feel little of that vital spirit of life which is essential to the happiness of the real Christian". However the nucleus of future Christian leadership in the community was formed through John Palmer and Surgeon Thomas Arndell as well as by Robert Campbell who was Australia's first merchant, and who eventually broke the rum economic control of the military over the people of the colony.

Marsden's name has been blackened by the history books because he accepted the job of magistrate as well as clergyman and is known as "the flogging pastor". He also possessed much farming land and property.

In his early life he was a Wesleyan but joined the Church of England as a Chaplain to NSW. He was a man full of sound judgment, fervent piety and enlightened zeal, he acquired great influence with the public and commanded the confidence and respect of both civil and military authorities.

Marsden as a missionary visited New Zealand (1814) and on six subsequent occasions. This was the scene of his greatest spiritual fruitfulness bringing many Maoris to the Lord. In all he spent 45 years of his life preaching justification by faith, regeneration and holiness as essential. In brief his life's message was "Christ is all in all to the sinner".

Fugitive Missionaries:

In 1798 a group of fugitive missionaries arrived from Tahiti who settled in Parramatta and helped Marsden. Francis Oakes became Chief Constable. Rowland Hassall opened the colony's first Sunday School.

Samuel Leigh:

Samuel Leigh arrived in NSW in 1816 as the first Wesleyan Missionary. Leigh was a trail-blazer, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit. He had the support and cooperation of Marsden. By the time he left Australia (1831) he had established in Australia and the islands of the South Pacific 9 circuits of Wesleyan Methodist, 14 missionaries, 736 communicants and 1,000 children in schools. In those days Methodists were careful about who they admitted to sit at the Lord's Table so the number in church attendance was a higher figure.

Samuel Leigh left because of a breakdown in his health but continued his ministry in Britain until 1845. He was a man full of zeal for the Lord whose desire was to seek the salvation of men's souls. He did not spare himself and was not concerned to become a comfortable settler in Australia.

Other Methodist Missionaries who followed after Leigh were men of like spirit....wise for eternity turning many to righteousness.

John Dunmore Lang:

He arrived in NSW as a minister of the Church of Scotland in 1823 and soon became one of the most influential, determined and colourful figures in Sydney. He founded Scots Church and for the rest of his life was its minister.

He returned repeatedly to Britain to crusade for able Christian immigrants and evangelical ministers, as well as opposing the continued British policy of transporting convicts to Australia. He saw that without the arrival of a large number of free settlers the whole spiritual and moral tone of the nation would not change. For the first 20 years of the new colony there were fewer than 100 free settlers. As free settlers were the backbone of the first churches in Sydney and Parramatta, more free settlers were needed for the growth of the church in the colony.

John Dunmore Lang was a prolific writer and his book in 1834 gave a historical account of the life in NSW and the need for free settlers. Convict transportation stopped in 1853 and over 160,000 free settlers had come to NSW. Many of these new settlers were not concerned for material wealth. They were God-fearing people ready to subordinate worldly comforts for spiritual advancement.

It is interesting to note that the Christian merchant Robert Campbell established a fine country property at Duntroon (now the federal Capital of Canberra) and he employed about 70 Scottish families of good stock who began each day with prayer and kept the Lord's day as a community.

The moral standards of the nation gradually began to change at which time the Rev Saunders arrived in December 1834 and as a pastor established the first Baptist Church in Sydney. He saw the great need of the people of Sydney at that time and he writes: "Sydney appears at first sight, like some oriental city rising from the wilderness at the command of a despotic power. On landing its streets appear wretched, sand and loose, and a hovel next to a respectable shop; a hut next to a mansion a Prince might be proud of. It appears at present as unlike an English town as it could possibly be made. And then to look at the people; so thin, so sunburnt, and many of them so drunk - not a lady to be seen, hardly a woman."

Saunders was active with many Christian agencies that began to operate in the colony eg Bible and Tract Society. There was a growing bond of friendship between Evangelical Christians who were united in their spiritual and moral endeavours to change the whole character of the colony.

3.4. Profile of First Minister - Rev Johnson:

3.4.1. Background to his appointment:

(From "Hewn From The Rock" by Marcus Loane and also from "Sydney Anglicans" by Judd & Cable. Any highlighting is the researcher's)

In 1783 Eclectic Society was formed in London. A group of Evangelical clergy under the leadership of John Newton, they met on a regular, although informal, basis in order to discuss matters of faith and the progress of the Gospel. Close contacts were men like Henry Thornton and William Wilberforce who was a close friend of William Pitt, the Prime Minister, at the time decision was made to settle Botany Bay.

The Eclectic Society were Evangelicals who formed a part of the religious renewal which flourished in Britain in the 18th century as a result of earlier influence of Whitfield and the Wesleys. Unlike the Methodists, the main element in the great revival, they remained firmly within the Church of England. They were no less dedicated to the cause of Evangelical religion but they were of the ruling classes, landowners and merchants and professional people. They saw their duty as moral and national rather than revivalist and personal. Prison reform, popular education, public morality, the abolition of the slave trade, were - or came to be - their interests.

Rev Richard Johnson's name was recommended by this group who had interested themselves in the appointment of a Chaplain to the colony. He received his Royal Warrant on 24th Oct 1786. On 13th Nov the Society discussed the question "What is the best method of planning and propagating the Gospel at Botany Bay?"

Wilberforce then introduced Johnson to the Societies for the Propagation of the Gospel and for Promoting Christian Knowledge and they gave him a large supply of books and tracts for the colony.

Wilberforce in a light-hearted mood spoke of Johnson as "the Bishop of Botany Bay".

The ministry of the C of E in NSW was Evangelical as well as formal, the impetus for it coming from the upper class of society. It was a religion for, rather than to, the motley inhabitants of the penal colony.

3.4.2. Conflict of Roles:

His royal warrant of 24th Oct, 1786 was typical of the period:

"You are to observe and follow such orders and directions.....as you shall receive from our Governor...or any other of your superior officers, according to the rules and disciplines of war..."



Richard Johnson
Royal Society of New South
Wales, Sydney

He was frustrated by the conflict of roles:

1. As chaplain expected to be guardian of public morality
2. As clergyman required to perform regular ministrations of the church
3. As an Evangelical had mammoth task of promoting the conversion of the felony

Never succeeded in reconciling these three roles to his satisfaction. His faith was strong but he lacked that 'buoyancy of spirit' to apply it.

Regarded by Phillip as:

Moral reformer
Ethical preacher
Adjunct to his disciplinary arm

3.3.3. Other aspects of Johnson's life:

- * Appointed through the influence of William Wilberforce
- * A Moravian Methodist (Moravians stressed sole authority of Bible, simplicity of worship, receiving the Lord's Supper in faith without human explanation, and disciplined Christian living)
- * Had to function as the rep of C of E
- * In the First Fleet Johnson sailed on Golden Grove. Conducted a service each Sunday and read prayers every evening. At Rio de Janeiro and at Cape Town, was able to visit other ships and to minister to all on board.
- * 3rd Feb 1788....first service based on Psalm 116:12
- * Only official rep for 3 years (Rev James Bain, Chaplain to NSW Army Corps 1791-1794)
- * 4 or 5 months after settlement before he was able to build a little cottage for his wife, Mary, but by the end of the year growing vegetables for own personal needs
- * Quite incapable of tackling task of introducing Christianity to a settlement of debauched convicts and self-seeking soldiers
- * One of the busiest men in colony. Although aware enormous gulf never shirked his official responsibilities
- * Appointed magistrate within months of landing in Sydney. By July 1788 also a member of Court of Civil Jurisdiction
- * Suffered apathy, discourtesy and ridicule of a godless community

3.4.4. Johnson's Ministry:

- * Visited the ship's holds of the 2nd Fleet in spite of health hazards to attend to their needs. Looked after the sick, prayed with them, gave them books to read, and fed them with food and vegies from his own store. Johnson himself was to observe that his great joy had been to "speak of the great and inestimable love of Jesus in dying for sinners, and in inviting them to come to Him, to behave in and rest upon Him for life and salvation."
- * Spent considerable time visiting convicts and sick in their own dwellings to give assistance and advice. "Found more pleasure at times in doing this, than in preaching".
- * Was seen by some he helped as very kind, others said that 'they did not believe that there was so good a man beside in the whole world' (Catholics saw him as 'sensitive' to their spiritual needs...able to respond to them.....Marsden on the other hand seen as strongly anti-Catholic)
- * Was concerned for the welfare of the Aborigines, tried to befriend them, and gave his daughter the Aboriginal name, Milbah Mary. He wrote to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1792 to urge the need for missionaries to work among the tribes on the fringe of the white community.
- * Published 74 page pamphlet encouraging people to study the scriptures, keep the Sabbath and refrain from various sins. Totally unsuccessful.
- * Built his own church from own pocket. Later burnt down by convicts.
- * Only his belief that he was there 'by God's appointment' that enabled him to endure the apathy and hostility of most convicts for 13 years
- * Whether or not men cared for his Evangelical Spirit, noone could say that he did not work as hard as any man in those critical and difficult years.
- * He supervised the first schooling of children in the colony (1793)

3.4.5. Ongoing Dispute with Grose:

- * A succession of bitter, personal disputes between Johnson - that 'very troublesome, discontented Methodist' - and the Lt Governor Grose who was irritated by Johnson's personality and evangelical views. Johnson also subjected Grose to a torrent of insult and humiliation when he lost his magisterial powers. Felt 'deeply offended and shocked'.
- * Lt Gov Grose was a selfish, godless, worldly-minded man (*Source for our uniquely Australian expression 'that's gross' ! ?*) who had no use for the Chaplain. 1st open rupture in 1793 when Johnson refused to wait any longer for government provision of a church and built his own.
- * Grose set out to frustrate and thwart Johnson with a calculated meanness which was meant to crush and humiliate him once for all. He failed to do this.
 - Grose only permitted one service at 6 am

- sometimes soldiers were drunk, sometimes they were marched off half way through the service
- interference with his ministry to the condemned
- his convict workers were withdrawn
- river transport was refused for his return journeys from Parrammatta
- soldiers and convicts were openly encouraged to treat him with contempt
- insults and stones were flung at him as he walked down the road

* Grose thought that Johnson's emphasis on personal salvation was detrimental to good order and discipline - hence the charge of Methodism. Johnson felt the two aspects of religion could not be separated. Johnson felt that during this period "almost all common morality and even decency was banished from the colony".

Grose when he left the colony left the Rum Corps, the farming and trading of its officer class and a legacy of bitterness.

* Gov Hunter returned in 1795 and in contrast to Grose he was genuinely concerned for the moral and spiritual welfare of the colony and gave Johnson support as he had not had before. Marsden by this time also brought friendship and encouragement.

By this time Johnson was in a very run-down state of health and had very little resilience. Also in 1798 his church was burnt down.

3.4.6. Some of Johnson's Achievements:

- * The pioneer for education in NSW. Was as much concerned for illiterate convicts and aborigines as for the children of free settlers.

By March 1792 had established schools in Sydney, Parrammatta and Norfolk Island. Within 6 years there were about 150 children in the school in Sydney.

- * Started a fund for the care of orphans and in Aug 1800 was treasurer of a committee for the conduct of an orphan institution

- * One of the best farmers in the colony. Perhaps the 1st man to grow wheat in NSW, as well as fruit, vegies, barley, and tobacco. Farming was for him recreation as well as a valuable contribution to the colony's food supply.

- * His health was a cause of grave concern and finally he returned to England with Hunter in Oct 1800.

His last service for NSW was giving evidence re transportation in 1812. Died in 1827 back in England.

• 3.4.7. Johnson - What Kind of Man ?

John Newton in 1786 declared "A Minister who should go to Botany Bay without a call from the Lord and without receiving from Him an apostolical spirit, the spirit of a missionary, enabling him to forsake all, to give up all, to put himself into the Lord's hands, to sink or to swim, had better run his head against a stone wall."

Johnson must have been seen as such a man with an apostolic spirit to have been recommended by the Evangelicals for the post of Chaplain.

" His gift was faithfulness rather than vision, courage and steadfastness rather than aggressiveness, and if we reckon that God demands not success but faithfulness, we can have no doubt that Johnson fulfilled his high calling of God." (Bishop D W B Robinson)

When he returned to England he was broken in health and hope, 'a mere skeleton' so Marsden wrote, 'from vexation and toil'. Perhaps Newton's vision of the significance of his work was clearer than his own: " The seed you sow in the Settlement may be sown for future generations and be transplanted in time far and near. I please myself with the hope that Port Jackson may be the spot from whence the Gospel light may hereafter spread in all directions".

Is this a prophetic word from Newton for Sydney today ?

3.5. Profile of Rev Samuel Marsden:

- * Born 25th June 1765
- * Son of a blacksmith and small farmer in Yorkshire
- * Went to village school and grew up to his early manhood in the environment of forge and farm.
- * Strongly influenced by the Methodist revival and soon became a lay preacher.
- * Never took his degree.
- * Was persuaded by Wilberforce to accept appointment as assistant to the Chaplain in NSW.
- * "I am about to quit my native country with a view to preaching the everlasting Gospel," he wrote. "Oh! that God would make my way prosperous, that the end of my going may be answered in the conversion of many poor souls."
- * He was to be as much distressed by the liquor trading of the NSW Corps as by the sin and degradation of the convict community.
- * Soon clashed with MacArthur.
- * Largely instrumental in the establishment of an orphan home and school for girls in 1800.
- * Proved to be an outstanding pioneer as a farmer and sheep breeder in NSW.
- * Linked with John MacArthur as the founder of sheepbreeding and woolgrowing in this country.
- * Appointed as magistrate by Hunter in 1795.
- * Became known for the severity of his punishment. Loane writes in defence of Marsden: "Writers such as M. H. Ellis and C M H Clark have fastened on this and have represented him a harsh and brutal in the extreme. It was an age in which the lash was a merciless instrument in the hand of authority; flogging was as common in the navy as for civilians. Marsden's childhood as a blacksmith's son and his own rugged strength may have had something to do with his severity; his strong ingrained belief that a vigorous discipline was the only way to preserve morality may have had more to do with it; and his recognition of the abnormal character of a convict community may have had most of all to do with it."
- * Judd & Cable write in 'Sydney Anglicans': "Order became the fixed point for Marsden - it was God's will for the world and an urgent necessity for NSW. It was the prime motive in his pulpit denunciations of sin, where anti-social acts were his main target, his severity on the bench as a magistrate and his insistence that missionary activity be accompanied by European work and cultural patterns. The Aust natives did not seem to conform to those standards; those of New Zealand did. For this reason, he came to be the apostle to the Maoris rather than the Aborigines."

- * Marsden had good personal relations with Hunter, King and Bligh but considerable conflict with Macquarie and Brisbane. Remained in ongoing hostility with MacArthur.
- * Consecrated churches in Parramatta (1803), at Church Hill (1810), in Windsor (1821), in Hobart (1823) and in King St (1824)
- * Became Vice-President of NSW Auxiliary of British & Foreign Bible Society which was formed March 1817
- * First President of NSW Auxiliary of Church Missionary Society. (Started 8th Feb 1825). It's first project - to promote missionary work among aborigines and first two missionaries began their work in the Wellington Valley in 1832. This later failed because of local opposition and dispute among the missionaries themselves.
- * Sole charge of St Johns Parramatta until 1837.
- * Responsible for affairs of C of E during Broughton's absence in England from 1834 to 1836.
- * Died 12th May 1838 in Windsor.
- * He became a legendary figure in the generation after his death. Mrs Barker who arrived in Sydney in 1855 soon described what she had heard: " Marsden, being a household word among the older settlers here, a man greatly beloved" (quoted by Loane)
- * This is in contrast to his 'flogging parson' reputation among the wider community.



3.6. Descriptions of Early Sydney by Christians:

- * A 'cess-pool'
- * Building up a nation of crime, a curse and a plague and a by-word to all the people of the earth...
- * 'An awkward and uncomprising corner of the Lord's great house'. (Johnson)
- * 'Truly a wicked people - sin abounds of all kinds and amongst all ranks too much - God and religion set little store by'. (Johnson)
- * Convict constabulary threatened convicts if they attended church which was forbidden territory (1793)
- * Convicts practised 'gaming' within 100 yards of church while service in progress
- * 'Sabbath'....was profaned as a day particularly appropriated to gaming, intoxication and the uncontrolled indulgence of every vicious excess" (Dr. Arndell)
- * 'Satan's Kingdom' -(Marsden)
- * First service for Marsden (1794) preached on breaking of Sabbath - greeted with ribald laughter and derision
- * 1793/5 (Grose - Paterson) religious climate at very low ebb....
- * 'Satan hath his agents everywhere and....I do not know one person that wants the great Physician of souls' (Marsden - 1795)
- * 'No other place in His Majesty's Dominions exhibits such disrespect to the clergy' (Marsden)
- * Mrs Marsden dismayed so few people were susceptible to religious influence. 'Evidently God has some great design in sending his Gospel to such a dark, benighted part of the world'.
- * Clergy insulted in streets with no form of redress
- * Grose imposed increasingly brutal punishments for non-attendance at James Bain's Barrack Church services - also convict women's heads were shaved
- * Both convicts and officials showed little interest in religion
- * Under Hunter stricter discipline and compulsory services hardened an attitude of 'indifference, cynicism and ridicule into one of bitter hostility and opposition towards established church and two clergymen....'
- * Hunter.....a good and godly Governor trained as a Presbyterian Minister who wrote and spoke of Christ as his Saviour. 'A more wicked, abandon'd and irreligious set of people have never been brought together in any part of the world'. Saw them as willing to crucify Christ a second time.



Clergyman at a Public Execution of Criminals
Mitchell Library, Sydney



Female Factory, Parramatta, 1830s
Augustus Earle, 'Female Penitentiary, or Factory, Parramatta [sic],
N.S.W.', Rex Nan Kivell Collection, National Library of Australia,
Canberra

- * Rowland Hassall - missionary from Tahiti....'Here iniquity abounds and those outward gross Sins which in Europe could render a person contemptible in the Public eye and obnoxious to the civil law are becoming fashionable and familiar - adultery, fornication, theft, drunkenness, extortion, violence and uncleanness of every kind'.
 - * Convict Irish Priest, Father James Harold did not receive a drop of Christian charity since arriving in Sydney. People too busy gratifying their own selfish passions.
 - * Mrs Marsden....'so little attention paid to clergy that it made religion appear contemptible...'
 - * By 1800 Marsden very dejected. 'Satan's kingdom seems to be so fully established and his power and influence so universal amongst us, that nothing but an uncommon display of Almighty power can shake his throne....'
 - * Clergy nor their property was safe. Robberies and murder.
 - * Prevailing attitude of convicts and ex-convicts was one of godlessness, irreligion and anti-clericalism.
 - * People still had their babies baptised. Strong traditional desire by women to 'have the kid done'.
- (NB: Marines, sailors, soldiers and officers rather than male convicts mainly responsible for high rate of illegitimacy)
- * By their attitude and example many officers positively encouraged irreligion and anti-clericalism. 'It ceases to be deemed foolishness with some of them, to scoff at religion and sacred things and treat the Holy Scriptures of truth with contempt and ridicule'.....an artisan missionary, 1799.
 - * Margaret Catchpole, an exceptional convict, 1802....'I grieve to say, my dear lady, that this is one of the wickedest places in the world. I have never heard of one, excepting those of Sodom and Gomorrah, which could come up to it in evil practises'.....
 - * 1794, Thomas Watling, an observant convict artist...'There is scarce a man without his mistress. The high class first exhibit it; and the low, to do them justice, faithfully copy it.'
 - * Marsden 1806..'the colony was saturated with convicts and worse, the spirit of convictism....
- Mrs Marsden began to doubt whether she was still 'a child of God'.
- * Nothing seemed to be regarded as sacred
 - * Concubinage and illegitimacy the rule rather than the exception....no one attached any social stigma to concubinage except a few evangelical churchmen. The offspring officially referred to as 'national children'.

- * 'Crazy sex ratio' of the convict colony 347 Men/100 Women (1st Fleet)
 - * Church attendances remained 'so pitifully low as to present a perpetual challenge to the missionary zeal of the evangelicals'.
 - * (Macquarie 1809)... 'The morals of the great mass of the population are in the lowest state of debasement, and religious worship almost totally neglected'
 - * (T. W. Plummer 1809)... 'the whole colony was little better than an extensive brothel'.
 - * Macquarie tried to encourage marriage, the keeping of the Sabbath by closing public houses during church hours and insisting on church attendance for convicts. Drunks were gaoled.
 - * Seeds of Christianity continued to fall and wither on stony ground
 - * 'Every kind of iniquity indulged in without a blush'.
 - * Marsden to Samuel Leigh, Wesleyan Preacher.... "We must expect great difficulties in a place where Sin and Satan have obtained such universal sovereignty, where his kingdom appears to be firmly established, and where his subjects are unitedly devoted to his interests; however, let us go on and sound the ram's horns; the walls of Jericho will fall in time."
 - * Bible Society launched in March 1817. Macquarie - Patron and Judge Advocate Wyld as President. 990 Bibles and 1600 testaments distributed over 4 years.
 - * 'Conviction had bred a race of levellers, who were only happy when they were laughing cruelly at the misfortunes of others or getting a rise out of the pretentious, and sneering at all the mighty men of renown'. (Manning Clarke)
 - * 'Large parties of boys, all strangers to the fear of God, and lacking any reverence for the mystery at the heart of things, gathered outside the churches of Sydney on Sunday evenings and blew smoke into the eyes of the worshippers as they left the church.' (Manning Clarke)
 - * Contrast between Sydney and Melbourne sabbaths in the 1840's by Russell Ward, historian. Sydney Sunday's were 'spent by many in boating, driving, riding, drinking, visiting etc...' and 'most of the churches were more than half empty'. Melbourne - 'delightful contrast: the places of worship are well-attended, the people dressed in their best attire, the shops shut, the streets as quiet as in an English town, and no visible symptoms of riot or drunkenness'.
- It was felt that convicts had 'most polluting consequences' on Sunday.....
- Alexander Marjoribanks (1847) - 'fewer than 5000 out of the city's then 45,000 ever went to church. 'The people', he wrote, 'do not seem to trouble much about religion'. (Sydney)
- * Contrast with Adelaide - The genesis of Adelaide 'bears the marks of evangelical religion, pragmatic radicalism and the bourgeois virtues of prudence, industry and respectability'. Within 10 years of its existence it was renowned more for its churches than for its sly-grog shops.

3.7. Attitudes to Clergy and Church

Convicts and ex-convicts:

- indifferent, distrustful and hostile
- despised prisoners who, in their eyes, deserted the ranks to become unctuous hypocrites
- viewed with contempt chaplains easily humbugged by false piety
- hated compulsion associated with church parades and meaningless ritual
- sheer physical survival took precedence over the study of scripture, hymns and prayers

Early clergy were:

- often 'bloody new chums' poorly equipped for job
- came from completely different social background to convicts
- early chaplains not just ministers of religion...they were officers of the Crown, appointed by the King and bound by their commissions. Primarily responsible to their superior officer....worked in quasi-military capacity...
- paid by the State and were in no sense 'called' by the people. Never much mutual trust, fellowship or cooperation. Marsden felt happy with this union between 'Throne and Altar'.

Early Governors had complete authority over most aspects of official religious practice. Manning Clarke summarises the instructions given to Phillip:

" He was to enforce a due observance of religion and good order among the inhabitants, and take such steps for the due celebration of public worship as circumstances would permit.....he was to take care that the Book of Common Prayer as by law established be read each Sunday and Holy Day, and that the Blessed Sacrament be administered according to the rites of the Church of England".

For prisoners this same man Gov Phillip possessed powers of life and death.

Normal church service also used for the proclamation of government orders. Any chaplain who challenged this was soon reminded of his subordinate rank to the Governor.

Church was seen as organ of the State.

George Loveless (1837) *"Good God, what hypocrisy and deceit is here manifested ! The most cruel, the most unjust, the most atrocious deeds are committed and carried on in the name of religion".* He saw C of E clergymen as men of disturbing power and spiteful habits and so claimed it was dangerous for convicts to offend them.

Three major steps to a convict's freedom involved the clergy:

- petition for ticket-of-leave had to be signed by chaplain and principal magistrate of that district
- same for conditional pardon
- also free pardon

Other privileges for convicts also required chaplain's signature.

Clergy attended floggings and executions and so were seen as linked with a barbarous penal system.

Until 1862 there was State aid for churches which meant they were still very much identified with the official establishment. John Ward, historian, writes:

"Suspicion always attaches itself to a State-aid clergyman; there seems always to be a something which is not right about him; there is a chord wanting - the chord of the heart."

In early days Anglican parsons were appointed as magistrates as was the custom in 18th Century Britain.

Samuel Marsden served 12 consecutive years as Magistrate in Parrammatta. Position gave him prestige lacking as a chaplain but lost him any respect and affection the convicts might have had for him.

He became the most hated clergyman of the convict era - reputation for savage penalties.

Became known as the 'flogging parson' by Sept 1800 after having an Irishman thrashed for not revealing information. There was also something abnormally cruel in his dealings with female convicts. Altogether the Bench under Marsden distributed 11,321 lashes and hundreds of years in the gaol gang, coal mines and Female Factory.

No doubt Marsden was driven by his horror of sin but the convicts only saw him as a ruthless participant in a vile system. A popular saying at the time - *"He sentences the prisoner on Saturday, admonishes him on Sunday and flogs him on Monday."*

Government men and reputable members of the community also felt he was unnecessarily severe and even when no longer a magistrate he was unable to undo his reputation as 'flogging parson' which assumed legendary proportions.

Other Anglican clergymen were magistrates and reluctantly tried to fulfil the role fairly. They were glad to be relieved of their duties in 1827 when this practice came to an end.

For generations however the tradition of the 'flogging parson' persisted. As late as 1899 it was recorded that the convicts had thought....

"the clerical magistrates were generally far more cruel and brutal than the lay magistrates and this opinion was crystallised into a cant phrase which was current among the old hands many years later. It was "The Lord have mercy on you, for his

reverence will have none." This phrase was used on all occasions, whether it was appropriate or not to the subject under discussion or the circumstances of the time."

The tradition of the 'flogging parsons' not only passed into the folklore of the 19th century, but also into the stories, drama, verse and art of the 20th.

Clergy also seen by convicts and emancipists as:

- contemptible, hypocritical moral policemen
- servile, sanctimonious spies of those in authority for the preservation of the existing social order

Against a backdrop of official support from various governors, the Evangelicals - Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian - preached to their congregations that they should pay 'due respect, submission and obedience to their superiors'.

Clergymen tried to maintain the status quo from 'home' that all gradations of rank and wealth were divinely ordained - seen as theological clap-trap by the convicts and emancipists.

At the same time the Evangelicals grabbed every opportunity to denounce what they regarded as idleness, wasteful pleasures, trivial amusements and sinful sports, especially if taking place on the Sabbath.

Christianity was reduced to a repulsive caricature in the press who said there were too many narrow-minded, negative, bigoted churchmen (sounds familiar !)

By 1820's the Evangelicals had a kill-joy, sin-obsessed, God-bothering, 'wowser' image firmly established because of their attempts to keep the Sabbath and their condemnation of drinking, gambling etc.

Often seen as figures of fun and disparagement.

Many clergymen were young, inexperienced, unworldly and naive when sent to bush parishes. The bushmen 'did not ask whether his parson was a High Churchman, he asked whether he was a man'. Unfortunately most were standing jokes and seen as 'a regular ninny'.

Most of the early Anglican clergy engaged in secular pursuits, buying land and running sheep and cattle. The Presbyterians especially tended to become full-time or part-time graziers.

These secular activities aroused considerable scorn and condemnation both within and outside the church. The landless Lang denounced the practise because it gravely compromised the Church in the eyes of the people.

"It identified the worship of God, in the estimation of the infidel and the scoffer, with the most severe idolatry of Mammon - the show of piety with the practice of extortion."

Numerous ex-clergymen and ex-missionaries became graziers, cattle dealers, merchants and speculators. Variety of motives:

- lost their vocation
- lost their 'flocks'
- resigned for health reasons
- family commitments
- snared by Mammon
- forced to fend for themselves

During the 1820's, bond and free sat separately in all Anglican churches which were regarded as the church of the aristocracy, of government officials and of the high and mighty. Many of the clergy, especially Anglicans, moved in same social world as the gentry.

By this time the convicts and ex-convicts had no interest in the doctrines and liturgies of 'Old England'; they felt no need to come to God in prayer; and they had no desire to wash away their sins in Christ's precious blood. There were exceptions, but mostly they were sustained by mateship. (what a heavy burden of accountability sits on the early church in Australia....)

3.8. The Catholic Church

(These are very preliminary notes only and further work is needed. Attempt is to try and understand something of the root of the clearly severe differences between the denominations, particularly between Anglicans and Catholics. So we can pray more specifically)

3.8.1. Irish Background:

- * In Irish history the century that saw the foundation of Australia is known as the Bad Century because it was the period of the Penal Laws. A time of all inclusive persecution by the English overlords. Lands were confiscated and civil rights withdrawn and people were driven into the fields. They could not vote. They could not sit in Parliament. They could not enter the army. They could not open a school. They could not belong to a religious order.....etc. Pauperised and embittered Irish men and women.....
- * 12,000 natural leaders fled to the Continent.....result was CLERGY filled the vacuum....paradoxically the Penal Laws effectively gave power to the Priests....
- * Deprived of politics, social life and even a creative cultural life, the Irish turned to the Catholic religion as the sole focus of their national spirit....
- * This was the background.....in which Irish Catholics were brought to Australia....

3.8.2. Early History in Colony:

- * The first Aust Catholics were lay people....on the whole one in ten of all convicts transported from England was Catholic, half of them born in Ireland....
- * Arrived with 'spiritual and intellectual luggage already acquired at home....Irish Catholicism before the Famine years was a bewildering mixture of formal Catholicism, debased Catholic practices, family piety, superstition, magic and Celtic mythology. Catholic convicts brought this with them." (from 'Australian Catholics' by Edmund Campion page 4)
- * " Like poor immigrants everywhere, settled in ethnic conclaves round the inner city - in Woolloomooloo, Pyrmont, Redfern, Surry Hills, Paddington, Balmain and Waterloo.....
- * Often forced to attend Protestant services....only ones officially available...
- * " For the first generation of white settlement, seeing a (Catholic) priest was a rare event...."

- * Laymen emerged as Catholic spiritual leaders....in Sydney a stonemason, James Dempsey, read prayers with those condemned to death.....
 - * Despite no clergy.....by 1828 there were 10,000 Catholics in NSW.....products of 'settled family life and lay religious networks stretching back to the beginnings of the colony". Nurtured mainly within family circles but also in wider environs such as the local committees and the Dempsey cottage chapel.
 - * In the early days....ther were no Catholic magnates.....mostly from humble stock....when prospered, Catholics became small farmers...who worked the land with their children...
 - * 1800.....first Catholic Church appointment in Australia....Father James Dixon. " He won the approval of the Government. He was an educated member of the middle class...and Gov King considered allowing him to conduct a school, although he thought this might afford him the means of 'instilling improper ideas' into the minds of his pupils. "
- Reason King indulged Dixon....probably more to help deal directly with quelling discontent, grievances from Irish convicts.....
- * 1803....First Mass heard by convict priest.....however the experiment in toleration didn't last long...March 1804 saw 300 Irish convicts rebel at Vinegar Hill.....King considered the Mass had been used as a cover for seditious gatherings....so permission for Dixon to perform the Mass (and his salary) were promptly withdrawn...
 - * By 1828....Catholics constituted one-quarter of the colony's population....
 - * 1835.....Bishop Polding began a vigorous scheme of religious instruction for newly arrived Catholic convicts before they were scattered like seed across the pastoral landscape. By 1841, 7000 had passed through this. Seems to have been effective as the Catholic Church was growing from strength to strength and there was a dramatic decline in number of Catholics who returned to gaol.
 - * Australia's first nuns.....the Sisters of Charity, made a magnificent effort to bring Christianity to those 'wretched families' at Parrammatta Factory. Their twice daily visitation wrought a 'moral miracle'...the tone of the institution was wonderfully improved. The fact that 60% of the inmates were Catholic probably helped their cause.
 - * Overall there is little evidence of outward anti-clericalism on the part of Catholic convicts and emancipists towards their own priests. Even the most immoral persons, declared Father Ullathorne, looked with 'deep reverence upon their clergy'.

In Ireland the priest became the unchallenged social and intellectual leaders of the people through all the upheaval with Protestant England. But they also shared the agonies and aspirations of a proud people battling to survive on a plundered island. This relationship must have influenced the respect given to the priests in the colony.

* When convicts received their ticket-of-leave and eventually their freedom, the great majority completely forsook the church. It would appear that the exceptions were mostly Catholic. Loyalty to their church was strengthened by the fact that the Catholic church - unlike the Anglican church - was untroubled by the taint of convictism among its adherents. The Catholics believed it was the Protestants that were at the root of crime in Ireland and so helped to create convictism in the first place.

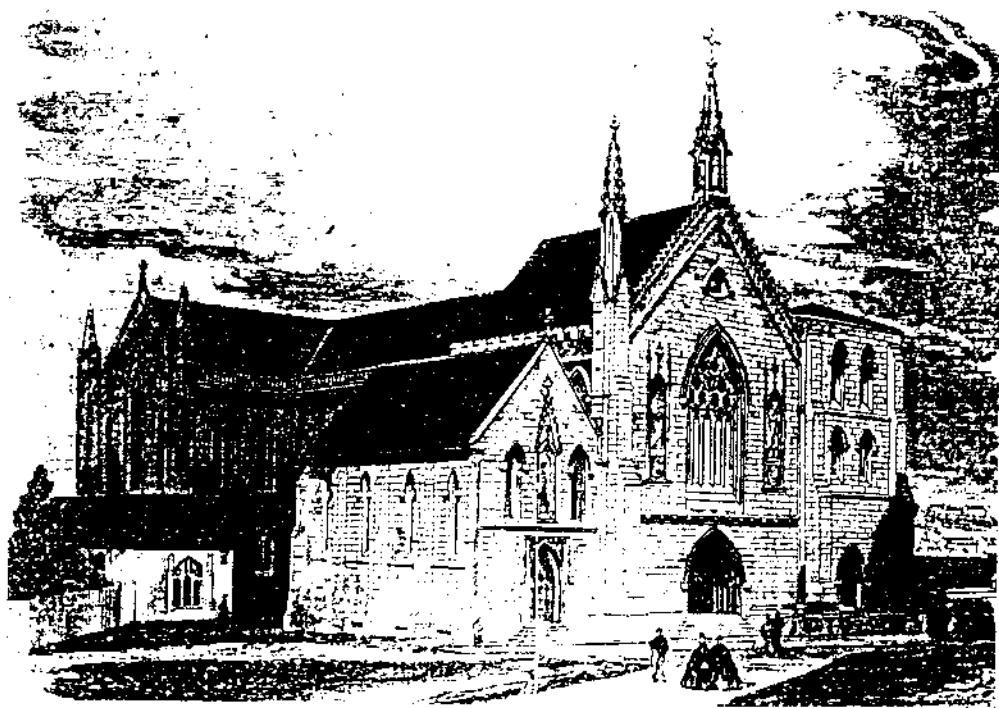


Above right 'Fleet of Transport Under Convoy'. Satirical print by an unknown artist.

3.8.3. Australian Catholicism:

- * A religion of group loyalties..... the melding of Irish national sentiment and Catholicism gave to the religion one of its characteristics in its Australian form: in Australia it was a religion of group loyalties. Aust Catholicism was not a one-on-one encounter with the Lord God; nor was it a religion that emphasised bare intellectual assent to rarefied dogmas. It was a religion that put weight on continued and loyal belonging to a group of co-religionists - religion was about loyalty to the group. A falling away was viewed not so much as loss of faith (an intellectual thing) but as a loss of loyalty (a moral thing). 'Loosing the faith' meant being disloyal to your group." (Edmund Campion)
- * A people's religion suited to the century of the people.....(revival in Irish Catholicism in early 1830's).....'at the heart of the revival was the development of a new lushness in Catholicism, which made it a warm, affective language of sentiment, rich in its ability to express the feelings of many different kinds of people. In those years, the leaders of the Irish church encouraged new initiatives in transforming Catholicism into a people's religion suited to the century of the people. For the Irish, this meant that the Catholic religion could do the jobs that in other circumstances were done by poetry, art, drama, and other manifestations of national culture."
- * Identification between Irish and Catholicism central....central to the experience of being Catholic in Australia. In part...a natural expression of emigrant nostalgia. In part...also the result of a deliberate policy by the bishops in Aust to coalesce Catholicism with Irishness.....Preaching a St Patrick's Day sermon in 1924, Archbishop Mannix asserted that wherever there were Irishmen, Catholicism was strong. The more deeply his congregation breathed the Irish atmosphere, he said, the stronger would be Australian (Catholic) faith. When an Irishman began to forget the country of his fathers, argued the Archbishop, almost invariably his hold upon religion also began to weaken.....
- * Rooted in 'poor' and 'outcast' beginnings.....the lowly condition of Australia's first Catholics. About 1820 papist priests were appointed by the Govt as auxiliaries to the priest. Their job was strictly defined: not to stir people up or make converts, but to keep the convicts in order.

The Catholic Ch of Aust was identified right from the beginning with the outcasts of society, the convicts and the colonial proletariat. The concentration of Catholics was at lower levels of social scale. Assisted migration between 1836 and 1886 brought out 200,000 immigrants - nearly half were Irish. As late as 1856 - less than half of the Catholics could read or wrote. Truly a church of the poor.
- * Unusual pride in church buildings.....The early Irish-Australians may have lived in hovels and slums, but they liked big, impressive churches. And they enjoyed raising money to pay for them. Wanted their Cathedrals to be landmarks. Fund raising events would pit parish against parish to raise money...a side effect would be an increase in parish solidarity. Thus the buildings are an important element of Irish religion in Australia.....



The First St Mary's Cathedral, 1860

3.8.4. Differences between the Churches:

- * Mainly concerned here with Anglicans and Catholics.....but also there was an open anti-Catholicism in the early colony which has remained evident up to recent times...
- * Catholic convicts more inclined than Protestants to seek religious consolation before being executed. Many desperate Protestant prisoners were 'impressed' by the Catholics ability to convert condemned men to Christianity and so many sought the aid of the priest when they were sentenced to death.

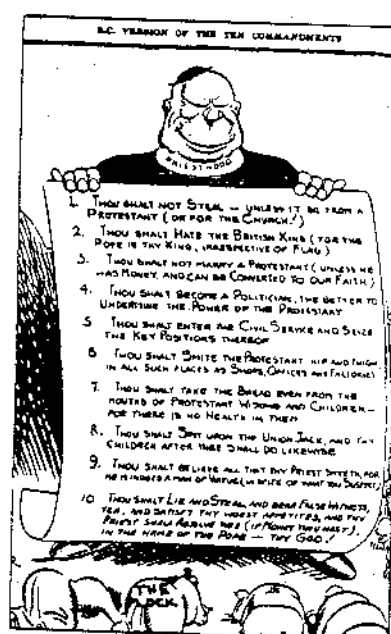
Father Ullathorne claimed that 2/3rds of all Protestant criminals sought the aid of a catholic priest. The Anglican bishop, Broughton, was perturbed by this and accused the prisoners of being charmed by 'the soothing ways' of the priests. Probably another expression of that chasm of hostility, cynicism and distrust that separated Anglican Chaplains from the convict world.
- * George Loveless, leader of the famous 'Tolpuddle Martyrs', believed the Anglican clergy not only owed their first allegiance to the State rather than God, but that they propped up the rottenness of the State....
- * Most contemporary witnesses agreed that Catholic convicts tended to be more religious than Protestants.
- * One of the doctrines that differentiates Catholicism from Protestantism.....the Communion of Saints....seen as 'powerful friends at the heavenly court...who can be appealed to in need'.....
- * Rev Marsden had a bitter and uncompromising view of Catholicism.....opposed toleration of Catholicism in colony.....saw the granting of a salary to Father James Dixon as an act of 'the Kingdom of Satan'.....
- * Gov Kings comments - in granting approval to James Dixon initially to conduct the Mass - illustrate a common view at the time of Catholicism....in considering allowing him to conduct a school he said..."...I realise this might afford him the means of instilling 'improper ideas' into the minds of his pupils". He goes on to say "No description of people so bigotted to their religion and priests as the lower order of the Irish; such is their credulous ignorance that an artful priest may lead them to every action that is either good or bad. "
- * Anti-Catholic views were still very evident many years later as illustrated in the following examples...
- * Canon Knox, Principal of Moore College, broadcasting over the radio in 1969....gave as the principal reason why Protestants like him opposed state aid the fact that the Roman Catholic schools taught an unacceptable version of Christianity....." Roman Catholic schools are founded to propogate the R...C... teaching, and we must say explicitly that this is superstitious teaching, and is the exact contradiction of the Christian Gospel with regard to the most important of all topics - forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God - and we ought not to be asked to support from.....taxes.....to propogate such superstitious aberrations from the Christian faith."

* The newspaper "The Rock"....1945 to 1979.....circulation around 30,000.....based on an unusually extreme opposition to Catholicism. 'The historical significance of the paper lay in its continued espousal of the idea that only British Protestants were true Australians.'

* Labour politician Clive Evatt in 1955 addressing an Orange Lodge rally at the Sydney Town Hall said...." I am happy for many reasons to be here, but chiefly because, unlike a lot of others in the community in the political sphere, I am proud of my Australian heritage.....With the vast majority of migrants coming from Southern European countries, our Protestant traditions would soon be submerged."

* Rev Gordon Powell, minister of St Stephens Presbyterian Church in the city....gave one reason in 1962 for opposing state aid to Catholic schools as follows: " It would lead to Roman Catholic domination of Australia. If the Roman Catholics can win Australia by normal means I have no objection, but I don't intend to hand it to them on a platter. Nor do I intend to turn my back on 400 years of Protestant sacrifice and courage. We have no right to give away such a heritage out of apathy, or weariness with the incessant pressure."

Cartoon from the anti-Catholic publication *The Rock*



3.8.5. Examples of Cooperation:

- * James Dixon - the first Catholic Priest here - was stripped of his office and salary after the Castle Hill Irish convict uprising.....he lived privately for the next five years at Parramatta, supported by Protestants and Catholics, baptising and marrying those who came to him....
- * Rev Richard Johnson (Anglican) was seen by the Catholics as being responsive to their spiritual needs....(in contrast to Marsden)...
- * The remarkable Caroline Chisholm (arrived in Sydney 1838)...a convert to Catholicism from evangelical Anglican....became a special friend to female immigrants...won govt aid for setting up female hostel...personally led female convoys to new lives up country.....got conditions improved in outward bound ships...organised missing friends burueau....the ecumenical dimension to her life was noticeable...school she established at her immigrant's home had Anglican and Catholic chaplains and its teacher was a Presbyterian...

(But unfortunately....clerical jealousies handicapped her work; Protestants thought she was a tool of the priests; Catholics thought she should be making converts.....)
- * Samuel Terry - befriended clergymen of various denominations...
 - successful emancipist
 - deeply religious man with an ecumenical outlook
 - tireless churchgoer
 - gave numerous donations to the Wesleyan, Presbyterian + Catholic Ch
 - remained an active supporter of the Aux Bible Society, the Religious Tract Society and the Sydney Bible Assocn
 - first attracted to Methodism, serving for many years on the Committee of the Wesleyan Auxy Mission Society and assisting such clergymen as Joseph Orlon
 - later more closely associated with Baptist Church
- * Simeon Lord....
 - another who found it useful to support the cause of colonial Christianity
 - active member of the Auxy Bible Society
 - Vice-President of the Benevolent Socty in 1819/20
 - looked favourably on the Wesleyans, allowing them to hold SS and church services in his cloth factory at Botany
 - years later, permitted Baptist minister John Saunders to preach there

3.9. History of Other Churches in Australia

Brief notes on the early history of various denominations in Australia - from Tess Van Summers book 'Religions in Australia' - the Pix series extended to 41 Beliefs. 1966 Rigby.

Methodist:

Rev Richard Johnson was both a Methodist and an ordained Anglican Priest.

Pioneer work done by laymen.

Sydney in March 1812 a group of laymen formed 2 classes to meet regularly for Bible Study and prayer.

3rd NSW 'Fellowship' class founded soon afterwards by Edward Eager, an Irishman transported for forgery, who had become a convert.

1815. Aust Methodists asked Wesleyan Missionary Society in London to send them their first ordained minister, Rev Samuel Leigh.

1855. 1st Aust Methodist Conference - 172 chapels, 69 ministers.

During 19th century Aust Methodists broke up into many factions but in early 20th most agreed to sink their differences and unite.

Doctrinal links with Anglicanism are strong.

Staunch evangelicals, believing in spreading the Gospel by missionary work at home and abroad. (C.C.&C. page 102)

1st 20 years of missionary outreach in NSW - feeble and unproductive. 'The NSW district is the only one of our missions that has been a disgrace to us.'

Membership - 1818 - 72, then in 1831 - 126. Out of accord with time, effort and expenditure. 1840's - several local revivals swept part of Sydney district.

Australia's 1st Colonial-born minister and son of an ex-convict, John Watsford, rejoiced in the 'fruits (which) soon appeared to change lives, in earnest work for Jesus and in cheerful giving to his cause'.

1851 -

64 chapels

77 other preaching places

21 clergymen and catechists

99 lay preachers

10,600 'hearers' within the colony

The Churches of Christ:

In Aust movement pioneered by British migrants

1st chapel built in Adelaide 1846

In early 1850's, until first church built, regular services were held in home of an English migrant.

The Congregational Church:

Two Congregationalist ministers preaching in NSW in 1798 'in different places in the country, about the town of Parrammatta' - known then as Independents.

James Cover and William Henry - two of the 11 fugitive LMS Missionaries from Tahiti in May 1798. Got permission from Gov Hunter to commence an itinerant ministry based in Parrammatta. Established at least 4 regular preaching stations, including one at Toongabbie, one of the early centres of secondary punishment (very cruel places - hellish reputations). Their congregations were said to be greater than those of the two official chaplains.

Johnson - particularly impressed with zeal of James Cover. 'He earnestly preaches, and exhorts every Sabbath in different places'.

In NSW - 1810 - 1st organised group of Australian Independents was a handful of laymen who met and held services in the schoolroom of William Pascoe Crook, a London Missionary Society missionary.

Had to be a private affair as only religion officially approved was Anglicanism. Crook was reprimanded by Gov Macquarie for administering the Lord's Supper while not being a licensed or ordained minister.

23 years later - the congregation, swelled by migrants and converts, had its own chapel.

The Anglican Church:

In the beginning closely linked with Government.

1st clergyman Rev Richard Johnson, appointed Anglican Chaplain to the First Fleet.

1st service - Feb 3, 1788.

1st church in Sydney - 1793 - later burnt down. Built from Johnson's own money.

1st chaplains to all the settlements were Anglicans.

Civilians and military officers stood in to take services in early days using C of E prayer book.

Both clergy and laymen paid out of Govt funds.

NSW - large land grants made to the Church and until 1830's only denomination receiving State aid.

Same pattern of exclusive State subsidy repeated in other settlements. Only abandoned as other denominations began to make claims for help.

Until 1962 - Church in Aust was part of English Church and so senior clergy tended to be imported from England.

Baptists:

1st total immersion baptism in Australia took place in Woolloomooloo Bay Sydney in 1831.

1st Church formed among Baptist believers then. Baptist believers had existed in the colony almost from the beginnings.

1831 - Baptist preacher, John McKaeg, arrived from England and held services in an inn and conducted public baptisms. Five years later had their own small chapel.

(Extra information to be added...)

The Presbyterians:

History of Presbyterianism in Aust like the Church of Scotland has been a stormy one.

1802 - several Scottish families settled in NSW and started holding services in the open.

1809 - built church at Ebenezer. Oldest church building still standing in Aust.

No ordained minister until 1822 when Archibald McArthur reached Hobart.

1823 - John Dunmore Lang - arrived in Sydney and founded Scots Church. Became a newspaper editor, Member of Parliament and a Preacher.

Chinese Presbyterian church in Sydney was established in 1882.

Particular emphasis on education, medical and mission works. Original Flying Doctor service was Presbyterian.

'Numerically stronger than Methodism in the early colony but much of its energy was dissipated in internal quarrels and divisions'. (CC&C page 102)

'Nowhere did Presbyterianism become a popular crusade'.

1851 - strong enough to support 5 clergymen and several churches in Sydney.

Roman Catholic Church:

Number of Catholics, including a priest, on early transportations.

May 15, 1803 - 1st authorised mass celebrated in colony by Father Dixon.

RC outlawed in England and so copied in NSW.

Majority of RC convicts were Irish rebels charged with political offences, including Father James Dixon, who was soon emancipated and pressed the authorities to allow him to conduct services for the RC's. He ministered, not always openly, until his return to Ireland in 1808.

Then for nearly 10 years - no RC services and RC convicts were forced by threat of punishment to attend Protestant services.

1817 - an Irish priest, Father Jeremiah O'Flynn, who had managed with difficulty to make his way into the colony, conducted secret Masses in a working man's cottage near Sydney Cove. Deported the following year.

1820 - 1st RC Priest, Father John Joseph Therry, officially appointed to Sydney.

1821, Oct 29 - laid foundation stone of first RC Church but 13 years later it still lacked a roof

1836 - 1st St Mary's Cathedral dedicated. Started to receive some government aid for buildings, schools and clerical salaries.

By 1850's - system of circuit riders, priests on horse-back who did rounds of the scattered settlements.

Aust 1st RC Bishop, Dr John Polding, once rode from Sydney to Perth ministering on the way. (!!!)

In Aug 1840, when the foundation stone of St Patrick's Church laid, some thousands of Catholics marched triumphantly through the streets of Sydney to St Mary's Cathedral. At the time was the largest and most spectacular procession ever witnessed in Aust. (CC&C page 102)

The Quakers:

Introduced to Aust by a botanist, James Backhouse and his companion, George Washington Walker, who went to Tasmania in 1832. Not missionaries in usual sense used by Christian churches. Do not proselytize but seek to combine practical works of relief with personal example of living. Brought important reforms to aborigines and convicts in Tasmania and on mainland.

(Following from CC&C book)

Six year preaching tour through the colonies. Constantly gratified by 'very quiet and attentive' convict audiences. Visited many chain gangs - gave simple homely talks.

The unpaid, altruistic labours of the 2 Quakers could fairly be described as successful, but they were probably transitory.

Muslims:

1st resident Muslims in Aust were the hardy camel drivers from India and Afghanistan who were imported to help pioneer the inland transport routes. Train from Port Augusta to Alice Springs was known as "The Ghan" in memory of them. They carried their prayer mats with them, and worshipped daily, alone or in small groups.

In 1881 - 4700 Muslims in Aust. In 1955 only 300.

In 1890's mosques were built in Adelaide, Perth, Broken Hill and Brisbane.

(More information from Eddy Smith - WECC - authority on Muslims)



Rev Richard Johnson

